

Biography of Edward C. Randall (1860-1935)

The head of the Buffalo, New York law firm of Randall, Hurley & Porter, Edward C. Randall (1860 – 1935) is remembered primarily for his 20 years of research with direct-voice medium Emily French. He authored seven books, *Life's Progression: Research in Metaphysics* (1906), *The Future of Man* (1908), *Psychic Truths Told in the Afterlife* (1914), *The Dead Have Never Died* (1917), *Frontiers of the Afterlife* (1922), *The Living Dead and The Direct Voice* (1926), and *An Hour in the Afterlife* (1931)

Randall pursued his liberal arts education at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania and then studied for the bar while working for the firm of Morris & Lambert in Fredonia, New York. He was admitted to the New York bar on April 3, 1883, and gained fame as both a trial lawyer and a businessman, serving as president of several large corporations that provided hydroelectric power in upstate New York.

In his 1917 book, Randall explains that he met Emily French in 1892 when asked by a number of prominent citizens to see if he could explain the unusual phenomena associated with her. "I investigated far enough to find that she was possessed of a vital force unknown to me," he wrote. "She was just as much in the dark regarding it as I, and just as much interested. Accordingly, she undertook to join me in an investigation, to devote her time without money and without price to the mastery of that force in the hope that good might come. Out of that compact came over twenty years of continued work, and experiences which seem to me worthy of record."¹

Although Randall heard from both his father and mother and received other evidential messages, he was much more interested in learning higher truths from the communicating spirits

and passing them on through his books than in discussing the veridical messages.



Most of the Randall's 700-plus sittings with French were in his own home. "The room in which we hold communication with the spirits was constructed as directed by our spirit band," he explained. "It is consecrated to this work, and naught but harmony enters. In the day, the sun, so essential to life, floods it, and in the evening, when our labor begins, the curtains are drawn and darkness fills the room. Cloudlike substances form and change, evidence of gathering spirits. Magnetic and electric lights float and fall, but give forth no illumination. Then they greet us and we them, with words of welcome and fellowship, as do guests and host in any home. Usually, someone advanced in the other life is introduced, and he speaks on some special subject. In this manner, we are taught. We may ask for a lecture on any subject; and the same evening, or at a subsequent time, it will be given by a master mind. I have never heard

such teachings and magnificent discourse in the material world. Our circle is known in that other life, and thousands are always waiting to come within the vibrations that have been formed."²

As an example of the messages received, Randall asked a spirit known as Dr. Hossack about the character of his "light" and how it differs from sunlight. On another occasion, Randall asked Dr. Hossack about the nature of light. "The light we have is obtained from the action of our minds on the atmosphere," Dr. Hossack replied.. "We think light, and there is light. That is why people who come over in evil conditions are in the dark; their minds are not competent to produce light enough for them to see. There is greater intensity of light as we go up through the spheres, which comes from the blending of the more spiritual minds. Our life is merely the condition of mind which each one has. We create images in thought, and have the reality before us, just as tangible as your houses and buildings are to you. You do not have any conception of the great power and force there is, or may be, in thought. It dominates all conditions and makes us what we are. One who realizes this may control his destiny."³

Randall went on to explain that much of the circle's activity involved missionary work, or "rescuing" earthbound spirits – those who did not realize they were dead and seemed to be bewildered. "Some are in total darkness, some in half-light; all in all, it is at most a twilight zone between the spiritual and physical worlds," he offered. "Here old appetites, thoughts, and desires hold sway as before. In this zone a great mass of undeveloped people of the same general character, with a desire for spirituality no greater than when living in the physical body, remain. Their condition is much worse than in this world, for there is not the opportunity for reformation that there was before."⁴

Randall further explained that other spirits would try to help these earthbound spirits, but were unsuccessful because of the difference in vibration rate. Because the vibration rate of those liv-

ing on earth is much closer to that of the earthbound souls, it was easier for the higher spirits to reach the lower ones by communicating through Mrs. French and having Randall talk with the earthbound souls and explain their condition to them.

During one sitting, Randall heard from an old business acquaintance who had died at the age of 70 some five years earlier. While considered a good citizen, the man, referred to as Mr. W— by Randall, had the reputation of being a "penny-pincher." Both Mrs. French and a visiting clairvoyant could see the man and describe his appearance, which fit Randall's recollection of him. More evidential, however, was the man's voice, which Randall clearly recognized. Mr. W— told Randall that he was trapped in a wall of money and that it shuts out the light.

"Having from experience learned how to help in such cases by suggestion, I said, 'Mr. W--, I think you can see light if you will look. What do you see?'"⁵ Initially, Mr. W could not see the light, but Randall, with the help of the higher spirits, was able to guide him toward the light.

"The continuity of life has been proved and as well established as any other fact of nature," Randall concluded his 1922 book. "But these facts and incidents are so out of the ordinary that the human mind has difficulty in grasping them. It is difficult to comprehend what one has not actually experienced."⁶

Randall also observed other mediums, several of whom he discussed briefly in his 1922 book. However, Mrs. French was clearly the focus of his research.

The Edward C. Randall Collection is housed in the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan. The collections consists of 18 typed manuscripts of Randall's metaphysical writings and some 500 letters addressed to Randall, many with replies attached, regarding his doctrinal and controversial works.

See biography of Emily S. French for more about Edward C. Randall



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¹ Randall, Edward C., *The Dead Have Never Died*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1917, p. 35.

² Heagerty, N. Riley, *The French Revelation*, Morris Publishing, 2000, p. 31

³ Randall, Edward C. *Frontiers of the After-Life*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1922, p. 89

⁴ _____ pp. 141-142.

⁵ _____ pp. 165-167

⁶ _____ p. 199