

MY BLAVATSKY-DEFENCE PROJECT: 1947-1959

To My Friends and Benefactors:

It has now been more than ten years since I first wrote to the heads of the Theosophical centers, Mrs. Henderson and Messrs. Jinarajadasa, Geiger, Conger, and De Zirkoff, eliciting interest and co-operation in a project to resurrect the plans of the late Beatrice Hastings for a complete, printed Defence and vindication of Madame Blavatsky and for the thorough refutation and official withdrawal of the inimical Report of the Society for Psychical Research and related charges. That this proposed work has not been effected within this period, and that the contemplated book was not published in time for the Diamond Jubilee of the Theosophical Society as was my hope, is certainly no fault of those who, from time to time, and in various ways, have assisted me generously with information and encouragement. From the H.P.B. Library I was able to obtain on long-term loan (extended by Mrs. Fielding and trustees) all of the papers and unpublished Blavatsky Defence notes and books left by Mrs. Hastings with the late Mr. Smythe; from the United Lodge of Theosophists (at the behest of Mr. Geiger) I have been given volumes of Lucifer, typed extracts and articles, and books. From the Theosophical Society at (then) Covina and (now) Altadena, I obtained typewritten data, copied notations by the late Dr Du Purucker from his copy of the Coulomb pamphlet, and (by permission from Mr. Long) have secured permission to microfilm certain pamphlets and items on the case presently in the Society's library or archives. From the Theosophical Society with Headquarters at Adyer, has come, with other material, specially prepared blue-print plans of the former "Shrine Room" (in its present state) and surroundings, as well as complete transcripts of the original Madras Christian College Magazine "exposé" (sent by Mr. Sidney Cook), and (through intervention of Sri Ram) copies of other data in England. I must add that considerable help and encouragement

in various ways has also come from Mr. De Zirkoff. All of this special and specific co-operation is to my mind a living demonstration of the continuing unity of brotherhood among Theosophists, and of their common determination to defend to the fullest the potent memory and reputation of H.P. Blavatsky. But, moreover, this interest shown in my work is to me a warm token of appreciation and faith shown in my projected plan, and I must express my full gratitude for this.

Plans for a Definitive Defence of Madame Blavatsky

Briefly, as envisioned, this plan was (and still is) to preserve within covers (preferably by independent publication, so as to insure the most universal circulation among all groups) a complete, detail-by-detail analysis of all the published attacks and charges brought against Mme Blavatsky, with special emphasis on the Reports of the Committee of the Council of the Society for Psychical Research and the related “exposures” by the Coulombs, Solovyoff, and William Emmette Coleman publicized by the SPR. (Actually, of course, most subsequent attacks simply devolve from these “authoritative” ones). This compilation is to include not only the best of every earlier Defence effort, but is to be completed by addition of my own studies, explanations, and conclusions. It is not to include any partisan references to later Theosophical history, nor is it to deal with the lives and works of any later Theosophists, and it will touch on Theosophic philosophy only in so far as the question of “plagiarisms” or of occult explanation of phenomena (occult) might arise.

Status of This Project After Twelve Years

With youthful enthusiasm, I expected to have this work prepared for the press by 1950, 75th Anniversary of the modern Theosophical Movement. Although now most of the published material required for research and study is in my hands, it must be truthfully admitted that the

completion of this endeavor is yet far off and still demands considerable labor. Between 1947 and 1955 a great deal of thought and study was devoted to analysis of the details of the anti-Blavatsky charges---perhaps more concentrated thought brought to bear on this than by all previous students of the case. Many thousands of notes were made, together with hundreds of annotations. These encompass scores of new discoveries and original lines of argument for the defence, ideas not yet published by anyone, many being of the highest relevance and value, striking to the heart of the problems, The Hodgson Report, being the chief target for any defence counter-attack, has been dissected and re-arranged in loose-leaf notebooks, paragraph by paragraph in sections according to subject, each paragraph numbered and indexed so that in the final work there will be a cross-index between each paragraph of the SPR-Hodgson Report and corresponding rebuttal material offered in reply, thus at last precluding any possible objection that some charge or some part of the attack remains unanswered. (This analytical data, all on paper, together with the scarcest of the published research material on hand, has for years been kept in one or more safes as a precaution against fire or change damage).

Tracing the Blavatsky-Coulomb Letters

Prominent among the accomplishments prior to 1953 has been the tracing of the so-called Blavatsky-Coulomb letters. From advice received from the Scottish Free Church officials (superiors of the Madras missionary center which sponsored and for a time possessed this “correspondence”), and from the living heirs of the Professor Coues (who either borrowed or purchased the documents from Mme Coulomb in 1890 with the intention of using them in his defence against the suit brought against him by HPB, according to William E. Coleman), it appears these documents were either burned with other letters attributed to HPB a few years back here in America, or were returned to Mme Coulomb and otherwise destroyed.

My Original Discovery of the “Key” to Forgery in this “Correspondence”

However, this loss need not discourage us because, as one may recall, the initial discovery in April 1947 which prompted my conception of this Defence project, was the important and original findings that: (a) With but one understandable exception, whenever an incriminating (forged) passage of this “correspondence” appears in a letter that is otherwise non-incriminating (genuine), the incriminating part is always at the extreme end or beginning of the letter; and (b) when at the end, never once bears the signature, “H.P. Blavatsky” as do the non-incriminating conclusion (Mme Coulomb pointedly denies that the “signature” of H.P. Blavatsky was ever forged); (c) Moreover, when the whole of letter is shown to be incriminating (forged), the document besides bearing this signature not once, is very considerably shorter in length than are the non-incriminating (genuine) letters; and (d) when the wise found to be very considerably shorter in length than the non-incriminating sentences (genuine) throughout the “correspondence”! (e) Not only are the incriminating (forged) parts thus differentiated from the non-incriminating (genuine) documents and passages by location and length as well as signature in pertinent instances, but also, as study shows, by the paper and writing material used (“scrap of paper” and “blue pencil”) in most instances.

Thus, through one cannot show what difference there may have been between the handwriting of non-incriminating (genuine) letters and passages and the handwriting of incriminating (forged) letters and passages, there are other equally decisive differences which the critics of Madame Blavatsky (and her defenders as well) have ignored. This, quite apart from the question of circumstantial evidence one may adduce from the subject matter of the letters, another problem which readily resolved itself in HPB’s favor and one which Hodgson and his posterity have left almost totally unexplored. In other words, Hodgson’s charge that Mme

Blavatsky rejected as forgeries certain letters and parts of letters only because they were incriminating, and that these rejected sections were not otherwise unusual, is shown to be a false charge, for the incriminating sections (from letter to sentence) are also distinguished by those unique signs and features not at all derived from subject-matter, but which nevertheless stamp them as different, out-of-place, ergo---forgeries!

My Two-Year “Retirement” Plan

Despite progress in this and other directions, I realized in 1951 that my employment for 8 hours of daily manual labor (which included tossing 400lb. Barrels of oil about on a concrete floor the year round in an unheated, uncooled tin building where the temperature sometimes hit 110° in the summer) was not compatible with much real progress on my Defence work, that I could do little writing at the end of the day to put these notes and discoveries into paragraphs. My job---which was primarily the operation of semi-automatic machinery for the manufacture of mayonnaise---permitted lots of free thought but interfered with writing. So, that year, after going to Los Angeles for a series of aptitude and intelligence tests (which, according to the counselor, showed that, with an IQ of 138, I was “certainly on the wrong job” and “ought very definitely to resume schooling and go to college, being innately qualified for the highest kind of academic training---especially in the graphic arts or literature”), I was registered for some months with a local employment agency, and then for a short time with another, hoping to land some part-time work that would permit both my writing and a continuing income. But nothing at all came of this because such work was hard enough to find, especially for me as my only work experience to date has been this mayonnaise-mixing job (at the only such plant in central California) and, before that, lawn-mowing (at which I suffered a heat-stroke before quitting in 1943, the year prior to taking this one and only job).

With this effort thwarted, I returned to the old routine, but in 1953 decided that it would be necessary to quit my job, despite the fact that this meant the loss of \$3200 in annual wages and to cut myself loose from every anchor of financial security in as much as the job could never be regained and I had no training or qualification for anything else. The only solution would be to divide my projected efforts between writing my Defence book and preparing myself vocationally for resumption of gainful employment afterwards. So that year plans were laid to set aside funds thought to be sufficient to tide me over a period of two years without employment, the expectation being that by dividing my time between writing and correspondence course in commercial art, the book would be finished and I would be qualified for a job at the period's end. With hindsight it is easy to see errors that otherwise escape one. Thus, in January 1955 I relinquished my job (after 10 years and 8 months at it), and went into "retirement" to work on my Defence book and my art study, with \$1,000 saved up. It is now perfectly plain to see that the time and money required for such intention were both underestimated at the start, and spent unwisely afterwards.

New Discoveries in the HPB-vs-Coues Case

Following this, progress in another direction on the HPB case was made, when enquiry turned up transcripts of the Coues-Blavatsky court proceedings. These show, among other things, that (a) the published charge by Coues that HPB was the mother of a child by Prince Wittgenstein originated from no less a source than a letter from DD Home to William E Coleman; (b) Mme Blavatsky's attorney informed the court that he was prepared to put into evidence the certified statements from "medical experts" showing that Mme Blavatsky had never borne a child. These newly discovered points are of special importance as showing that (i) HPB's enemies were merely engaged here in throwing out wild calumnies against her, for a while

Bechofer-Roberts says the Baroness Meyendorff believed that Mme Blavatsky had a child by Baron Meyendorff, DD Home (who, Roberts reports, was “a good friend” of the spiritualistic Baron) swore that the Prince and not the Baron was the father. Thus HPB’s critics can no longer enjoy the pleasure of simply choosing between their witness, the Baroness, and the accused, Mme Blavatsky; it is now incumbent upon them to say which of their witnesses was lying. And that, contrary to the insinuations of Bechofer-Roberts and Mrs. Williams, the Oppenheimer certificate could not have been a forgery when the threat of its exposure to scrutiny in open court persuaded the opposing lawyers to abandon any effort to justify Home’s charge! Moreover, it shows that besides the verdict of Oppenheimer, HPB was prepared to cite other authoritative opinion on the question.

The Impressive Discovery of Joint HPB-Hodgson Annotations

Undoubtedly the most significant accomplishment by way of obtaining new material for analysis since 1947 was (made possible by my membership in the SPR and by my purchase of that society’s Journal and Proceedings, the cost of all being about \$300) my discovery in the Catalog of the SPR Library (open to members only) that certain unpublished annotations written jointly by Richard Hodgson and H.P. Blavatsky are in the former’s copy of the Coulomb pamphlet still on file after this prolonged lapse of time. A copy of these notes reached me in October 1955 (although I am hopeful that a photographic copy may be obtained later to forestall any chicanery by some SPR member who might be tempted to destroy the evidence when their true significance is learned there). I add this parenthetical statement because, in my opinion, these annotations, carefully and ignorantly preserved in the bosom of the SPR for 74 years, are a real danger to the enemies of HPB and are sheer dynamite!

New Light On the Role of Richard Hodgson

These newly acquired writings convey an entirely different picture of Dr. Hodgson's conduct of his investigation and reporting of the Blavatsky case. Above all else, they are valuable as shedding new and withering light on the question of his honesty. They reveal that it is no longer possible to pass over his misrepresentations and omissions as "honest errors", for they expose this SPR agent as a dishonest man, an adept of deception and documentary trickery, who put the desire for HPB's condemnation above every consideration for truth! For one thing, these notes prove that, contrary to his public stance of self-assured certainty that the Coulombs were reliable in their accusations, Hodgson privately held a number of serious doubts about crucial points of the Coulomb story, doubts or questions which were expressed in his notes as queries of special importance to be later put to the Coulombs, but neither the answers nor these questions appeared later in his Report, while the points of the Coulomb account to be questioned were quietly omitted!

These annotations, correlated with the SPR Reports, demonstrates more than one example of patent dishonesty on Hodgson's part. What Mme Blavatsky's defenders (including the present writer) had, through an inordinate sense of fairplay, previously mistaken as ought but inadvertent error or lapse of memory by Hodgson are now by his own private notes proved to be nothing less than sly trickeries.

Thus, for example, he was informed by HPB in one of her notes that Mme Coulomb was lying in her pamphlet about the receipt of a telegram, and that the telegraph office records would disprove her lie. Yet despite this challenge, and despite the additional fact that FWH Myers himself ascertained that Mme Coulomb was lying about this and had brought the facts to Hodgson's attention, Hodgson in his report not only omitted the fact this important Coulomb "explanation" had proven to be a lie as Mme Blavatsky had insisted it was, but while treating the

incident at issue he also suppressed the fact that Mme Coulomb had offered any explanation at all, instead concocting one of his own directly conflicting with hers but one complying with the particular circumstances---all the while, of course, pretending that he had been unable to find Emma Coulomb anything but an altogether reliable witness!!

If there were no other like example of conduct to be found, this alone would forever damn “history’s greatest psychical researcher” in the eyes of every informed, intelligent, honest person.

(Other examples of the implication of these annotations can be found in the accompanying study, Summary of Some Original Findings For H.P.B.).

The discovery of these notes and appreciation of their implications worked a profound and radical effect upon my total evaluation of the Blavatsky “exposure” by Dr Hodgson. Until these facts arrived, I, like all other before me, had been proceeding on the supposition that, while a fool, Hodgson was nevertheless honest, although, from the extent of his “foolishness” as a contrasted with his apparent ingenuity and his reputation for intelligence, I had always found it difficult to swallow. But these revelations put an end to that position, which I saw was no longer tenable; no longer could one look on Hodgson as a dupe of Mme Coulomb, for the facts now in place showed her to be simply his tool at the last, the handy helper of a master charlatan who worked the SPR leaders and his fellow Committeeman as puppets led by adroit trickeries and clever subterfuge. Adopting this fresh approach, a complete review was made of the initial moves and attitudes and declarations of these leaders. What were formally paradoxes and difficulties were now found to fit easily into the new and different pattern.

For the public or parapsychologists at large, indeed for any fair-minded person, it would be preposterous to even suggest that the 7 eminent members of the SPR investigation Committee

were, as has been alleged by Vania and others, from the start engaged in a deliberate conspiracy to discredit HPB and to hoodwink the public. I decline to propose such a monstrous charge. It cannot be disputed that this Committee, besides being the first in that society's history to "expose" anyone (an "exposure" that still remains the only case of official SPR "exposure"!), was also the most illustrious circle of experts, authorities, and patriarchs (by modern reckoning) ever to convene for investigation in the activity of the SPR. It included the President, two future Presidents, the one future Honorary President (Mrs. Sidgwick, the 7th member and only female, who survived for the SPR's Golden Jubilee), the Secretary, future Secretaries, including the chief Founders and leading figures of the society, among them its most notable philosopher (Myers), its most notable skeptic (Podmore), its most famous investigator (Hodgson), and its guiding spirit (Professor Sidgwick). But it is not necessary to imagine their investigating as a conspiracy. They were simply outsmarted by Richard Hodgson. Nor is it necessary to confine oneself between the choice idea that he was a blunderer or that Mme Blavatsky was an imposter. A third choice now forces itself upon us: the trickster, the imposter, "one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting", was Hodgson himself, and this eminent Committee, by their very willingness and unbounded faith in him, were the first victims of his chicaneries.

How Many Times Did Richard Hodgson Fool the SPR?

One day in October 1955, while musing over the question of how far he fooled his peers in the SPR, certain questions about Hodgson came to my mind: Was the Blavatsky case the only one in which he hoodwinked the SPR with false exposure? Was it his first? Was it his last? Just how far did Hodgson go into charlatanry? Why should it be assumed that this student of Sidgwick and Myers at Cambridge, who ingratiated himself into the confidence of the "limited circle" of the SPR leaders, was not simply a trickster from the first, a clever conjuror with words,

a shyster lawyer, driven by ambition to make himself both famous and their master---a psychopathic case from Australia for whom the mysteries of spiritualism and occultism held a secret kind of strange fascination. In so far as I had studied his other “exposures” (of the mediums Henry Slade, whose supernormal powers had been endorsed by HPB and Col. Olcott when they sent him to Russia; and William Eglinton, England’s greatest “physical medium” of the era, whose phenomenal abilities had been acknowledged by the Mahatmas; and Eusapia Palladino, the greatest medium ever to submit to laboratory controls, whose phenomena were endorsed by scores of Continental scientists who investigated her; and Mrs. Thompson of England whose clairvoyant faculty was believed in by all of the SPR leaders, even Podmore, most skeptical of them all, after her “exposure” by Hodgson; et al), I had already taken his “explanations” and charges in each instance to be farcial and on par with his conduct of the Blavatsky “exposure”. Aside from this long record of “exposing” people, Hodgson’s solitary “achievement”---and one reckoned now by all authority to be the “greatest in the annals of the SPR”---, his one piece of work taken to be a positive accomplishment had been his leading role in the conduct of the seances of Mrs. Lenore Piper of Boston. Aside from this one exception, therefore, it could be shown that his “exposure” of HPB was no singular incongruous blunder, but simply one of a series of brilliantly successful hoaxes similarly engineered for the SPR’s benefit by the same gentleman. No longer was it to be supposed that Mme Blavatsky was the unlucky victim of a mistake by an otherwise great and wise detective working for (as TIME’s Editor lately put it) “the learned and incorruptible SPR.” Her case was not simply a strange and solitary blot on the otherwise spotless record of a society led by astute experts and reliable sleuths. Instead she was seen to be merely one---howbeit the first, the chief, and the most ill-treated one---among many victims who suffered outrageous injustice at the hands of a

psychopathic deceiver who was callously sacrificing his victims in order to make a name for himself in that circle of self-electing “authorities” who were at best simply dabbling detectives misled by his cunning and beguiled by their own unrestrained prejudices.

The “Greatest Case” For Richard Hodgson,

Spiritualism, and the SPR, Exploded

If Hodgson tricked in all his negative cases, I asked myself why should anyone trust that he did otherwise in the one “positive” investigation, the case of Mrs. Piper? And so, about a month after receiving and digesting the Blavatsky-Hodgson annotations, I began to re-examine the SPR’s published records of this singular case that had been for 16 years under Richard Hodgson’s direct and immediate supervision, and which has left behind it the most “convincing” and “watertight” evidence in the history of spiritualism. The performances of Mrs. Piper and her “spirits” converted, or helped to convert to belief in telepathic communication between the living or dead, such famous personages as William James, FWH Myers, Walter Leaf, Andrew Lang, James Hyslop (founder of the American SPR), Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, Frank Podmore, Walter Franklin Prince, and Richard Hodgson himself. In the 70 years since this record begin no one (until now) has been able to explain the best of her strange phenomena in normal terms. Frank Podmore, the only “psychical researcher of standing” who ventured to try that at any stage, found his arguments torn to pieces by Hyslop’s rebuttal (a reply which, of itself would be the most convincing of all defences of “spirit communication”). Podmore, in words of Hyslop, showed “nothing scientific about anything he did”---and Podmore never replied. At no time has anyone even attempted to explain how all Piper’s “spirit readings” cited as evidence could possibly have been fraudulent. Dr. Hodgson reported he had her put under observation by

detectives, her mail was opened, but she passed all tests, and became the first medium to be pensioned off by the SPR!

Armed with a profound distrust for Hodgson himself, I fell upon the records of the case (several volumes of the SPR Proceedings, etc.) and began to dissect them piece by piece with the scalpel of skepticism. Before Dec. 1955, I had read all there was in them, and I had reached three conclusions: (1) By assuming that Hodgson and one other person, together with the “spirits” of Mrs. Piper (whether “lying spirits” of extraneous origin or “secondary personalities”), were in conspiracy to deceive, it was possible to explain in terms of physical fraud and mental trickery all of the marvelous incidents of the Piper case; and this particular case flourished because it was in effectual control of Hodgson who, beginning with his suppressions and distortions of testimony in the Blavatsky case years before, had perfected his skill in manipulating witnesses and evidence to suit his own designs. (2) That there was positive as well as negative evidence to support the conspiracy theory, that all of the secret principals could be thus identified, that no precaution had been taken to effectively preclude fraud by Hodgson himself so that his own activities went untrammelled in a monumental display of faith and credulity by the SPR leaders; that all three conspirators as evidenced by the record, were mentally-unsound persons, Hodgson having become himself a “medium” for “divine intellegences” and having set aside in his apartment a “shrine” or room which he permitted no one else to enter, placing a “special” chair there for the “sacred” use of his deceased childhood sweetheart (!)---secrets well kept from the public (and most characteristically) until his sudden demise from heart failure (when many of his papers were found in cipher and burnt on order of the SPR!).

It is my theory that, having first established “spiritual contact” with his “sweetheart through Mrs. Piper, and that at a time when he did not know that she was receiving much of her

information surreptitiously by normal means and thereby deceiving sitters such as James, Hodgson was already “hooked”, he was subservient to the “spirits” as their own “medium” also, their abject slave since they were in his own head for the most part as well as “they” appeared to be in Piper’s---and he did not dare to expose Piper lest they depart in retaliation. He was thus blackmailed by the “spirits” who threatened to sever his idyllic “communication” with his “spiritual sweetheart” (whom he never deserted for marriage). And just as he had been ready and willing in 1885 to serve an inner compulsion by trickery and deceit in the case of Mme Blavatsky, so now he was even more prepared to resort to every imaginable chicanery to serve a like compulsion and “help the spirits” whose “divinity” and “reality” he could not, for psychopathic reasons, deny.

My hypothesis (wheels within wheels) covers all available printed records on this case, coincides with all published facts, leaves no stone unturned, and is supported at every crucial juncture by otherwise peculiar circumstances. Yet this does not mean that for a certainty, the Piper case was hatched in conspiracy and driven on psychopathic fraud. What it does mean, however, is that (a) there is more reason for thinking so than for thinking otherwise, and any alternative conclusion must in the last analysis rest squarely on the question of Richard Hodgson’s honesty, the most fragile of all foundations! (b) The brand of faker is transferred from the back of HPB to that of Hodgson (“whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”). (c) The SPR’s “finest achievement” is now open for mockery by scoffers and skeptics, where before it was not, where before it seemed impregnable---and as a direct result of their attack upon the Theosophical Society and HPB. (d) The whole problem of the reliability of investigators and of investigations into spiritualism’s “mental phenomena” and even ESP hereby takes a drastic new turn, a bad setback for the “spirit hypothesis”---nor should we weep, for in her words, HPB

hoped to see a “death-blow” given to Spiritualism---and for the trend by self-appointed investigators to abrogate to themselves titles of expertship and authority over the occult (see Rhine’s new Association of Professional Parapsychologists---!); for this demonstrates better than anything that those who accept ESP and denounce para-physical phenomena are intrinsically wrong in their approach, for while fraud in the latter instances can only be worked in the laboratory at time of the investigation, mental fraud can only be precluded by a 24-hour surveillance of the medium and her associates or by other controls ignored by the SPR in the Piper case. (e)The would be defenders of Hodgson and the SPR have a job cut out for them indeed, but even if they could prove him innocent of these theoretical charges, certain tremendous implications would still remain: first, that it would still be that only as a result of this Theosophical counter-attack that the awful lacunae in the Piper case were revealed and repaired (if such a thing is yet possible from unpublished records); and second, that the most voluminous and detailed, the “best” reports published by the leading authorities in Psychological Research over a period of many years, have at last proved amazingly vulnerable to criticism and are as of now, in themselves, absolutely worthless as proof or good evidence that Mrs. Piper ever produced a single psychic phenomenon in all her career; hence, third, not only are the methods of investigation and reporting by the SPR, its greatest investigators, reporters, and philosophers hereby discredited as unreliable, but they are discredited by a defender of Madame Blavatsky, who maintains that if such notable experts of long experience could not prove their case and build an invulnerable defence than that was their purpose during the 20 years or so when Mrs. Piper was occupying the stage, why should one decry the failure of Theosophists to “prove” HP Blavatsky’s phenomena in 1885?

Finally, (3) I arrived at the conclusion that, in light of all these considerations, and the intimate relation of the case with that of Madame Blavatsky, I would write a study and exposure of the Piper case, supplemented by analyses of Hodgson's role in other investigations of his career, under the title, Richard Hodgson and the Societies for Psychical Research.

Having reached this decision, I was faced with another of immediate concern: how to get both this book and my Blavatsky Defence book written. I saw that two courses were open to me: First, I could drop my part-time commercial art study and devote all my effort to the latter work. But having paid \$10 per week towards my room and board in addition to every other expense, my "retirement fund" was already more than half depleted, so that I foresaw that what money was left was no more than enough to carry me for another 12 months. Equally evident, however, was the fact that even if given full attention for 12 months I could not possibly get the Blavatsky book done, for there were materials yet to be secured (and some absolutely necessary data yet to be translated, as the Solovyoff-Jelihovsky controversy in Russian). Moreover, even if I could write this book on the funds at hand, I told myself, what would I do after its completion when I found myself at last financially stranded, since publication of the Blavatsky Defence would not return a penny. I would then be left with nothing at all to pay my way while writing the Piper book, and having sacrificed my commercial art training in the meantime, I would be unprepared for a job. The Second possibility was that upon which I settled. As an expose of sensational import, the Piper book would certainly sell, and thus if it were done first, I could plan to use the proceeds afterwards to meet expenses during the time I wrote my Blavatsky-Defence and, still later, to pay for re-enrollment in the correspondence art school, my paid term of tuition (correction of assignments) expiring in 1956 unless renewed.

With this in mind, I quit my art study (which I now see, was a very bad decision) and began working on a rough draft of the Piper book. I soon discovered that there were a number of books to be obtained (see Wantlist) as well as an effort to be made in tracing down some old family records the better to tighten the noose around Hodgson's neck. In addition, I wanted some help in typing. Ass of this was to cost money, and I didn't have a dime to spare for it. Assuming that the import of my findings were so important to Parapsychology by defining its past errors and helping to disclose those kinds of control best suited to preclude theoretical fraud on the part of the investigator as well as the medium investigated, a point coming ever more forward, impressed by the magnitude and significance of my study of the Piper case and Hodgson's career, I developed the naive idea that at this juncture I might persuade someone of authority in Parapsychology to finance this research with two or three hundred dollars, or to aid me in securing a publisher's advance of like amount (there being thousands of follars granted annually, by the Parapsychology Foundation and others, for independent research in this field). So I first approached Dr. J.B. Rhine with the idea, relating my findings more or less in detail (having had some extended correspondence with him on a local case which he asked me to investigate---he having also previously stopped off on one of his cross-country flights to contact me here). I asked that if he did not feel free to pledge strict secrecy as to the contents of the study I enclosed with my letter, that he please return the material unread. He returned it immediately saying that the pressure of work forbade his reading it (although I might say that it is my belief that the material was read by someone---the enclosed clip having been removed and replaced, and inside pages soiled and well-thumbed as was not the condition when I mailed them). It was my impression that Dr. Rhine did not want to find himself as a sponsor of any such controversy that

he might not resolve in his own laboratory at Duke, especially a controversy that would bring down on his head imprecations from SPR Headquarters.

The Work of Dr. George Price: His Offer of Assistance Rejected

Even before this material reached Durham, I received the distinct premonition that my plea would be rejected and so, before hearing from Rhine, set to work writing a second summary of much the same character addressed to Dr. George Price of the University of Minnesota. Not for years had I gotten such a kick and a laugh as I had then recently, upon reading in the local newspaper the report (broadcast worldwide by the news services) of Dr. Price's vigorous attack upon the experts and "authorities" in Parapsychology, his thesis being that when the results of their investigations were positive, it was only because of errant methodology or else fraud on part of the party investigated or on part of the investigator himself! Price's forthright contention that these Parapsychologists have no right to hold themselves above the suspicion of fraud while seeking to preclude the possibility of fraud by their mediums of psychics or witnesses, brought screams of distress from Durham and, especially, from London, where the darling of the SPR, Dr. S.G. Soal who had formerly castigated even his fellow experts (and accused one of peeping through the keyhole to cheat!) but who was now the special butt of Price's criticisms, raised his voice with others, protesting the idea that investigators should be put on the same level as the investigated.

But it was the apparent chicanery of the investigator, the expert, the authority, in short, Hodgson himself, that I had found at the basis of the Blavatsky condemnation and the Piper canonization. So when Dr. Price received my letter he replied with enthusiasm, saying that it was precisely what he was looking for, an example to back up his thesis, a strong case of fraud against some famous expert in Psychological Research.

Now I by no means agreed with Price's fundamental position, viz., that there are no genuine psychic phenomena (he rejected all of them as fraudulent a priori, through concentrating his attack on the card-calling ESP experiments innate love for any kind of story in the negative side, and showed an idiotic faith in the "exposures" of Harry Houdini, whose literary farces are more entertaining than were his stage acts. (Price claims to have begun as a believer and to have graduated to the Houdini school. I myself at the age of 14, began where Price is now in his approach---addressed my high school class on the marvels of Houdini's "exploding psychic phenomena"; but that was before my discovery of Isis Unveiled the following year!) Incidentally, it was gratifying and in another way amusing, to see Dr. Prince quoting Houdini quoting Madame Blavatsky as an authority in one footnote to his paper in what Rhine described as "America's leading scientific journal" (Science, August 26, 1955)!

While recognizing Price as someone approaching the subject from an obstinately negative angle, there was much to be credited even in his harshest criticisms; and, foremostly, I saw the possibility of trading Mme Blavatsky's "exposure" for that of Richard Hodgson. My proposal to him was that by indicting Hodgson as a fraud and thorough-going cheat, it would be necessary to accept Madame Blavatsky and certain mediums as his victims, as ill-treated persons, but in exchange for this concession, skeptics could be grateful for the destruction of spiritualism's strongest evidence, the Piper case. (At the same time I was aware that, however negative, the attitude of many skeptics of the prestidigitator school does not display that particular animus against para-physical phenomena exhibited by quasi-skeptics who admit only ESP).

On the strength of what I revealed to him of my findings on the Piper case, Dr. Price was led to make an offer of substantial assistance on concrete terms, adding the idea that I might be

assured a paid trip to England to examine those original records remaining in the SPR archives. But all of this was on the conditions that, first, I abandon my plans for a thorough, detailed complete study of the cases re-examined, and instead condense my ideas into a book of two or three hundred pages written for popular consumption and a ready market; second, that I do this, and have the book ready for the press, at the end of one year.

Of course I rejected this proposition out of hand. If I do any work at all in criticism, it will not be in a condensed or skeleton form aimed at popular sale and prepared for an ephemeral audience, but it will be designed to cover the material in so thorough a fashion that any attempt at rebuttal will be itself an equally forbidding task. I myself have no regard whatever for “popular” versions decorated with shallow statements and superficial treatment which forces the reader of discrimination to dig all his conclusions from original sources traced by tip. I want it said, when I get through with the SPR-Hodgson case, that the doctor not only peeled off the skin in the dissection but chopped up the meat and ground away the bones until nothing was left!

My “UFO” Book---An Attempt to Solve the Financial Problem

At this juncture I found myself stranded. I calculated that my combined Blavatsky-Hodgson-Piper books would demand 2 or 3 years of time, but I had no money to take care of such a period and no prospect of money. Moreover, to undertake either book forthwith would put an extra strain on my pocket for there was much expense to be involved in tracing records, copying, buying books, etc. Thinking it over, I saw the best course was to try by the least expensive means to raise the most possible money in the shortest length of time. For some years I had been interested in “flying saucers”, having formulated an original theory to explain them in terms of natural terrestrial phenomena of an obscure and rare kind but akin to a type of known to science, recognized by many scientists, but the nature of which had been debated for

centuries. Although no book along this line had been written, books on the UFO's were selling well, with a new title almost every month, and this interest was heightened by recent issuance of the US Air Force "Project Bluebook Report". Thus it occurred to me that with minimum expenditure for research, and not having to meet in such a work so demanding a standard of technical detail as I set for myself in psychical research, this newly contemplated book could be written within 6 months and the return from sale would then pay for resumption of my Blavatsky Defence, Piper exposé, and correspondence instruction in commercial art.

At the same time I saw more than mere monetary profit in this work, for the thesis adopted was that because of the as-yet undiscovered potential of cosmic radiation in space, the travel of living organisms between planets would prove to be impossible (one reason for opposing any idea that "flying saucers" were "space-ships"), and once this goal of science was seen to be a chimera and the space-frontier proved a dead-end, humanity's attention would be returned to earth, to its great unsolved mysteries, and to man himself, the "last frontier", and the mysteries of man, ESP, etc.

So in December 1955 I made a hurried trip to the Los Angeles office of the USAF and after failing to get permission from the Pentagon (!) for microfilming, in two days copied their Bluebook Report in longhand, its statistical data to be explained in terms of my theory. At the same time copies were made of old UFO news reports in microfilm files at the Los Angeles Library. Between the costs of this venture and the purchase of all worthwhile books on the subject, I spent \$125 of my few remaining savings. But I had thus practically all the source-material I required, and I deemed it worthwhile in its promise.

I Adopt the Case of Borley Rectory as a Better Solution to My Money Problems

And then in March 1953 there was published under the “auspices” of the SPR the most sensational “exposé” in *Psychical Research* during this century, a real landmark in the business, by which for the first time this society (through 3 of its chief investigators and under approval of the President and Council) launched a direct attack on the honesty and competency of not a medium or of a psychic but of a reputable “psychical researcher of standing”, the late Harry Price, the most famous English parapsychologists and most energetic psychical researcher of the past 50 years. Harry Price, a wealthy man, by his independence of thought and activity, by his audacity in linking the word psychical research with para-physical phenomena, by his competition and favorable publicity which put the SPR in the shade. This SPR report came as The Haunting of Borley Rectory, an attempt to discredit the claim of “haunting” made for the Rectory at Borley, England, “England’s Most Haunted House”, which, after being ignored by the SPR, received “immense publicity” for many years as the result of the investigations by Price and others. Although the “haunting” had been brought to the attention of the SPR leaders by the owners, the Society officials, ever reluctant to endanger their “scientific reputation” by any public show of serious interest in “haunted” houses, disdained the case until after Price’s death, when their “exposure” was set on foot to discredit both the haunting and Price, who, in their report, is set forth as a faker and the guiding spirit behind the “haunting” represented as a great hoax. Needless to say this latest “exposure” follows the ground rules set down by Podmore and Hodgson in the 1880’s and is itself a crude farce from beginning to end.

Taking time out from my UFO book to write a 2 or 3 page review of the SPR book for some magazine section, I soon found myself utterly engrossed in the details of the case. I soon found these completely refuted the monstrous accusations against Harry Price, that the “exposé” abounded with miss-statements, misquotations, and errors of all kinds. That the authors had

founded their charges against Price on nothing more than their own stupidity and blunders. I saw that one could completely explode the methods and reputation of the SPR leaders merely by exposing this one book which demonstrates those methods to be as atrocious as they were 70 years and more ago!

At this point the thought came to me that, while there would be others equally prepared to write a book on “flying saucers”, it was doubtful if anyone else was so well qualified by a long study of SPR methods to demolish this report on Borley Rectory. Moreover, the case at hand was that of the most publicized “haunting” of the century, of immense interest to occult-reading public there, and a book in reply would find as ready a reception and promise as much in proceeds as any UFO book, at the same time supplementing my two early projected works as also discrediting the society that had condemned HPB.

So, dropping the “flying saucers” book, I went about writing a reply to The Haunting of Borley Rectory. I realized that this course set back my hope of soon resolving my monetary difficulties, that it required further expenditure for research; but I was convinced the relevancy of the subject to my Blavatsky Defence and Piper theory was worth the extra effort. At the same time, I hoped to marshal support for such a reply by contacting Harry Price’s living friends, and by securing a publisher’s advance on the book. But after a couple of month’s effort in this direction, during which I approached everyone I could think of, everyone who had shown disapproval in their public reaction to this SPR “exposé”, including the Creative Age Press (headed by Mrs. Eileen Garrett, who had been “discovered” by Harry Price, and who had published a savage review of the SPR book in her magazine, Tomorrow), I ran into a stone wall all round. Thus I was unable to borrow from any of these parties one of Price’s original books on the case, so that I found it necessary to get it on loan from the California State Library and copy

the contents of several hundred pages by typewriter for source-material and later consultation. None of the professed admirers of Harry Price's work would so much as loan me a book, give me an address, write for me a preface, or pass on a recommendation for a publisher's advance, although all were voluble in their appreciation of any sample writings I sent them. Thus, Dr. Hereward Carrington, dean of American parapsychologists, after characterizing one of my sample chapters written for my Borley Rectory book as "something for which Psychological Research has waited for 40 years---most remarkable and painstaking!" refused to write me a preface for fear of "losing what little receptivity I still managed to find in the S.P.R." Dr. Nador Fodor, author of The Encyclopedia of Psychic Science, who in print had rushed to Price's defence first, described my study of the case as one which "ought to be published by all means", but begged off doing anything in my favor since, as he expressed it, he did not want to get "involved" in "Parapsychology's controversies" lest his professional work in psycho-analysis suffer.

At last, however, I was able to contact Harry Price's literary heir in England who for ten years had been trying to get into print a completion of Price's last unfinished work on Borley Rectory. It was proposed by him and agreed that together with this material to which he was adding replies by still-living witnesses, I should include my analyses of the SPR report on the case. It was further agreed that before the sales proceeds were divided he was first to meet certain "expenses" incurred during this ten years in preparing his half of the book (our contributions to be separate but under one cover). I continued all the time writing, tediously typing about one double-spaced page copied from final draft every half-hour. After 8 months I had the mass. two-thirds complete, about 100,000 words in polished form, when I decided to write my co-author asking just how much he expected to have secured before equal division of the

receipts. As my own finances had by this time vanished altogether, I was anxious to learn what I might expect from this venture and so arrange with my family to borrow enough to meet expenses in the meanwhile, on strength of this promise. After a delay in months and following a second enquiry, I received word that the prospective co-author's literary agent had advised him that, in his opinion, the addition of my analysis would not increase the book's sales enough to offset the extra increase in printing costs, that therefore our agreement to "pool" efforts was not feasible. So, this meant the loss of months of work, all of the sacrificed effort and cost for research put in the earlier abandoned UFO book; for we both had already agreed that the market would not sustain more than one such reply to the SPR's Borley Rectory report, and my erstwhile co-author informed me that his half was already in publisher's hands (although his book has not been published nor has he been heard of since, 3 years or so later).

During my earlier search for help in securing source-material on the Borley Rectory case, I had corresponded with the editor of LIGHT, official organ of the erstwhile London Spiritualist Alliance, but he had answered that he could get no help for me there because "our present position of co-operation with the S.P.R. is a delicate one"; yet he had suggested that I write a condensed study of the matter for his periodical. Planning to do a book on the subject, I had not taken up this offer; but after the book was abandoned, I wrote to the new Editor, but he wasn't at all interested now.

Although it seemed that all of this was lost, on reconsideration I now arrived at the conclusion that the Borley Rectory material, together with analyses of related and similar examples of SPR methodology could be incorporated under a single title, The Fraud Problem in Parapsychology: a dissection of the methods of the "Podmore school" and its technique of "exposing" in Psychical Research. This clearly would form the missing part of a trilogy:

- I. The Fraud Problem in Parapsychology (in which the methods of the society which “exposed” HPB are discredited.)
- II. Richard Hodgson and the Societies for Psychical Research (in which the methods of the investigator who “exposed” HPB are discredited---and a parallel drawn between the careers and “achievements” of Hodgson and Soal).
- III. The Case For Madame Blavatsky (in which the actual “exposure” of Madame Blavatsky is discredited).

Unlike the effort expended on the UFO book---which was not resumed as neither finances nor public demand, since diminished, seemed to permit it---, what had been written on Borley Rectory would still contribute directly to HPB’s Defence by serving to destroy the reputations of those who today prevent the withdrawal of the “Hodgson Report”, and so also to destroy the prestige of the society responsible for that report.

Despite the dismal dead-end into which these projects ended, the costly experience taught me two things: first, that it was foolish to expand any more effort on speculative ventures in hopes of making money to renew my Blavatsky Defence work and art study later; second, that all of the leaders in modern parapsychology---at least since the death of Harry Price---are obsessed with fear and trembling at the mention of the August SPR, the shadow of which falls as a pall over the path of progress, as a damper on the fires of independent thought which threaten to burn away the gross of entrenched bureaucracy and stupidity that is today the heritage of organized psychical research.

A Final Exposure of SPR “Standards”---the Soal Experiments

In January, 1957, the same month that I learned there was no prospect in making a penny on my Borley Rectory book (and in which I concluded that I might have to pay for its revised

publication, *The Fraud Problem in Parapsychology*), I chanced to pick up a copy of Soal and Bateman's *Modern Experiments in Telepathy* in the city library one day. I had of course for years heard a great deal about Dr. Soal's experiments in telepathy and "precognition", especially with his brilliant subject Shackleton; and I was aware of the general understanding (especially among English parapsychologists) that his investigations of ESP had been conducted under the most stringently controlled conditions on record, but yet had produced extra-chance results against astronomical odds. Basil Shackleton, the chief "psychic subject", had been paid handsomely by the SPR for his achievements, had been elected to Honorary Member of the SPR, and elevated to the same sacrosanct position as the late Mrs. Piper. I also knew that Dr. George Price, in his attack on parapsychology and sacrosanctity of its "authorities" (by his article in Science), had chosen Dr. Soal and his Shackleton experiments as an illustration of how "positive" results, however seemingly protected by "iron clad" control conditions, could always be discounted if one set down the investigator as chief fraud-maker. But in order to do this with Soal's experiments, it had been pointed out by Rhine and Soal in rebuttal that Dr. Price's negative theory would implicate as many as 7 or 8 persons of reputation and academic standing who took part in the proceedings, and that without them as additional cheats his fraud theory could not cover all the evidence. But that was precisely where my ideas broke with Price, it was where he laid himself open to ridicule.

So, knowing all this, it was simple with a sense of curiosity that I began to read the Soal-Bateman report (an account of the experiments in ESP with Mrs. Stewart, who produced more spectacular feats than Shackleton on occasion, together with a résumé of Soal's earlier experiences). But before the first day of reading was over, I knew that I had discerned some astonishing facts and had formulated an amazing theory about Soal's work. For more than 15

years the world's leading Psychological Researchers, all of the brains of the SPR, Dr. Rhine and his "experts" at the Duke Parapsychology Laboratory, together with all the criticism engendered by the attacks and fierce animosity of skeptics within science and without, had not been able to break down the positive results of Soal's experiments, nor to show how his results with Shackleton and Stewart could have been obtained normally without a prolonged conspiracy between persons of academic esteem and public reputation. No one had been able to devise a simple theory of fraud sufficient to cover all the facts but which involved only Soal and his "psychics". Yet I saw that evening that it was possible to do exactly that!

Not only was it possible to devise such a theory, but it was possible to suggest means by which all of Soal's positive results could have been engineered fraudulently with only the help of his two subjects---or at most with the additional assistance of only his wife and "an old friend" whom he himself introduced into the proceedings and who was otherwise unknown to psychical researchers---, a system of fraud with little or no danger of discovery and one without the necessity of leaving tracks behind. Practically the "perfect crime" in parapsychology.

The important implications of this discovery may be seen from the unique regard with which Dr. Soal is universally held by parapsychologists. As a reward for these outstanding experiments he had been awarded his doctorate by the University of London, the first time a doctorate had been granted for research in Psychological Research; and on the strength of his achievements, he had been elected President of the SPR. He himself has boasted, "the Shackleton experiments after nearly a decade of discussion stand where they were when the report was published in December 1973..." (My Thirty Years of Psychological Research); and W.H. Salter, in his official publication, The S.P.R., An Outline of Its History, declared (pp. 51, 52): "The experiments were notable for the thorough measures adopted to make them as watertight as

possible, and for the very striking positive results... The report of these experiments was immediately recognized as contribution of the highest importance to the study of supernormal cognition.” Dr. Rhine, world’s leading authority on ESP, has written in glowing terms, “Soal’s work was a milestone in ESP research. Entirely apart from the intrinsic value of his work, which is high, the manner in which his conclusions forced him to reverse his position on ESP has given it additional status [a farce, because Soal did not “reverse his position”, since he had published his belief in ESP twenty years earlier, and posed as a “spirit medium”!]. In the story of the ESP controversy, Soal’s work ranks with those two other noteworthy events---the verdict in the American Institute of Mathematical Statistics in 1937, and the ESP symposium before the APA in 1938” (The Reach of the Mind, pp. 167-68).

In short---what a historical catastrophe, what a debacle! If these experiments, ranked by the world’s experts and judges as the very best of their kind, jewels in the diadem of the SPR, should be discredited, and discredited by a devotee of Madame Blavatsky, by the prospective author of the Case For Madame Blavatsky. What a vindication of her charge that the leaders of the SPR were for the most part fools and asses! As with the “greatest” most “watertight” case in the annals of spiritualism (the Piper Case), so now is the “strongest” case in the records of academic parapsychology, the experiments of S.G. Soal, we find all to be a simple vulgar hoax or otherwise scientifically worthless---and both together laid at the doorstep of Mme Blavatsky’s eminent accusers, the esteemed tribunal of the SPR. Such a revelation would set what passes as “Psychical Research” back a generation and would throw over all the “experts, authorities, and leaders” and all “psychical researchers of standing” in the business-not one of whom have ever so much as criticized the marvelous claim for Piper, Shackleton, and Soal, and not one of whom has had a good word to say of Madame Blavatsky. Like that their forbears laid unjustly upon

HPB, what a pall of opprobrium these parapsychologists would find upon their own heads. In one lifetime, could anyone ask for more than that he might play a part or contribute to such a savage and triumphant retribution? It would be precisely the kind of shattering fiasco that is necessary if the entrenched reactionaries are to be expelled from the field, and an opportunity provided for a fresh approach and progress in psychical research.

My Study of the Soal Case Comes to Nothing

After satisfying myself that all of the published records of the Soal experiments contained nothing to impede my negative hypothesis, I decided to approach Dr. George Price again in the hope that he might underwrite the cost of research into certain unpublished records of the case, as well as enquiry into antecedents of Soal's theoretical confederates. An initial notice of my conclusions, without details, brought his response that it would be "a great feat if you can do it" i.e., explain Soal's positive results in ESP experimentation without involving in fraud by theory more than the investigator and his two "psychics". Some weeks later, having studied all of the available data, I sent Price a 60 page study of Soal's career and reports, whereupon he replied, saying that he hoped to get out of the Psychical Research criticism business, that it was a dead end, that his career had suffered as a result of his interest in it, that he did not at the moment have time to read all of my findings, and he advised me to do the same, adding, "Psychical research is a disappointing endeavor. You will find you are wasting your valuable talents on it, so the best thing is to get into some more rewarding enterprise, as I have done." He had resigned his work at the University, moved east, and taken up a new line of pursuit. Still, he urged me to write my study of the Soal case, not as a book but as a paper for Science, promising to recommend it to the editor; he asked me to let him know what the cost for Photostats would be of the unpublished Soal records in custody of the SPR, and sent me \$7 in credit tickets for library research. If one is

to judge by the clues (see LIFE, Nov. 18, 1957, p. 125), Dr. Price has long since left behind the question of Soal's honesty, being persuaded in his own mind that, to use his words, of the Rhine and Soal, one simply "does not believe in extrasensory perception." And he is now writing feature articles for LIFE, POPULAR SCIENCE, etc.

Had Price loaned me a couple of hundred dollars at the time, or helped to secure a publisher's advance of like sum, I would have written a joint study of the Piper and Soal cases, under the title Is It Telepathy? But when this prospect resolved itself into nothing but another speculative venture of writing at a time when I was altogether penniless to meet any of the research costs, and since an article for Science would contribute nothing towards paying for my resumption of my Blavatsky Defence, I simply put the matter on the shelf indefinitely.

My Final Plea to the Parapsychologists Rejected

About this time, requiring certain volumes of the ASPR Proceedings, for source material, I learned that almost all of these Proceedings as well as the ASPR Journal, going back to 1906 were still available mint at original prices from the Society. This was both good news and bad. For years I had advertised by mimeographed list to bookstores round the world in search of these very volumes---when I had the money to buy for them (for some reason the Society never notified its members of this stock on hand). But now that I had no money, I discovered unexpectedly that they were all available (howbeit in "extremely limited quantities", wrote the Secretary). What depressed me all the more was that I required a number of these that bore on the Piper case, that in fact I wanted to make a search of all of them for relevant material; and, although a member of the ASPR, I could only withdraw 6 volumes a year from their library, and no more than one at a time (which precluded cross-comparisons). It was through my study of the Society's Journal that I learned of Hodgson's private intention to "vindicate" HPB in 1884, and,

in an 1940 number, of the ASPR Editor's admission that "maybe, after all" some of the occult phenomena of Madame Blavatsky had been genuine---a very unique admission to come from a "psychical research of standing"!

Hoping to secure some kind of cooperation through which I might obtain these much-wanted volumes on deferred payment, or at least get permission to withdraw more than the limited number of books from the ASPR Library, I wrote the one Member of the ASPR Council whom I knew to be sympathetic to a defence of para-physical phenomena (who had written favorable reviews of the work of Harry Price, who decried certain "exposures", etc), enclosing samples of my analytical study in this field, hoping thereby to persuade him that some special consideration was deserved. But in the reply to my enquiry, all my suggestions were rejected, I was told that I would get nothing published in psychical research until I did some original experimental research of my own along laboratory lines, and that the best advice to me was to quit splitting my infinitives---although a number were split by my correspondent while passing on this sage advice.

How the SPR Stifles Truth Today

Another incident revealing a valuable insight into the kind of appreciation the independent critic in psychical research may expect today came when, in December 1954 I sent to the SPR Editor a paper titled, "A Reply to the Charges of Herr Rudolf Lambert Against Dr. Gustave Geley." Geley was, of course, the famous French Parapsychologist, author of the classic works in that field, From the Unconscious to the Conscious and Clairvoyance and Materialisation, in which the ideas of reincarnation and the astral body were more or less "authoritatively" adopted by a psychical research "of standing" for the first time. With Dr. Baron Von Schrenck-Notzing, the leading German authority, he sponsored investigation of the notable

medium, “Eva C”, whose séance phenomena during the 1910’s and 20’s gave rise to the term “ectoplasm”. In contradistinction to the English-American school under the SPR influence initiated by Sidgwick-Hodgson-and-Podmore after their “exposure” of HPB (which as Mrs. Sidgwick later confessed, had an “important effect” on the thinking of that society in respect to para-physical phenomena), Geley and his European collaborators, after many years of investigation, concluded that the physical phenomena of spiritualism originate in the psycho-physical mechanism of the medium, guided and colored in its actions and permutations by subconscious imagery and by the collective thoughts and desires of the sitters. The policy of the SPR leaders had been consistently to ascribe all such phenomena to physical fraud, and Lambert’s charges were welcomed and printed by them, for these postulated that “Eve C’s” séance phenomena were altogether fraudulent and their success was abetted by Geley himself, described as an unscientific bungler, subject to a kind of insanity. Concisely, the basis of these charges was that, of two photographs taken according to Geley in sequence within minutes during a single séance, one showed a ring on the medium’s finger and the other did not. Lambert builds on this fragile basis, the monstrous accusation that Geley “mixed the photographs” of two different séances, got confused in his data, and did not know where he was. Simple examination shows that there was no such confusion, that both pictures were taken at the same sitting, for the “missing” ring in one photograph had disappeared along with the fingers of the hand itself as was plain to see, merely because all of these details had been eliminated by inadvertent over-exposure of the flash picture in question when the medium had extended her hand too close to the camera at the moment too much flash power was ignited. The only confusion exposed was inside the head of Herr Lambert who based his whole “exposé” on his presumed ability to pronounce as an expert on photographic questions. After proceeding to his less portentous

exhibitions of stupidity, I went on, in my reply, to demonstrate by comparison of reports, that the methodology of the SPR Committee which had later investigated “Eva C.” displayed far more ludicrous mistakes and falsifications than were now charged to Dr. Geley in his earlier investigations of the subject. Far from correcting any shortcomings in Geley’s methods, the SPR had later by their conduct invented new and compounded ways of bungling.

Not only was this reply of a few pages refused publication (on the asinine pretext that “another letter” had been received prior to mine! ---I knew of course that this other earlier complaint would not set forth the objections I raised, which was true), but my particular request, in accord with SPR rules, that permission be granted for use of quotations utilized in my paper, in event it had to be published elsewhere, was ignored. Yet this SPR Editor (who dropped dead a few months later, happily removing another obstacle to truth), in later numbers of the SPR Journal continued his defence of Lambert’s obtuse charges, all the while concealing from his readers the fact that anyone at SPR HQ, least of all himself, had ever seen such a reply as mine demolishing this rude and vicious attack at its foundations!

Determined at the time to see this reply of mine brought to attention of the SPR membership, even though reluctant to dip into my newly acquired “retirement fund” for that purpose, I wrote to Mrs. Eileen Garrett, proposing that with her wide international contacts among spiritualists and psychical researchers, she might find someone who would underwrite the cost of mimeographing and mailing copies to each member (as I had not received permission to use the quotations in publication, I saw no other way of doing this). Her Secretary, in a most candid confession, replied that she was instructed to say that Mrs. Garrett was in “full sympathy with your intention to ‘expose false exposures in Psychical Research’, but that there is nothing she can do to help you in this direction lest she jeopardize the work for which she has labored for

so many years.” To put it plainly, she was scared of the SPR! So it was never published, never printed. The first of a series of fiascos.

Like the attack on Harry Price---the most notorious assault by leaders of this organization since their denouncement of Mme Blavatsky---, the attack on Dr. Geley was merely an illustration and a warning to “psychical researchers of standing” that they would lose this “standing” and be excommunicated if they, like Geley or Price, dared to display independence of mind and action or recognized para-physical phenomena.

An Indictment of Organized Psychical Research

This marked the beginning of my disillusionment with organized Psychical “Research”. It soon became clear to me just how much feared the SPR is today and how much the sycophants who masquerade as parapsychologists fear to contradict its leadership. Until reaching this stage of knowledge, I had always hoped and half-expected that my introduction of new facts of great significance, however personally distasteful they might prove to individual belief, would be recognized by organized psychical research nevertheless. I supposed that a “psychical researcher of standing” (as Mr. Salter, Hon. Secretary of the SPR until recently, likes to put it) was as interested as myself in getting at the facts, whatever they might be, pro and con. In 1947 I had supposed that the promise of mankind’s progress in realms of the occult rested on the shoulders of the psychical researchers and these societies of “pioneer in the scientific search for the human soul” who, if not equipped with the gifts of Mme Blavatsky, would yet be the guide to the first few steps beyond the boundaries of skeptical materialism. I assumed that, whatever the private embarrassment, loss, or sacrifice, the real leaders in this field would out of sheer honesty by prompt to show recognition and cooperation, even though these new facts should come (as in the case of Mme Blavatsky’s Defence) from an unlettered, unaccredited, insignificant, independent

source. In all my own appraisal of claims, it was the fact itself and not its origin which was the criterion of acceptance or rejection.

How the Latest Enquiry Concerning HPB Was Treated at SPR HQ

It was in this optimistic frame of mind that I addressed a letter to the Council of the SPR in October 1955, as a Member requesting permission to obtain copies of 14 and more documents mentioned in Hodgson's Report, and known to have been in possession of the investigating Committee of 1884-85 or its agent, documents for the most part freely given by Theosophists or Madame Blavatsky herself (for example, several pages of her written, detailed answers to the Coulomb charges, supplementing her annotations in Hodgson's copy of her accuser's pamphlet). My request expressly set forth my intentions to reproduce these documents verbatim in entirety and by photostat if possible; and that they would be part of a study embracing all of the charges against Mme Blavatsky, this study with all of the evidence pro and con to be compiled and submitted to the Council for the SPR later for publication if they saw fit, otherwise the copies of these documents to be published however and wherever the Council decided.

By answer I received a letter (now carefully preserved) from an SPR official, expressing full co-operation in the matter, notifying me that a search for the date was to be put underway, after which my letter would be passed on the Council when the results of this search were in. When a year passed and no follow-up notice was had, I made enquiry and was informed by the chief Secretary, Mr. Salter, that the search had proved fruitless, and that in light of the restricted finances and short help of the society he did not feel free to continue the search for the documents requested.

This Mr. Salter (whose wife, besides being Investigation Officer during the term the SPR "investigated" Eva C., had for 30 years held the important post of Editor for the society's

Proceedings, where she was able to censor all papers published, a post she received at the hands of Mrs. Sidgwick) seems to have dominated the bureaucratic administration of the SPR along the lines laid down by Mrs. Sidgwick---whose protégé he was---since before her death. It was he who, in 1931, answered the petition of the editors of The Aryan Path for a withdrawal of the “Hodgson Report” by replying erroneously that this report was not the responsibility of the SPR but of Hodgson personally. The allegation was incorrect as Hodgson’s “Account” (or report) is “Part 2” of the official Report on Theosophical Phenomena returned by the duly constituted Committee appointed by the SPR Council, “Part 1” being the “Statements and Conclusions of the Committee”. The SPR Constitution, then and now in effect provides that no report of an official Committee, such as this, may be published without express approval of the Council---a little piece of legal hardware I shall, as an SPR Member, toss at stuffed heads when the appropriate moment arrives! Mr. Salter, moreover, is the same gentleman who, several years ago, in controversy with Bechofer-Roberts who in his book re-stated the fact that F.W.H. Myers had been a member of the Theosophical Society, alleged that on questioning Myers’ still-living acquaintances and descendents, he (Salter) had “determined” that the report was untrue and that Myers certainly had never been a member of “that society”! It was also Mr. Salter who, when his attention was first drawn to the act the SPR Library Catalog listed Hodgson’s annotated copy of the Coulomb pamphlet, professed to be unable to find it; and it was also Mr. Salter to whom several years ago I directed an yet unanswered query as to whether the SPR retained any sample of Coulomb handwriting or of the “Blavatsky-Coulomb correspondence”.

Finally, in April 1957, another enquiry was made, posted by special delivery, return receipt requested (and received), asking Mr. Salter whether he had any intention of seeing my letter passed on to the SPR Council to which it was properly addressed, and stating that if he

required clerical help in his search I would try to obtain that for him, too. Mr. Salter has not been heard from since. However, I am preparing for the eventuality that, if present resumption of correspondence with the SPR officials fails, I may have to address a copy of this October 1955 petition to each member of the Council individually, together with a complaint that, as a Member of the society, I protest the apparent fact that the SPR archives are in so bad a mess that a year's search failed to turn up such historically valuable papers!

My Break With the Parapsychologists: Neutrality Abandoned

Mr. Salter's unhampered performance in side-tracking this petition is a good illustration of the kind of "co-operation" which may be expected from "psychical researchers of standing" even by one who, though sympathetic to Mme Blavatsky, has been a member of that society for ten years and has paid almost \$500 into its coffers. (Believe me, I shall make them pay with interest!) This kind of conduct has shattered my long-standing illusion (first expressed to the Theosophical heads in 1947) that, as gesture properly righting the sponsorship of the 1885 "exposure", it could be hoped that my completed Defence might be published as part of the SPR Proceedings, affording it equal prestige. In anticipation of this kind of fairplay, I must confess, I bent so far over backwards in a neutralist stance which I thought would be pleasing to the SPR leaders when the time arrived, that I purposely avoided joining the membership of the Theosophical organizations, and had gone so far as to title my proposed work, The Case of Madame Blavatsky instead of The Case For---.

But all this well-meaning foolishness is in the past now, and I am glad to emphasize that not only will the work be titled The Case For Madame Blavatsky (let us welcome the day when a Theosophist will be able to counter the critics with the stock answer, "Have you read 'The Case for Madame Blavatsky'? No? Well then, shut up!"), but when it is finished the SPR will be left

with no prestige to sponsor it nor anything; and instead the SPR will be left with so-called Hodgson Report will remain forever blazoned on their escutcheon as a shameful token of their dupery and stupidity!

I might add at this point that I have learned by sad experience that there are Theosophists of note---though thankfully not in positions of decisive influence---who also appear to be over-awed by the phony reputation of the SPR leadership. One of these misguided gentlemen cautioned me not to “stir up mud” but that what was called for now was a new era of “friendliness” and “mutual co-operation” between the SPR and the Theosophical groups. Again, I was told that I was wasting my time trying to defend HPB, that all I would accomplish would be to stir up ill-will in as much as Beatrice Hastings had done all that anyone could ever do to vindicate her! To me this sounded like a “wish-fantasy” out of the mouth of the SPR itself.

Only someone who had innocently dipped into its depth can appreciate the bottomlessness of the chasm that lies between the reality of the situation in present-day Parapsychology on the one-hand, and, on the other, the optimistic expectation generally perpetuated (and fostered by society leaders anxious to gull dollars out of the optimistic) that someday, soon or eventually, but somehow, the leaders in Psychological Research are going to run up the flag and announce to a needy world that Sir William Crookes was right 90 years ago and that the “psychic force” over matter is reality. Alas, there is no hope whatever, when one knows the facts, that revolutionary discoveries or beneficent advances for betterment in human understanding can come from this quarter. Discoveries may be made from time to time, it is true; but the reactionaries in charge of the show will never permit the audience to know of them. Every major official trend is an approach towards compromise with prejudice and gross materialism (the greatest hope at the moment is that ESP may be explained in mechanistic terms

compatible with materialistic science). Simply put, as an organized endeavor, Psychological Research today is driven by plaudits of self-congratulating, self-elected experts who strive to extend their authority over private psychics and mediums by threats of exposure, and over public beliefs as well--uninspired clods, Popes in embryo, promulgating their own Indices Prohibitorum, who begin by preparing anathemas against those who question or rival their authority, and who hold power by feeding fodder, carefully sifted free of dangerous facts, to those upon whose backs they ride. The Master KH once described the psychological researchers of his day as busy squirrels collecting nuts they could not crack---now almost eighty years later the meat of the nut is protected not only by its shell but by the accumulated defilement of their own intransigent stupidity.

Indigent, Indigent, and Ill

All of these rebuffs and disappointments merely served to harden my determination to see my ideas in Psychological Research, my criticisms, and especially my HPB Defence, published. Before “retiring” in 1955 I had always supposed that if one had the knowledge and time, one could write a book---always since 1947 the question of delay in my Blavatsky Defence project had been only one of time, time to recuperate from the fatigue of a day’s labor, time to read what had to be read, write what had to be written. But I now found that although I had time, I could do little for lack of money. Moreover what little time I had had was wasted in pursuit of money to insure more time. Of the two years of time past, less than half had been jointly devoted to my Defence work and art study (6 lessons done). Both endeavors had been sidetracked after ten months when, finding the Piper case collapsed with Hodgson’s leading role in it, I had set about to find some means to finance and extend my period of “retirement” so as to permit completion

of both Blavatsky and Piper case books and commercial art training. My \$1,000 “fund” had gone as follows:

\$520 - Room and board, \$10/wk (discontinued January, 1956)

\$165 - 1955-56 Incidentals (art supplies, postage and stationary, clothing, vitamins, etc.)

\$125 - UFO and space-flight books and data; trip to Los Angeles

\$75 - HPB Defence data (Coues court transcripts, Hodgson notes, etc.)

\$58 - Membership dues (SPR, ASPR, AFA, Fortean Society--\$2/yr.)

\$42 - New stamp issues, purchased in 1955.

\$15 - Books on Borley Rectory case.

All my savings exhausted, and subsisting solely on Birthday and Christmas gifts of cash, I tried without success by local and national advertising to sell a photographic enlarger and a \$150 camera lens. I managed to get through the spring and summer of 1957 by selling what few books and old magazines I could spare from my library; and received about \$10 or \$15 from a Theosophist friend for “paper and typing materials”.

On top of these difficulties an old scalp tumor had lately become inflamed and greatly enlarged while the lymph glands in my neck below swelled and became sore. Hating to spend my meager cash for medical attention, this condition worsened over a period of days until I conceived the terrible notion that I had cancer. Despite the fact that this obsessive idea was at last more or less dissipated by proper medical attention, the fear was renewed some months later then the adjoining jaw grew so stiff that for two or three weeks it could be opened and closed only with pain.

Psychological Pressure to “Bow Out”

Worse than all this. I seemed to drift into a mental “dead-spot” on the approach of summer, 1957. There were periods of black despondency when I felt my work was at a dead-end permanently; and when considering all my wasted opportunities, lost efforts, and bleak future, I almost found myself at times not giving a damn whether psychical researchers, Theosophists, the public, or anyone ever got any of the results of my research. These matters so intellectually important to me seemed of no concern to the world and to others; while scores of less significant lines of research into psychic phenomena were being well financed, it looked like my own highly original discoveries would never see print.

Beyond this, I asked myself many times, what in the end would all of this profit me--- even if my books were printed? Mme Blavatsky was dead, Harry Price was dead, Gustave Geley was dead, Borley Rectory was demolished; and does not the world and its progress depend upon the living and not the dead? Even if the teachings and phenomena of HPB were authentic, what practical use did they have for me? What did I get out of it if these claims and events were true from the Shrine of Koot Hoomi to the Rectory at Borely? Was it not more profitable to “bow out”, to throw it all over, to discard my plans and burn my writings, to go back to work, to get a job---any job---, to lead a normal average life to marry and raise a family and live out my days and die as my forefathers had before me? If I did manage to get my ideas into print I would be 40 years old and entirely without money, or vocational preparation, or job, or future, and with all these other things denied me. Sometimes, in my most wretched moods, I thought of Beatrice Hastings with her head in the gas over, and I asked myself what was really the sense of it all. And thus I had to fight off the idea that it is all a losing battle that I am throwing my best years away on a chimera, that even if I succeed, so that I fully vindicate all those and all that which I

defend, the result would be nothing, for it would mean nothing in personal benefits, material or otherwise; that what really counts in life is what we personally receive and experience, but that we can never experience these purported phenomena that so enthrall and spur us to the defence; that what would be received at best---the plaudits of the crowd, however few or many---are only like echoes in the desert, leading away from the comfortable oasis of reality among the tents of the living into trackless wastes of the past where one can find only dead bones and lifeless relics of bygone wanderers and the experiences of others. At such times I had the urge to abandon the whole thing!

At every occasion my mother reinforced this unexpressed despair by reiterating that I was, in her opinion, “foolish” for “throwing [my] life away trying to defend that old dead woman”. Equally encouraging were the comments of my Christian-minister father who delights in denouncing HPB as “devil possessed” and one who “worked miracles by the help of Satan ‘to deceive if it were possible the very elect’!” Amused or impervious as I always am to such criticisms from others, still I was disturbed and impressed by the ludicrous and somewhat ironic fact that Christians of all people should be financing the definitive Defence of Madame Blavatsky!

Of course, I told myself, one thing I might do was to get a job “any kind of job” (as my father repeatedly put it), and thus accomplished something practical. But at best this would mean nothing more than another “dead-end”, at worst, it would involve pushing a lawn-mower in 110° heat, which was merely another form of nightmare (what with my pulse rising to 130 and 140 after pushing a sweeper over the front room rug!)

A New Direction---Vocational Plans

At this point, as a last resort, I borrowed \$23 and inserted an ad in Astrology Guide Magazine, offering to erect horoscopes (no reading) at \$2 each. The “practice of astrology for

pay” being outlawed by local city ordinance, I hoped that the mere drawing of horoscopes could be defended as simply a mathematical procedure if I was hailed into court (even though I had no business license, also a requirement). Then optimistically awaited the response (and with \$5 in my pocket, a gift from my father), my mind temporarily lightened of its almost intolerable financial worries, I turned my thoughts again to a radical reconsideration of my position. I at once realized that no matter what else, I would not be able in the future to pursue any vocational research or writing unless at the same time I also followed a constructive program of vocational preparation and provision for my own future income and personal well-being.

Having decided this, I had another question to answer. Having long ago found that intellectual detection and criticism were much more stimulating than art work, a vague long-time interest in law as a career came to the fore in the autumn of 1957 when a law school opened locally. After looking into this, I had the opportunity of a free ride to San Francisco, and visited the State Bar Commission office to obtain bar-examination statistics according to schools and to check on certain claims by the dean of the local school. I found that the claims and statements made by this gentleman (for example, his answers in private as to why his school was unaccredited) had been freely sprinkled with falsehood, that the 50-year-old “university” of which the local school was a branch, had not produced a graduate lawyer in years, that one would be wasting time and money by enrolling. At the same time, however, I decided to look into law study by correspondence as a last bet, and (by loan from my mother) purchased 3 or 4 books on the subject, to explore it further; and, on returning home, enrolled in night school “law for the layman” class. Having made a study of more than 500 occupations, and after testing of my own talents and abilities, I was decided that by preference the only choice open was between

a career in law or commercial art. I wanted to resolve this conclusively before going a step further.

With this intention, that same month I mailed an entry to a national art talent “search” contest, conducted by the art school with which I had enrolled; and although I knew the rule that “our students are not eligible”---to win the free art course given as a prize---, I conceived this might be a good opportunity to test my art talent. Even if the designation “student” were to cover my case (I being no longer enrolled as a student at all), I might still enhance my understanding in event of winning with subsequent disqualification.

Pending receipt of the results, I re-wrote an appendix (concerning the best evidenced apparitional “haunting” in the history of England---a case which I intended to defend against criticisms of the then current SPR President who was objecting that it and practically every case of “haunting” or “poltergeists” was the consequence of disturbances by underground water flows) from my Borley Rectory mss., mailing it together with an original illustration to FATE magazine, my first attempt to sell an article or picture.

At this time, my astrology advertisement appeared; but the response was so very poor that by the end of the year I had not gained enough to pay for the cost of the ad.

A Plan To Ask For Theosophical Support

While in San Francisco, my father had “loaned” me a dollar to hear a renown philosophic lecturer deliver a two-hour monologue on occult ideas. When writing to the Theosophical leaders in 1947 I had also written to this gentleman, outlining my plans for the Blavatsky Defence, asking for access to any information he might have in his center’s library, but his reaction had been exceptional in that he had never answered. Certainly at this lecture he collected \$300 for his presentation of ideas, which, interesting though they were, appeared all to have been borrowed

from other authors, none of his statements containing evidence of any new discoveries or original creative thought on his part; and though famous as an admirer of Mme Blavatsky, he did not mention her name once during the two hours.

On returning home, I found in my mail box a form letter from another “occultist”, the alleged representative of “four Mahatmas”, asking for donations towards a \$6500 building fund that it was hoped would be fulfilled “within the coming sixty days”!

And so, after these hammer blows, although I had never in my life asked anything---even so much as the loan of a dime---from anyone except my own immediate family and the Bank of America (my credit with both of these being now exhausted!), I at last found myself forced by circumstances to a point where I was willing to beg for financial help. Distasteful as this was, I saw it as the last and final resort towards insuring continuation of my HPB Defence. Had it not been that all my hopes and the focus of my life’s ambition was at jeopardy I would not have entertained such a thought for a moment. But, I told myself, if the occult-orientated public can contribute their dollars to no better enduring purpose than these activities to which I had lately been witness, surely the real friends of H.P. Blavatsky can be willing to do a little to building for her a monument, a definitive defence, which will endure through centuries to come. And so I decided that I would write to each of the five Theosophical benefactors (centers) named, and ask from each help in securing a donation of \$25 (or 48¢ per week) to meet my personal expenses for that coming year (a total of \$125).

To quote my words of November 1957, prepared for my 5 correspondents:

“Conditions under which this program is to go forward are: First, that the Defence work is to be written as a trilogy, the 3 volumes as outlined, The Fraud Problem in Parapsychology and Richard Hodgson and the Societies for Psychological Research to discredit first

the “exposing” Society and its “exposing” investigator, then The Case For Madame Blavatsky proper, discrediting the “exposure” itself; and whether so published or not, the trilogy is to be written in this order, the latter volume preceded by the first two, Second, that 2 or 3 days a week (but not more) are to be given to art study; and 3 or 4 days a week (and perhaps more), to work on the trilogy. Third, that I am to allow nothing but sickness or death to interfere with this schedule. And to allow fourth, in event of my death, each of the contributing benefactors (their affiliated Theosophical center) is to receive a microfilm copy of my notes and writings on the trilogy, this is to be financed by sale of my stamp collection”

Great New Discoveries for the Defence of H.P.B.

Having settled on this proposition and put into the first draft of a report, “Ten Year Review of My Blavatsky Defence Project”, I set to work in December to write up some examples of my findings to date, the better to illustrate my conviction that my own research and analysis of the Blavatsky case far transcended the accomplishments of previous apologists for HPB (hoping in this way to destroy any misconception that my project might not be worth the support asked). I had drafted “chapters” on the “The Doll”, “The Letter Traps”, “The Astral Bells”, “The Shrine of Koot Hoomi”, and “Hodgson’s Attack on Damodar”, when in January 1958 I sat down one evening to finish the task by reviewing some of my findings on the calligraphic problems involved in the case. I intended to show my previously aroused suspicion that Hodgson had fooled the SPR Committee and the public by obtaining expert approval of what were innocent genuine Blavatsky-Coulomb letters instead of incriminating parts of the “Blavatsky-Coulomb correspondence”.

After sitting up all night, just before dawn, while mulling over the possible meaning of numbers attached to documents inventoried in Netherclift’s printed “Report”---numbers

thousands of readers had read before, and which I had seen a hundred times without comprehension or even acute attention---, it came to me like a flash that the figures might well relate to the sequence of the corresponding documents as these had previously appeared in print... and so it proved (with one or two exceptions where it appears Hodgson, making good use of the device which he knew some reader might someday discover, secretly exchanged the incriminating content of a numbered envelope for an innocent one, as can be seen by close study of the salutations between the two, etc.---a typical illustration of the dishonest documentary “switch”, a Hodgsonian characteristic). By this discovery for the first time we gain proof beyond reasonable doubt that Hodgson avoided a real test by experts of the incriminating Blavatsky-Coulomb documents, the meanwhile palming off innocent letters and documents thus professionally examined as “incriminating Blavatsky-Coulomb documents”, concealing this masterful “switch” and its related substitutions.

And then, a day or two later, aroused to a renewed scrutiny of the Netherclift “Report” by this amazing discovery, I suddenly realized for the first time what had previously escaped everyone, viz., that to conceal the fact he had nothing from Netherclift to substantiate the allegation the experts “changed their opinion” and adopted his theory that Mahatma letters had been written by HPB “in a feigned hand”, Hodgson had falsified the last date on this expert’s printed “Handwriting Report”! This subterfuge was necessary because, as now revealed, the published “REPORT” far from having been returned on merely the subject of “THE BLAVATSKY-COULOMB DOCUMENTS” (as errantly titled), was really nothing less than the butchered fragments from two different reports of different dates, bearing on both Blavatsky-Coulomb documents (in the first instance) and Mahatma writings (in both instances); but in expunging all the expert’s references to Mahatma writing, it was now clear for the first time that

Hodgson not only suppressed what Netherclift said on that problem before he “changed his opinion” but what the expert said afterwards as well! In short, Hodgson had found it as prudent and necessary to hide the expert’s written opinion after it was “changed” as when before this alleged change. Plainly, on the question of Mahatma calligraphy, Netherclift’s expert judgement was of no more use to Hodgson’s theory at the last than it had been at the first---and to conceal this necessity for suppression, to hide the fact Netherclift’s “second” report was even more butchered than the first, the SPR agent put a false date on the printed “Report” to make Theosophists think it had in no part been written after this alleged “change of opinion”!

This latest finding was the last piece in a puzzle that I had been slowly assembling, for earlier I had made the original and remarkable finding that the SPR Committee of 1884-1885 had never adopted Hodgson’s belief that Mme Blavatsky wrote, or instigated the writing of, Mahatma letters “in a feigned hand”. A renewed study of this matter showed now that no one but Hodgson himself ever pretended to have personal knowledge that the experts had ever rescinded their first opinion that she was innocent of this charge, and even he did not quote so much as an intelligible statement attributed to either Netherclift or Sims in support of this strange allegation. In short, Hodgson’s claim that experts authenticated incriminating Blavatsky-Coulomb letters, and that they adopted his charge that Mme Blavatsky wrote Mahatma documents “in a feigned hand” are charges that rest on nothing but his own unverified word---like the Piper case, like so much else in his career, these allegations boil down to nothing more than the question of this man’s personal honesty. But I had a hundred facts to prove Richard Hodgson was a liar and a reporter whose word was altogether untrustworthy!

With these findings in early 1958, I at last cut the very heart out of the case against Madame Blavatsky. These discoveries, which I consider to be the most rewarding and gratifying

in all my studies in Psychological Research---the most valuable of all---, are direct results and in corroboration of the implications revealed by the newly-evaluated Hodgson-Blavatsky annotations in England, revealing Richard Hodgson as a thoroughly dishonest, criminally-minded charlatan.

A New Plan for the HPB Defence---Sidetracked 10 Months

By the time that I had written a 400-page analysis of the handwriting problems touched by these and other new findings, and had drafted a summary of these findings and others for my 5 prospective benefactors, I had come to some drastic modification of my original conditions to be proposed. For one thing, this continuing typing, which extended to all hours of the day and night (especially the night, as I found it very difficult to work during hours when TV was going full blast at my elbow---nor could I retreat to another room of the house as mine was the only position by the cooler in the summer and the heater in winter) had become a point of my family criticism (my brother for one finding it particularly annoying as he slept behind a door only six feet from my noisy Underwood). By July, when my 400-page analysis was completed, I had three sty's on my eyes at once (precipitated by eye-strain), so that I was anxious to get a typewriter with the larger Pica type (mine then being Elite). With these considerations, and in deference to the comfort of those who were more or less supporting all my work, I decided that as an additional condition of continuing my HPB Defence I would have to have a Remington Noiseless typewriter with Pica type; I would ask, in addition to the \$125 total support, that someone loan me \$150 towards purchase of this new machine (interest free, the typewriter itself to be collateral). On looking about I had learned that the new and redesigned current model was not available on the local used market, that those dealers who sold used typewriters were not anxious to order this latest model from the wholesaler in New York, sight unseen, even though

they did not handle the machines new, and that by purchasing a new Remington Noiseless from Remington Rand, I could design the keyboard of my own choosing (putting all the less-used numerical symbols on shift, for example) and could obtain it with keys carrying the planetary symbols and astrological aspects---something I had wanted for 15 years---all at no extra cost over a standard Noiseless!

My second reconsideration, and one more important, was that the great scope and tremendous implications of my inspiring new discoveries of this year meant that, to my mind, for the first time the HPB Case could carry its own weight without any necessary contribution from any other study. This steadily worsening, and the increasing fear that my Defence project would not be completed at all if I was any further misled and side-tracked by side ventures (however undertaken on its behalf), caused me to realize the vital importance of getting my HPB book done as soon as possible and without regard for the other two prospective volumes of the trilogy. Why should I give a damn, I told myself, to rescue the reputation of Geley, or Harry Price, or even to expose Soal and the whole SPR beginning with Piper herself, if in trying to do so I might die in the process and leave my HPB Defence unfinished? By defending, vindicating HPB, one would be without doubt overturning what “psychical researchers of standing” unanimously regarded as the most conclusive verdict and the most celebrated and creditable “exposure” in the annals of Parapsychology—and the reputations of the SPR, its greatest leaders and its most respected investigator---Richard Hodgson, the first psychical researcher to be honored by having an university endowment fund in his name, at Harvard---would be buried in the course of this overturning! Thus I would modify my proposal so that all my writing time would be concentrated on The Case For Madame Blavatsky (with only an appendix thereto reserved for discrediting the Piper case and related Hodgson “investigations” in general terms).

By June I had re-drafted my "Ten Year Report" and its proposals and was about to begin a final round of typing when a lady Theosophist from out of town (who had introduced herself some months before by sending some data for my use) visited here. During our conversation, and with no prompting from me---except the necessary display of toes peeking through dilapidated shoes and of hair overdue at the barber's---she unexpectedly brought up the question whether my Defence project was being financially supported in some way. When told her it was not, except to the extent of free board and room, she remonstrated, saying, "Well, it ought to be." At this point I told her confidentially of my then present undertaking to approach heads of the 5 Theosophical centers which had already given support in the way of supplied data, and of my plan to ask \$25 a year from each; whereupon she pooh-poohed the idea, contending, "you will get no financial help from Theosophical officials---they have their own programs to push, and you are not even a member of any group." Then she suggested that instead of this, I ought to put the solution of my problem in her care, that she knew "several wealthy Theosophists" who would probably be interested in helping, naming a "rich" publisher, and referring to "an heiress to a million-dollar fortune", and another Theosophist friend "who is making \$20,000 a year", affirming that she herself had an income of \$7,000, adding, "you ought to also have something to contribute towards your board and room---if I had tried what you are doing at home like this, my mother would have kicked me out in the street!" She asked that I loan her the sample "chapters" I was to type to typify my findings, so that she could acquaint these people with my endeavor.

So, between her earnest petition and grandiose expectations on the one hand, and the concurring advice of another Theosophical friend (who, as I have noted, had sent me 15 or 20 dollars for "postage and stationary" over the years), I was persuaded to first put my problem to this kind of solution. As both of these parties were acquainted I suggested that they pool efforts

to see what might be done, urging the necessity that what was wanted was a firm promise of contributions, \$5 or \$10 per month, since I did not have the equanimity of mind to drift from month to month, wondering where and when the next penny was coming from if at all. Meager as my personal expenses were, I had to be assured that they would be met in advance, otherwise I could never clear my brain of financial worry and apply my thoughts constructively to the project at hand!

My Theosophist friend managed to raise enough to pay my dues to the SPR, ASPR, Fortean Society, and American Federation of Astrologers (although he took the liberty of advising me that this was “throwing good money away”), and up to the end of the year he sent \$33 additional. But after 90 days, when I heard nothing from the lady Theosophist, I wrote asking return of my mess. Later she promised to send me a “long report” of her activities on my behalf---but now after almost a year, despite her prodigious expectations, she has not sent me a dime! It seems that as a result of all this a third party learned of my plight, and in December 1958 mailed me a check for \$5, saying “our group intends to continue our help from time to time”. Two or three months later, this gentleman paid me a visit, took my “sample chapters” away with him---and now 6 months later, after two unanswered inquiries, neither the promised “help” nor the mss. Have arrived!

The one friend who produced any concrete results in this direction wrote me that, even after seeing my mss. Outlining my original findings for HPB, “people approached are just not interested in helping”---well, damn such people, I say, either they do not have the brains to see the worth of such work for Theosophy and Mme Blavatsky (and so I am not writing for them in the first place) or else they are only selfishly interested in getting at the philosophy while

ignoring the philosopher in the pillory! Despite his well-meaning promises of continued assistance, I have not received more than \$5 since January of this year.

An Interim of Good News

After fifteen months of suspense and waiting---which became almost intolerable at each approach to the mail box---, during which time I had subsisted on what financial scraps were had from the last of my horoscope-making, and birthday gifts, supplemented by reluctant family loans, in December 1958 I received a check for \$82 from the Editors of FATE after publication of my illustrated article in the Dec. issue of that magazine. This prolonged delay which forced me to borrow and beg for pittance in the meantime, killed any idea I might have had of depending upon such writing to supplement my otherwise elusive income. This does not mean that I may not try to sell another such article at later date, simply that no such speculative venture merits taking out from my Blavatsky-Defence any time whatever.

Although both of my Theosophist friends expressed displeasure with my intention to purchase a new typewriter, I had made my mind up that this was an absolute prerequisite, and had ordered the same with not a penny in my pocket. Fortunately, by the time it arrived, I had my FATE paycheck in hand, which was sufficient to pay the down payment since I had not succeeded in selling my old typewriter.

During the past year (of 1957) the American Federation of Astrologers had sponsored an essay contest open to members only, with a first prize award of \$150. Having been busy with my research I was reluctant to take time out for the venture of submitting an entry, since the subject upon which I thought vaguely of writing was not one which I supposed would be particularly welcomed by the judges. During 1942 and 1943 I had made a bit of original research and discovery into the working methods of the Hamburg Schule (Uranian System of Astrology),

based upon the astrological “midpoint” and rejecting use of the conventional “soft” aspects (* and *L*). Nevertheless, during the last days of the year, I whipped together my ideas, and after three days of writing and typing got the entry into the mailbox for postmarking one hour before the deadline. This essay (a copy of which I can send on loan, if you like) defines certain limitations on the scope of astrology, not generally recognized by the orthodox practitioner, and while sharply exposing certain grave fallacies in the Uranian System, nevertheless demonstrates that in its essence the methodology of that school is far superior to conventional procedures. Thus it is the kind of article which pleases no one, neither the orthodox astrologer nor his critic of the opposite school. Hence, I sent in with much doubt that it would get anything, but I saw a slim possibility of third place award and \$50 cash; and being obsessed with the need for cash, I took the gamble. Imagine my utter surprise then when two months later I opened my mail one morning to find that I had been awarded First Prize and the \$150!

This of course, equaled the exact sum I wanted to borrow *(without success) for payment on the typewriter, the very typewriter whose astrological keys had been used in typing this winning essay! However, after delay for months, during which a contract was held up pending the hope that such a loan might be made (in as much as once contracted, no appreciable deduction on interest was permissible even if all the principle were immediately afterwards paid in full) and that the balance thus remaining would be so low as to entail only payments for one year, I at last had to agree to a 30-month contract at \$10.80 per month with \$55 interest charge, so that when the prize money arrived I was already in debt for the interest. In the meantime too, I had sold my old typewriter, the better part of this money going to pay off the sums due my mother for loans during the past year. Thus, with only the debt of the typewriter in force, and

with \$150 banked to cover these payments due for some months, things looked up in March and I began to turn my full attention to a final resolution of my vocational problem.

A Vocational Decision Answers the Time Question

After being delayed by my fifth bout with the “flu” since the previous August (and my worst illness in six years, during the first 3 days of which I lost 12 pounds---not that I missed the loss!), I began in May to reappraise the necessity of working out a definite time schedule for the future. The first decision I made was that I was not going to let the financial problem drift any longer; I was not going to commit my future to indefinite promises and capricious contributions however well meant. The constant worry, misgivings, and intermittent emergencies as I found myself without pocket money from time to time made for an intolerable situation and interfered with whatever work I was doing. Moreover, from the facts distinctly shown (having no occupational training but only strictly limited inapplicable experience, so that I am presently qualified by professional standards for nothing above lawn-mowing), any stop-gap job, even a part-time one with no future, would ruin both my writing project and my vocational (commercial art) preparation, by drastically curtailing my free time and by drawing on my physical and nervous energy. The only conceivable answer to this objection would be that, after a period of preliminary study and practice, my artistic talent might be improved to the point that it would provide me with some income during the part of my time devoted to art.

But there was still a question whether commercial art training was the best preparation for me. Fortunately this had been more or less answered already by two developments during 1958. First, I had received statistical (official) results that showed from the 1957 Bar Examination results that of the last class of 152 students enrolled in California for the study of law by correspondence, only one had successfully passed the bar at the end of the prescribed

term of four years! This finding confirmed all that I had read by experts on the subject---even the training of the best resident law schools is not too good for the conditions and competition in the profession today, and the training by correspondence is quite impractical in the legal field.

Second, I had learned that my entry for the national talent search art contest had indeed been declared the winner, and afterwards disqualified because I was still judged to be a student of the school! This was precisely the kind of informative result I had hoped for, and was one more indication to confirm the wisdom of my original vocational-avocation plan of 1953.

Finally, as a last exploration of this facet of my difficulty, I consulted the Vocational Advisory Office of the local division of the State Department of Employment, hoping that the choice between literary and artistic talents and opportunities might be more clearly defined than was in 1951. But after going through a battery of tests and interviews---during which the counselor advised that the results showed by my scores I was more than qualified for training in even the most demanding professions (medicine and engineering)---no preference between the two could be found. The counselor, nevertheless, suggested that commercial art, after such a late start, would for me prove “too intellectually dissatisfying, too much of a dull grind” and that “in trying to get [my] studies published in Parapsychology, [I am] simply butting [my] head against a stone wall of convention which, however unjustly, demands a certain academic status---[I] could tell Rhine off!”---he had read some of my Borely Rectory mss., saying “That’s great stuff--I’d hate to have to be cross-examined in court by you!” It was his final advice that I ought certainly to go to college, even if only to qualify for librarianship (a congenial profession with an increasing demand for workers and one permitting a continuing avocational interest in Psychical Research, as he put it).

I spent the following month and more reviewing, re-analyzing, re-studying every aspect of this question. At last I decided that with a \$300 investment in art course and textbooks on hand, and with an yet as unexplored fund of natural artistic talent—all of which would be irrevocably discarded were I to undertake a course of college training--, it would be foolish not to resume my original program. To do otherwise would not only mean to turn my back forever on any prospects in this direction, but a full course of college study would utterly jeopardize my Blavatsky-Defence project by delaying its resumption for at least 5 years (the training for Librarianship, the minimum term under consideration). Moreover, there are possible activities in commercial art which would, of all possible occupation, provide the ideal maximum opportunity for continued writing. Thus, the choice here was a clear one, all the advantages lay in one direction, and the decision was definite—to adhere to my originally intended schedule of 2 or 3 days per week devoted to study in commercial art (with the new and added provision that if, my talents to a practical, paying level could not be accomplished, full time would then be given to the Blavatsky Defence, hurrying that to a conclusion, after which I would enroll in college for library training).

A New Way to Solve the Money Problem

Having thus re-affirmed my original plan to divide full-time between vocational preparation and the HPB Defence, I proceeded to make a thorough analysis of the financial demands and possible solutions to this situation. I first of all rejected the idea of re-enrolling or re-purchasing another art course (even though I had been advised that, on strength of my entry being judged the best in the national contest, this would be permitted in my case at half the normal charge), for what this would really amount to was only correction of assignments by mail (since I already had the textbooks and instructions); and I concluded that success in art depends

50% on native talent, 25% on practice, 20% on instruction, and only 5% on correction, the observant artist being given to self-correction and, in my experience, only 5% of the corrections received being of appreciable importance.

Having eliminated this expense, I considered all my possessions with the idea of selling such as would finance my expenses for at least three years. I began with the idea of selling everything except my typewriter, desk, safes, books, and one or two cameras. But after a long and painful process of elimination I found that, with but one exception, anything I could afford to part with either would not bring sufficient money or would entail too great a loss in sale (e.g., my chief possession, a \$3,000 professional 16 mm motion picture outfit including camera, magazines, lenses, tripod, projector, editor, etc., bought at \$50 per month for five years or so through the Bank of America Timeplan—not a payment missed or tardy--, if sold, would mean a loss of \$1,500 while I could not reasonably hope to replace it). On the other hand, some items would be very difficult to sell (e.g., a professional Magnecord tape recorder mechanism used for re-recording, which has no amplifier and operates only at 7.5 and 15 ips. And at full track, or 4X the standard operating tape cost of the average home-type recorder). The one exception is my stamp collection, which might be later replaced in virtually the same condition.

Although began 23 years ago, most of this collection was purchased from 1951 to 1954. Having lost track of market values for two or three years, I borrowed a 1959 Scott Standard Stamp Catalog with the intention of appraising my stamps at catalog prices, preparatory to placing them on sale. But I was pleased to find that since 1954, when last appraised, the collection had steadily increased in substantial value (some categories making spectacular gains), so that it was now worth pretty close to 50% more than it had 5 years ago. This disturbed me, for it meant that the one possession I could part with on anticipation that it would pay for my

expenses and yet be replaced again someday in substantially the same condition was, of all possible saleable items, that very one exception which stood to increase in value rather than depreciate with age!

On pondering this impasse, it suddenly occurred to me that there was yet another possible solution to my financial worries: I might be able to obtain a loan from some sufficiently interested Theosophist, putting this stamp collection (with a 1959 catalog value of \$1,334.72) as collateral. See inventory of collection, enclosed.

A Comprehensive Plan to Permit Completion of My HPB-Defence Book

(I) If I can obtain a cash loan of \$500 on this basis, to be due and payable 5 years from the date of receipt of loan, and with interest at 5% per annum due in 5 equal installments (\$25 per year for 5 years), each installment of interest due on the anniversary of receipt of loan (and any failure to meet interest or principle when due, meaning my loss of the collection), then;

(II) I will have sufficient funds on hand to meet all my foreseeable personal expenses for the coming three years (thus lifting the burden of financial worry and the constant temptation to divert energy into speculative ventures for gain).

(III) During the first two years of this time not more than three days a week is to be spent in vocational preparation (commercial art study), and not less than 3 days per week on the HPB Defence Book (which is to include by appendix of not unreasonable length a brief outline with example citations of my conclusions on “Hodgson’s conduct of the Piper case and his other “investigations” which “exposed” Slade, Eglinton, Palladino, etc.). At the end of two years (or perhaps sooner, but not later), I will be in a position to know whether I can expect any modest success in commercial art as a career; if the decision is positive, then I will continue with 3 days

or less of art per week; if it is negative, then I will drop the art work and give full time to completion of the HBP Defence Book during the third year.

(IV) In fact, it is my definite plan that this book will be complete, or very substantially so, by the end of the third year; and if by dropping art work altogether whatever the decision on art as a career, then it will be dropped this third year if that would mean the difference between finishing or not finishing the book within this period.

(V) In the meantime, nothing but war, sickness or death is to be allowed to interfere with this program and schedule (not even the prospect of a full-time job in commercial art would be permitted to turn me aside). All additional writing outside of this limited scope (which would be no more than possible articles for FATE or like mss.) will have to be done outside of the 3 or more days per week devoted to the HPB Defence book. Also, needless to say, no outside publicity or public activity will be permitted in connection with this work nor public Theosophical activity in general. I am perfectly aware that no Theosophical center welcomed Mrs. Hastings' ambitious attempts to organize another group, even of limited interest, under the banner, "Friends of Madame Blavatsky." No such thing will ever be considered by me so long as even one established Theosophical center continues the present spirit of co-operation and interest in my work.

(VI) Any benefactor (Theosophical center, or head thereof, whether offering or obtaining the offer of such a loan or equal assistance, officially or privately) or any center contributing under the following proposition (vii), will be assured receipt in case of my death of all my notes and mss. On the cases of Mme Blavatsky and Mrs. Piper, these to be supplied by microfilm copy.

(VII) In addition to meeting my personal expenses by this loan (equal to \$166 per year for the 3-year period), there is the problem of obtaining certain additional research data, now that I will be entering the final phase of the HPB Defence project. (See Wantlists enclosed, giving titles of books, periodicals, and articles known to be wanted or examined; and Stock Lists of books, periodicals and articles already in hand). What the cost of this will be is difficult to imagine. But I think the best proposal here is simply this. Each benefactor-center willing to cooperate in the data-gathering program might have its librarian check these Wantlists against the center's library catalogs and then return the sheets, notifying me which items are there in stock. Knowing then what material, what part of these wants, can be found in Theosophical hands for loan or for copy, I would thereafter endeavor to locate and ascertain the cost of borrowing or obtaining by copy all other material not crossed off the wantlists. On locating the needed data and ascertaining its cost, I would apply on approval to willing benefactors alternately as needs arose, passing on this information; and then, on receiving from each the contribution necessary to purchase copy of the preferred item, I would obtain the data, and, after copying or using it myself, would forward it on to the benefactor who had made that particular covering payment for deposit in that center's library. This way money would only be spent in obtaining material not now in any central Theosophical library, and the one paying it would receive back in copy value for payment. All of the wanted material is, of course, concerned with Theosophical and Mme Blavatsky (even when indirectly, as regarding the career and status of Hodgson thru his "exposures" of other mediums, whose records must therefore be traced).

One SPECIAL POINT on interest here, which I would very much hope to see come about is the possibility that some central Theosophical library might see the way clear to arrange for some donor to purchase for the library a set of one of the few complete mint sets still (I hope)

remaining of the Journal and Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research. As the greatest repository in print of records of psychical research in the Western Hemisphere (containing papers by William James, Hyslop, William MacDougal, Walter Franklin Prince, among other early leaders of Parapsychology in this country), these are of particular value and will become increasingly so with passing years. Through my efforts some few numbers were sent by donation to the California State Library, but by far the most are not obtainable through the California Library System (in fact none of the earlier volumes were before this obtainable here; and my right to borrow through the ASPR itself is, as I signified, severely limited, although I shall be requiring a thorough study of at least examination of all these contents). In fact one of the strongest incentives for me to give up my Defence project and to get into some kind of remunerative work has been the desire to obtain a file of these publications before they were exhausted (the cost, I presume, being around two or three hundred dollars at the most).

I am sending copies of this present plea and report simultaneously to each of the five named Theosophical centers. I am not doing so successively, one by one, for to do that would mean that I would have to agree to the first acceptance received, something that would be manifestly unfair as I would then have to count as my chief benefactor that first accepting correspondent, whereas the others who had not been approached would perhaps be equally agreeable to these proposals. At the same time I try to be neither pessimistic nor optimistic about the results of this present petition. Perhaps someone more use to asking would be more optimistic about receiving. It is equally true, however that I do not rule out all possibility that an offer on more favorable terms might be received; but this \$500 loan is what I ask, what I hope for, what is sufficient---its receipt will mark the end of an effort which began in December 1955

with my decision to write and sell the “flying saucers” book, for which I expected to receive six or seven hundred dollars.

On the optimistic side, I may mention that if there is more than one offer of this loan, I will flip a coin or otherwise determine the choice of one purely by chance, providing the terms and conditions are equally acceptable (see suggested Contract). On the pessimistic side, if there is no more than one such offer, then I shall perhaps be confronted with the serious temptation of abandoning my 12-year policy of co-operation-with-all-and-preference-for-for-none, and think of re-arranging my project under the official auspices of that one benefactor-center. Another prospect is that there will be no offer whatever of such a loan, in which discouraging eventuality, I shall be forced against all my will to put my Blavatsky Defence on the shelf indefinitely, and instead proceed to the writing of Is It Telepathy?, hoping from the sale of that book to be able to finance a resumption of my plans. Of all possible courses this would be the least preferable, for only the dogs would know when if ever my Blavatsky Defence work would then be completed. Needless to say, any response to this plea shall be considered strictly confidential, just as, it is hoped, this present report and proposal will be accorded the privacy of those to whom it is now addressed and their confidants.

“On the Wings of Intuition”---My Credo and My Reward

It has now been 12 years and 4 months since I first decided to write a definitive defence of H.P. Blavatsky, and 4 years and 8 months since I quit work to do that. One kind of appraisal would show 4 years and 8 months of wasted effort and \$15,000 of lost income. But all is certainly not irretrievably lost. I have learned many things by study of books and people, and have divested myself of several long-cherished illusions---mental progress which will prove of enormous advantage in my projected writings for Madame Blavatsky. Perhaps the greatest disillusionment

has been the realization that there is no compromise between light and darkness, no ground of co-operation between those who have Madame Blavatsky's good name in view and those who are smugly referred to by that chief bureaucrat of them all as "Psychical Researchers of standing".

By quantitative analysis, I have learned that progress on the HPB Case has been 3-1/2 times faster in these 4 years and 8 months than in the previous 5 years! Even more gratifying than "cracking" two of the most "watertight", most famous cases in the annals of parapsychology (one of which defied skeptics for more than 70 years, the Piper case; and other, for almost 20 years, the Soal experiments), the greatest satisfaction of this period---of even my life to date--- has been my discovery of the deceptive manner in which Dr. Hodgson "exposed" Madame Blavatsky by "the testimony of handwriting experts", for more than anything else, this revelation exposes the heart and soul of the SPR case against her, a case now seen to be truly a dead carcass, with all its guts ripped out and its animating spirit exorcised as a dark villainous demon of deception.

What little experience this life has given me, has proved that one ought never to imagine that some contrary decision, some different choice or some other turn in the road behind would have led to better things. I have often asked myself what would have been the result if I had finished my book in defence of Madame Blavatsky by 1950 as planned, what would have been accomplished if some Theosophical center had sponsored a schedule of full-time wiring and paid for its completion many years ago? The truth is that the book then done would have been a mere travesty of what can be done now, for the light which one can now throw on the case compared to what was known of it only 5 years ago is as the blaze of noontide to a rushlight.

Read now what I wrote in December 1957 one month before my most momentous findings:

“In those dark days, when I held no hope at all for Madame Blavatsky (when I was 15 and, after just reading Isis Unveiled, had next come upon the Hodgson Report), when I believed that the Society for Psychical Research had proved her a charlatan, when it seemed the case against her was final and almost complete and with Hodgson the victor, then it was only the splendor and grandeur of her ideas that drove me on to deeper enquiry, to protracted study, ever perplexed as I was, never fully convinced that such a teacher could ever had been such a faker.

“Agitated and tormented, confounded more than “convinced”, I wondered how ‘one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting imposters in history’ could be such a master of ideas and idealism. And so I wondered until, spurred on my encouragement and example, the day came when I too could help strip the lies one by one from the façade of ostensibly impervious authority raised against HPB, exposing the monstrous horror and rottenness beneath this monument built by her “exposers”. Here is where determination, faith in a “dream”, and “hopeless” hope brought great rewards---FOR MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THIS LIFE, I WANTED TO KNOW IF RICHARD HODGSON WAS TRUE IN HIS CHARGES AGAINST H.P. BLAVATSKY.

“Nothing ever written on the subject by Theosophical writers convinced me, I read every important work on the subject and was still disappointed. I saw no way I could ever be convinced that Hodgson was wrong until, after first rejecting the offer, I reconsidered and bought a copy of the Coulomb pamphlet for almost the value of a week’s wages (3 times the price I had paid for any book), a copy bound together with one of the Hodgson Report (a report which, I have been told by the late Dr. Carrington who compared the handwritings, was annotated and signed by none other than Hodgson himself!). I was such a skeptic that I would believe no one but Mme Coulomb herself. And she convinced me. By her published account, her pamphlet, she convinced

me beyond all shadow of doubt that, whatever Mme Blavatsky was otherwise, she was certainly a victim of Madame Coulomb's lies and frauds, that Madame Coulomb was a forger, a deceiver, and a fake, and that Hodgson was her eager 'dupa'.

"Of course, I am not yet fully convinced that Mme Blavatsky's claims were true or that her phenomena were genuinely paranormal---neither am I convinced (that is to say, with all my doubt removed) that 'paranormal' phenomena of a mental or physical kind are ever genuine (oh, how Hodgson in his report made capital of his "belief"!). But we are in no danger of our prejudices when we are aware of them and know from whence they spring, for then we can build checks and barriers to reduce their effects and offset their otherwise fatal poisons. I say this even when I myself have witnessed some few physical occurrences in my home when in company and also when alone, where fraud of no kind was possible, and under conditions which---try as I may---admit of no completely satisfactory "normal" explanation. But while I found these 'convincing' at the time, the impression fades with the passing years so that almost no impressiveness now remains. How then could I ever be convinced of that which I have never seen, of incidents which took place a third of a century and more before my birth?

"But this I do know---: Madame Blavatsky was never exposed by anyone, nor is there the slightest danger that she ever will be, for it is impossible to 'discredit' her phenomena except by the idiotic theory of a conspiracy of unlimited scope. There is no good evidence she ever produced a fraudulent phenomenon of any kind, but there is decisive proof that the major charges against her---certainly those by Hodgson and the Coulombs, the only ones pretending to proof---were false and vicious concoctions, while the vast preponderance of evidence (such as it is, and some of it is among the best to be found outside of parapsychology laboratories) is that her claims were true and her phenomena genuine. It is one of the most important but least known of

facts in this case that both Madame Blavatsky's most ferocious critic, the ubiquitous William Emmette Coleman who fought her from 1875 to the day of his death and who perhaps wrote more words against her than anyone who ever lived, and Frank Podmore, the most esteemed of all skeptics in *Psychical Research*, were equally frank in their admissions that she possessed occult powers (for, in naming the "two

"Above all, it should be borne in mind that if anyone ever claiming occult or psychic powers was ever open for any possible exposure, that person was Madame Blavatsky, because all during the height of her para-phenomenal career, Mme Coulomb, the spy and eavesdropper (perhaps even a trader with the Jesuits from the day in Egypt when Metrovich mysteriously dropped dead), Mme Coulomb, a conscienceless schemer who was to be revealed as her most bitter enemy, was a person who moved at Mme Blavatsky's elbow and lived with her daily in her house. But far from this intimate association enabling Mme Coulomb to gather any evidence of fraud, when the time for "exposure" came she had to forge and fabricate to have anything at all to fling at her erstwhile benefactor! And then---to quote Walter Franklin Prince (joint President of the British and American Societies for *Psychical Research*) on Richard Hodgson: "the academic product of two great universities, lecturer in one of them... keen and logical of intellect, author of historic exposures of fraud, co-author of the finest demonstration of the possibilities of mal-observation and memory aberration in existence, unusually versed in the methodology of fraud and deception", a man "fitted by mental constitution and equipment to build a road clear across the bog, assuming that the whole region of *psychical research* is a bog"---this Richard Hodgson had to resort to all manner of trickery and deception to save, though only for a time, the fabrications of Madame Coulomb!

“As much cannot be said for any other occult or psychic claimant in modern history... and I think that one would have to go back into the mists of legend to the story of Jesus and Judas to find anything like it.

“I have been carried thus far ‘on the wings of intuition’, even in the bleak hours of 1957 when I would readily have put a stop to living had I any conviction that thought is but a secretion of the brain, But I am no fool. No discouragement can ever for me repair the supreme disillusionment---: knowledge that even the choicest oasis in this world eve lies, with every passing second, inexorably closer to pitiless shifting sands that all too soon will forever bury for everyone the best of everything material. This being true, one has nothing to lose but possibly everything to gain by holding fast to those ideas, unmatched in human thought, which hold the promise of rewards nothing else can offer. And I cannot forget that it was these same ideas, as expressed in Isis Unveiled, and this same ‘intuitive’ conviction, that ‘saved me’ twenty years ago when I first read Richard Hodgson’s report and when for a time I saw no way of escape from what I took to be the terrible devastation wrought by his damning indictment. When my allegiance to ideals has served me this well, if hope of just rewards for just deeds has paid me this much, until now, what may not the rewards of tomorrow be---in this life, or in the next, if there be another. I can do one thing and one thing only---go on, whatever the cost, if all is sacrificed, my possessions, my family, even I myself, but not until I have delivered my ideas and discoveries, my intolerable burden (for sometimes I feel like the Virgin Mary in her 8th month!)”. If December 1957 was the “8th month”, January of 1958 was certainly the 9th, when, as I have shown, I made (on the subject of “handwriting experts” in the case of Madame Blavatsky) the greatest deductions and discoveries of my lifetime. What greater “reward” could I have asked?

In anticipation of continued co-operation and mutual benefits, I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your associates for all favors past or future, hoping that together, shoulder-to-shoulder, we may march on into the years ahead and live to see that day when the “exposures” and accusers of our Great Teacher will at last stand naked before all mankind, shackled in their own revealed prejudices, strangled by their own false words, ripped to shreds and tatters by the arrows of truth, and shot thru with swift darts of destruction drawn from a quiver of karma and loosed in defence of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

“Someday the world will come to know me better”
H.P.B.