



Immortal Longings: F.W.H. Myers and the Victorian Search for Life After Death

Trevor Hamilton

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Immortal Longings: FWH Myers and the Victorian search for life after death is the first full-length biography of Frederic W.H. Myers, leading figure in the Society for Psychical Research and friend and associate of Browning, Gladstone, Ruskin, Tennyson, Swinburne, Henry James, Prince Leopold and other influential Victorians. The book offers a fascinating insight into a key period in the development of Victorian thought. Among many things it covers: 1. Extraordinary Phenomena Myers investigated extraordinary phenomena, much of which is still reported today: out of body experiences and astral projection, near death experiences, poltergeists, gurus like Madame Blavatsky claiming strange powers, mediums both private and public, and haunted houses (for example, the giant warrior haunting a chateau near Heidelberg, the Cheltenham Ghost that was seen by a considerable number of people, and the odd doings at Ballechin House in Scotland which caused a scandal in the press. 2. Life After Death Investigations Myers believed he had virtually proved life after death by a) the link he thought established between hundreds of apparitions and living or dead human beings b) the messages that the outstanding mediums Mrs Piper and Mrs Thompson gave him from his first great love Annie and his intimate friend and co-worker Edmund Gurney which contained information the medium could not know and was delivered in a way highly characteristic of the personality concerned. 3. Automatic Writing Some researchers have claimed that he has returned after death and proved his continued existence through the automatic writings of a number of mediums in England, America, India. These writings continued for thirty years. 4. Romance & Suicide There is also love, tragedy and jealousy in Myers' life. His first great love Annie, a married woman, committed suicide and Myers' wife, a rather possessive person, tried to prevent any detail about this being made public after his death, even though the relationship was platonic. This inhibited the work of researchers who were trying to verify the 'post-mortem' communications from Myers, since, for many years, they could not check the facts. 5. Credibility Myers' researches led him to forming a view about human personality and psychology which Aldous Huxley has said is much richer than Freud's

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