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Dear Sir:

Unprecedented ill-health, plus the death of one member of the family and the extended hospitalization of another, combined with the exigencies of a new business demanding up to 80 hours a week of my time-not to speak of strategic considerations-, has until now prevented my making an answer to your review (in FATE magazine, June 1964, pages 103 and 106) of my book, OBITUARY: THE "HODGSON REPORT" ON MADAME BLAVATSKY: 1885-1960. Of more than 30 reviews published around the world, only yours purports to defend the So-called Hodgson Report (the 1885 Report of the Committee appointed by the Council of the Society for Psychical Research to investigate phenomena connected with the Theosophical Society) at the expense of this book; and, therefore, in as much as the book is still available from the publisher and its agents, and the intention is to keep the contents in print indefinitely, I think this review requires attention it might not otherwise deserve.

A. As myself the author of many well-received book reviews for FATE-from the time of my first review therein until my last (when I had to decline further books for review), I served for three-and-one-half years as that magazine's busiest reviewer-by-invitation, with more than three times as many lead reviews as the next most prolific reviewer-, I must say I found the scurrility of language in your piece quite out-of-place and unprecedented for a FATE book review. The "New Books" review section began in the February, 1956, number of the magazine, and from then until the current issue of June of this year, 518 books have been reviewed therein. I have just completed a careful re-reading of these, to confirm my memory, and with the solitary exception of one review

which described a volume extolling the enchantments of LSD-a drug now legally proscribed-as “in some respects a dangerous book...,” I can state as a fact that in no other review during the past 11 years and more has there appeared the use of even one of the following epithets of denunciation which your review hurls at this book and its author: (a) “diatribe”; (b) “dangerous”, (c) “half-truths”, (d) “misinterpretations”, (e) “quotations lifted from context”, (f) “outright falsehoods”, and (g) “farrago of nonsense.” Your review not only ascribes all this to my book, but alleges, without qualification, that all of the author’s claims constitute nothing more than (c), (d), (e) and (f)-see your fourth sentence.

- B. Never before or since in this magazine has such a torrent of stinking abuse been vomited forth upon a book and its author. Quite apart from the questions of fact at issue, dealt with below, I have consulted two local attorneys-one a specialist in copyright law-for determination of the legal propriety of this review. The finding of one was that legally it was “defamatory,” and the other attorney agreed that it was libelous under the law. (Both, however, advised against legal action, saying that the expense involved would quite probably exceed the compensation for damages which might be awarded the hitherto unknown author of an obscure, controversial work published in limited edition in India with, as yet, no widespread attempt at American sales.)
- C. Thus, in order to defend myself and my work, it becomes incumbent upon me to prepare for publication a sentence-by-sentence refutation of your review, to expose your calumnious charges, and to challenge you to try and make good your undemonstrated, undocumented, unwarranted accusations against this book. In now doing so, I must warn you that, in accordance with the common right of self-preservation, I shall make full use

of any reply you choose to offer, and, before your publisher, editors, and audience, shall dissect the same, point-by-point. Any failure to reply will, of course, give its own answer.

- D. This review consists of 12 sentences and the head with title, not one of which does not contain at least one error of some kind, and not one of which accurately portrays so much as a single idea expressed in my book! These divisions are as follows:

HEAD: "OBITUARY: THE 'HODGSON REPORT' ON MADAME BLAVATSKY, 1885-1960, by Adlai E. Waterman. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, India, 1963. 92 pages, price given as 4.00 rupees (about \$1.00, available from the author). Here several omissions or untrue representations at once disclose a clue to a propensity for bad reporting and sloppy research, and raise suspicion of an attempt to obstruct sales of the book among FATE readers. These are: (I) The address of the publisher is given incompletely, the true mail post, Madras 20, being omitted, though it appears on the title page of the book itself; (II) the correct number of pages is 112 (xx plus 92), not just "92"; and (III), if not for a desire to suggest that the reader would be getting less for his money, notice ought to have been given that on unnumbered pages the book also contains two large plates (Plate I, with Figures A, B, and C, being approximately 7 inches X 10 inches, and Plate II, approximately, 12 inches by 22 inches); (IV) the "price given as 4.00 rupees (about \$1.00" is more than the (84 cents) exchange value, as could have been ascertained by phoning the nearest bank, had there been any real intent to assist readers in obtaining copies; but (V), actually, this should have read "obtainable from The Theosophical Press, P.O. Box 270, Wheaton, Illinois, \$1.25 clothbound" (as this information was sent to the publisher in my letter to Mr. Curtis Fuller of February 29. 1964, with mention that the Managing Editor, in charge of book

reviews, “might want to know” the same-and if this arrived too late for press time (which I doubt), the omission is still inexcusable, since an earlier phone call by you to the next county of your state could have made the fact known to you; but it is evident that there was here not the least desire to see this book sold. Instead (VI), we find the irresponsible notice, “available from the author...” This must have helped in a wonderful way any reader who may have wished to check on your accusations against the book, since in the review the author’s address is nowhere given and obviously his name is of no help since it I said to be “a pseudonym...”! And finally (VII), this book is not, and never has been, “available from the author” at “about \$1.00” or any price, since he is under contract specifically not to sell the book; hence this false statement-quite arbitrarily “pulled out of the blue”-is one which might well have raised, with his publishers, the question of a violation of contract had it come to their attention.

Sentence 1. “I must offer one word of thanks to Adlai Waterman: if it had not been for this little volume of his, I might never have read the masterful report by Richard Hodgson concerning the founder of the Theosophical Society.” (I) Here the reviewer-who aspires to be something of a bibliographic expert on Parapsychology of current if not past date-, confesses both his initial ignorance of, and disinterest in, what is indisputably the most famous single case of the annals of modern Psychical Research (as may be confirmed by comparing its frequency of mention with any other in available encyclopaedias). In sending copies of this book for possible review, I had written under date of August 8, 1963, to the publisher, expressing the “hope that you or Mr. Geier or some reviewer conversant with the methodology of Psychical Research may be able to review it for FATE.” In “arranging for a review,” as Mr. Curtis Fuller, the publisher, put

it in his reply of acknowledgement of November 27, 1963, “the editorial department, whose members have been reading the book” (quotation continued) performed a grave disservice to both their readers and themselves with their choice of a review who was admittedly a total newcomer to the subject under review. (II) This sentence also contains an error in giving Madame Blavatsky as the founder of the Theosophical Society...” Properly, she was “a founder” thereof, for, as any comprehensive history of the subject shows, she was only one of a number of co-founders present on the occasions when its organization was both suggested and accomplished, afterwards occupying only a minor post therein. This sentence implies that you had read “the masterful report by Richard Hodgson...” but the first representation you make bearing upon that report is that it was written “concerning the founder of the Theosophical Society”-when, as a matter of fact, the first page of the so-called Hodgson Report, in stating that, “The Theosophical Society was founded in New York, in 1875, by Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky...,” discredits your use of the singular, “the founder,” and, therefore, prompts Waterman to decline your “one word of thanks” in view of doubt thus cast on your claim of having “read the masterful report by Richard Hodgson...”

Sentence 2. You say, “If read completely on its own, this little diatribe by Waterman (a pseudonym, incidentally,) sounds absolutely convincing, and one has the feeling that Hodgson’s report has been completely demolished.” (I) Now, of course, the author cannot be held responsible for anything more than his own words, least of all for the feelings of his readers; and I, for one, have never made any suggestion that this little book was meant to completely demolish the so-called Hodgson Report. That there is more to come is made clear by the book itself, see pages viii, 6, 70 and 92. That is to be

left for a later, definitive re-examination of the whole case in which, you may be sure, an appropriate niche will enshrine David Techter as a beautiful specimen of that species of professed reviewers who is expert only on stopping the eyes and ears of his readers. While, with this present work, the “Hodgson Report” can be listed among the dead, there is yet the formidable task of burying all the remains. Indeed, the book under review itself bears witness to its modest purview: see especially page 76, where mention is made of “the limited scope of the foregoing analyses...” (II) Your choice of the denigrating description, “this little diatribe...”, can perhaps best be understood on the assumption that, for some reason best known to yourself, you did not want your readers to know that this booklet, with its various diagrams and several hundred references, book and page, to sources of quotation and data given, is obviously one of the most fully documented, best-referenced polemic studies in the annals of *Psychical Research*. In contrast, your own true diatribe, miscalled review, contains not a single page reference, and only five words in quotation marks, while its portentous allegations lack support of any kind! Your readers might profitably compare this latter and its bungled-or deliberately perverse-reporting with the review of another work on Madame Blavatsky (in *FATE*, “New Books,” August, 1960), which, though it does not give page references-since it is apparent the author makes no attempt to dispute the book reviewed-, is replete with verbatim quotations in accurate presentation of the author's own ideas. (III) Here, you disclose that Waterman is “(a pseudonym, incidentally [sic],)...” This disclosure was completely uncalled-for and of no conceivable relevance, unless you hoped that this “inside information”, juxtaposed as you make it appear, with the epithet, “diatribe,” might mislead your readers to take the author for some kind of ranting coward, hidden behind a false name. Perhaps they ought

to have been told that Waterman, under his true name, was the author of what is the longest review of a biographic book ever to appear in FATE's "New Books-a biography of Mme Blavatsky, incidentally-, something of a tribute by the publisher and editors who do, I presume, put some value on space in their publication; and, that he is also the author of the first neutral study, and the longest notice of, Madame Blavatsky to appear during the last 73 years in the official journal of any recognized Society for Psychological Research (the A.S.P.R., of which Dr. Hodgson himself was the most famous Secretary). Now it is true that this use of a non-de-plum, as well as the real identity of the author, can be deduced from a comparison of this book with one of the source-references given therein, but, frankly, I think you lack both the acumen and the reference necessary to this. My belief is that after I wrote the publisher, Mr. Fuller, August 8, 1963, disclosing that the book being sent for possible review was "under my pen-name" and that "this last fact is confidential," and after, as he put it (in reply of November, 27, 1963), "Your letter of August 8th concerning 'The Hodgson Report' has been going the rounds between me and the editorial department...", this fact of pseudonymous authorship became known to you through the offices of FATE, and, for no other reason I can see except malicious mischief-making, you revealed this "confidential" information in your review, a revelation which, when passed by the editors for publication, constituted a further violation of the confidence I had so naively placed in them. It may or may not have occurred to you that the author had no idle purpose in using a nom-de-plum, for such was the fact, since he was then engaged in some delicate negotiations relating to the research into this case, the outcome of which might well have been imperiled had certain parties concerned acquired any fixed suspicion he was the author of such a book in defence of

Mme Blavatsky-though here, too, no credit was given them for an ability to discover this fact on their own.

Sentence 3. You express an idea that, “In as much as it is likely that 99% of Waterman’s readers will never have (or even seek) the opportunity to read Hodgson, this volume becomes rather dangerous.” (I) Only once in more than eleven years of presenting “New Books,” just once in 518 books reviewed, only in this solitary instance, in a review arranged by its editorial department, in so unqualified terms has FATE warned the world that a book must be looked upon as a danger. Perhaps one ought to be flattered by this singular appraisal, coming as it does from a dupe and defender of Richard Hodgson-but flattery of this sort was no consolation to the authors who saw their “dangerous” and “rather dangerous” books burned in Munich or Peking. (II) What I take it for is an indiscreet admission that the reviewer looks upon this work as an attempt to dig up old evidence that can be of danger to long-cherished, widely-held “scientific” beliefs, and that, consequently, the work ought to stop and the diggings be buried again under an avalanche of mud-and he is perfectly willing to contribute his spadeful! (III) However, he can rest assured that Waterman already had done his best to reduce this “99%” by, for one thing, sending copies of this book-comprising 5% of the total printing-to leading members of the British Society for Psychical Research, recipients who, it may be presumed, would, if anyone would, take the trouble to check with Hodgson before being converted to Madame Blavatsky (though it is my assumption that most of them didn’t even bother to read the book-at least their present President did not-, which, if true, ought to make happy anyone who, like yourself, appears to make the pillory of Mme Blavatsky an achievement for Parapsychology).

Sentence 4. At the heart of your rejection of my book stands the gravest charge of all: “For a close comparison of Waterman’s claims with Hodgson’s statements will show that the former consist of half-truths, misinterpretations, quotations lifted from context, and outright falsehoods.” (I) This is, indeed, a most pretentious accusation, this unqualified charge which reduces all of “Waterman’s claims” to nothing but a butchery of truth; and which, if there were anything to it, by all means ought to qualify you to come forward at once with this “close comparison” (where, indeed, is it?) and speed to the rescue of those most precious disciples of dear old Hodgson, the present-day majority leadership of the S.P.R., two of whose Editors, it has been said, have successively rejected the challenge of certain of their own members to review my book because, so I am told, there is among them “no one sufficiently acquainted with the facts in the case to give an adequate appraisal.” (II) But I most emphatically and unequivocally deny these unsupported accusations; and I defy you to substantiate your opprobrious claims and to produce this alleged “close comparison”, and I make this direct challenge: If this sentence is anything except a pack of blackguardly lies, I invite you to prove by citation of all necessary sources, book and page, that my claims in OBITUARY: THE “HODGSON REPORT” ON MADAME BLAVATSKY: 1885-1960 contain at least the following (the very minimum of what you say they do):

- (a) two “half-truths” (where, to make sense at all as an objection, it can be shown that the whole-truth contradicts the portion purportedly given);
- (b) two “misinterpretations”;
- (c) two “quotations lifted from context” (even though you do not define what you mean by “context,” which is of some importance since I, for one, consider all

the evidence available as proper context for any portion thereof-whatever you mean, but where, to make sense at all as a criticism, the “quotations lifted” could not in all honesty be used as I have used them were the “context” considered therewith);

(d) two “outright falsehoods”.

I assure you that, no matter to what standard of reporting you subscribe, the test for which I endeavor to prepare my writings is that alluded to in the words of Dr. James H. Hyslop, perhaps the keenest critic in the history of Psychical Research in America, when he said of Frank Podmore, god-father of the skeptics in present-day parapsychology, “He mistook the prejudices of skepticism for the love of truth and never appeared to realize that no amount of subterfuge or concealment will prevent the future from discovering our limitations.”

Sentence 5. You say, “Waterman takes Hodgson to task for having accepted the evidence against Madame Blavatsky given by the Coulombs, whom Waterman believes guilty of forgery, theft, and every other manner of fraud.” This statement is in some respects wholly-in others, only partially-untrue: (I) The book makes abundantly clear, from the last page of its “Introduction” to the last page of Section (XI), just previous to “Special Note,” that the charge is not that Hodgson “accepted the evidence against Madame Blavatsky given by the Coulombs...” but, as explained on page 52, “that Richard Hodgson-far from being a trustworthy reporter-was as ready to trample underfoot his own previous published testimony and Madame Coulomb’s as he was that of any Theosophical witness or the latter’s reputation, if it happened to get in the way of his ‘building a case’ against H.P.B.” Nowhere do I claim that Hodgson “accepted the

evidence against Madame Blavatsky given by the Coulombs”-but only that in certain instances, when it suited his purpose, he accepted portions of “the evidence against Madame Blavatsky given by the Coulombs” and did so without regard to whether or not these portions of evidence could be individually substantiated in any way, and even when they could be disproved. Numerous examples of this arbitrary picking-and-choosing technique are given, a number of which-in the eyes of any fair-minded reader-, of themselves alone, ought now to be sufficient to discredit both Hodgson as a reporter and his present report in particular (see, e.g., my book, Section II, Part 9, and Parts A-12, I-11, VIII-2, and IX-2). And Hodgson does this not only with the Coulombs’ evidence but with any evidence as it suits his purpose, even his own, as witness the quotation above from page 52, where the specific example is substantiated. As I show, Hodgson operated “as if he were not a scientific investigator making an impartial inquiry but only a common prosecutor obligated to ‘building a case’ at all costs” (pp. 8-9). (II) In this sentence you represent me as objecting that Hodgson “accepted the evidence” (and not just some of “the” evidence) “given by the Coulombs...” But later (see sub-sections II and V under Sentence 7 below), and contrariwise, you allege that instead of “having accepted the evidence against Madame Blavatsky given by the Coulombs...”, Hodgson “totally discarded” all except substantiated portions of the Coulomb testimony, and that Waterman recognizes this but, instead of acknowledging it in his book, applies the word “suppressed” to what was legitimately “discarded.” Undocumented as they are, these contradictory assertions of yours ought to make the thoughtful reader wonder if you really know what Waterman said about Hodgson and “the evidence” (not “some” of the evidence) “given by the Coulombs” because, so you say, I believe them “guilty of

forgery, theft, and every other manner of fraud.” On the contrary, no where do I say this—my objection to Coulomb testimony is only in respect to those portions thereof which cannot be otherwise verified, or which are inconsistent with reliable evidence otherwise obtainable, as a reading of my book will show. (IV) Because I may believe that the Coulombs were guilty of forgery and theft does not mean I fall back on this belief whenever confronted with a piece of “evidence against Madame Blavatsky given by the Coulombs...” If you wanted your readers to believe I was so simple-minded as that, you should have omitted to say, when concluding, that I call the Coulomb evidence “a farrago of nonsense.” For, such as it is, this amputated quotation shows that I judged the Coulomb evidence on its own incoherency; and, in the case of testimony, the charge of nonsense is quite different from the charge of forgery or theft. Of course, as my book shows, what I did was to accept or reject each part of the Coulomb evidence as it arose, judging each portion on its own intrinsic merit and by comparing it with related portions of evidence from other sources. Taken altogether, the evidence proves to be “nothing except a farrago of nonsense, self-contradicting and contradicted” (see III under Sentence 12 below. For an account of some of these deficiencies in the Coulomb evidence, see Footnote 58 of my book, from which you may have extracted this derogatory epithet, an epithet there amply justified by a demonstration of facts). (V) As for any belief that the Coulombs were “guilty of forgery,” you might have let your readers know that—as admitted by F.W.H. Myers—the resolution of a question of forgery, with which the Coulombs were charged, was “broad enough” to settle the whole matter. Section II of the book (not all of the evidence, by any means, see II-8), in the writer’s opinion, is sufficient to settle the whole matter (though apparently you were not willing to let your readers

know such a fund of evidence even exists); but this has not been chosen as the premise for rejecting the verity of all the Coulombs evidence. (VI) As for the Coulombs being guilty of “theft,” your readers ought to know that this is more than Waterman’s belief, for it comes under the heading of “uncontested charges” (euphemistically, as “squandering household funds”), charges on which the Coulombs were expelled from Theosophical Society Headquarters after trial, the proceedings of which (such as they are) they themselves published but which Hodgson thought fit to suppress unmentioned (see pp. 1-2, 58-9). And, contrary to the obvious implication of your reference here, nowhere does my book cite any belief of guilt for theft as a reason for discrediting the Coulomb evidence or for taking Hodgson to task for using it or any part of it. (VII) As for the claim that Waterman believes the Coulombs “guilty of... every other manner of fraud...”, this is an irresponsible exaggeration, born-charitably-out of your own frivolity in toying with the real facts.

Sentence 6. “Yet, repeatedly,” you assert, “it is only the professedly-worthless testimony of these two knaves that Waterman can muster to contradict the statements of the S.P.R. investigator.” I answer this with” (I) That testimony, if “professedly-worthless,” is all that is required to overturn almost all the principal claims brought against H.P.B. by this S.P.R. investigator, since Mon. and Mme Coulomb are shown to be, indisputably, Hodgson’s own two chief witnesses. Nothing less than this ever satisfied the present writer, nor does he expect the reader to be content with anything else.” For 75 years all attempts to defend Madame Blavatsky came to nought because, for one thing, they were met with scorn as being founded on the testimony of the lady herself and her witnesses, her “dupes,” if not her “lying confederates.” But now that we find a

defence founded on evidence taken out of the mouths of her avowed enemies, we hear that the Coulomb testimony, which the S.P.R. Committee and its agent and all the critics of Mme Blavatsky who followed thereafter, had to bring forward (in one degree or another) as “evidence” essential to their “conviction” of Mme Blavatsky (though, as with Hodgson, this primary reliance on the Coulomb story often was deliberately concealed), now suddenly becomes the “professedly-worthless” word of “two knaves”, the “worthlessness” of which, we are told, Hodgson himself admitted (see Sentence 7, below); and, as an apologist for Mme Blavatsky, we are taken to task for relying too much on the word of the Coulombs! One would be hard-pressed to find anywhere in the interminable controversies of Psychological Research a more perverse distortion of position than this unmitigated balderdash you have fetched up-and for good reason if you are trying to get the Coulombs off Hodgson’s back.

Sentence 7. As if to prop up this amazing new thesis, concocted in the preceding passage, you add, “It is quite evident from Hodgson’s report that he agreed with the worthlessness of the Coulomb testimony, which he totally discarded (‘suppressed’ is Waterman’s interpretation) except where it could be substantiated by independent witnesses or material evidence.” This statement is so diametrically in conflict with the known facts as set forth in both my book and Hodgson’s report that it makes one wonder whether, before writing this, you had read either. (I) For one thing, it is absolutely untrue that Hodgson “agreed with the worthlessness of the Coulomb testimony...” What he ostensibly thought of this disputed testimony is evident from his stated conclusion thereon, as quoted on pages 66-7 of my book: “And I may add that though, of course, I have not, in coming to this conclusion [“that the phenomena connected with the

Theosophical Society were part of a huge fraudulent system worked by Madame Blavatsky with the assistance of the Coulombs...” etc.], trusted to any unverified statements of the Coulombs, still neither by frequent cross-examination nor by independent investigation of their statements wherever circumstances permitted, have I been able to break down any allegations of theirs which were in any way material” (from the S.P.R. Committee Report, S.P.R. PROCEEDINGS, III, p. 210). It is obvious from this that he found-or pretended to find-nothing in “any allegations of theirs” which he would recognize as “worthless.” (II) It therefore follows that he could not have “totally discarded” any bit of Coulomb story in belief it was “worthless” if not “substantiated...” Once, when an uncorroborated, unsubstantiated bit of Coulomb testimony, vital to his case, obtruded, Hodgson did not “discard” it, but, as if to persuade the reader that he would not cite such unsubstantiated claims without warning, he put it in his report “for what it is worth” (Op. cit., p. 222). And (III), that he made use of the Coulomb testimony only “where it could be substantiated by independent witnesses or material evidence” is not only not Hodgson’s claim (he uses only the ambiguous term “unverified,” which may mean simply that he took the reported authentication of so-called Blavatsky-Coulomb letters as verification sufficient to qualify the whole of the Coulomb story-“independent witnesses or material evidence” is your own spurious representation of what the Hodgson test demanded), but his own claim was false on the face of it as pages 85-7 of my book prove. As I there say, after citing, in connection with no more than the Shrine, a half-dozen instances where his sole reliance on the Coulombs’ “unverified statements” saved his “case” against H.P.B. at critical and decisive junctures: “Each and every one of these things was necessary to his ‘case;’ he built his ‘conclusion’ upon them; and without them

the whole of that fragile edifice of charges against Mme. Blavatsky would have collapsed at first sight. And yet, to protect his ‘conclusion’ and ‘clinch’ his arguments at these and other most critical turns, Hodgson had nothing to call upon but the unsupported word of these two self-confessed liars-little wonder that at the start of his report he wished his readers to think he had not ‘trusted to any unverified statements of the Coulombs...’ Certainly one can find in Hodgson’s report nothing more emphatic, culpable and misleading than this sanctimonious disclaimer.” (See also S9-b-ii, below.) (IV) As if in corroboration of your claim that Hodgson consistently discarded unsubstantiated Coulomb testimony, or as if this S.P.R. investigator did not have to depend upon them at all in so critical a matter as his “reconstruction” of the circumstances and surroundings of the pivotal Shrine phenomena, you add later in Sentence 9, that the witnesses here “quoted” by Hodgson are “witnesses (all of whom are defending Madame Blavatsky)...” (a) If this were so, where then are the “independent witnesses” who “substantiated,” as you claim, portions of the Coulomb testimony (at least as relating to Shrine phenomena) which were not “totally discarded” by Hodgson? Or (b), do you wish to mislead the reader into thinking that Hodgson, on the Shrine, made no use of Coulomb testimony not “substantiated by... material evidence”? But (c), of course, as shown both by Hodgson’s report and my book, the truth is that this description of witnesses as “all of whom are defending Madame Blavatsky” is thoroughly false and works a deception on the reader because: (i) The Coulombs themselves (who certainly were not “defending Madame Blavatsky”) were, as sufficiently shown in my reference above (pp. 85-7) the key-source for testimony which Hodgson took to be final on “essential details” of the Shrine and surroundings-and one must remember that Mon. Coulomb’s vocation was carpentry and

he had had free run of the premises, and had worked with these arrangements, one of Hodgson's first facts (see his pages 222-3, and cf. My H-4, 5). And (ii), you have failed to account for (among others) two admitted critics of Mme Blavatsky, Gribble, the missionaries' "expert," (see my page 2; F-4, and F-6) and "Mr. G." (my p. 30)-both quoted in Hodgson's report as witnesses to essential details of either the Shrine or surroundings (pp. 339-44). And (iii), if Hodgson was after "independent witnesses," to substantiate the Coulomb testimony here, as you pretend, why did he suppress Mme Coulomb's admission that the Shrine, or "Conjuror's Box" as the S.P.R. Committee called it, had been made, not in secret nor by Mon. Coulomb, but at a commercial cabinet shop, Deschamps, in Madras? The craftsman who built this Shrine, (A-1), and the carpenters and the masons (H-2) who, in accordance with the Coulomb testimony, contributed their labor to the construction of allegedly fraudulent devices in connection with the "Conjuror's Box," do not figure in Hodgson's roster of witnesses, but that only means they could not help him in "building his case." (V) For anyone who has read it, it is quite evident from my book that the use of the charge of suppression of evidence is not there brought against Hodgson except in instances where the material thus omitted (suppressed) would prove dangerous or even fatal to Hodgson's "case" had it been admitted into his report, and where there can be no doubt he was aware of its existence (see pp. 88-9). (VI) Your attempt to show this repeated charge of suppression as a misinterpretation on my part, applied to unsubstantiated portions of Coulomb testimony legitimately discarded by Hodgson, is nothing less than a gross and unforgivable misrepresentation of fact.

Sentence 9. “In direct contrast to the unruffled precision with which the author depicts the physical arrangements surrounding the shrine, the actual testimony of witnesses (all of whom are defending Madame Blavatsky) quoted by Hodgson are so diverse in essential details that it would be practicably impossible ever to reconstruct the physical layout in even broad outline, let alone feet and inches as does Waterman.” To this I must reply that: (I) The alleged “unruffled precision” is an interpretation that is calculated to make readers think that Waterman is an idiot plucking “feet and inches” out of the air to depict “the physical arrangements surrounding the shrine...”, whereas the truth is that my book repeatedly alert the readers to numerous limitations and qualifications that must be placed on the figures arrived at (and mainly given in Parts A, G, H and J of Section III) only after study of the great mass of all available evidence. Had you read Parts A-9, H-3, G-4, G-5, G-6, H-11, J-3, and seen I-12 and caption to Plate I for qualifications on Figures A, B, C, you would have known this and you would realize how unfairly and falsely you represent this conscientious analysis. (II) In S7-IV above, I have already dealt somewhat with the preposterous representation here made that “all” of the “witness” whose “actual testimony” was “quoted by Hodgson” respecting “essential details” of “the physical arrangements surrounding the shrine” were witnesses “defending Madame Blavatsky...” But now (III), in conjunction therewith, I must object to your futile efforts to firstly, portray our knowledge of “the physical layout” at issue as being limited to “the actual testimony of witnesses (all of whom are defending Madame Blavatsky) quoted by Hodgson...”; and, secondly, to represent the knowledge as so inadequate as to make “practicably impossible” any attempt to “reconstruct” it “in even broad outline...” (a) As if to put over this untenable conclusion, your review conceals the fact that, next to

Mon. and Mme. Coulomb, the most important witness, and the witness furnishing the chief and most measurements of “essential details” is Hodgson himself. (b) Once again, it is only by suppressing Hodgson’s own evidence that you can dare to claim that it is “practicably impossible ever to reconstruct the physical layout in... feet and inches as does Waterman” (yes, as Waterman does, with the stated qualifications referred to above, not as your review wrongfully pictures his measurements). You omit the vital facts that: (i) No less a witness that Hodgson himself gives a detailed map, drawn to scale of “¼ inch to 1 foot”; (ii), that this plan of his, no less than Hodgson’s written descriptions, like Waterman’ book, calculates “essential details” of these arrangements in not only feet but inches. Here is an example: Now, the crux of this S.P.R. investigator’s case-at least as relating to phenomena at Adyar-lies in the question whether, during periods of Shrine phenomena, a “hole in the wall immediately behind the Shrine” actually existed. Certainly it is there in his “Plan of Occult Room, with Shrine and Surroundings”, where, in scale, it is shown as approximately 3 X 6 inches in depth and width respectively. But, in crediting this plan only to “measurements taken by R. Hodgson, assisted by the statements of Theosophic witnesses” (see heading thereto), this “greatest” of Psychical Researchers of the Golden Age of Psychical Research in England, was less than candid in tactfully omitting credit where credit was due. For this imaginary secret passageway was, by his own admission, never measured or seen either by himself or any of these Theosophic witnesses (leaving aside those whom he pictures as faithful Indian confederates, observing sworn secrecy in the matter), and was testified to only by the Coulombs, who, admittedly, had no material evidence (my Footnote 58) to substantiate its alleged existence at any time (J-1, 2, and 3 of Section III). (iii) Why do you not realize

that-even if Hodgson's charges were true-, we have in his plan of the Occult Room, shrine, and surroundings, a more complete plan of a "physical layout" where Madame Blavatsky produced her "miracles" than we do of the rooms where Soal and Shackelton are said to have performed theirs! (And should your response to this be that physical "arrangements" are less important in respect to mental than physical phenomena, that would, I fear, only prove how little you know about the physical techniques of fraudulent mental phenomena.) (iv) Some of Dr. Hodgson's original sketches and measurements, which the writer's efforts have brought to light in the Archives of the Society for Psychical Research, and which have by copy come into my possession only since analyses of the Shrine controversy in my book were first printed in the December 1960 and January 1961 numbers of THE AMERICAN THEOSOPHIST, will, I can promise, prove enlightening when these previously-unpublished items are set side-by-side with (first) Hodgson's own later published statements and Plan, and (second) with my previously published, related deductions of 1946-1960. (IV) Equally suppressed, or discarded if you wish, by your "review" is the relevant fact-a vital fact as relating to your Sentence 9-that in my book, Hodgson's Plan is photo-reproduced full-size, and for the first time outside the PROCEEDINGS of the S.P.R. (V) Therefore, for anyone who has seen either the original S.P.R. Committee Report, or, more especially, the book you ostensibly undertook to review, your lament that "it would be practicably impossible ever to reconstruct the physical layout.." is simply ridiculous. When one thinks of the amazing "reconstructions" of fossils (often times with major portions still unknown)-page the Piltdown man!-in paleontology, it ill-behooves a bone-duster from the Chicago Natural History Museum to scorn as "impossible" efforts in Psychical Research to re-formulate

(from so much evidence) the layout of a particular locale so thoroughly reported, and at first hand so examined and personally reported by (not least of all) “the greatest Psychological Research of them all” in his “masterful report...” But this blind conclusion of yours is not the least part of a display of imprudence, for, before thus leaping wildly into the blue, you ought to have paused to consider the possibility that Waterman might know a bit more than you about this subject, despite what your reader-dupes have been led to think—especially after his repeated indications that there is more to come. Thus it ought not come as any surprise to learn that, (a), as a matter of fact, this “Occult Room” with “surroundings”, as Hodgson attempted to picture it in his Plan, still exists at Adyar, and with only minor and ascertainable modifications during the last 82 years; and (b), moreover, at this writer’s behest, engineers some years ago measured the structural arrangements, and their professional blueprints, drawn to scale, foot and inch, lie before me as I write.

Sentence 10. “In short, after more than 75 years times, it is quite impossible to reach any meaningful evaluation of the Adyar phenomena, pro or con.” Whether true or false, and coming as it does from the only defender of the S.P.R. Committee Report on theosophical phenomena to attempt an answer to my book in the four years since its appearance, this is a noteworthy confession indeed. Up until now, the critics of Madame Blavatsky were wont to boast that the proofs of her guilt were overwhelming in connection with the Adyar Shrine phenomena, but apparently Waterman has changed all that! But if “any meaningful evaluation of the Adyar phenomena” is “impossible,” it is so only for Techter, and is rightly so for the thousands of innocent readers who assumed that, of course, he was giving them the truth about Waterman’s “claims.” But it becomes

as asinine opinion when we choose not to play the role of dupe prepared for us by your review, and only if we prefer the documented demonstrations of fact given by Waterman, backed as they are by the known records of the case, to the unsubstantiated, unverified allegations of David Techter.

Indeed, were it “quite impossible to reach any meaningful evaluation of the Adyar phenomena, pro and con”, even with this kind of evidence, in all its unique breadth and magnitude, we ought to hear no more of any of the great wonder-workers of history, and Psychical Researchers especially ought to burn their PROCEEDINGS, and at once begin anew from scratch! But, as I trust I have shown, Mr. Techter does not know what he is talking about and has, knowingly or otherwise, hooked his reading victims with the bait of his own ignorance of the facts in the case of Madame Blavatsky.

Sentence 11. “Readers interested in reading the ‘Hodgson Report’ itself will find it in the Proceeding of the Society for Psychical Research (London), Vol. III, beginning about page 200.” Coming from someone who professes to be a bibliographer in Psychical Research-and who has already published annual bibliographies on the subject-, this sentence may be more than a curiosity with its sloppy reference to: (I) “Proceeding” incorrectly given for Proceedings; and (II), ambiguously, “about page 200.” By this latter does not the reviewer betray both his unconcern and uncertainty as to just exactly which page that “masterful report” begins on? But I ask, would you have had any doubt as to which page the so-called Hodgson report actually begins on-if it is true, as alleged in the initial sentence of this review, that you had, preparatory thereto, “read the masterful report by Richard Hodgson...”? At this point it is perhaps significant to note that, on reading no more than page 1 of the Waterman book, where, with regard to pagination, I

show only that my references to the “Report of this committee” (popularly miscalled the “Hodgson Report,” see the reviewer’s use of quotes) are those bracketed numbers “above 200”, one could with like-prudence with respect to pagination, say only that the “Hodgson Report” has its “beginning about page 200.”

Sentence 12. Your so-called review ends with the belittling conclusion that, “As for Waterman, his little volume can best be described by the term he himself coins for the Coulomb testimony: ‘a farrago of nonsense.’” (I) Lest anyone suppose that your quotation here of four words, which do appear in the Waterman book, is good evidence you have read the book, one must observe that the same “term” appears on page 3 of the 4-page “ANNOUNCEMENT” flyer which accompanied each of the books sent August, 1963, to the offices of FATE. (II) Here the significant difference in usage of this “term” is that, in the case of the Coulomb testimony (where it appears as part of a conclusion given in Footnote 58 on page 86 of my book), I do not introduce the epithet until after I have first used the better part of 106 pages to justify its cogency, but in your review it comes merely as the climax of a series of senseless denunciations. In short, I have proved my right to use the “term,” you have not. (III) Having tracked a trail of noxious error from the title head to the last sentence of this “review,” I cannot refrain from pointing out that the final four words thereof, taken from Waterman, comprise a quotation-to quote an objection of your own-“lifted from context...” Followed directly as it is by a full stop, rather than by the ellipsis marks which would show the reader the punctuation was of your own making, the substitution of your “a farrago of nonsense.” For my “a farrago of nonsense, self-contradicting and contradicted.” Denies your readers a significant clue to the fact that my use of the term was not a mere epithet but, originally, was part of a

larger, deliberate verdict given in judgement after two dozen immediately preceding lines had cited a dozen points of deficiency to show that, in order to convict H.P.B. of fraudulent phenomena, “Clearly, not even the Coulombs had the necessary evidence and answers; and what they did have amounted to nothing but a farrago of nonsense, self-contradicting and contradicted.” (IV) The implications of this verdict can only be appreciated when we consider that, since the Coulombs, who lived with Madame Blavatsky for years, and had the run of the premises, with all their admitted spying, eavesdropping, and “fund”-fathering as would be extortionists, were unable in that time to get evidence against her that would stand up to close examination, and so at last had to resort to forgery and lying to “prove” their case, and did so poorly at it that it took a Doctor of Laws from Cambridge more than ten months to work up a presentable hoax from all they gave him, Madame Blavatsky’s case is rather unique in all the annals of “wonder-workers.” And this, quite apart from the fact that of all occultists, she alone performed phenomena for members of a Committee of recognized Psychical Researchers-and a phenomena these witnesses could not explain by fraud (see JOURNAL, A.S.P.R., July, 1962, p. 134).

E. SUMMARY. I. In beginning this sentence-by-sentence, point-by-point dissection of what your, your editors, and your publisher have palmed off on an unsuspecting public as a review of OBITUARY: THE “HODGSON REPORT” ON MADAME BLAVATSKY: 1885-1960, I charged that your 12 sentences and the head with title, each “contain at least one error of some kind, and not one of which accurately reflects so much as a single idea expressed in my book!” Documented with quotations and references, book and page, from the S.P.R. Committee Report of 1885 as well as from our own respective works, the

foregoing analysis, in more than 60 major or enumerated sections, banishes-I venture to say-any doubt about the probity of my charge.

Not counting other errors, inexcusable omissions of vitally relevant fact, and worthless claims couched in generalities of non-specific terms (see examples in Head section, parts I, III, IV, V, and VI above; and Sentence sec. 2, parts I and II above, and S3-I, and S4-I and II, and S5-V and VI, and S8-I and S9-V, and S10 and S11-II), your opus on this famous controversy, in criticism of OBITUARY: THE “HODGSON REPORT” ON MADAME BLAVATSKY: 1885-1960, exhibits more than two dozen false and misleading statements about this book (as may be seen in H-II above, and S5-I, II, III, IV, and VII, and S6-II, III, and IV, and S7-IV-i, ii, iii, and V, S8-II, and S9-I, III-a, b-i, and ii, IV, and V, and S12-II and III;) and in accomplishing this astonishing feat, at the same time displays more than a dozen equally spurious statements concerning that “masterful reports by Richard Hodgson...”, the S.P.R. Committee Report of 1885 (see S7-I, II, III, and IV, and S8-III, and S9-II, III-a, b-i and ii, and V, and S11-I). I doubt whether the Coulombs, those “two knaves” as you call them, could have done so well!

II. From the opening title-which, as punctuated, was not taken from the book itself-to the closing quotation (“a farrago of nonsense.”), “lifted from context” (to borrow a phrase of your own) and, without warning, also graced with your own punctuation, your study gives not a representation but a parody of my book. In particular, you allege that this book contains the following 7 specific ideas: (1) “Waterman takes Hodgson to task for having accepted the evidence against Madame Blavatsky given by the Coulombs” (2) “whom Waterman believes guilty of forgery, theft, and every other manner of fraud.” (3) “Yet, repeatedly, it is only the professedly-worthless testimony of these two knaves that

Waterman can muster to contradict the statements of the S.P.R. investigator.” (4) “...the Coulomb testimony, which he totally discarded... except where it could be substantiated by independent witnesses or material evidence” is ““suppressed”” according to “Waterman’s interpretation...” (5) “Waterman apparently thinks it most impressive to go into the endless details of measurements concerning the notorious shrine...” (6) “...the unruffled precision with which the author depicts the physical arrangements surrounding the shrine...” (7) “...it would be practicably impossible ever to reconstruct the physical layout in even broad outline, let alone feet and inches as does Waterman.”

III. The proof that my book does not contain these 7 ideas attributed to it can, as follows, be found in the foregoing sections of this letter: Ideas (1) False. Waterman “takes Hodgson to task” for no such thing (see S5-I and II, and compare with II-4 in summary above). (2) False. With its “and every other manner of fraud...”, no such idea as this appears in my book, least of all to be used as a premise to discredit a priori “the evidence against Madame Blavatsky given by the Coulombs.” (See S5-III, IV, V, VI and VII.) (3) Misleading. (See S6-I, II, III, IV, and S7-III and IV, and my book, pp. xvi, and 85-87). (4) False. See S7-I, II, III, and IV, especially S9-b-ii-which alone is sufficient to give the lie to this extraordinarily perverse representation-, and my book, pp. 85-6). (5) False. See S8-I, II. (6) False. See S9-I. (7) False. (See S9-III, IV, and V, with subdivisions).

In short, despite 7 attempts, your review does not succeed once in portraying accurately-even in broad outline-even as single specific idea belonging to the Waterman book. In these instances, your review proves you to be ignorant-or that you want to appear ignorant-of a great mass of decisive, pertinent evidence in my book, evidence

sufficient times-over to damn the Hodgson-SPR report, and evidence which in each case gives the lie to your representation.

IV. On the other hand, it is apparent that you are not altogether ignorant of what this book is about in general. Extracted from your statements and divorced from your own error, it is evident that you do know: (1) That the theme of the book is a defence of Madame Blavatsky against the so-called Hodgson Report. (2) That the book, “read completely on its own...sounds absolutely convincing...” (3) That its author attacks the S.P.R. investigator, who is Richard Hodgson, for the way he used evidence brought against Madame Blavatsky by the Coulombs, who figure, so you put it, as “two knaves...” (4) These latter are charged with “forgery...” (5) And also, with “theft...” (6) That Waterman also makes the charge that Hodgson “suppressed” Coulomb testimony. (7) And that much of all this related to a “Shrine” at Adyar, where “numerous... phenomena... took place.” (8) That, Waterman depicts the related “physical layout” in “feet and inches...” (10) That the author refers to the Coulomb testimony as “a farrago of nonsense...” Does this then prove that you read the book to be reviewed?

V. Except in the case of (4), (5), (8) and (9), all of these stated circumstances, however distorted in the reviewing for FATE, can be found in the aforementioned 4-page advertising flyer, headed “ANNOUNCEMENT” in bold type, bearing the imprint, “Vasanta Press, Adyar, Madras 20, India,” with price in Rupees (“4.00” for clothbound) stamped thereon, and distributed with review copies of the book, one of which accompanied each of the two copies sent in August 1963 to the offices of this magazine. The only two quotations your review gives, as from Waterman’s book (“suppressed” and “a farrago of nonsense.”) can also be drawn from this advertising circular, where we find,

“Hodgson had to suppress great portions of this damaging testimony...” and where the quoted “term” appears on page 3, “The comparison proves to be devastating and leads Waterman to pronounce the Coulomb story ‘a farrago of nonsense, self-contradicting and contradicted.’”

Moreover, your use of punctuation within the book title (see review head with title) differs altogether from the full title as given in the book itself but corresponds in part to the punctuation as given in the full title where it appears at the head of this 4-page circular.

As for the provenance of what real knowledge is shown in (4), (5), (8) and (9), the first three of these four points could be gleaned from a couple of pages and a couple of lines beginning on Page 1 and ending on Page 3 of the book (where theft is euphemistically signified by “squandering household funds”); and (9) could be discovered from page 26 of the book, opposite Plate I where, because of the three-fold thickness of the latter, the volume has a natural tendency to fall open when riffled.

Thus, while your review bears internal evidence of a greater dependence on the 4-page advertising flyer than on the 112-page book itself (with Plates), at the same time it demonstrates no more knowledge of the book and its contents than could be gained from reading additionally 2 or 3 pages of the actual volume your piece pretends to review. Thus staffed with a pair of crooked sentences, partially worked up from two or so pages of the book, and flourishing a brace of quotations evolved from the 4-page circular advertising the book, you appear to have thundered forth as if armed to the teeth in a sally to slay the works of Waterman-but, alas, I fear the show has proved a farce!

VI. As for your representations of contents of the so-called Hodgson Report itself, these appear to be no more reliable. You offer 4 statements as facts gained from your reading of that document. These allegations are: (1) That, “It is quite evident from Hodgson’s report that he agreed with the worthlessness of the Coulomb testimony...” (2) That it was “the Coulomb testimony, which he totally discarded... except where it could be substantiated by independent witnesses or material evidence.” (3) That “the actual testimony of witnesses... quoted by Hodgson are so diverse in essential details that it would be practicably impossible ever to reconstruct the physical layout in even broad outline, let alone feet and inches...” (4) That the position of these witness was “of witness (all of whom are defending Madame Blavatsky)...”

VII. In detail, both Hodgson’s own account and my book prove none of these statements to be representative of his report. Thus: (1) False. See S7-I. (2) False. See S7-II, III, and S9-b-ii, and Summary section III-4. (3) False. See S9-III-b-i, ii, and iii, and S9-V. Compare Summary II-7 and III-7, above, with references, which discloses your apparent total ignorance of Hodgson’s own testimony and his use of “feet and inches,” both by description and by scale-drawing, which constitute his own reconstruction of the Occult Room, Shrine and surroundings. (4) False. As proven in S9-II.

VIII. What can be the explanation for this altogether remarkable failure-four times in as many attempts-to portray even one decisive fact as it really appears in what you eulogize as “the masterful report by Richard Hodgson...”?

At this juncture, let me recall to special attention the penultimate sentence of your so-called review. If this review is taken to indicate what you knew about the report in question when you undertook to criticize my book, one must conclude from this sentence

that you did not know the correct title of the volume containing it nor even the number of the page on which it began (Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, Vol. III, beginning page 201).

Taken with S1-II, these signs altogether may be seen to offer an explanation for this strange fiasco. As with its representation of the contents of my own book, this abject review so caricatures “the masterful report” it pretends to applaud that, from internal evidence alone, there is nothing to disprove and much to uphold the conclusion that, contrary to what your readers were told, you had not even read the “Hodgson Report” when you wrote of “a close comparison of Waterman’s claims with Hodgson’s statements” as something which you had found to thoroughly discredit OBITUARY: THE “HODGSON REPORT” ON MADAME BLAVATSKY: 1885-1960.

Had you really read this book and this S.P.R. report, the gross and palpable fabrications by which you have sought to portray them would be so inexcusable as to suggest deliberate fraud upon your readers. As a review of anything, your work in question is a pitiful production indeed. All it confidently can be said to reflect is its author’s-charitably-abysmal misunderstanding of his subject; and, whatever prompted its conception, it is no better than a hoax on its readers. It serves as one more example of those treacherous barrier reefs which forever menace a vessel of truth-particularly one laden with a promise for human progress-launched upon the sea of public opinion.

I am asking the publisher to do what he can to “erase” this imbecilic blot from the pages of his magazine, FATE.

Sincerely,

(signed)

Adlai E. Waterman

P.O. Box 1543,

Fresno, California 93716

Via Registered Mail,

Special Delivery,

Return Receipt Requested.

Cc: Mr. Curtis Fuller, Publisher,

FATE Magazine,