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Biography of Arthur James Balfour (1848 – 1930)

Prime Minister of England from 1902 to 1905, Lord Arthur James Balfour became interested in psychical research while a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was a pupil of Professor Henry Sidgwick, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR). Lord Balfour, who was born in Scotland, served as president of the SPR in 1893 and as a vice-president of the organization for many years thereafter.

Balfour is most remembered in psychical research for his part in the “*Palm Sunday Case*.” It was on Palm Sunday 1875 that Mary Catherine Lyttleton, Balfour’s sweetheart, died. Grief stricken, Balfour never married and spent every Palm Sunday for the next 55 years with Mary’s sister and family.

On Palm Sunday, 1912, Balfour began receiving evidential messages from Mary through the mediumship of “Mrs. Willet” (Winifred Coombe Tennant). He also received corroborating messages through the mediumship of “Mrs. Holland” (Alice Macdonald Kipling Fleming). These messages continued over a period of 18 years and convinced Balfour that he would be united with Mary after his death. The *Palm Sunday Case*, recorded in the annals of the SPR, is looked upon as one of the most convincing cases of survival on record. – *Michael E. Tymn*

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