

The Other Side

Wisdom about the Other Side
from Those *ON* the Other Side

Presented by Tony Stubbs
Author of *Death Without Fear*
and *Living with Soul*

Dandelion Books, LLC
Tempe, AZ

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The Other Side: Wisdom about the Other Side from Those Already ON the Other Side, by Tony Stubbs – ebook edition

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In order to provide a smooth reading experience, this book presents relevant paragraphs back-to-back, even though

they may be several paragraphs apart in the original book. The above web site presents them rigorously as standalone paragraphs, along with the original page numbers. Page numbers are omitted in this book since few readers have access to the out-of-print original books.

Finally, much of the material originated in England, so the spelling has been Americanized for less jarring reading in the United States.

Preface

Apart from a brief introduction to each chapter, this entire book consists of testimonies from those on the Other Side brought to us via psychic mediums. The testimonials are all taken from Spiritualist classics written during the century 1850 – 1950, and now sadly out-of-print.

My intent is to “breathe new life” into these invaluable accounts that time has passed by, and to bring wisdom from the height of the Spiritualist Movement to today’s readership, because we need it today just as much as, if not more than, we did a century ago. The Soul Plane doesn’t change, so the material is still current and relevant.

For an idea of just how well accepted Spiritualism was a hundred years ago, here are just a few prominent figures in the movement, most of whom became involved to drive out the “charlatans and crooks” who they thought were deceiving the gullible public. However, once they began weighing the evidence, they soon changed their tune:

- **Judge John W. Edmonds** (1816-1874) served in both houses of the New York legislature, including president of the Senate. He was elevated to the New York State Supreme Court and became its Chief Justice. He began his investigation of mediums in 1851, assuming that he would expose them as frauds. However, later, he said, “But all this, and much, very much more of a cognate nature went to show me that there was a high order of intelligence involved in this new phenomenon – an intelligence outside of, and beyond, mere mortal agency; for there was no other hypothesis which I could devise or hear of that could at all explain that, whose reality is established by the testimony of tens of thousands, and can easily be ascertained by any one who take the trouble to inquire.”
- **Governor Nathaniel P. Tallmadge** (1795-1864) served as a United States Senator from New York and as Governor of the Territory of Wisconsin. He initially considered mediumship a “delusion,” but urged by the testimony of Judge John W. Edmonds, he soon began communicating with the spirit of his old friend, John C. Calhoun, former vice-president of the United States, saying, “I have received numerous communications from [Calhoun] from the time of my commencing this investigation. They have been received through rapping, writing, and speaking mediums, and are of the most extraordinary character.”
- **Professor Augustus De Morgan** (1806-1871) became chairman of the mathematics department at University College in London at age 21. He began sitting with mediums in 1853, and said, “I have seen in my house frequently various persons presenting themselves [as mediums]. ... I am, however, satisfied of the reality of the phenomenon.”
- **Professor James J. Mapes** (1806-1866) was professor of chemistry and natural philosophy at the National Academy of Design in New York and later at the American Institute. Around 1854, he set out to rescue his friends who were “running to mental seed and imbecility” over the mediumship epidemic. After investigating many mediums, however, he changed his views and both his wife and daughter became mediums. He said, “The manifestations ... are so conclusive in their character as to establish in my mind certain cardinal points. These are: First, there is a future state of existence, which is but a continuation of our present state of being.... Second, that the great aim of nature, as shown through a great variety of spiritual existences is progression, extending beyond the limits of this mundane sphere.... Third, that spirits can and do communicate with mortals, and in all cases evince a desire to elevate and advance those they commune with.”
- **Sir William Crookes** (1832-1919), the eminent physicist and chemist, discovered the element thallium and was a pioneer in radioactivity. He invented a high-vacuum tube that contributed to the discovery of the x-ray. He was knighted in 1897 and served as president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1870, he set out to drive “the worthless residuum of spiritualism” into the “unknown limbo of magic and necromancy.” However, after thorough investigations of Daniel D. Home and Florence Cook, he changed his views, saying, “[The phenomena] point to the existence of another order of human life continuous with this, and demonstrate the possibility in certain circumstances of communication between this world and the next.”
- **Rev. William Stainton Moses** (1839-1892) received his master’s degree at Oxford before becoming an Anglican minister and English Master at University College in London. A medium himself, he was the first vice-president of the Society for Psychical Research, after first denouncing mediumship either fraudulent or demonic. He said, “Some six months were spent in persistent daily efforts to bring home to me proof of the perpetuated existence of human spirits and their power to communicate.”
- **Sir William Barrett** (1844-1925) was professor of physics at the Royal College of Science in Dublin for 37 years, and was knighted in 1912 for his contributions to science. He frequently sat for sessions and became a prolific source of information from the Other Side after his death. “I am personally convinced that the evidence we have published decidedly demonstrates (1) the existence of a spiritual world, (2) survival after death, and (3) of occasional communication from those who have passed over.”

- **Frederic W. H. Myers, Esq.** (1843-1901) graduated from Cambridge in 1864 and lectured in classical literature. He was one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research and devised the system of Cross-Correspondences that proved *without doubt* the survival of the spirit. After his own transition, he organized a huge experiment from the Other Side whereby several mediums received a meaningless fragment of a message that emerged only when the fragments were assembled. Myers is famous for saying, "Messages of the departing and the departed, have, to my mind actually proved: a) In the first place, they prove survival pure and simple; the persistence of the spirit's life as a structural law of the universe; the inalienable heritage of each several soul; b) ...they prove that between the spiritual and the material worlds an avenue of communication does in fact exist; that which we call the dispatch and the receipt of telepathic messages, or the utterance and the answer of prayer and supplication; c)...they prove that the surviving spirit retains, at least in some measure, the memories and the loves of earth..." (Myers is a major contributor to this book.)
- **Sir Oliver Lodge** (1851-1940) was professor of physics at University College in Liverpool, England and later principal at the University of Birmingham, and achieved world acclaim for his pioneering work in electricity, including the radio and spark plug, and was knighted in 1902. Starting in 1884, he sat frequently with prominent mediums, Leonora Piper and Gladys Osborne Leonard. "I tell you with all my strength of the conviction which I can muster that we do persist, that people still continue to take an interest in what is going on, that they know far more about things on this earth than we do, and are able, from time to time, to communicate with us.... I do not say it is easy, but it is possible, and I have conversed with my friends just as I can converse with anyone in this audience now." (Lodge also contributes to this book.)
- **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle** (1859-1930) was knighted for his service as a historian during the Boer War, but is best remembered as the creator of Sherlock Holmes. Driven by skepticism, he began investigating psychic phenomena in 1886 but concluded, "Healthy skepticism is the basis of all accurate observation, but there comes a time when incredulity means either culpable ignorance or else imbecility, and this time has been long past in the matter of spirit intercourse."
- **Dr. Richard Hodgson** (1855-1905) earned his M.A. and LL.D at the University of Melbourne, and moved to England where he studied moral sciences at Cambridge. He became a full-time psychical researcher in 1887 and had hundreds of sittings with Leonora Piper over 18 years. He admitted, "I had but one object, to discover fraud and trickery. Frankly, I went to Mrs. Piper with Professor James of Harvard University about twelve years ago with the object of unmasking her.... I entered the house profoundly materialistic, not believing in the continuance of life after death; today I say I believe. The truth has been given to me in such a way as to remove from me the possibility of a doubt." Hodgson spent the last four years of this life having extensive conversations with his dear friend Myers through Mrs. Piper. Myers regaled him with thousands of pieces of evidence, all of which was accurate.
- **Dr. James H. Hyslop** (1854-1920) received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1887 and his LL.D. from University of Wooster. He taught philosophy at Lake Forest University, Smith College, Bucknell University and Columbia University. He later became a full-time psychical researcher, affirming, "I regard the fact of survival after death as scientifically proved. I agree that this opinion is not upheld in scientific quarters. But this is neither our fault nor the fault of the facts. Evolution was not believed until long after it was proved. The fault lay with those who were too ignorant or too stubborn to accept the facts. History shows that every intelligent man who has gone into this investigation, if he gave it adequate examination at all, has come out believing in spirits; this circumstance places the burden or proof on the shoulders of the skeptic."
- **Dr. William James** (1842-1910) wrote extensively in psychology, philosophy, and religion in his 35 years of teaching at Harvard. His *Principles of Psychology* and *Varieties of Religious Experience* are both classics. In 1885, he discovered medium, Leonora Piper, arguable the most accurate medium in history. He said, "One who takes part in a good sitting has usually a far livelier sense, both of the reality and of the importance of the communication, than one who merely reads the records.... I am able, while still holding to all the lower principles of interpretation, to imagine the process as more complex, and to share the feelings with which Hodgson came at last to regard it after his many years of familiarity, the feeling which Professor Hyslop shares, and which most of those who have good sittings are promptly inspired with."

[Special thanks to Michael Tynn for contributing some of this material.]

Introduction

Suppose you've been happily married for 35 years, but are facing some medical challenges in your late sixties. One day, as you're watching TV, suddenly your heart convulses and you're dead before you realize what's happening. You jump up and see your old body slumped in the chair, as your distraught spouse calls 9-1-1. You figure out that you're "dead," but oddly feel fine because you no longer have that pain in your chest and that heavy dragging feeling has gone. In fact, you feel fantastic.

As the paramedics pronounce you dead, you have a problem. Your spouse is in hysterics and you really want to offer comfort and say, "I'm feeling great, so don't worry about me." However, no one can see or hear you, even though you're right in their faces. And then another dilemma. A bright light appears and you just *know* you're supposed to go into it, but you don't want to leave your spouse alone, sobbing hysterically.

Neither of you has ever given a moment's thought to what happens when we die, so you're both pretty scared about what's going to happen next. This scenario plays out thousand of times a day in the U.S., made infinitely more difficult by the ignorance on the part of most people about the process of crossing over to the Other Side.

Most people turn to the one institution that claims to have a handle on the afterlife business, but if you rely on organized religion for an explanation of what happens to you and your loved ones when you die, you're in a lot of trouble. The problem is that organized religion has no business claiming to know about the Other Side and what happens when we cross over. And what they *claim* happens is complete nonsense, designed solely to keep you locked in fear and dependent on them.

You see, organized religions confuse the spirit with the body, and conduct elaborate and morbid rituals around the *physical* body of those who cross over and then bury it in the ground, thus creating a focal point for yet more morbid and grief-stricken rituals. Meanwhile, those religions ignore the departing *spirit* completely, which actually could use a boost of energy from a heart-felt prayer. Instead, religions assign the spirit to some vague limbo state to await a far-off and ill-defined Judgment Day. More fear!

Even worse, those who really *do* know about the soul plane, i.e., those already there, are eager to tell us about it via psychic mediums, but organized religions shut them out by declaring that talking to the "dead" is necromancy, and the work of the devil. So their monopoly on the issue of death and dying is secure. Yet more fear!

The purpose of this book is to let you know that the soul plane is a dynamic, vibrant place in which your loved ones are having a blast, especially the children who cross over. And that old physical body? It's a worn-out garment

that's of no consequence, so save the graveyard real estate for the living, not the dead, who certainly do not need it. Those on the Other Side shake their heads at the huge spending on cemetery lots, expensive caskets and elaborate rituals, all to honor an old, worn-out and discarded overcoat.

If our hypothetical couple had read this book, there would be no confusion. They would know that the other is still in the room and say, "Okay, so you're going home before me, but I'll be along in a while. Come get me when it's my time. Until then, go into the light and have fun."

Views of Death

Feeling safe is a paramount need of all aware beings, especially humans, with our powerful imaginations. And when faced with a change in life circumstances about which we know little or nothing, our "safety cage" is seriously rattled, more so when we know that the change is inevitable. The only thing we don't know is when and how it will happen. In fact, the fear level can rise to the point where we just block out the entire subject ... at least until it stares us in the face and says, "Prepare to die." And then we panic.

As I write this, I'm hearing that nine months ago, NASA sent a Mars probe called Phoenix almost 250 million miles and it landed a couple of miles from its intended target. In many ways, we are an amazing species yet most people know nothing about what's going to happen when their physical body can no longer serve their four other bodies. In fact, most don't even *know* they have four other bodies. This glaring ignorance about who they really are is the reason why most people fear death, whether their own or that of a loved one.

Regarding death, questions abound. What is dying like? What, if anything, happens next? Where will I go? Will I be safe? Not knowing the answers to those questions can really mess up what should be the climax of an Earth life – crossing over back to home. This book will not only alleviate any fears you may have but may actually have you looking forward to crossing over.

The reports in this book portray the afterlife as a grand, glorious experience, stretching out so far into the future that you're effectively eternal. Life on the Other Side is infinitely safe because, of course, as a soul, you can never die or come to any harm whatsoever. And all you need do to enjoy this glorious anticipation is broaden your sense of who you are and embrace your eternal self.

The number one regret people have when they land on the Other Side is, "Why did I waste so much precious time on Earth worrying about dying? What a waste? Why didn't anyone tell me it was this wonderful?" Well, this book is your wake-up call, so get with the program.

Also, do not think an Earth life is what it's all about.

All you are doing on Earth is lining up to get your ticket to the main event ... and the doors open when you cross over. Trust me, if you think life on Earth is great, you ain't seen nothing yet!

Death is a graduation. It simply means you have done all you planned to do before you incarnated, and there's no more point in hanging out on the Earth plane. You no longer need a physical body as a focal point for your spirit ... so you leave. Graduation ceremonies are joyful occasions, so we should be happy for those who "die," for they no longer have to suffer the physical plane's limitations. They are FREE and having a blast.

Being born is so much harder than going home because you had to lower your rate of vibration, learn about life down here, grow, and earn your place in life. Crossing over means returning once more to the higher and finer vibration of the soul plane, so is much easier and more pleasant. Do not think, "Alive is good; dead is bad." In fact, the exact opposite is true, as you will read. So, do not grieve for those who cross over. Instead, send them your prayers and best "bon voyage" wishes for the most wonderful journey on which they have embarked.

What you think of as "life" and "death" are just different phases of existence with different rates of vibration in a continual process of soul growth and evolution. As you begin to identify with the eternal nature of your being rather than just one stage, you lose all fear of the transition to the soul plane. The obvious question is, "Why doesn't everyone know about this?" The reason is that one of the conditions for having an Earth life is that you forget who you were before birth and who you'll be after death. If you didn't, Earth lives simply wouldn't serve their purpose, which is *playing with free will*. The only way free will can be realistic during the Earth experience is if you *think* you're separate from everyone else, so you have to block out the knowledge of who you are on the soul plane, and how connected you are to everyone else in bonds of deep love.

So if we're not supposed to know about our true identity, why am I and others blowing the whistle? *To even the playing field*. Organized religion has tilted the field by distorting the truth and telling you that contact with the Other Side is the work of the devil. This would be a joke if it weren't for its negative impact on believers in terms of generating fear of dying and amplifying the grief when we "lose" a loved one. So, through this and other books, the Other Side talks back and sets the record straight.

And it's so necessary, according the folks on the Other Side. Their number one gripe is that most people cross over in complete ignorance of what to expect and require orientation classes, which consumes a lot of resources over there. But far worse are those who arrive with unshakeable but erroneous beliefs about the afterlife. Correcting these "know it alls" is a *huge* drain on soul plane resources. As you'll see, those over there beg and plead for the truth to be taught

over here, to avoid unnecessary conflict and confusion when we cross over.

So, what *can* you expect when it's your time? Crossing over is a very personal process. It depends on how you have prepared yourself during your current incarnation, your soul age in terms of evolution, and what you believe will happen during and after your crossing. Because the soul plane is created from thought, you will *initially* experience whatever you *expect* to experience – for good or not so good – until your spirit guides sets you straight.

Crossing over will be whatever your soul needs to experience – quick and easy or long and painful – but the conscious you reading this book will have an enormous impact on that experience. So know that crossing over is never a punishment but your ticket out of here, a blessed release to a life wondrous beyond your imagination, as you will read in this book.

So why are we afraid of death? Ignorance, pure and simple. We fear what we do not understand, whether it's death, a move to another city or country, or a change in our living situation. We always fear things that are unknown to us. Sadly, there is very little *real* mainstream (i.e., organized religion) information about dying and what we can expect on the other side. Courtesy of organized religion, we have so many horrible ideas about death that we suppress the fact that we, too, must die rather than acknowledge and explore the issue. We are frightened to face death and it is this lack of knowledge at the root of the fear. However, if we truly understood death, we would see it as a reward to which we are entitled and not a punishment. Spreading that understanding is the purpose of this book.

Some cultures are smart enough to rejoice at death. However, Western society has become ritualistic and dogmatic in its beliefs, and sees death as a final and painful experience. Aboriginal cultures are able to let go of loved ones, knowing they are in a much happier state than they could ever be on the earth plane, and that the rest of us will catch up with them in a few short years. Christianity has horribly misinterpreted death, with images of torture and suffering in the afterlife rather than a return to the higher planes, free of limitations.

So how can this fear be overcome? First, stop sweeping it under the rug and buying into religion's negative connotations about death. Accept that life and death are just brief phases in an eternal cycle, and learn all you can about crossing over from books such as this. Then, one day, you will look forward to your crossing and what the soul plane has in store for you.

How can you know within yourself that life is eternal and that you will be far better off once you've shrugged off your limiting physical body? One way is to have out-of-body experiences, usually during a deep meditation. Then you will *know* you are not just your physical body and can actually function much better without it. Also, learn all you

can about death so you no longer fear it. Read accounts of those who have returned to loved ones with messages of hope and well-being. Their reassurances will dispel any horror or dread you may have about leaving your physical body when your time comes. Instead, you'll learn about the freedom and happy, joyous lives of those on the Other Side.

How will overcoming the fear of death change your life? It changes everything you are doing, for you are no longer limited by your own physical and emotional states. You will have access to unlimited knowledge from the Other Side to tap into and use. You will also prove to yourself that you are master of your own destiny, and that death is just a walk into the next room, with nothing to fear. The resulting release, freedom and joy completely colors every waking moment of your day.

But do not wait until you are on your deathbed to prepare. Be prepared for death at any moment by knowing each breath could be your last. Leave nothing unsaid, nothing undone, and live each day thoroughly with love so that if you do cross over in the next moment, you will have no regrets. You will not be thinking, *Gee, I could have said this, or I could have done that*. Also, clear up any grudges you're holding and offer any apologies you need to make because it's much easier, and means more while you're still on this side of the veil.

So prepare yourself for your death or the death of a loved one by proving to yourself through meditation and education that you are not confined to your physical body, and that you have four other bodies that are the *real* you. Once you know there is nothing to fear except fear itself, you will have eliminated the biggest barrier to soul-consciousness that exists on the earth plane. Yes, intellectualizing will get you part of the way, but you will only *truly* believe through the feeling experienced in meditation.

Your Death Is Your Choice

Before you incarnated, you defined certain scenarios called "exit points," at which you will make a "leave/stay" decision. If you have a close brush with death, depending upon your personality, attitude, beliefs and unmet goals, your soul will choose to either leave for the Other Side or remain on Earth in order to complete any remaining lessons and experiences necessary for your growth.

Your soul may choose to include your conscious mind in the choice. During a Near-Death Experience (NDE), for example, you may be asked if you want to stay or return to your body, but usually, your loved ones on the other side will tell you it's not your time and that you must go back. You can usually bring back that memory with you, which results in drastic changes in your thinking and way of life, such as living your life *on purpose*, rather than reactively.

When it comes to talking to children about death, many of them understand that death is nothing more than going

to sleep at night and living in a new world they still remember, so they will not fear death. It is mainly the parents' attitudes that determine how children feel about death. If parents are fearful or uncomfortable around the subject, kids will pick this up and have the same fears.

If the adults think of death as a happy transition rather than as a source of sorrow or fear, so would children. And if children are raised to know that death is a beautiful release into a world of sunshine, peace and love, they will be more prepared to face it without fear. Parents should train children to know that death is a happy experience, and that the soul has fulfilled all its reasons for incarnating so it's going home. Parents in grief over a lost child should go straight to Chapter 13 for reassurance that their child is being well taken care of by loving experts in child psychology.

Part One begins with accounts from many spirits about their own crossing, followed by an overview of the various planes of existence above the Earth Plane and reports about the unsavory Near-Earth Plane. Part Two focuses on the Astral Plane, or the main soul plane. We read accounts of arrival and orientation, what faculties we will have on the Other Side, and what we can expect to experience. Then we examine the Higher Astral levels, or Summerlands, which will be your home if you're leading a life of kind service to those around you.

Next, we read about the lower Astral Plane levels, peopled by the spiritually unevolved and those who were sure death meant oblivion so are wandering around a little confused. Those who enjoyed inflicting harm or cruelty on others or animals find themselves on the lowest Astral Plane levels – the so-called Stony and Dark Planes – truly places you do *not* want to end up in. Then we wrap up descriptions of the planes with a brief look at the next higher plane – Mental Plane – although most of us will spend a long time on the Astral Plane before being ready to go there.

Part Three then looks at special topics such as children and animals that cross over, the hierarchy running the Other Side, travel and activities over there, including the very special job of escorting people through their transition and orienting them to life on the Other Side. Then, after discussing the woeful job done by organized religion to prepare us for the Afterlife, the book offers advice from those on the Other Side about life on both sides of the veil and how we can better work together. And the book closes with what a few famous people are doing on the Other Side.

Final Word

Please remember that these reports are opinions, and that it takes centuries to fully experience the soul plane. Ask a New York cab driver and a Kalahari Bushman to describe their lives and you will get completely different accounts. It's the same with our reporters. They disagree about a lot yet they are all right in their experience.

Bibliography

The accounts in this book are all prefaced by the name of the person reporting and the initials of the book in which their report was originally published.

The publishers of these books appear to be long out of business, but if by chance a publisher is still around and holding the publishing rights, please contact Dandelion Books to see what arrangements can be made.

- AD: Julia [Julia T. Ames] through medium W.T. Stead, *After Death: A Personal Narrative*. New York: George H. Doran, n.d.; c. 1914. The Ames' family name does not appear in the book, but can be found at "William Thomas Stead," Red Pill, http://redpill.dailygrail.com/wiki/William_Stead. Stead was also a medium when alive and a frequent spirit communicator after his death. In 1909, three years before his death, he published *Letters from Julia*, a series of messages coming from Julia T. Ames, an American newspaperwoman, during 1892-93. Stead had met her on his travels, and several months after Julia's death, she began communicating through automatic writing. Stead himself died on the *Titanic*, having years earlier written a fictional account of a ship named *Majestic* sinking after hitting an iceberg.
- BHP: Frederic W.H. Myers through medium Geraldine Cummins, *Beyond Human Personality*. Downloaded from <http://www.trans4mind.com/spiritual/cummins/cummins2.html>.
- BI: William Thomas Stead, *The Blue Island*. Experiences of a New Arrival Behind the Veil. Estelle W. Stead and Par-doe Woodman, eds.
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- FMABL: John Heslop through F. Heslop, medium, *Further Messages Across the Border-Line*. A Continuation of *Speaking Across the Border-Line*. London: Charles Taylor, date not available.
- *HH: Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson through medium Anthony Borgia, *Here and Hereafter*. San Francisco: H.G. White, 1968 (dictated in 1957). Monsignor Benson was a Catholic priest who died in 1914. In 1947, he started channeling through Borgia, and dictated six books, three of which are quoted from in this book.
- ITE: Alice Gilbert, medium, channels her son Philip in *Into the Everywhere*. Tunbridge Wells: World Spiritual Council, 1968.
- LFOS: Henry Thibault, *Letters from the Other Side*. London: 1919.
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- *LIWU: Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson through medium Anthony Borgia, *Life in the World Unseen*. M.A.P., 1993.
- LO: Paul Beard, *Living On: How Consciousness Continues and Evolves After Death*. New York: Continuum, 1981.
- MA: Joy Snell, *The Ministry of Angels*. G. Bell & Sons, London, 1928. Joy grew up in Ireland, became a nurse in England, and had an extraordinary series of spiritual experiences which she recounts in her book, *The Ministry Of Angels*. She was frequently at the bedside of a dying patient and saw the deceased family members and friends who came to assist their loved one in making his or her transition. Joy also describes many out-of-body ADCs she had with her mother, father, brother, and others. This book sets forth what she learned about the Ministry of Angels on earth, and of life in other spheres of existence beyond this world. It has been written because angels have told her that rare psychic powers have been bestowed on her, and she has been permitted to see what is hidden from the vast majority of mankind until after death, that she might tell others something of what has been revealed to her.
- *MALIWU: Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson through Anthony Borgia, medium, *More About Life in the World Unseen*. San Francisco: H.G. White, 1956; c1968.
- MTR: Robert Leichtman, M.D., *Mark Twain Returns*. Columbus: Ariel Press, 1982.
- PMJ: T.E. Lawrence through Jane Sherwood, medium, *Post-Mortem Journal: Communications from T.E. Lawrence*. London: Spearman, 1964. This is the spirit of the British soldier who was the legendary "Lawrence of Arabia," responsible for so many Allied successes in the Near East during WWI.
- PTS: Philip Gilbert through his mother, Alice Gilbert, medium. *Philip in the Spheres*. London: Psychic Book Club, undated.
- PTW: Philip Gilbert through Alice Gilbert, medium, *Philip in Two Worlds*. London: Andrew Dakers, 1948.

- RR: Robert Liechtman, M.D., *Rembrandt Returns*. Columbus: Ariel Press, 1981.
- RTI: Frederick W.H. Myers through Geraldine Cummins, medium. *The Road to Immortality*, the afterlife journal communicated by Frederic William Henry Myers, 1843-1901. It is in the form of an unpaginated e-book downloaded from <http://www.trans4mind.com/spiritual/cummins/cummins1.html>. In life, Myers was a principal investigator for the British Psychical Society, his most famous case being Mrs. Leonora Piper, the celebrated Boston psychic medium. Myers went in convinced Mrs. Piper was a fraud but came out a firm believer in her and the actuality of the afterlife. In fact, after his death, he became Mrs. Piper's control spirit.
- SABL: John Heslop through F. Heslop, medium, *Speaking Across the Border-Line: Being Letters from a Husband in Spirit Life to His Wife on Earth*. London: Charles Taylor, 9th ed., n.d.
- SBS: Geraldine Cummins, *Swan on a Black Sea*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965.
- SOLR: Robert R. Leichtman, M.D. through medium D. Kendrick Johnson, *Sir Oliver Lodge Returns*. Columbus: Ariel Press, 1979.
- SR: Robert R. Leichtman, M.D., through medium D. Kendrick Johnson, *Shakespeare Returns*. Columbus: Ariel Press, 1978.
- ST: Stainton Moses channeling several beings, but mainly the control known as "Imperator" (Malachi). *Spirit Teachings*. London: Spiritualist Press, n.d. (Prior to 1883.) The entire manuscript is available for download at: www.meilach.com/spiritual/books/st/spteach.htm
- SWSL: Charlotte E. Dresser, medium, and Fred Rafferty, editor, *Spirit World and Spirit Life*. Los Angeles: Rafferty, 1922.
- TIH: Harry Homewood, medium, *Thavis Is Here*. New York: Fawcett, 1978.
- TR: Grace Rosher, medium. *The Travellers' Return*. London: Psychic Press, 1968.
- TSR: Notes received from Army Private Thomas Dowding, killed in action in France, in 1917, through Wellesley Tudor Pole, medium. *The Silent Road*. Neville Spearman, 1917. Downloaded from www.nderf.org/private_dowding.htm.
- WS: *William Stead*, downloaded from redpill.dailygrail.com/wiki/William_Stead.

* *I have formatted these three books by Monsignor Benson along with the three not quoted from, and have made them available as a PDF e-book. To get a copy, please visit www.DeathWithoutFear.com. (Tony Stubbs)*

PART ONE: THE BIG PICTURE

Chapter 1: Crossing Over

Introduction

This chapter looks at the process of crossing over through the eyes of those who have already done it. At the very least, it's not at all painful or scary if you know what to expect, and is often described as ecstatic. However, if you *don't* know what to expect, you may experience emotional upset and mental confusion.

Many reports say that it's such an easy process that people often don't realize they've done it and are frustrated because no one can see or hear them. So it behooves us to learn as much as possible about crossing over for when our time comes.

Julia Ames and Monsignor Benson are the most prolific reporters on the process, as are Joy Snell, T. E. Lawrence and Philip Gilbert.

The chapter closes with several warnings about suicide and its consequences on the other side, so if you know anyone contemplating this as an option, be a friend and share this chapter with them.

"Dying" is a Perfectly Natural Process

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) Death to you is a darkened way; to us it is a path of light.

Never be afraid of death. It is only the final sleep of the mortal mind, and has no power to affect the spirit mind. That grows stronger and brighter and more active from the moment of separation, until it becomes so educated and balanced that it is the all-in-all of spirit life. I found it so, for I went to sleep in the mortal mind, and discovered at last that I was more vividly awake than ever.

One thought we will leave with you. Take no thought nor anxiety for the future life. Have no dread of death, which is only a coming, a rebirth, into this life. Do what you can to help others into an understanding of the immortal life of the human soul, and live in happy contentment and confidence of your future, now and ever.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) Death only exists for the living, not for us.

What you call death ... is really the entrance into life.

We imagine that life, our life, ends with the death of the body. What you learn here is that the span of life spent in the earth-body is but a small segment of the great circle of existence. You go on. You never stop. Sometimes you sleep, but you always wake.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) Do remember that, to us, your coming over here is no cause for grief – why *should* we interfere [with the course of an illness], in normal circumstances?

(*John Heslop, SABL.*) The change from the shadows into the sunlight, from night to day, is no greater than that between your world and ours.

If people *really* believed what they *profess* to believe, they would rejoice when a loved one is born into the higher life by death, and not mourn as they do.

(*Therold, FMABL.*) Death is merely the casting off of the garment of flesh, which you bury out of sight and which passes into dust. You, the real Ego, with its personality, pass at once into the [Near-Earth plane].

(*Winifred Combe Tenant, SBS.*) There comes to me from the earth such a feeling of oppression, of worrying, of anxiety, of fear of death, and all is derived from non-belief. If they could but realize the glory, even a fragment of the peace of this life I now experience.

Why brood about decay and death? Perishing, perishing, when it is all being recreated, reborn, immediately. That is what is happening. We shall all be changed in the twinkling of an eye.

Here that core of self laughs at the episode of mortal death and seeks and finds life, more life.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Leaving the earth in the common act of 'dying' is a perfectly natural and normal process, which has been going on continuously, without intermission, for thousands upon thousands of earthly years.

Everything about you on earth is corruptible. There is, then, a palpable state of *impermanence*. However much the decay may be arrested, you still have the certain fact of the eventual termination of your earthly life, which in itself sets the seal upon mundane impermanence.

We have seen the shadow of 'death' and the 'grave,' those two ogres that frighten so many good souls, filling them with a dread that is utterly and completely unwarranted. Man was never intended to go through his earthly life with this monstrous dark shadow forever hanging over him. It is unnatural and thoroughly bad. It has been raised by men upon earth in remote periods of the earth's history and it has so continued for the generality of earth's dwellers for generation after generation of the incarnate. It is but natural that, with the opportunity presenting itself, we should visit

the earth and, by bringing with us a little of the light of knowledge, we should be able to dispel the fears of death of the physical body that haunt so many people and, in place of those fears, to give some knowledge and information of the superb lands of the spirit world wherein we now live and wherein you yourself will one day come to join us.

In place of fears of a speculative 'hereafter,' we try to show you something of the brilliant prospect that lies before you when that happy moment arrives for you to take up your true and undoubted heritage in the spirit world.

Death is Painless

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The whole process of transition, which is so much feared by the folk on earth, is a natural, normal, and painless process. It is as natural and painless as removing your outer garment when you have no further use for it.

The spirit body exactly coincides with the physical body, and during waking hours, the two are inseparable. When sleep takes place, the spirit body withdraws from the physical body, but the former is attached to the latter by a magnetic cord. I call it a magnetic cord for want of a better name. It is a veritable life-line. Its elasticity is enormous since the spirit body can travel either throughout the earth during sleeping hours or throughout the spirit world, subject to special conditions and limitations.

However vast the distance between the sleeping physical body and the temporarily released spirit body, the magnetic cord can span the distance easily and perfectly, and without any diminution of its active agency, which is to sustain life in the earthly body. The life-line will, as its length increases, become exceedingly fine and almost hair-like in appearance.

Just so long as the magnetic cord is joined to the earthly body, just so long will earthly life remain in the physical body. But the moment that dissolution takes place, the life-line is severed, the spirit is free to live in its own element, while the physical body will decay in the manner which is perfectly familiar to you upon earth.

The death of the physical body, then, is simply the severance of the magnetic cord, and, as far as the physical body is concerned, it is closely akin to ordinary sleep. There does not seem anything very dreadful about this straightforward process if a little thought is given to it.

Since my own advent into spirit lands, I have talked with many friends upon the matter and not one of them was aware by any internal or external incident that their magnetic cord had parted from their physical bodies. In this respect, the actual process of dissolution is painless. Whatever suffering is endured by the person whose transition is imminent is purely physical. That is to say, it is the cause of physical death, from disease, for example, or accident, that may bring pain and not the actual death itself. If doctors can

relieve the pain, and there is no reason why in all cases they should not, then the whole course of dissolution would be entirely painless. Why should the severance of the magnetic cord be a painful operation? If it were, it would surely suggest that there were some fault in the heavenly scheme of things. But there is no fault and 'death' is painless.

(*Joy Snell, MA.*) It was the first death that I had witnessed. Immediately after her heart had ceased to beat, I distinctly saw something in appearance like smoke, or steam as it rises from a kettle in which the water is boiling, ascend from her body. This emanation rose only a little distance and there resolved itself into a form like that of my friend who had just died. This form, shadowy at first, gradually changed until it became well defined and clad in a pearly-white, cloud-like robe, beneath which the outlines of the figure were distinctly visible. The face was that of my friend but glorified, with no trace upon it of the spasm of pain which had seized her just before she died.

Whether the deaths I witnessed were peaceful or painful, preceded or not preceded by the recognition of someone from the other world, always, immediately after the physical life had ceased, I saw the spirit form take shape above the dead body, in appearance a glorified replica of it. However painful might have been the last hours, however protracted and wasting the illness, no trace of suffering or disease appeared upon the radiant spirit face. Striking, at times, was the contrast which it presented to the human features, pain-distorted and deep-furrowed by suffering.

The Moment of Death Described

(*Sir Alvary Gascoigne, diplomat, LO.*) Every part of me seemed to be switching off gently and ... I suddenly found I was floating above my body. ... Nothing in life comes up to the immense joy of dying. ... I told you that I had experienced a strange feeling of power that seemed to be drawing me out of my body during the last few days of my illness. ... I welcomed this inrush of new life and let go very willingly. That was why I did not linger. ... You must ... be ready to receive the power that draws you quite painlessly out of your body. It's the most beautiful and glorious thing. I see so many are prolonging their life quite unnecessarily. ... Life commands; you agree and co-operate.

(*E. Bozzano, LO.*) I remember feeling rather peculiar, I suppose it would be the night before I passed over. I did not think I was going, but felt less clear in mind than usual. About dawn I had a sinking feeling and the daylight seemed to go. I seemed to be swaying about in the dark and felt suddenly giddy.

I am still rather puzzled as regards the actual events before my decease. I just remember the great darkness swooping down on me like a bird. How close, how suffocating it was.

Then at last there was relief, expansion, a sense of being freed from an intolerable weight. When I came out into a strange clearness, I did not believe that I had died. ... My memory isn't quite the same, at least so far. It is as if a curtain had been rung on a play. I know it has all happened, is, perhaps, still there in its setting behind that curtain. But I can't quite visualize it.

Deathbed Visitations and Transition Guides

(*Colonel Cosgrave, LO.*) All day on August 28, Horace Treubel [had been] very low-spirited. He had been brought in from the veranda but was now absolutely radiant. 'Look, look, Flora, quick, quick, he is going!'

'What, where, Horace, I do not see anyone.'

'Why, just over the rock, Walt appeared, head and shoulders and hat on in a golden glory; brilliant and splendid. He reassured me, beckoned to me, and spoke to me. I heard his voice but did not understand all he said only, "Come on." All the rest of the evening, Horace was uplifted and happy. ...

On the night of September 3, Horace was very low. Then he said: 'I hear Walt's voice, he is talking to me.'

I said: "What does he say?"

He said: 'Walt says: "Come on, come on, come on."'

After a time he said: 'Flora, I see them all about me, Bob and Bucke and Walt and the rest.'

On the last night, about 3 a.m., [Horace] grew perceptibly weaker and his eyes opened, staring towards the further side of the bed, his lips moved, endeavoring to speak; his eyes remained riveted on a point some three feet above the bed. My eyes were at last drawn irresistibly to the same point in the darkness. Slowly the point at which we were both looking grew gradually brighter, a light haze appeared, spreading until it assumed bodily form and took the likeness of Walt Whitman, standing upright beside the bed, a rough tweed jacket on, an old felt hat upon his head, and his right hand in his pocket, similar to a number of his portraits. He was gazing down at Treubel, a kindly reassuring smile upon his face, he nodded twice as though reassuringly, the features quite distinct for at least a full minute, then gradually faded from sight.

(*Rev. C. Drayton Thomas, LO.*) Then the atmosphere seemed to become light around me and I heard voices, but they were not the voices of people on earth. They were the voices of my two dear boys, the voices I had not heard for many long years. I did not feel impatient. I knew they were there and that I should not lose them again. I was content to wait until I should be able to speak to them.

I did not feel that wild joy, that great elation, that I had always expected to feel. I was not in the state for it, but felt heavy, stupid and sleepy, yet at peace and full of confidence and quiet happiness knowing they were round me. Now and again, I heard the voices of people actually in the room with me. The nearer voices were those of my boys.

After a time of unconsciousness, I seemed to have become clearer quite suddenly. It was like a burst of sunshine and I looked. I seemed able to move my eyes quite suddenly and in the burst of sight and light I saw my boys, my brothers, and many others round me. I think this was only for a moment or two and then I must have gone to sleep again. I knew nothing more then and so suppose that it was just before leaving my body that I had that burst of light. I remember waking gradually on this side and hearing my sons say: "Be quiet and don't try to think."

(*Joy Snell, MA.*) It was about six months after I began to work in the hospital that it was revealed to me that the dying often really do see those who have come from the realms of spirit life to welcome them on their entrance into another state of existence.

The first time I received this ocular proof was at the death of L-, a sweet girl of seventeen, who was a personal friend of mine. She was a victim of consumption. She suffered no pain, but the weariness that comes from extreme weakness and debility was heavy upon her and she yearned for rest.

A short time before she expired, I became aware that two spirit forms were standing by the bedside, one on either side of it. I did not see them enter the room; they were standing by the bedside when they first became visible to me, but I could see them distinctly as I could any of the human occupants of the room. In my own thoughts, I have always called these bright beings from another world, angels, and as such I shall hereafter speak of them. I recognized their faces as those of two girls who had been the closest friends of the girl who was dying. They had passed away a year before and were then about her own age.

Just before they appeared, the dying girl exclaimed: "It has grown suddenly dark; I cannot see anything." But she recognized them immediately. A smile, beautiful to see, lit up her face. She stretched forth her hands and in joyous tones exclaimed: "Oh, you have come to take me away! I am glad, for I am very tired."

As she stretched forth her hands, the two angels extended each a hand, one grasping the dying girl's right hand; the other her left hand. Their faces were illumined by a smile more radiantly beautiful even than that of the face of the girl who was so soon to find the rest for which she longed. She did not speak again, but for nearly a minute her hands remained outstretched, grasped by the hands of the angels, and she continued to gaze at them with the glad light in her eyes and the smile on her face.

Her father, mother and brother, who had been summoned that they might be present when the end came, began to weep bitterly, for they knew that she was leaving them. From my heart, there went up a prayer that they might see what I saw but they could not.

The angels seemed to relax their grasp of the girl's hands, which then fell back on the bed. A sigh came from her lips,

such as one might give who resigns himself gladly to a much needed sleep, and in another moment, she was what the world calls dead. But that sweet smile with which she had first recognized the angels was still stamped on her features.

The two angels remained by the bedside during the brief space that elapsed before the spirit form took shape above the body in which the physical life had ceased. Then they rose and stood for a few moments one on each side of her, who was now like unto themselves. And three angels went from the room where, a short time before, there had been only two.

I noticed that often, irrespective of the physical conditions or frame of mind of the dying, just before the end came, they would seem to recognize someone who was not of those at the bedside and was by the latter unseen. I have seen a woman who had been in a comatose state for hours suddenly open her eyes with a look of glad surprise, stretch forth her hands as though to grasp invisible hands outstretched towards her, and, then, with what seemed like a sigh of relief, expire.

I have seen a man who had been writhing in agony suddenly grow calm, fasten his eyes with an expression of joyful recognition on what to those observing him was only vacancy, and uttering a name in tones of glad greeting, breathe his last breath.

I recall the death of a woman who was the victim of that most dreadful disease, malignant cancer. Her sufferings were excruciating, and she prayed earnestly that death might speedily come to her and end her agony. Suddenly her sufferings appeared to cease; the expression of her face, which a moment before had been distorted by pain, changed to one of radiant joy. Gazing upwards, with a glad light in her eyes, she raised her hands and exclaimed: "Oh, mother dear, you have come to take me home. I am so glad!" And in another moment, her physical life had ceased.

The memory of another death which occurred about the same time comes back to me. It was that of an old soldier who was in the last stages of tuberculosis, brought on by exposure while fighting his country's battles. He was brave and patient but had frequent paroxysms of pain that were almost unbearable, and he longed for the relief which he knew death alone could bring him. One of these spasms had seized upon him, and his features were convulsed with agony as he fought for breath, when suddenly he grew calm. A smile lit up his face, and, looking upwards, he exclaimed, with a ring of joy in his voice, "Marion, my daughter!" Then the end came.

[These visitations] are not, as some suppose, a phantom creation of their own imagination on which they gaze so gladly just before death occurs, but a ministering spirit – an angel – and more highly endowed with life and vitality than those who have not yet undergone the change wrought by death.

About an hour before [another friend of Snell's, who was dying of pneumonia,] died, he called [his wife] by name and, pointing upwards, said: "Look, L-, there is B-! He is

waiting for me. And now he smiles and holds out his hands to me. Can't you see him?"

"No, dear, I cannot see him," she replied, "but I know that he is there because you see him."

B- was only a child who had been taken from them a year before, when between five and six years of age. I could plainly see the little angel with curly flaxen hair and blue eyes, garbed in what I call the spirit robe. The face was just that of a winsome child, but etherealized and radiant as no earthly faces ever are.

The father had been greatly weakened by the ravages of his disease and the joyful emotion occasioned by seeing his angel child seemed to exhaust what little vitality he had left. He closed his eyes and sank into a placid sleep. He remained in that state for about an hour, the angel child meanwhile staying poised above the bed with an expression of glad expectancy on his radiant face. Occasionally he looked lovingly at his mother.

The breathing of the dying man grew fainter and fainter until it ceased altogether. Then again, I witnessed what had now become a familiar spectacle to me – the formation of the spirit body above the discarded earthly body. When it was complete, the angel child clasped the hand of the now angel father, each gazed into the eyes of the other with an expression of the tenderest affection, and with faces aglow with joy and happiness they vanished.

It was indeed a glorious sight! It made death, which nearly everybody regards as something awesome, enshrouded in dark, impenetrable mystery, appear beautiful and beneficent, indeed as the crowning proof of infinite mercy and unfathomable love. ... Had it not been for the presence of the weeping widow, I could have clapped my hands and have sung for very joy.

(Helen Salter, LO.) My turn to make what some believe is a long journey. But for me, it was such a short journey. Oh, it was so incredibly easy and painless. There was only one very brief nightmare, when I wanted to get back into my body in order to return to you. An instant's bad dream. That's all death was to me. After it, almost immediately, there came the unimaginable moment – a welcoming mother and father. You can't imagine what a feeling of safety they gave me. Freedom at once from that inert thing, my body – freedom from the fear of the Unknown. ...

In the past, we, you and I, have wondered what our arrival to this level would be like. But nothing we supposed came up to that beautiful, surprising, homely feeling I had with these two protectors waiting for me. That's why I have called it the unimaginable moment.

Death's exit is so simple and all our lives, we have made it intrinsically complicated.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) The rule is that all souls passing to here shall have some measure of attention. It depends upon themselves how much attention they shall have. Some

are sunken so spiritually low as to preclude any approach to them that would be effective.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) It is a safe rule to say that no person passing into the spirit world at dissolution does so unattended. There is always *someone* there. But in so many cases, we are prevented from giving any help by the spiritual state of the soul we are approaching. In fact, approach becomes impossible and so we can do nothing but watch the soul depart upon its way into darkness.

No transition is left unattended, no matter where it may be, or in what circumstances, or howsoever caused; whether it be upon land, beneath the land; on the sea or under it, or in the air above the earth.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) Let us assume that an average, not very instructed, basically good-hearted person comes over after a serious illness which has given him warning of approaching death. ... One way in which the Law brings help – the Law of the Inevitable Consequence – is that an act of service or help must be repaid, sometime. If our average person has helped anyone and has not been repaid whilst on earth, then that entity over here must repay it somehow and an easy way is to give help after death, for many people need it badly.

Similarly, anyone who has injured our average man and, in the next life, realized his folly, must make reparation.

That is how it happens that really decent people, the above average, do enter “heaven,” in that they find themselves at once surrounded by a crowd of eager helpers, extending upwards even to the advanced people and everything here is smooth sailing.

But the reverse also applies. If [the recent arrival is] a fairly decent sort of chap, there is always someone he’s helped, or some good turn owing to him, and he may link for a flash with one of the advanced people – just a glow of blinding light. Once he’s done that, he is in the way of knowing.

Spirits Know When Deaths will Occur

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The knowledge that a transition is about to take place, together with its precise location, is the result of a remarkable conveyance of information, passed from one to another, commencing with the important functionary, the individual’s personal spirit guide, and terminating with us who undertake the work of escorting folk from the earth world to their homes in the spirit world. Between the former and the latter, there is a clear concatenation of minds, if I may so express it, an exchange of information carried out by thought transmission, accurately and rapidly.

In the city, there is an immense building which exercises the function of an office of records and inquiries. In the earth world, you have your multifarious offices of inquiry. Why should we not have ours? ...

Among its many important duties ... is that of knowing beforehand of those who are about to come into this realm.

This information is accurate and infallibly reliable. It is collected through a varied process of thought transmission, of which the inquirer sees little or nothing. He is merely presented with the required information. The value of this service can be readily imagined.

In normal times upon the earth-plane, when transitions maintain a fairly steady level, it is valuable enough, but in times of great wars, when souls are passing into the spirit world in the thousands, the advantages of such an office are almost incalculable. Friend can meet friend and together can unite in helping others who are passing into spirit lands.

Many People are Prepared by Sleep Visits to the Spirit World

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Visits to the spirit world [during sleep] are ... usually made by people who are conversant with spirit truths and who are eager to add to their knowledge. While these visitations are in progress, they can meet and converse with such of their relatives and friends who have passed into spirit lands before them.

Old relationships are renewed; indeed, it would be more accurate to say that they are continued since they have not been interrupted. The visitor can gain useful help and guidance upon his earthly affairs from people who, from their superior position in the spirit world, are able to offer assistance. ...

Hundreds of individuals ... come to us here when they retire to rest upon earth and, with their knowledge of the laws of the spirit world, they can give *us* material help of no small consideration in a variety of ways. They become temporarily one of our community of friends, enjoy the delights of these realms, enter into our affairs as one of us – as they will be permanently one day – work with us, indulge in our recreations, and so forward their own spiritual progression in a score of different ways.

Imagine the rejoicing when regular visitors to our realms at length come to take up their permanent abode with us. The information and knowledge that they have been accumulating during the years, but which, during their waking hours on earth, they will scarcely recollect, will now take their place in their minds and memories as useful experiences. These experiences will establish the continuity of their existence since their birth on earth, instead of transplanting them into the spirit world with the feeling that they must start anew.

Some Incarnates Spend Nights Working on the Astral Planes

(*John Heslop, FMABL.*) When you possess occult power, your guides can bear your [sleep]-released body into higher realms for spiritual refreshment. It is ever hampering to this psychic body to be held in the flesh, and it gladly floats away with ministering spirits to one of the beautiful spheres of light and love.

Through the communicating cord which connects the two bodies, it returns to the physical portion, which is always guarded by watchful spirits who can warn the absent one of the necessity to return. Then in a flash it can re-enter its prison of flesh, for the physical body would be in great danger if left unprotected at such times.

As psychic development proceeds, you become conscious of these journeys into space, and the memory of what you have seen and heard is a priceless possession, a foretaste of the glory of the life to come. But it is not always wise for these spirit journeys to be too well remembered by one who must still linger in the flesh: the contrast would make his life unendurable, so in mercy, it is often veiled from your minds.

When times of great stress come, as in the present war, we call upon you to help us in our work for those newly passed to this side. And you come in the night and aid us greatly while your physical frames are asleep.

We dare not take you to the battle-fields, for the suffering you see there saddens and depresses you too much, causing lassitude and exhaustion when you awake, which might unfit you for the day's work. But when any of you are willing to help us, we greatly value it.

The more you have functioned in these heavenly spheres while still on earth, the more familiar will they seem when that glad day comes, and you float away from your own worn-out body and join your loved ones in this Land of Peace.

Some Spirits Warn the "Living" of Their Own Demise

(*Joy Snell, MA.*) I woke one night out of a sound sleep to find the room filled with light, although there was no light burning in it, and standing by my bedside was my dearest girl friend, Maggie. Addressing me by name, she said: "I have a secret to tell you. I know that I am going over to the other world before long and I want you to be with me at the last and [to] help ... comfort my mother when I am gone."

Before I had recovered from my fear and amazement to make any response, she vanished and the light slowly faded from the room. ...

A week later, I was summoned to my friend's home. I found her suffering from a feverish cold, but there was nothing in her condition to cause alarm. She had no presentiment of impending death. And it was obvious to me that she had no remembrance of the visit she paid me in her spirit form. Therein lies a mystery of which I can suggest no explanation. In the course of my life, I have seen several apparitions of people who were still living on the earth-plane of existence. To some of them I have spoken, and some of them have spoken to me; but subsequently I have always found that they themselves, in the body, had no knowledge or remembrance of such communications with me.

Maggie's mother was called away to see a sister living at some distance who was seriously ill, and she asked me to stay with her daughter while she was absent. I had been with Maggie only about three or four days when, one night, she was suddenly taken very ill. She expired in my arms before the doctor, who had been summoned, could reach her.

Circumstances of Arrival Vary

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Circumstances diversify individual cases to such an extent that it would require many volumes to recount even a part of the experiences of others in the matter of arrival in the spirit world alone.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) Unfortunately the moment of transition sometimes seems to be very full of pain and dread. With some [the time of quitting the body] lasts a comparatively long time. ... With some it is momentary. The envelope opens, the letter is released, and it is over. But sometimes the death-birth is like childbirth and the soul labors long to be free. ... I do not know why some should pass so much more easily than others. That it is a fact is true. But, after all, the parting of soul and body is but an affair of moments. There is no reason to regard it with so much alarm. The tranquil soul that prepares and knows need not feel even a tremor of alarm. The preliminaries of decease are often painful; the actual severance, although sometimes accompanied by a sense of wrench, is of small account.

Some [whom I have spoken to] say that they left the body before it ceased to breathe, others that they lingered behind for a time after physical life had ended. But these are exceptions.

For Most, Death is a Painless Waking Up After a Gradual Decline

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) Most people who in normal times live completely through their earth cycle, merge into the more detached unemotionalism of old age – at least that is what should happen, but does not always! [They] soon find their bearings and begin to study the technique of thought control – very slowly for the average. They are like children going to school.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) With the approach of earth-life's natural ending – so [spirit control Abdul Latif] says – the etheric body alters. It becomes stronger and more easily detached (old people fall asleep easily, don't they?), and the act of death takes place easily and without shock to the etheric body so that, at any rate, except in exceptional circumstances, they are not hampered with the results of nervous strain, fear and suspense, as with the soldier in battle or people in air raids or prison camps.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) [Sudden or violent transitions] are not what could be considered in any way normal had other

conditions prevailed. Normal transition, from the point of view of the spirit world, is that the spirit body becomes gradually and easily detached from the earthly body in a slow and steady process of separation. The magnetic cord, in such cases, will become detached from the earthly body gently, it will fall away naturally, just as the leaf falls from the tree in autumn. When the leaf is in full life and vigor it requires a strong action to dislodge it from the tree. And so it is with the spirit body. In the young, the cohesion is firm, but it gradually lessens as age increases. When people on earth reach the autumn of their lives, like the leaf of the tree, the spirit body is less firmly attached to the physical body.

(Julia Ames, AD.) When you die, a change takes place that differs so much in different cases that I think I had better begin by describing as clearly as possible what is felt by the person who dies. In my letters I have told you how I felt. There was no pain, no shock, no sensation at all save that of waking up out of a deep sleep, perfectly well. That was my experience and it was a very happy one. It is a very common one, but it is not universal. There are many ways of passing from your side to ours. Of these the most general is painless waking up and the first sensation is one of rest, of relief, and of peace.

Sudden or Violent Transition

(“Joe’s Scripts,” LO.) Those who are killed quite suddenly ... come over with the feelings and thoughts which they had just before. Often it is those who still think they have to go on fighting and have to be calmed; often they think they must have suddenly gone mad because the scene has changed. That is not surprising if you can imagine in what a tremendous state of tension, almost like madness, the actual fighting is carried out. Then they often think ... they are now in a base hospital.

We have to humor them at first and only gradually explain to them what the hospital means. Sometimes they are profoundly glad, those who have come to the limit of endurance and rejoice to be free from the world of wars. Sometimes, with those who have very strong home ties, we have to let them realize as gently and gradually as possible; most are so weary in spirit that they worry very little, and are soon ready to settle down to their rest.

Others have foreseen that they must be killed. They have seen the shell or bomb about to explode and have known that when it explodes, they must be gone.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) How is a person affected whose death is sudden and perhaps violent as well, which would include the person who is precipitated into the spirit world without warning or that, knowing the end of earthly life is imminent, yet undergoes a violent transition? How would such a person fare?

It calls to mind the phrase, “launched into eternity.” What dreadful images this stupid phrase must have conjured up in the minds of so many people. The awful tragedy of ‘death’ which all men must face. The terrible uncertainty of what was to happen after they had ‘departed this life.’ The fearful prospect of being marched before the Great Dread Judge. Most of them having been told that they were ‘miserable sinners,’ the best that could be hoped for would be ‘mercy,’ provided that they ‘believed in’ something or other that was so obscure in meaning that they could not make heads or tails of it, but which nevertheless possessed some magic means of ‘saving’ them. Which was it to be – Heaven or Hell? Most probably the latter, from their obvious failure to reach the impossible standard set by their religious ‘teachers.’ Of what is there to be frightened in eternity? ...

In speaking of people passing into the spirit world suddenly, you no doubt will recall where, for example, failure of the heart’s action is the cause and where accident or some deliberate action causes an instantaneous transition. In the latter instance, you would be forcibly reminded of what takes place during the evil times of war upon the earth.

It is when we come to transitions where the physical body is literally disintegrated, blown into fragments in a second of time, that the greatest distress and discomfort are caused to the spirit body. The magnetic cord is snapped off or wrenched away, almost as though a limb of the physical body were torn from its socket. The spirit body finds itself suddenly dispossessed of its earthly tenement, but not before the physical shock of disintegration has been transmitted to the spirit body.

Not only is there extreme bewilderment, but the shock has something of a paralyzing effect. The person so situated may be incapable of movement for the time being. In many instances, sleep will intervene. He will remain in the place of his dissolution, but we come to his rescue and carry him away to one of the rest homes specially provided for such cases.

Here he will receive treatment from experts and ultimately the patient will recover his full health beyond any shadow of doubt. There is no such thing as a relapse or recurrence of the indisposition. Perhaps the most difficult part of the treatment comes when a full consciousness is restored and the patient begins to ask questions!

What effect, you might ask, does maiming of the physical body have upon the spirit body? None whatever, as far as the full complement of limbs and organs is concerned. Disintegration may be sudden or it may take a number of earthly years through the normal processes of decomposition. Whichever way it may take place, the result is the same – a complete, or almost complete, disappearance of that physical body. The physical body is corruptible, but the spirit body is incorruptible. And what applies to the whole in the latter also applies to the limbs and organs; in fact, to every part of the spirit body. The loss of one or more limbs

of the earthly body, the possession of diseased organs, physical malformations, any subnormal or supernormal conditions of the physical body, any or all of these states leave the spirit body entirely unaffected. Whatever has happened to the physical body, the spirit body will always maintain its complete anatomy.

The shock which is sustained is not exactly the same as would be the case of a shock merely to the physical body, though it is nearly enough like it for your understanding. But the results can be entirely dissimilar. In the rest homes of the spirit world, a cure is certain to be brought about without any possibility of doubt and upon full recovery, the victim of the shock is not one whit the worse for the experience. The memory of it remains, though only perhaps dimly, without any recurring reactions upon the mind of an unpleasant nature. And there are no resulting fears implanted in the mind such as would be the case with the physical body.

Many people have passed into the spirit world in what the earth would call a dreadful manner – and dreadful it might be in earthly eyes – yet, when they have come to tell me about their rapid transition, their ‘sudden death,’ they have treated the whole episode with a light heart, and often are perfectly ready to joke about the matter. Indeed, I have heard friends remark that they entered the spirit world in a most undignified manner! And that, I think, demonstrates the precise difference in the way in which ‘death’ is regarded by us here in the spirit world and by you still upon earth. The ‘death’ of the physical body is a tragedy to the earth world. To the spirit world it is the operation of a natural law unattended by any mournful solemnities. While the physical body is being consigned to its earthly abode, accompanied by all the ceremonial trappings and dismal black habiliments of minister and mourners, the spirit body containing the real and everlasting substance of personality has gone to its proper abode in the spirit world.

Multitudes Arrive at Once in Times of Disaster and War

(“William Stead,” WS.) When the Titanic went down, Estelle, Stead’s daughter, was on a tour with her own Shakespearean Company. One of the members of the touring group was a young man named Pardoe Woodman. According to Estelle Stead, a few days before the disaster, Woodman told her over tea that there was to be a great disaster at sea and that an elderly man very close to her would be among the victims. In 1917, shortly after being discharged from the army, Woodman began receiving messages from William T. Stead by means of automatic writing. Estelle Stead then started sitting with Woodman and observing. She noted that Woodman wrote with his eyes closed and that the writing was very much like her father’s. Moreover, the writing would stop at times and go back to dot the “i’s” and cross the “t’s,”

a habit of her father’s which she was sure Woodman knew nothing about.

Stead informed his daughter that there were hundreds of souls hovering over their floating bodies after the big ship [the Titanic] went down, some of them apparently not comprehending their new state as they complained about not being able to save all of their valuables. After what felt like a few minutes, they all seemed to rise vertically into the air at a terrific speed. “I cannot tell how long our journey lasted, nor how far from the earth we were when we arrived, but it was a gloriously beautiful arrival,” Stead recorded through Woodman’s hand. “It was like walking from your own English winter gloom into the radiance of an Indian sky. There, all was brightness and beauty.”

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) In ancient days great plagues would send thousands of souls into spirit lands in most distressing conditions. In modern times one has no need to point to the devastating wars that cast people loose into the spirit world with shocking suddenness. In many cases such sudden dissolution is a great shock to the spirit body undergoing it. But here again the spirit world has risen to every contingency. Homes of rest exist here especially for the treatment of people who have undergone a sudden transition.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) As the earth world progresses in civilization – in its own estimation – the means and methods of waging war become more devastating and wholesale. In place of hundreds killed in battles in ancient times, the slain are now counted in hundreds of thousands. Every one of those souls has finished with his earthly life – though not with the consequences of it – and, in so many cases, the earth world has finished with him too. The individual may survive as a memory to those whom he has left behind him; his physical presence is gone. But his spirit presence is unalterably with us. The earth world has passed him on to us, oftentimes not really caring what has befallen him. He will leave behind him those whom he loved and who loved him, but the earth world – so it thinks – can do nothing for him, nor for those who mourn his passing. It is we, in the spirit world, who will care for that soul. With us, there is no shifting the responsibility on to other shoulders and passing upon our way.

The earth world, in its blind ignorance, hurls hundreds of thousands of souls into this our land, but those who dwell in the high realms are fully aware long before it happens, of what is to take place upon the earth-plane and a fiat goes forth to the realms nearer the earth to prepare for what is to come.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) They say there never has been in all man’s history such wholesale precipitation of souls into our world – very ordinary, unevolved people, too, not really bad, but not evolved enough to attract strongly advanced help by the operation of the Law. It is felt over here that these people did not have a fair chance as, had they lived

out their complete earth cycle, they might have found themselves better off here and so we try to seek them out individually and to help them.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) There is much to do here to help the multitudes who come. With every second some soul arrives on this side. Sometimes in great catastrophes, they arrive by hundreds. Can you not see how often we are called to help?

(Imperator, ST.) What you hear are the first mutterings of a conflict which will be long and arduous. Such are of periodical occurrence. If you could read the story of the world with the spirit-sight, you would see that there have always been periodic battles between the evil and the good. There have recurred seasons when undeveloped intelligences have had predominance. Especially are such seasons consequent on great wars among you. Many spirits are prematurely withdrawn from the body. They then pass before they are fit; and at the moment of departure, they are in evil state, angry, bloodthirsty, filled with evil passion.

They do mischief great and long in the after-life. Nothing is more dangerous than for souls to be rudely severed from their bodily habitation, and to be launched into spirit-life, with angry passions stirred, and revengeful feelings dominant. It is bad that any should be dismissed from earth-life suddenly, and before the bond is naturally severed. It is for this reason that all destruction of bodily flesh is foolish and rude: rude, as betokening a barbarous ignorance of the conditions of life and progress hereafter; foolish, as releasing an undeveloped angry spirit from its trammels, and [imbuing] it with extended capacity for mischief.

Many Do Not Realize They Have Died

(Julia Ames, AD.) The dead – for I fear I must use that misleading word – in almost all cases where death has been unexpected, does not realize the change that has taken place. His only idea is that he has suddenly recovered. Physical pain drops off you like a garment with the body which you left behind; you wake up well; and your first impression is one of delight, just the same as when you wake up from a bad dream. So simple, so natural does this seem that you almost always mistake what has taken place. I did, as you know. And I find it is a common experience.

The immense majority here say the same thing. They were asleep; they found themselves awake and well, in the same place where they fell asleep, and at first they could not realize they had died.

And this is the case even when, as in some churches, the dying have been prepared for death by the last solemn rites. They knew that they were going to die, but they did not expect that dying was waking up quite well, with all their old faculties and memories, in the same place where they fell asleep, and this always is a source of astonishment, of bewilderment, to them at first. Many think it is a pleasant

dream to be well and dread waking up to the old pain and weakness. ... There are many, very many exceptions. But, as a rule, death is a painless waking up in health and the first emotion is bewildered astonishment.

The spirit-body, disengaged from the physical body, is conscious, at least I was, almost from the first. I awoke standing by my dead body, thinking I was still alive and in my ordinary physical frame. It was only when I saw the corpse in the bed that I knew that something had happened.

What first convinced me that something had happened was the sight of my old body. After that came the discovery that my nurse did not see me nor hear me, but wept about my body as if that were myself. This is usually what happens. The passing soul, which retains consciousness, sees the body which it had inhabited lying inert.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) He is a type of many, very many, who come here with their mortal desires and plans still the only life they know. We talked with this one a long time after he could hear us, and he is at last convinced that he is here in the spirit world, and that a new life, a new adaptation to life, is necessary. It seems to us that when he at last actually understands this necessity, he will show the same persistence and determination to ‘win out’ that had formerly made him a success in mortal life and earthly business. He will progress rapidly when once he is entirely convinced that the way leads to happiness, selfishly, probably, at first, but growing into spiritual insight by degrees until he becomes a fine worker here in helping others. This is our joy, to watch the advance of those who seem almost hopeless. You will love to help when you come.

(Private Dowding, TSR) Physical death is nothing. There really is no cause for fear. Some of my pals grieved for me. When I “went West,” they thought I was dead for good. This is what happened. I have a perfectly clear memory of the whole incident. I was waiting at the corner of a traverse to go on guard. It was a fine evening. I had no special intimation of danger, until I heard the whizz of a shell. Then following an explosion, somewhere behind me. I crouched down involuntarily, but was too late. Something struck, hard, hard hard, against my neck. Shall I ever lose the memory of that hardness? It is the only unpleasant incident that I can remember. I fell and as I did so, without passing through an apparent interval of unconsciousness, I found myself outside myself! You see, I am telling my story simply; you will find it easier to understand. You will learn to know what a small incident this dying is.

Think of it! One moment I was alive in the earthly sense, looking over a trench parapet, unalarmed, normal. Five seconds later, I was standing outside my body, helping two of my pals to carry my body down the trench labyrinth towards a dressing station. They thought I was senseless but alive. I did not know whether I had jumped out of my body through shell shock, temporarily or for ever. You see what

a small thing is death, even the violent death of war! I seemed in a dream. I had dreamt that someone or something has knocked me down. Now I was dreaming that I was outside my body. Soon I should wake up and find myself in the traverse waiting to go on guard. It all happened so simply. Death for me was a simple experience – no horror, no long-drawn suffering, no conflict. It comes to many in the same way. My pals need not fear death. Few of them do; nevertheless there is an underlying dread of possible extinction. I dreaded that; many soldiers do, but they rarely have time to think about such things. As in my case, thousands of soldiers pass over without knowing it. If there be shock, it is not the shock of physical death. Shock comes later when comprehension dawns: “Where is my body? Surely I am not dead!” In my own case, I knew nothing more than I have already related, at the time. When I found that my two pals could carry my body without my help, I dropped behind. I just followed, in a curiously humble way. Humble? Yes, because I seemed so useless. We met a stretcher party. My body was hoisted on to the stretcher. I wondered when I should get back into it again. You see, I was so little ‘dead’ that I imagined I was still physically alive. Think of it a moment before we pass on. I had been struck by a shell splinter. There was no pain. The life was knocked out of my body; again, I say, there was no pain. Then I found that the whole of myself – all, that is, that thinks and sees and feels and knows—was still alive and conscious! I had begun a new chapter of life. I will tell you what I felt like. It was as if I had been running hard until, hot and breathless, I had thrown my overcoat away. The coat was my body, and if I had not thrown it away, I should have suffocated. I cannot describe the experience in a better way; there is nothing else to describe.

My body went to the first dressing station, and after examination, was taken to a mortuary. I stayed near it all that night, watching, but without thoughts. It was as if my being, feeling, and thinking had become ‘suspended’ by some Power outside myself. This sensation came over me gradually as the night advanced. I still expected to wake up in my body again – that is, so far as I expected anything. Then I lost consciousness and slept soundly.

No detail seems to have escaped me. When I awoke, my body had disappeared! How I hunted and hunted! It began to dawn upon me that something strange had happened, although I still felt I was in a dream and should soon awake. My body had been buried or burned, I never knew which. Soon I ceased hunting for it. Then the shock came! It came without warning suddenly. I had been killed by a German shell! I was dead! I was no longer alive. I had been killed, killed, killed! Curious that I felt no shock when I was first driven outside my body. Now the shock came, and it was very real. I tried to think backwards, but my memory was numb. (It returned later.)

How does it feel to be ‘dead’? One can’t explain, because there’s nothing in it! I simply felt free and light. My being seemed to have expanded. These are mere words. I can only tell you just this: that death is nothing unseemly or shocking. So simple is the ‘passing along’ experience that it begs description. Others may have other experiences to relate of a more complex nature. I don’t know.

Suicide

The Situation of Suicides

(*Winifred Combe Tenants, SBS.*) [L’s] suicide led to his being plunged into darkness and isolation here for a very long time. ... Eventually he took to drugs and, as you know, killed himself. That is a mortal sin. He took into this life his crude ego that hated and hated and denied love. So he suffered much. Poor Eveleen some time after coming here had to perceive, as we all have to, the consequences resulting from her life on earth. She saw how much she was responsible for her son’s ruined life on earth. She has been very brave about it and, though her reception by L. was grim, she sought him out and tried to help him out of his hell of her and his creation. She has done much to improve things for him.

(*Philip Gilbert to his mother, PTW.*) Last night, we both worked ... at one of the hardest tasks in one sense, among some suicides. The Law, to me, seems hard on such people, but it is simply the inevitable consequence, I suppose. Spiritually, they are earth-bound unless they have been very highly evolved people who have performed the act for unselfish reasons. Any suicide for selfish reasons, however strong and urgent, finds himself ‘tied to the aura of his incarnation,’ as the Chief put it to you. He cannot escape to the Light, though he may see it. Yet, to those who have been sorely tried, help can be taken. It acts as in every case: if a person has been sufficiently in harmony to attract, magnetically, harmonious entities, then, whatever folly he has committed in earth-life, he gets help and inspiration here, in time. It may not be from the highest levels, but it is from higher levels than his own, and there are billions of discarnate entities who have chosen to pay off debts of selfishness and greed by unselfish efforts to help in the astral world. They can often pay off ‘Karma’ in this way, just as well as by re-incarnating. There is no lack of help here – rather, a superabundance of it.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) What happens to the unfortunate soul who puts an end to his own existence? In many – in most of such – cases the pressure of work and worry, combined with private misfortune have unsettled the reason – or this is the would-be charitable verdict of the Coroner’s Court. There are few men who have not in their make-up that weak point at which control breaks down. In most cases, courage has been sapped by self-pity and so the breach is carried by a flood of despair. No man can judge, because each of us has his breaking point whether life tests us to the limit or not.

The friend of whom I speak was found almost immediately and I was able to go to him. He was in a kind of stupor and I was told that he might remain in this state for a long time and that nothing could be done about it. We watched over him and were loath to leave him in the misty half-region where he was found. It was a tract I myself had known in time past. Until he regained consciousness, there he had to remain; had we forcibly removed him, his poor body would not have been able to stand the conditions of our plane and so we had to leave him there. Now and again, I went back to find him still in the same quiet coma, and seeing the state of his astral form, I almost dreaded his awakening.

Suicides often show this long-lasting coma. It is really a merciful pause during which some of the damage to their emotional bodies is quietly made good. Much always remains for them to do when they come to themselves and in D's case, Mitchell asked me to make periodic visits to him so that he might find a familiar face when he awoke.

It would be tedious to describe the slow and uphill progress he made. I was with him as often as possible and, as his senses developed and his body strengthened, I got him by degrees into better conditions. There was much trouble to clear; remorse for his weakness, and sorrow and fear all had to be cured. He is still unable to join Mitchell in his 'home,' but a delicate beauty and grace is beginning to emerge and I am hopeful of more rapid progress soon.

It is fitting that those who help him pay their debt of sympathetic suffering, but we know the end, and it is glorious. There can be no such thing as final failure, and this is where we have the advantage of earth. Even a relapse can be only temporary and there is never any occasion for despair. So I look forward with joy to the day when D will be among is as a happy and fulfilled being with his mistakes and sorrows all behind him.

Spirits Rarely Regret Dying

(Julia Ames, AD.) When you stand alone for the first time on this side, there is not always, as you would think, a great longing to go back to the world you have quitted. The first sense is not that, but of awe and curiosity as to the new world. When I awoke, I was so astonished and amazed at what I saw and at the strangeness and the sameness, I did not want to come back.

I did not think much during the journey of those whom I had left behind. They were alive and well, and they would soon come over and be with me. The overpowering rush of new sensations seemed to leave no room for regrets or thoughts of the old life.

The body is such a miserable substitute for the spirit in which we live and move and act as we think. ... It would be all loss and no gain. There is nothing the body can give me that I do not now enjoy. ... Much that I now enjoy I should lose by being again in my body.

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) We had a hearty laugh over our ghostly experience [dying in a car accident], but also mingled with sorrow for our families left behind, two of whom were badly injured at the time we were killed. But as time passes, and we learn of the beauties and joys of this life, we realize that we have lost our desire to really return to earth life, and we anticipate now the things that we may attain in the future.

We are not developed enough to even conceive what lies before us. But be sure of one thing, absolutely sure: You will never miss your human body, nor want to exist in one again.

'Did you not believe in spirit communication?'

Not entirely. How can a person believe in unseen powers when he is absorbed and narrowed by the seen? By the essentials of that life? I did not, at all events. And I approached the close of life with a fear that was almost horror. I was not wicked, as the world thinks of wickedness, but bound by the material and visible. And when the final test came, I could not find the spiritual and unseen. So I passed. And my friends must have had little consolation in the thought of my entering upon new conditions.

'How did it fare with you?'

I sank, out of extreme pain, into a sleep so gentle and peaceful, I think it would have been all right if I had never awakened again. But the waking came slowly, hardly consciously, until I finally knew that the terror was over, and about me were kindness and helpfulness. You probably cannot imagine those first moments of exquisite joy that I felt in the new life, a new opportunity to 'make good,' in a way, in a small way, but with such visions of larger opportunity before me that the life here has become truly the great adventure.

Chapter 2: The Planes of Life

Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the various planes of existence that circle the Earth. This series of ever-larger spheres increase in frequency, starting with the Near-Earth Plane, which is where many may initially find themselves if they are unprepared for crossing over or had a belief system that denied survival.

Next is the Astral Plane, with its many levels (from which most of our contributors report), then the Mental Plane to which we graduate once we've grown as much as possible on the AP at some far distant point in the future.

Words can't begin to describe the even higher frequency planes, so I guess we'll have to wait and see. For now, it's enough to know the Astral Plane, described in Chapters 4 – 11, exists and is waiting for us. Therefore, make sure you are ready for it, because you *will* find yourself on one if its levels when you leave Earth life.

The main message of this chapter is that the higher planes are exquisitely organized, but the overall purpose of it all is beyond human comprehension. Our task in life is to prepare for what comes *next*, and not worry about what happens after that. After all, we will be on the next plane for decades or centuries, so we will have plenty of time to prepare.

The Ordered Scheme of the Heavens

The Planes Are Spheres

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The spheres of the spirit world are ranged in a series of bands forming a number of concentric circles around the earth. These circles reach out into the infinity of space and they are invisibly linked with the earth world in its lesser revolution upon its axis and, of course, in its greater revolution round the sun. ...

An exemplification of the concentric circles is afforded us when we are told that a visitant from a higher sphere is coming down to us. He is relatively above us, both spiritually and spatially.

The low realms of darkness are situated close to the earth-plane and interpenetrate it at their lowest. ...

With the spirit world made up of a series of concentric circles, having the earth world approximately at the center, we find that the spheres are subdivided laterally to correspond broadly with the various nations of the earth, each subdivision being situated immediately over its kindred nation.

(*Unnamed Chinese philosopher, LHH.*) In the first place, the statement that 'heaven is all about you,' is correct to a certain extent, for spirits of the lower circles come and go freely through the earth's atmosphere. But it is not the real abiding place of any spirit who realizes where he is. It is in the farthest limits of the atmosphere that the heavenly lands begin.

We always speak of it as a sphere, and this is a proper designation, in a way, in that it surrounds the earth at a fairly uniform distance. But in another sense this does not fully express the conditions. We will have some difficulty here in making you understand just how this spirit land is placed. It is not the inside of a hollow shell, nor is it the outside of a sphere. It is more nearly described as consisting

of various regions, – you might almost call them countries. Their extent is impossible to convey to you, because distance is such a relative term. We will have to make a general statement and say that these regions are thousands of miles in extent. They are not like islands in the sky, and yet how else can I describe them? I know I am indefinite, but I am doing the best I can.

It is in these regions or countries that spirits of the lower plane have their homes. They are not replicas of any portion of the earth, for we have no cities [at this level]. Some times the homes are not far apart, but there are no congested sections. There is room to spare for everyone, and always will be.

If you were to attempt to explore these countries by any means at your command, you would sail about in many directions to find the various places. And if you desired to stop and investigate any one of them, you would find each one very extensive. But you must keep in mind that distance means nothing to us. It is possible to encircle the entire lower planes in a few seconds of earth time; although it is customary to use a rather slower speed than that.

We do not think of these various places as being separated, for we make no attempt to move any distance except through space. We have clairvoyant vision of nearly everything, but it is all under our control. We see comparatively little of our surroundings except as we experience a desire to view them.

If we wish to go to any place, it is only a question of desire and will power, and we are almost immediately at the place we had in mind.

It is a vague picture I am drawing, no doubt. It is not a vague country, I assure you. It is more real to us than even the earth with its mountains and oceans.

There are other spheres beyond these lower regions. Few of us have actual knowledge of them, except by de-

scriptions given by the few visitors from them, and from messengers who are trained to go to and fro. It is said that they grow more and more ethereal, and soon are beyond the ken of any with whom we communicate.

In making journeys to other planets, we no doubt go by them, but we cannot see them any more than you can see our sphere. It is all a question of advancement, and acquirement of higher senses, a knowledge of the more ethereal conditions.

(*Claude, CB.*) I'll give you a little chart Draw a round [circle] for the earth; around that put seven circles one outside the other, for the seven spheres. Outside those, filling all space, is an enormous force, an actual force which seems to contain or consist of many strong powers or forces that we think we have discovered on the earth plane – electricity to wit, radium [i.e., radiation], etc.; but there are many more still undiscovered on the earth-plane, but which we know are contained in this, the God-force or Life-force.

All in between and around every planet is the God-force; if you eventually went beyond the seventh sphere you would get into space and become part of the Infinite. You would then have no defined or finite form, for you would no longer be finite; you would then be only a consciousness.

There is something substantial about my spirit-body. Suppose I had to leave the third Plane and to go to the fifth, sixth, or seventh Plane (for good I mean, not for a visit). I know then my entire etheric body would undergo a change: the atoms would be of a still lighter kind, because the nearer I go to the God-force, or Life-force, the more actual Life-force there is running through my body and holding those atoms together.

(*John Heslop, FMABL.*) Briefly, the lower spheres are more or less interwoven with your earth. This includes Borderland, and the first and second spheres, with all their astral plains [sic]; also, the Grey World, which is the first of those below Borderland on the downward grade. Below the Grey World there are those of gloom and sadness, till you reach the land of total darkness.

As the spheres become more advanced spiritually, their distance from the earth increases and they are held in suspension in the atmosphere as separate worlds. I do not go much to Borderland, nor to the first and second spheres, because my work does not lie there, except on the rare occasions when I am sent down for the special help of one, probably known to me in the earth life. This one, not being advanced in spiritual perception, may be dwelling down there in the twilight of those spheres, or even in the darkness of spiritual ignorance. So the command comes to go and guide him into the light and give him comfort. Then, through prayer, his eyes become opened to see the beauty of the great love which flows around him.

It is true that, in Borderland and the lower spheres, the life and condition of the inhabitants are very similar to those

on earth. So much is this the case that many do not realize for long periods that death has passed and that they are in the intermediate worlds.

The third and fourth spheres are bright and beautiful, more like a glorified earth with their exquisite foliage and flowers and beautiful scenery. There are many intermediate planes in each sphere and these are more or less observed through the mentality and spiritual unfoldment of those who live there. Really, it is an extension of a similar faculty on earth, where a beautiful scene will produce exaltation in one individual, while another regarding it is quite unmoved.

Many of the higher spheres and interior states have originated by the combined thoughts of Exalted Beings from Higher Worlds, and none are permitted to enter them until they have been purified and are advanced in spiritual perception. But those who by prayer, faith, and, especially love, have their feet firmly planted on the right road while still on earth rise rapidly from sphere to sphere.

As the spheres become advanced spiritually, their distance from the earth increases, and they are held in suspension in the atmosphere as separate worlds.

The Boundaries of the Planes

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Each sphere is completely invisible to the inhabitants of the spheres below it, and, in this respect at least, it provides its own boundary.

Now I have already told you how the realms are one above the other. How, then, does one proceed from one to the next, either above or below. There must be some point or points in each realm where there is a distinct upward inclination to the one and a distinct declivity to the other. Simple though it sounds, that is precisely the case.

If we commence our world of spirit in the lowest recess of [what might be on earth something like] subterranean caves, we can see how each of the realms is connected with the realm immediately above it. ... The transition in the spirit world from one realm to another is literal – as literal as passing from [a] dark cavern to the sunlight above, as literal as walking from one room in your house to another, whether upstairs or down.

To pass from this realm where I live to the next higher, I shall find myself walking along gently rising ground. As I proceed, I shall see all the unmistakable signs – and feel them – of a realm of greater spiritual refinement. There will eventually come a point in my walking when I can go no further because I shall feel most uncomfortable spiritually. If I should be foolish enough to try to defy these feelings, I should, at length, find that I was completely unable to venture a foot forward without undergoing sensations which I could not possibly bear. I should not be able to see anything before me, only that which lay behind me. But whether we are standing at one of the boundaries, or whether we are well within the confines of our own realm, there comes a certain

line in the bridge between the realms where the higher realm becomes invisible to less spiritual eyes. Just as certain light rays are invisible to earthly eyes, and certain musical sounds are inaudible to earthly ears, so are the higher realms invisible to the inhabitants of the lower realms.

And the reason is that each realm possesses a higher vibrational rate than that below it and is therefore invisible and inaudible to those who live below it. Thus we can see that another natural law operates for our own good.

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) I am ashamed now to remember that on earth, I had great difficulty in my relationships with men whom I then regarded as inferior. I cultivated an attitude of fastidiousness which allowed me to regard them as less than human. One of my problems here has been to correct this attitude. My earlier experiences in the city of gloom brought me into touch with such men and women and I had shrunk in horror from any contact with them. Now I am learning that all of these are on their way upwards and will in time stand where I stand now, and that their faults and failings will exact from them, alas, the just measure of suffering.

With every advantage of education and upbringing, I brought with me so much evil, weakness, and wrong thinking and have had to be cured of it through so much pain and shame that I can have nothing but compassion and respect in my heart now for these others. My hierarchy of human values has had to be altered; instead of the imperfect judgments of earth where an adding up of this and that gives only an arbitrary and superficial result, here one sees a man clearly and as a whole.

One's scale of values has to be graded not upon present conditions but upon potential being; not what one is, but what one is capable of becoming is the criterion now.

Real value is a great leveler. All the nonsense of social standards is lost sight of here because we have to see the true nature of each one, and to recognize that social grade has very little to do with it. In fact, the queen and the peasant sometimes, though not always, have to change places. How cleverly good looks and social standing often mask a poverty-stricken and desiccated soul on earth! ...

The leveling tendencies operating increasingly in human society on earth look at first like a reflection of this process, but what goes wrong on earth is that the classes are reversed so that one or the other level claims a monopoly of all the virtues. Here, we find that the stratification of society runs vertically through the usual orders and so our 'noblemen' may come with equal likelihood from any social level.

The real 'classes' into which we are separated are divided in space because they have to obey the primal Law of Affinity. Near and far mean likeness ... in development and there is a compulsion in the association of groups of similar levels. Each group makes its own conditions and these are, for the time being, the only conditions in which its mem-

bers can exist in comfort. Whatever our natural plane may be, to go down from it causes acute discomfort and even suffering; to go up before one is ready means an air too rarified and light too intense to be borne. So each must go to his own place and stay there until development draws him up into a higher sphere.

Society is organized on a basis of emotional health; the angry, the sadistic, the brutal and the jealous have of necessity to foregather in their own place, because the atmosphere they engender cannot be borne by others, nor can they themselves bear the more rarified conditions of the higher spheres. Cure of these disorders comes gradually and, as they are cured, men are able to graduate into better conditions and are admitted to higher planes of being. It is a caste system if you like, but one based on fundamental affinities and never a cast-iron system from which there is no escape. The path upward is always open and there are willing hands to help and encourage any man who aspires to tread it.

Although segregation into planes produces a harmony of development, this does not imply a monotony of types.

We know that our stay on any one plane is temporary and, however our estimate of time may compare with the earth calendar, this notion of progress from plane to plane as development justifies it is common knowledge here. There is room for much speculation and difference of opinion as to ultimate ends, of course. Much of the thought of higher spheres is open to those who care to know, but there are many here who are satisfied to enjoy the easy satisfactions of their care-free lives without speculating upon any further development. In general, I think that those who have the farthest to go are most concerned with the journey. As I have said before, among thoughtful people at the university [here], much study is given to the progress of the human spirit, its ascent of the planes, and its probable return to earth when purification is complete.

More Developed Beings Visit the Summerlands

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) In plain words, there are other realms immeasurably more beautiful than that in which we were now happily living; realms of unsurpassing beauty into which we cannot penetrate until such time as we have earned the right to enter, either as visitors or as inhabitants. But though we may not pass into them, the glorious souls who dwell in them can come into realms of less celestial rarity, and can visit us here. ... Indeed, they constantly make visitations to consult and converse with the dwellers here, to give advice and help, to give rewards and commendations.

To those who had already witnessed ... visitations [such as the one we were about to witness], [the] arrival [of the lesser figures] was at once the indication of the coming of the high personage, and we all accordingly rose to our feet. Then, before our eyes, there appeared first a light, which might almost be described as dazzling, but as we concentrat-

ed our gaze upon it, we immediately became attuned to it and we felt no sensation of spiritual discomfort. In point of fact – as I discovered later – the light really became attuned to us; that is to say, it was toned down to accord with ourselves and our realm. It grew in shade to a golden hue upon the extremities, gradually brightening towards the center. And in the center slowly took shape the form of our visitant. As it gained in density, we could see that he was a man whose appearance was that of youth – spiritual youth – but we knew that he carried with him to an unimaginable degree the three comprehensive and all-sufficing attributes of Wisdom, Knowledge, and Purity. His countenance shone with transcendental beauty; his hair was of gold, while round his head was a lustrous diadem. His raiment was of the most gossamer-like quality and it consisted of a pure white robe bordered with a deep band of gold, while from his shoulders there [descended] a mantle of the richest cerulean blue, which was fastened upon his breast with a great pink pearl. His movements were majestic as he raised his arms and sent forth a blessing upon us all.

It is not possible for me to convey to you one fraction of the exaltation of the spirit that I felt while in the presence, though distant, of this heavenly guest. But I do know that not for long could I have remained in that temple while he was there without undergoing the almost crushing consciousness that I was low, very, very low upon the scale of spiritual evolution and progression. And yet I knew that he was sending out to me, as to us all, thoughts of encouragement, of good hope, of kindness in the very highest degree, that made me feel that I must never, never despair of attaining to the highest spiritual realm and that there was good and useful work ready for me to do in the service of man and that in the doing thereof, I would have the whole of the spiritual realms behind me – as they are behind every single soul who works in the service of man.

When we visited the temple in the city, and, from a distance, beheld the radiant visitor whom we had come to honor, he represented to the eye the appearance of perfect – and eternal – youth. Yet the degree of knowledge and wisdom and spirituality which he diffused, and which we could feel with our minds, was almost overpoweringly great. It is the same, in varying degrees, with all those who visit us from the higher realms.

Temporary Visits to Higher Realms

(*Gordon Burdick, TR.*) There may be some who progress quickly, but not many. I should say that most people stay on the first plane of experience as long as or longer than the normal span of earth life. One has so much to learn that it would not be possible to move on too soon. One just wouldn't be properly equipped for a higher kind of life until one was trained for it here.

(*Harry Dodd, LO.*) One cannot rise much higher because one loses consciousness. Accompanied by someone of greater development, one can go farther afield; but, if one goes much higher than one's own awareness, a dreamy state comes on and nothing registers clearly. I was taken traveling in this way so that I would understand it.

One's awareness grows as one develops – quite naturally as a child becomes an adult in time. One grows mentally and spiritually.

Time doesn't enter into this as it does in physical growth, of course. Some people here change rapidly and some hardly change at all. It is the *desire* to go forward that counts.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) Then having finished my "welfare work" (it is difficult to say how long it takes, as time is not the same), I go for a little light relief to one of the places of instruction. I do math or I listen to music and often, when doing that, I use it as a sort of funnel and go out into a wider space circle and increase my power so that I breathe for a while the "air" of a further plane of existence. Music is one of the "corridors" for evolving upwards. Even a very unspiritual entity can, if he *comprehends* music, flash upwards for a brief period, but he can't stay there, if his whole being is not in tune.

We were in a luminous plain of encircling white light, with faintly outlined domes and pinnacles reaching upwards into infinity. These are the thought worlds of the advanced – the creations of mind immeasurably stronger than ours. Music seemed to be emerging from each breath of air: at one moment, it was a cello and we blended with it and tried to increase our power even more.

An indescribable joy was in our hearts. We seemed to be one person, yet we each perceived, heard and felt. Flecks of radiant power floated around us.

But we could not stay long, for you, tied to the earth plane, are not strong enough to breathe this air save for a brief flash.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) When we have visited higher realms for a period, however long or short, we have only *glimpsed* the *greater perfection* of those realms. We can see that things are immensely purer in all ways, the colors, the musical sounds, the flowers and forests and woods; the rivers and streams; and, lastly, the people themselves, all are more rarified. But those of us who have been so fortunate as to have visited a higher state never on any account feel dissatisfied with our own estate upon returning to our own realms. Dissatisfaction does not come by visual comparison of our present realm with higher realms. There are other causes for that As far as my description of these realms is concerned, you need not be afraid that it is all too good to be true. To you who are still incarnate, it may seem that it is impossible of attainment. To us, it is our everyday life.

Beauty Increases as We Ascend

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) As we draw closer to the higher realms, the particles of the soil become finer, the colors more delicate, with a hint of translucency. A greater degree of resilience is at once observable underfoot when walking upon the thresholds of these higher realms, but the resilience comes as well from the nature of the realm as from the distinct change in the ground.

As one approaches the boundaries to the higher realms, the pavements become noticeably more translucent in character and they seem to lose some of their appearance of solidity, though, indeed, they are solid enough.

The spirit world is divided into spheres or realms. These two words of designation have passed into current [acceptance] among most of those on the earth-plane who have a knowledge of, and practice communication with, our world.

(*Imperator, ST.*) The passage from the highest of the seven spheres of probation, to the lowest of the seven spheres of contemplation, is a change analogous to what you know as death. We hear little beyond, though we know that the blessed ones who dwell there have power to help and guide us, even as we watch over you. But we know nothing by experimental knowledge of their work, save that they are occupied with nearer views of the Divine perfection, in closer contemplation of the causes of things, and in nearer adoration of the Supreme. We are far from that blissful state. We have our work yet to do; and in doing it, we find our delight. It is necessary for you to remember that spirits speak according to their experience and knowledge. Some who are asked abstruse questions give replies according to the measure of their knowledge, and are in error. But do not, therefore, blame them. We believe that we state what is accurate when we say that ... there are succeeding the earth life seven spheres of active work, and succeeding these, seven spheres of Divine contemplation. But each sphere has many states.

Life Beyond the Need to Incarnate

(*Spirit leader Imperator, ST.*) Life is of two stages – progressive and contemplative. We, who are still progressive, and who hope to progress for countless myriad ages (as you say), after, the farthest point to which your finite mind can reach, we know naught of the life contemplative. But we believe that far, far in the vast hereafter, there will be a period at which progressive souls will eventually arrive, when progress has brought them to the very dwelling place of the Omnipotent, and that there they will lay aside their former state, and bask in the full light of Deity, in contemplation of all the secrets of the universe. Of this we cannot tell you. It is too high. Soar not to such vast heights. Life is unending, as you count it, but you are concerned with the approach to its threshold, not with the inner temple.

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The Cosmic Drama Proceeds on Other Planets and Stars

Beyond Us There are More Worlds

(*Philip Gilbert in PTW.*) Beyond us, there's more and more Light and somewhere are other 'worlds,' reflected like the earth, nourished by the magnetic rays of their suns.

(*Claude, CB.*) The other planets have their own spirit-spheres round them.

Return to Earth Is Not the Only Method of Progression

(*Imperator, ST.*) [Return] is not even the usual one. We have with us many schools of instruction: and we do not employ a second time one that has proved a failure.

(*Frederick W.H. Myers, RTI.*) The Plane of Matter consists of all experiences in physical form, in matter as known to man. These experiences are not confined to the earth life. There are experiences of a similar character in numerous starry regions. Sometimes the body vibrates faster or slower than the body of man in such starry places. But the term "physical" expresses its character and nature.

Human beings exist on certain planets, but their material bodies are subject to a different time from the earth time, and travel, therefore, within the rhythm of that time. Consequently their physical parts are either vibrating slower or faster than yours and may not be discovered through the medium of man's senses. I call them human beings because the conditions of their lives, the construction of their physical parts, are similar to those of man.

(*Philemon, LFOS.*) I know that the heavenly bodies have souls and are spirits as men have and are. These are the great planetary spirits. The star-beings are really spirits of the nature of the sun-spirit – celestial beings. There are also inter-planetary beings and inter-stellar spirits. The macrocosm, no less than the microcosm, is infinite – infinitely great, infinitely minute.

Chapter 3. Near-Earth Plane Awakening

Introduction

The Near-Earth Plane is a “way station” for those who have left Earth life but for some reason haven’t made it to the Astral Plane, their ultimate destination. So this plane is the border between the Earth and Astral Planes. The contributors also call it the Borderlands, Purgatory, and the Vestibule.

Of course, teams of advanced spirits run rescue operations but, as you read, lots of folks seem to be stumbling around in a daze because they are so blinkered by their beliefs that they won’t or can’t recognize the help.

A typical denizen would be an addict who refuses to leave the low energy of bars or crack houses, where they may hang out for years getting vicarious highs. Readers of this book, of course, will know to take the “express elevator,” or tunnel of light, to the Astral Plane.

Most people awaken on the Near-Earth Plane and remain for a period of rest and adjustment. Others go directly to the Astral Plane for convalescence and adjustment if they are needed. Therefore, this section will appear to be repeated in the section on the Astral Plane. It is not a repetition, but an alternative.

Awakening in the Near-Earth Plane

Those Who Know About Life After Death Adjust Easily

(*Winifred Coombe Tennant, LO.*) I am glad to have known before my passing something about this life and the possibilities of communication with you. Before finally leaving, I seemed to be dreaming and yet it was not wholly a dream. It seemed as if I had come here before the final separation from my physical body. I was only partly conscious towards the last, only half within the body; for my soul was already freeing itself. Nor did it seem wholly strange to me when I found myself here. I must have frequently come during sleep; for I could now remember that I had been here previously.

Those Who Did Not Know May Have Problems Adjusting

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) You hear of individuals, who are new arrivals, wandering about aimlessly, apparently lost, and who do not seem to know what has befallen them. Can it be that they do not know that they have passed on?

Such is the state of spiritual enlightenment of the earth that in many cases, these folk are completely unaware that they have ‘died.’ ... This situation frequently arises among people who pass into the spirit world suddenly and perhaps without warning. Their lack of knowledge of conditions existing in the spirit world produces this state of bewilderment, and if there is added to that, ignorance also the fact that, during their earthly life, they never gave any heed to a future life in the spirit world, then their situation becomes a doubly unhappy one.

But there is in the spirit world a vast organization of all its immense resources and it must not be thought that these bewildered souls are left to shift for themselves. They are soon taken in hand by others long resident in spirit lands – as you judge time – who devote their spirit lives to such work.

Our task is often a difficult one because it is not always easy for the soul to grasp what has happened. The mental equipment of the individual may cause a reluctance to accept the truth. On the other hand, those who are mentally alert will soon see for themselves the exact situation.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) When anyone first gets over here, he is ‘imprisoned’ in his own thought-world. But into that may impinge other entities, such as relatives, who may help him – or hinder, if [the relative] has himself been mischievous. Most people’s thoughts are concentrated on the earth-plane and many people only on that spot of the earth which they inhabited, and they find it very difficult to dissociate themselves, unless the whole trend of their mind has been upwards. Or if they have done many kindnesses, because, in that case, the law of the inevitable consequences sends them to those they have helped, who pay back their debts in full measure.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) There are millions of men and women who arrive here to whom the discovery of the existence of life after death is a stunning shock. They have argued themselves into a conviction that death ends all and the discovery that it begins all over again makes them often angry, and sometimes they refuse to listen to any guidance or counsel. They are then left to themselves to find out by personal experience the facts (1) That they are still living entities in the same world, although on a different plane; (2) That the laws of the new world need to be learned if they would advance to the better life that lies before them.

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) When death interrupts the action of the brain, all thought is then necessarily carried on by the spirit brain. It can sometimes do this at once, although usually only for a short time. In most cases, it is unable to act at all for a while. (Presumably this is because it has always relied on the assistance of the machinery of the material brain, and lacks experience in acting alone.) This we think explains

the first unconsciousness after death. After a time, it receives additional power, as we all receive it, and then can function alone. It is often in a very dazed condition, however, for a longer or shorter period, and much lacking in reasoning powers. In addition, it may not have learned how to see and hear, thus still further limiting its action. So a spirit is frequently a very helpless being for a long time.

You know I did not believe as you did. I thought – if I thought at all – along the lines the church had laid out. I do not remember much of my coming; I seemed to finally drop into a peaceful sleep. How long, I do not know. Then a new consciousness seemed to come slowly. There was beauty about me; people moving; music far away, but beautiful. But I supposed the music must be from harps played by angels. Old ideas are strong, you know.

Then I found I could move. I saw a wonderful shining form near me – my guide, I afterwards learned – and, strangely enough, I felt acquainted with this stranger! He took me by the hand, or so it seemed, and together we explored this wonderful new country. Patient with all my ignorance, wise when I was foolish, tender when I was almost afraid; but through it all, he was leading, guiding me through wonderful scenes, and bringing me to a trust, a happiness and well-being, I never knew before.

This was my first experience of the new life. Afterward came the desire to fit myself into the wonderful surroundings; and studies were suggested. Studies? Why, pleasures, I should say! For thought is so quick here that study is the wrong name.

Then came moving from place to place, growing acquainted with other spirits. And though I have not risen very high in heavenly learning, I am thrilled with new power and look forward to an eternity of knowledge, growth and happiness.

(Philip Gilbert, PTW.) In my case, ... the betwixt and between stage ... only lasted a couple of hours. I seemed almost at once to get my power to think objectively, though for some hours, I felt confused. I cannot recall any ‘plane of illusion.’ I was conscious of myself from the first as an entity able to enter your room at will and I was attracted also by your glow.

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) [T.E. Lawrence describing his death from a motorcycle accident:] A shattering blow, darkness rent with interludes of throbbing agony and finally merciful cessation of pain; nothingness.

Out of the void came first a mere point of self-awareness, lost and found again and spreading gradually into an indefinite impression of being; a sensation of neither darkness nor light, an uneasy grayness filled with growing apprehension. Soon I should need to drag myself out of this numbing stupor, to find out where I was and what was happening in this waste of grayness. But, having flickered, consciousness went out again and I slept.

There came a time when I could no longer drowse my fears away. The sense of identity grew stronger and with it came a tumult of emotions and hurried, anxious thoughts. Unwillingly I had to awake to a formless world of which I seemed the only inhabitant. Yet I thought I heard voices but could distinguish no words; I felt the shadows palpitate with movement and could see no one. I was aware, too, of waves of sorrow washing up around me and trying to drown out my feeble consciousness. Becoming aware of my body, I found myself on my feet, surprised to find movement so light and easy, but I was afraid to venture far in any direction because of the shadowy obstacles I sensed around. I fumbled in the dimness, seeking a way out of the grief that enveloped me. Where was I? Even if I had become blind and deaf, surely there must be someone around to help me? I tried calling, but there was no response. What had happened?

The startling impression that this was death became insistent, but if I had to accept that idea, what became of my conviction that death ended it all? For I was certainly alive, if you could call it living.

I felt my body; firm flesh. How odd! I tried to speak but only a throttled ghost of a sound came forth. I arose and walked and realized afresh how light and resilient my limbs felt.

I had not expected existence to continue and certainly had as yet no reason to welcome it.

Whether the fault of my [awakening] vision or a characteristic of the locality, the same dingy murk prevailed and the place and the people were of a piece; hard-featured women with shrill, harsh voices and men whose faces were marked by brutality and meanness came from the houses and mingled uneasily in the streets.

(Philip Gilbert, PTW.) There was a crash. I was going fast down that slope. There was a crash and a blackness and then I opened my eyes and saw trees glowing, illumined in an ivory golden light – they seemed alive.... I lay quiet and pictures came before me of myself as a little boy, and you [Philip is speaking to his mother’s mind] always there and my room and its nursery rhyme curtains. But somehow I saw all round, you and me and everyone at once. Then I drifted to my school and to Lausanne – we were in a boat on Lake Geneva that time when your hat blew off. Then I was at sea and in that nightclub at Alex [Alexandria] – all through my life!

I opened my eyes again. I was surprised that I had no bruises after that fall, and I sat up and felt myself all over. ... Then I saw a car coming, and I jumped up to get out of its way, and I saw it brake, pull up and push something along the road. I looked and it was my body. I looked at myself and saw my own body seeming quite real and solid. But there were streams of light coming from my finger ends. Suddenly I saw Grandpa, standing smiling, all lit up, and I knew I was killed. I said at once: ‘Then Mother was right – I *have* got an etheric body.’

(American frontierswoman who probably died around 1890, LHH.) I am a woman. I have been here many years. I was born and brought up on the Atlantic coast, and moved to one of your western states when I was married. But that was many years ago. The year was 1840. I lived a lonely life on a farm, had many hardships, raised a family, and finally left my weary existence at the age of 68. I was never a church member, although brought up by Puritan parents. In coming into the western country, I brought none of that teaching with me, however. In some ways, I think I would have been happier if I had, for I would at least have been looking forward to something after death. As it was, I was so weary of life, I looked forward to peace and nothingness. I was ready to give up everything, there was so little I cared for.

When I finally realized that death had not ended my existence, I did not know what to make of it. I could see or hear nothing. But I knew I was alive and that I had left my earthly body. I was distracted, for I felt that now I could not rid myself of life, no matter how much I suffered, or how weary I was. But I soon found that I was not suffering, except from loneliness, and after a time, I began to wonder what it all meant. Surely there was something I had failed to understand. I certainly was not meant to pass through eternity in this lonely condition. Somewhere, somehow, I would meet someone in like condition, and then we could talk it over and try to arrive at some understanding.

By good fortune, my mind was so undeveloped at that time that I did not have very bright reasoning powers, so time itself did not seem so long as it might. But I did finally reason that if I met someone and wanted to talk, I would have to make this person understand by new means. It seems that this thought of itself brought some light and understanding. For it was not long before I was aware that I was beginning to see and hear faintly. It was a delight, you may be sure, and you on earth can never conceive the joy I experienced when I first realized that someone was trying to talk with me. Of course, it was not long then until I was taught how to use my spirit powers, and soon I was able to take up my new life. In contrast with my old one, anything would have brought joy. But if I could make you comprehend even one small portion of the reality, you would still be far from realizing my full happiness.

(Transition Guide from Cromwell's time, LHH.) When we were trying to influence this man, we found that he was only able to move from place to place, and to see dimly some of his surroundings. He was not able to see those who were trying to help him, and he could hear nothing. His own thoughts were all the company he had through the long centuries. We do not know just how long the time seemed to him for, of course, he had no way of measuring it. But he says he can only express it by saying that it seemed endless.

We were able to influence him by surrounding him with music. The continuous tones at last broke through his deaf-

ness, and set him to wondering whence they came. His attention having once been drawn to the fact that he was receiving impressions of sound, he was then led to detect other sounds, and finally made to understand that someone was trying to talk to him. After that, the progress was rapid.

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) It so happened one Sunday that few from our families wished to ride, so four of us were in my automobile including my friend and partner. We miscalculated at a railroad crossing and we two soon found ourselves on this side. That is, we left our earthly bodies. Here is where our unusual experience comes in.

We had just been laughing and talking about an article in the paper concerning ghosts. After our spirits left our bodies, we each seemed to realize that an accident had occurred, but each thought himself uninjured. But each could see the spirit form of the other, and its peculiar appearance to his new powers of spirit sight, convinced him that his partner had been killed and that his ghost was still present. It was a "Comedy of Errors," if ever there was one – right in the midst of tragedy. Each thinking himself in the flesh and the other a ghost, there was no attempt to speak, so the mistake was not discovered.

After the first excitement was over, we seemed to drift into oblivion for a time, and we think it must have been some months before we were aware that we were alive only in spirit.

(Unnamed politician, LHH.) I was well known on earth, and my name would be recognized by many. ... I was a politician on earth, and was more interested in swaying the opinions of other men than in educating any special talent in myself. I was always interested in seeing my political party in power, and bent all my energies towards showing the people that it was the proper remedy for their ills. ...

I did believe in a future life, and I was not long in a really unconscious state after arriving. But I was grievously disappointed at first that I did not find the beautiful heavenly life which I had been taught to expect.

It was not entire darkness; I could see dimly. But all that was visible was drab and unattractive. I could hear nothing, and could see no living being. You can imagine a little how surprised I was and how puzzled. I knew that my earth life was over; I had been very ill, and had been conscious until nearly the last. So there was no misunderstanding about the fact that I had died. But I could not understand what existence could mean, where there was so little I could see, and nothing I could hear.

After a time – I don't know how long it was – I realized that there were other beings near me. I was conscious at times of shadow-like forms that moved. I watched them, trying to understand what they meant. I was not particularly interested, for I did not in the least suspect that they were beings like myself. If I thought anything, it was that they were animals of some kind.

I was, of course, not in full possession of my reasoning faculties. When spirit first throws off the material envelope, there is a shock, – not always a severe one, but often sufficient to leave the mentality in a dazed condition, hardly more than a dream-like state. If I had then possessed full powers of reasoning, I could no doubt have soon concluded that the shadows meant something to me. But at first, I simply watched them curiously. They came and went, sometimes a few, sometimes many. I think it must have been months before it dawned upon me that they might be spirits, then I began to really think things out. I first concluded that possibly spirit was always rather ghostly; possibly these shadows were only conscious of me as a shadow. I pondered over this for some time. I finally concluded that there must be more to heaven than such shadowy creations. Something must be wrong somewhere. I made no attempt to study myself, I only wondered about the others. Why were they unable to make a more solid appearance?

It was a long study; and only after extended cogitation did I suddenly begin to wonder if the fault might lie with me. This thought interested me tremendously. I began to speculate on what spirit sight might be like, and I soon saw that it would necessarily be different from earthly sight. I was not successful in my conclusions at first as to the method by which I would have to see, but I was able to perceive things more plainly just because I realized that I myself was the one at fault. When we realize our own short-comings, a great advance is made toward eliminating them, no matter what they are.

I was soon conscious that I had greatly increased my powers of vision, for I could now see these other beings quite plainly. And I saw that they were conscious of my presence, even seemed to be trying to communicate with me in some manner. But no sound whatever reached my consciousness.

It was a great relief, however, to discover that there was a change taking place, that I was really able to see things. I was amazed at the beings I saw. I could not believe now that I was in the right place, for I could not conceive that I could belong with such wonderful beings. You must understand that a spirit who has arrived at a full understanding of the life here, and who feels the urge to live the life of spirit love and service, such spirit expresses the purity of its character by its outward appearance. Not only the features become wonderfully beautiful, but the garments likewise are glorified. And to my unaccustomed eyes, these spirits about me could not be less than angels from on high. I could not feel I belonged with any such advancement.

So I wondered and waited. As I watched, I became aware that these glorious shapes were communicating with each other. I studied this over, and as my mind became more active, I realized that hearing must be a spirit power as well as sight. No sooner had I reached this conclusion than I was conscious of sound. And, oh, the sweetness of that first

musical tone! Heavenly music indeed! I was entranced! I was in heaven after all! Not only were there beautiful angels, but I surely was going to hear the heavenly choirs!

It was not long before I could hear spoken words, and then everything was soon explained to me. It was a day of joy; an exhilaration that I probably will never experience again. But there has been no disappointment since. My education was not rapid, but I advanced surely, and I am now experiencing the pleasures that I only faintly glimpsed in the teachings of my earth life.

(Raymond Lodge, SOLR.) The purpose of the time spent in the vestibule is to give the transition from the outer planes to the inner planes more continuity. Even though any given person lives more of his lifetime on the inner planes than on the physical, the transition of death is still very abrupt. It can be almost as frustrating as the transition involved in entering the physical plane; in that case, the frustration is being unable to function as you've been used to because you are now a tiny baby. But in the transition at the time of death, the vestibule experience permits you to continue your patterns of thought about life and afterlife – until you begin to see that these beliefs are all made out of tissue paper and smoke, as it were.

It is a kind of layer in one of the inner planes that helps you lessen the shock of passing over. Again I'll use the analogy of a baby just entering physical life: the baby sleeps a great deal during the first years of its life. During these sleep periods, the spirit of the baby is returning to the inner planes where it can be a total being. So these long periods of sleep help the baby make its transition and become accustomed gradually to its new life. The vestibule is a period in which a person who has recently died gets used to being just a spirit.

Everybody goes through a number of stages after passing over, you see. When you first pass over, you usually enter a stage of awareness called the "vestibule." During this period, you usually experience the kind of afterlife that you have always expected, due to your conditioning, your religious upbringing and training, and your mode of thought. As long as you are in the vestibule, these expectations have a kind of reality. In an ultimate sense, they are not real, but they are real enough during this period of transition.

I want to distinguish between the vestibule and the portion of the astral plane that some of the others participating in [this] project have referred to as the "Peter Pan department." The vestibule is not necessarily a fantasy, but it's not quite real either.

It's really not a fantasy because that sounds as if there are lots of little munchkins running around putting up fake scenery to fool everyone with and that isn't quite what happens. The vestibule experience is a necessary part of nature. ...

Eventually, ... you begin to realize that the vestibule is only a vestibule, made of tissue paper and smoke and cotton candy – it's not real. This realization is, in a sense, what is

meant by the term “the second death.” You give up your cherished connections with the physical life and begin to adjust to life on the inner planes *as it really is* – which is startlingly different. If the transition to full reality were abrupt and you weren’t prepared for it, it would be quite a jolt. Something akin to a psychiatric problem could develop.

I believe that it has been mentioned that Colene’s grandmother and grandfather [Colene Johnson, David’s wife] were given the chance to have something of a second honeymoon in a part of the vestibule before getting down to the real business of living on the other side. I think that this was described as happening in the Peter Pan department, but it was really the vestibule. There is also a certain kind of healing that must be done in this time right after death. This healing is much easier when the person is on somewhat familiar surroundings and has a sense of continuity with his physical life.

Many Don’t Know about an Afterlife

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) I am a lover of humanity, and a sort of caretaker of souls who come to this side. I have studied for many years the various attitudes with which these newcomers view the change. I find almost as many differences as there are different personalities. But I feel that I have learned to divide them roughly into three classes.

First and fewest are those who have looked forward with pleasure and understanding to a future life, believing it but a glorious continuation of the earthly existence.

Second are those whose number is very large, who have led lives of helpfulness on earth, who may or may not have believed in a future life, but who were ready to adopt new ideas whenever they felt that they were good.

Then there is the third class, to which it seems to me a very large majority must be assigned. These are never able to understand the new life until after long and sometimes painful periods have passed.

Earthbound Souls

(*Raymond Lodge, SOLR.*) Ghosts are people who have died but who are still very much associated with the physical plane for some reason. They usually die under circumstances that create a great somatic shock – like being killed suddenly or murdered. If people die as a result of a very deep shock, when they regain consciousness they often have the sensation of still having their physical fingers and toes, their clothing and hair – of still being physically alive. Although they have technically passed over, they continue for a time believing that they are still physically alive. And so they continue doing the same things in the same physical locations as before. If physical people clairvoyantly see them while this is going on, they appear to be ghosts.

For example, if you were suddenly hit in the head with a battle ax and died, you would “awake” from the blow on

the inner planes sometime later, but you would probably not be aware that you were dead at all – because death was unexpected. So you would “walk the battlements” – you would continue doing the things you would normally do. The only change you would notice would be that people don’t react to what you do or even seem to see you.

This can be a period of great confusion. Sometimes these people have to be left alone because this confusion is a part of the life plan that they worked out for themselves – believe it or not. And so they “walk the battlements” for a period of time. But the time spent in this way is never really that long in terms of time on the inner planes.

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) It is sad to see the multitudes who linger near the earth, drawn by no forces except the material ones that ruled their lives while there. We cannot reach these multitudes easily, and many we cannot reach at all. And we grow sad at the thought of the long years of darkness and misery that so many must endure. You must try to put the truth before the world, if not personally, by means of books and papers.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) I’ve seen the little man who used to live in your flat. He won’t go away from it and the village. I talked to him and tried to make him see something further, but he wouldn’t. He said it was his and he’d made it. He doesn’t seem either happy or unhappy – just static. I don’t know when anything will move him – perhaps not for centuries.

You know, so many people here don’t seem to be alive in my sense. I don’t understand it – it distresses me. I see so many people who never seem to try to use their new powers to *get* anywhere. They just stand round where they’ve always lived.

Q. For how long?

I haven’t any idea. I suppose they must see the real forms of trees and people and yet it doesn’t seem to convey anything to them. They just talk and think of their own old interests and often just sit about in their old homes, getting het up about what their families are doing.

It does seem to me that people on earth badly need education for death – not so much ‘religious’ as common-sense instruction on how to make the most of their opportunities.

Yesterday I met a woman who had created a complete illusion for herself. She had been a mannequin [i.e., fashion model] in earth life and she still went parading up and down to an imaginary audience. But there were gleams in her of a capacity for service. When I spoke to her, she at first thought it was the prelude to an adventure so I had to do some little stunts to show her I was not an amorous sailor! In fact I managed to wish myself into the garment of an Egyptian priest for a moment, and then back again as the British Navy once more – the poor thing thought she had one too many! However, little by little, I got her to understand that she had been killed by a V2 [i.e., a German bomb] a year ago!

At first she was rather upset, for she has little power of concentration, but, soon, being quite a sensible wench, she got the idea and perked up. Her first idea was to see herself in a few remarkable garments. She seems to have no relatives or friends here that I can find, but I think she has some intention of finding her family still on earth and parking herself near them, for a time.

You see how queer it all is, far different from the easy falling into heaven theories we were brought up on. It is rather like being reborn, into a new body – all to learn, unless you’ve done it before.

(Philip Gilbert, *PTS*.) In these times, (WWII) ... there are so many, so many who have been shot over here suddenly, in full earth vigor, hot-blooded, resentful in many cases, or wracked by hideous memories, all their emotions going strong and to be subdued. All these constitute a great mass of the “earth-bound” at present and we work amongst them.

There seem to be many variations of the “earthbound” state, just as there are of temperaments. With some, it is a matter of living shut up in some strong thought-image of their own, some obsession-rut, caused by what they have dwelt on when in the flesh.

With others, they still *are* on earth in its etheric form. They cannot get away from earth surroundings, tied to their homes and families, and longing painfully to re-enter the flesh. These people are often quite evolved souls, but have committed some injustice or unkindness which ties them down to an overwhelming desire to make reparation, and, usually, they have no means of doing this.

There was a woman who had died in an air-raid, but did not know it. ... She had focused all her attention on her own flat which had become an obsession so that she spent all her time cleaning and polishing.... There she sat, “dead” in her flat, puzzled and worried because she could not prevent the dust accumulating. She kept trying to blow it away. I went and sat down in a chair, in my uniform, and she was outraged at first, especially when I proceeded to light a thought-produced cigarette and to knock the ash out on her carpet. She looked at me just as you used to when cigarette ash used to appear in unlawful places! She got into a tearing temper so I suddenly did one of my stunts – it was becoming the pirate of my child picture book, I think, this time. Then, for a flash, I became my advanced me.

I find these quick changes nearly always convince people. She soon got on to it that at least she must be dreaming. So I told her about the bomb and talked to her about the need to expand her boundaries and she picked up the idea quite quickly.

In the near-earth planes, ... there are some queer specimens, we well as lower types of entity – foci of negation. Powerless really, except for the fear they can inspire, but most unpleasant to behold.

People who have lived entirely in the material, seeking only earthly and bodily advantages, and with no real love-bonds (and mind you, there are comparatively few who don’t love anyone) have created a thick cloud of thought images – a deep rut between high walls – through and over which they cannot see at all, when they emerge from their body. They are in the center of a dense cloud (just as you *all*, on earth!). They can only see what they have left behind, and that is sometimes out of focus, erratic and constantly bewildering them by shifting and changing. They are neither in one world or another – it must be very wretched. ...

Yes – and they do go on like that for centuries, sometimes, because no one is sufficiently interested to dig them out. Those who may be aware of them would not have the power, for it is one of the hardest jobs, from our side, to penetrate into the shell-like image of an earth-bound person. Only someone fairly advanced *can* do it, but the advanced have so much more important work, generally.

These people just go on and on; it is their boredom and sometimes malice which has created the fears of “ghosts” and unseen “influences.” They do not always realize that there *is* any further world. But if an instructed earth dweller of spiritual nature and knowledge – a psychically sensitive person of unselfish and helpful nature – can get through to them the knowledge of a further state, they begin to emerge, to “climb up,” “peep over the wall” – and that is the beginning of progress.

Anyone who actually meets a real “ghost” of the haunting variety – and there are very few, most being psychometric picture memories – should not be afraid, but just speak to him and tell him to make a thought act of desire to advance into the real world. It is very simple and great help will have been given.

If anyone has “got anything on his mind,” an obsession for, say, cricket, he will live in an illusion world of that, and will not attain his full power and knowledge of how to get on here till he has snapped out of it and that may take centuries. But the average person who has had no mental unbalance soon begins to realize his new existence and tries to learn the rules.

Also, ... some activities are an extension of earth ones (or it might be more correct to say that they are the reflection on earth of universal activities) – music, painting (color), mathematics and so on can all be continued from where they are left off.

There seem to be many variations of the “earthbound” state, just as there are of temperaments. With some, it is a matter of living shut up in some strong thought-image of their own, some obsession-rut, caused by what they have dwelt on when in the flesh.

Without fear ... and with the use of positive creative will, any of these phantasms can be dispelled like smoke. Sometimes when I go “scavenging,” I have to do this first, before I can get to the wretched being beset by his own personified follies and weaknesses.

Actually there are – as far as I’ve yet experienced – very few people who are so debased as to gravitate to such horror when they die. But there are a good many whose lives have been obsessed by the more seamy aspects of physical desire, and they do find themselves in a rather disgusting muddle of tantalizing illusions and images. It’s not *punishment* - there’s no such thing literally: it’s what you called the “inevitable consequence.” In this world of mine, you’ve got to live in what you create and if you create muddle and illusion, then it’s just too bad!

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) It is customary among certain minds of the earth to regard the spirit world and its inhabitants as vague and shadowy, extremely unsubstantial and speculative. These same minds regard the dwellers in spirit lands as a class of sub-human beings who are immeasurably worse off than themselves simply because they are ‘dead.’

To be upon earth is normal, sound, and healthy, and infinitely to be preferred. To be ‘dead’ is unfortunate – but, of course, inevitable – very unhealthy, and anything but normal. The ‘dead’ are much to be pitied because they are not alive on earth.

This line of thought tends to place an undue importance upon the earthly life and upon the physical body of man. It is as though it were only at the point of ‘death’ that man takes upon himself any spiritual nature, whereas, in truth, that spiritual nature has been present since the moment of his drawing his first breath upon earth.

Where I have accosted earthbound people, I have always ascertained that the soul so circumstanced was totally unaware of any other state of existence to which he could depart from his present surroundings. He was ignorant of other realms higher or lower than that which he was occupying.

Usually, these unfortunate people are tied to their earthly environment, whatever it may be. That attachment may be one of sentiment, where a great affection was entertained for the earthly home, or place of residence, or work. The attraction may be a morbid one, where some misdeed has been committed which draws back the guilty one to the scene of its perpetration. Perhaps this latter is the most familiar to earth people under the designation of ‘haunted’ places, and many people are puzzled by the fact that in a large number of cases, the subject of the ‘haunting’ has remained in operation for hundreds of years.

The ‘haunting’ of an unpleasant nature where some crime of violence has been committed, or where some wrong has remained unredressed, fall into a different category altogether. In most instances, individuals remain rooted to the locality. They may still be in the same frame of mind as upon the original occasion of their misdeed. They may be consumed with the desire for vengeance or retribution or for some form of violence. So strong will be the concentration of mind and so powerful the emotion that the whole

incident or series of incidents will be projected from this harassed mind in the shape of thought-forms, and these will assume the precise details, with exact precision, of the original occurrence. The memory will have recorded the details faithfully and the mind will have released them and it can go on releasing them with unflinching exactitude. Any person whose psychic powers are developed – and sometimes those that are not – will see what is taking place before them and thereby causing the ‘haunting.’

It is always so much easier, and produces much better results, for people still on earth to tackle these cases in the first instance. The person who is responsible for the haunting is so much nearer the earth and is consequently more easily approached by you than by us here in the spirit world. When he has fully grasped what has happened and what he is doing, then we can take charge of him and lead him away from the environment that is causing the distress.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) Many refuse to believe they are dead. It is, of course, true that they are not dead. They have all their faculties: they see, they hear, they move hither and thither. Everything seems the same to them as before. Their first realization of the change that has taken place is a kind of shock to them. “So this is death. Then if so, there is no such thing as death!” For it is so entirely different from what we had imagined.

There are some who suffer violent deaths, who seem, as it were, stunned when they come here and do not recover consciousness until the funeral rites are over and they are forgotten among men.

The disembodied soul who wakes up to find his body gone and life going on in the home as before, and alive in the midst of it, does not realize that he is dead, and sometimes, it is quite a long time before he is aroused to his true condition.

He is annoyed that his folk do not see him nor answer him, and he feels as if he were in a kind of bewildered dream. There he continues until some spirit can convince him. Of course this occurs mostly with those who have not realized the existence of this world, or who have imagined it so different, they cannot recognize the truth that they are still in the same world after death. Death seems denied in two ways: First, the outward visible world has undergone no change; and, secondly, they retain unbroken continuity of consciousness. They are themselves, and realize their identity as much as they do on earth after they undress at night.

When the newly-arrived find that they can remain [on earth] among their loved ones but that they cannot communicate with them, it often opens up a feeling like that of Tantalus. And after suffering for a time, always hoping and trying to make them hear and see, they feel compelled to leave them. You are aware of many apparitions at the moment of death. These are the small percentage of those who succeed in impressing themselves upon the sense of survi-

vors. There are more of those who try more than once and therefore the number appears larger. The ratio of successes to attempts is not greater at death than after.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) Ghosts are the uneasy spirits who have left some earth duty undone or some wrong unrighted, and they try to go back again. The spirit of one who has committed a crime, or who has wronged someone on earth, is never at rest until the wrong is made right. Let this be a lesson to evil-doers. There are uneasy souls here who never have peace because they cannot undo the wrong. Criminals learn the lesson too late, and if reincarnation were true, they would gladly go into another earth life to profit by the lesson they have learned here. We wish we could make this plain to all evil-doers.

Q. 'Do you say they never have peace? Do you mean that literally?'

We mean it in connection with mortal life. Of course, the one who has suffered comes here sooner or later, and then the opportunity arrives for righting the wrong. We have many here who are making a study of these wandering spirits, and it is found that they sometimes seem to be seeking lost treasure, which to them is of transcendent importance.

The spirits of criminals often return and live over again the atrocities for which they are still suffering. It is the law of cause and effect. Their subconscious selves received the impressions of their acts and beliefs so strongly that they are still bound by the old sensations and criminal instincts, and they try to reproduce the semblance of the crimes or incidents that caused these impressions, in the surroundings in which they occurred. They live it over again as an actor reproduces a scene he has memorized. It is through the terribleness of these scenes that they discover themselves for what they are. It is sometimes a lifetime before they turn away from their evil impulses. But it is this earth-walking, this renewing of their past crimes in memory, that finally makes them determine to try for something better.

(Imperator, ST.) Spirits who in their earth-life had been victims to kindred vices ... live over again their earthly sensual lives, and find their gratification in encouraging the spirit to base and debasing sin. This tendency of bodily sin to reproduce itself is one of the most fearful and terrible of the consequences of conscious gross transgression of nature's laws. The spirit has found all its pleasure in bodily gratifications, and lo! when the body is dead, the spirit still hovers round the scene of its former gratifications, and lives over again the bodily life in vices of those whom it lures to sin.

Round the gin shops of your cities, dens of vice, haunted by miserable besotted wretches, lost to self-respect and sense of shame, hover the spirits who in the flesh were lovers of drunkenness and debauchery. They lived the drunkard's life in the body; they live it over again now, and gloat with fiendish glee over the downward course of the spirit

whom they are leagued to ruin. Could you but see how in spots where the vicious congregate [and] the dark spirits throng, you would know something of the mystery of evil.

It is the influence of these debased spirits which tends so much to aggravate the difficulty of retracing lost steps, which makes the descent of Avernus so easy, the return so toilsome. The slopes of Avernus are dotted with spirits hurrying to their destruction, sinking with mad haste to ruin. Each is the center of a knot of malignant spirits, who find their joy in wrecking souls and dragging them down to their own miserable level. Such are they who gravitate when released from the body to congenial spheres below the earth. They and their tempters find their home together in spheres where they live in hope of gratifying passions and lusts which have not faded with the loss of the means of satisfying their cravings.

Handling Grief

Spirits Attend Their Own Funeral

(Alice Gilbert, PTW.) At the funeral, I felt [Philip] standing over on the right, in front of me, and at that very serious moment when the coffin was being lowered, I heard a voice in my mind very clearly, "Whatever is he bleating like a sheep over that thing for - it's not *me!*"

The Grief of Loved Ones Left Behind

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) After I had passed into the spirit world, one of my earliest experiences was the consciousness of a feeling of sadness, not of my own sadness, for I was supremely happy, but of the sadness of others and I was greatly puzzled to know from whence it came.

Edwin told me that this sadness was rising from the earth world and was caused by the sorrow felt at my passing. It soon ceased, however, and Edwin informed me that forgetfulness of me by the earth people had already set in. That experience alone, my good friend, is one that can be relied upon to induce feelings of humility, if no humility before existed!

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) Sorrow is but natural in human hearts at the parting of loved ones and in their removal from physical sight, but sorrow is aggravated and increased by the lack of knowledge of what precisely has taken place. Orthodox religion is largely responsible for this state of affairs. The one who is mourned has gone to an unknown land where, presumably, an omnipotent God reigns supreme, ready to mete out judgment to all who enter that world. It behooves us, therefore, orthodoxy would urge in effect, that we should do all that we can to placate this Great Judge, that he may deal mercifully with our departed brother. Such a situation, it would be further urged, is no time for anything but the gravest demeanor, the most solemn behavior.

And how does the departed soul view all these adjuncts of ‘death’? Sometimes with disgust, sometimes with amazement at their stupidity, sometimes, and especially with those whose sense of humor is well-developed, with undisguised mirth!

And what of all the paraphernalia of ‘death’? Has it availed the departed soul anything? No, nothing. Black garments, drawn blinds, ponderous solemnity, hushed voices, and countenances of exaggerated gloom are utterly worthless to help the soul upon its way. Indeed, the reverse can, in many cases, be the result.

The spirit body may take some days of your time before it becomes completely separated from the earthly body and it may be hindered very much by the combined thoughts of the sorrowers who are participants in the dismal [funeral] rites. Instead of departing from the earthly sphere, the discarnate one will be attracted to the scene of obsequial activities and more than likely will be saddened himself by what he is witnessing and by the sorrow of those he has left behind. He will feel a heavy weight within him of the separation that has come about and, perhaps being ignorant of what has befallen him, he will be doubly distressed, and even trebly distressed by the fact that he speaks to his friends but they cannot hear him. And how great a difference a little knowledge would make.

(Julia Ames, AD.) My own beloved, what do you mean by mourning as one who has no hope? ... Why is it that with the certainty of the continued existence of your loved ones, you feel as disconsolate and forlorn as if there were no other world? Why do you grieve as those who have no hope? Do you not know that you are as a city, set on a hill which cannot be hid? How many thousands, nay millions, of poor souls all over the world will have their lives saddened by the drip of your tears, who might have been gladdened by the sunlight of your smile – if you had believed really in the love of God!

It is no use saying you believe when you feel sad. No one who really believes can ever feel sad. The measure of your grief is the measure of your unbelief.

All sorrow is the register of the spiritual thermometer of our unbelief.

So far as you disbelieve, so far you lose your power to be the conductor of the love of God to man.

My dear, dear friend, why do you not weep, not that your dear one is with us, but because you have made so little of the magnificent opportunity of proving to all that the other world is God’s world to you and that those who are lost to others are not lost to you who believe?

(Philip Gilbert, PTW.) You really must stop grieving over me. I feel it always, as if I were doing it. Everything [here] seems to be feeling. One feels other people’s thoughts.

Darling, don’t grieve – come on now: detachment! Practice what you preach! The end of a phase of earth-life – noth-

ing at all! I whom you love am in Eternity. That is the only reality – keep your consciousness there!

You should now cease to grieve deeply. We have given you the proofs you asked for.

(Raymond Lodge in SOLR.) Bereavement works two ways, you know. I remember after I died and I was being contacted by my family, I was bereaved too. I was separated from people I was very close to and in the beginning, the contacts I had with them served to calm me down a bit, too.

If someone is given over to grief at the passing of a relative, then it is certainly beneficial on both sides to make contact through a medium. But that kind of contact should be made only as necessary in the short period of time after death. As has been said, if someone insists on talking every Thursday to the spirit of Aunt Tillie, they are doing Aunt Tillie a great disservice. Aunt Tillie is alive and well on the inner planes and has her work to do.

Once you are convinced that Grandma is alive and well on the inner planes, you should let go of your grief so she can live in peace. Having been reassured that all is well, you should accept the fact that she is now living in a different dimension of life and has new activities to devote her attention to. And so you should try not to interfere with those activities. Of course, if after a few years, you need to talk to Grandma, then it is quite possible that Grandma will come back and talk with you. But that should be after Grandma has made her transition and adjustment and has embarked on her particular work over here.

Much Mourning is Spurious

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) The spirit world disapproves of mourning in every shape and form. Genuine, heartfelt sorrow is a human emotion that none of us is secure from, but so much mourning is spurious. Here we can see just what is taking place in the minds of the mourners. Mourning as a rule is utterly selfish because people are not sorry for the soul who has passed on except in so far as it is thought that he is now infinitely worse off ‘dead.’ The great majority of people are *sorry for themselves* at the physical separation, not happy and glad that their friend has gone to a greater, grander, more beautiful life.

Even when the sorrow is perfectly genuine and inspired by true affection, every effort should be made to curb it. The soul newly arrived in spirit lands will feel the determined drag of the thoughts of those who are left behind unless those thoughts are constructive thoughts for the present and future well-being of the friend who has gone.

Thoughts of the wrong kind will draw the soul back like a magnet and prevent it from making a steady and natural transition into its proper sphere. ... The strong attachment to the physical body that exists in the minds of so many people would be largely broken down if those same people were to become fully acquainted with spirit truths.

Spirits Discourage Visits to Grave

(Philip Gilbert, *PTW*.) Don't fret in your heart about what happened to my body. I shouldn't go often to that grave if I were you – it only makes you morbid. I don't want you to think of what's under there. I've got a real body now – indestructible and much more efficient.

[Later:] I really would much rather you didn't go to that grave – I saw how morbid it made you again.

Have the courage of your convictions, my dear! I've told you before, you would not, when I was in the flesh, have gone and brooded droopily over my cast-off suits and put flowers on them, now would you? I want you, once and for all, to rid yourself of any lingering feeling that what is there is me at all.

Learning, Adjusting, Departing

New Arrivals' Ideas of What to Expect Present Barriers

(Philemon, *LFOS*.) Oh, my dear friend, we bring such weird, unreal, unnatural conceptions of spiritual verities and states into this world! And we must drop them all; we must clarify the windows of our souls to let in the truth.

Some [arrivals] have erected certain insuperable barriers between themselves and the emancipated soul, by what are termed "truths," basic truths of Theosophy, etc. Others have much – nearly all, in fact – to learn with regard to the world with which they believe themselves to be in daily communion. So they are; but much that they believe to be imparted to them is merely, as it were, their own mental conception mirrored forth in their own objective consciousness.

Q. Can you tell me anything of the spiritual condition of our friend E. L., who recently passed over?

P. The mentality is somewhat obscured – not yet clear; but do not let this distress you. His development will go on naturally and slowly. He will achieve much, later on, but not yet.

Q. Is he happy?

P. He is not happy, but merely resigned to the inevitable. Happiness is not possible to all immediately. All that can be done is being done.

Q. Is he working?

P. He is not doing anything yet. He is still an invalid, and still cast-iron-bound in prejudice and prepossessions, and these must be dissolved away by the solvent of spiritual and mental affections, and even afflictions, in order to free the spirit from the self-imposed restrictions. Imagine a Chinese woman's artificially bound foot, and you have some notion of what a man can do with his soul-vehicle – not his soul. ... One reason why messages are withheld is that relatives cannot bear the truth. I have given you the true spiritual conditions. He is not yet a free creature, but you can make him

happier by rejoicing that his self-forged chains are falling away. It is because he has become aware of his limitations that he is unhappy. His case is one of transcendent value and interest to both worlds; for when the gyves that manacle him are riven asunder, he will be as powerful for freedom as he was determined in restricting activities that did not appeal to the intellect. ... He will eventually help in this great struggle for freedom better here than on earth with his former limitations. Mental fetters can be cast as we grow, but soul and spirit fetters continue into, and through, the unseen.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ*.) At first my mind was entirely occupied with my predicament [of awakening after death] and the past did not concern me, but as I wandered now one, now another vision flashed across my mental retina. A ribbon of road, boys on bicycles, my cottage, and soon these discrete memories began to coalesce into a continuous series of past experiences. Before long I was racing back along the years faster and faster, helpless to stay the record and obliged to feel as well as to remember as my past unrolled back to the earliest childhood memories, I had come to a stand while this disquieting survey held me and as it checked at the unconsciousness of the infant, my own consciousness flickered out. At the very moment of oblivion, I gasped with relief and just had time to think: this is really the end.

(*Julia Ames, AD*.) When you come to this side, your first thought will be of the waste of life that has gone in the past. Waste of opportunities, waste of strength, waste of growth, for the conditions of life, the object of existence here are so different that to many, the first impression is that of bankruptcy. They have spent their life in accumulating treasure and so the deposits in the Bank on the other side cannot be drawn here and they are undone.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH*.) It is not long [after death] before [his spirit body] begins to show its particular attributes to its owner. By its principal ability – ineffaceable and infallible recording – this mind reveals itself as a complete and perfect chronicle of its owner's life upon earth. The revelations, therefore, that are attendant upon the person newly arrived in the spirit world can be sufficiently startling.

(*Winifred Combe Tenant, SBS*.) To give me confidence in my beginning, to reassemble my bits of mind, as it were, my mother took me through some of the earliest of my memories that had made an impact on me and are all pictured here. ... This film was a little dim, but a touching one. ... Then the pictures moving back in time. ... There was I, the very old woman, a spectator of my small child self, entering into her emotions, throbbing to her tears, uplifted by her small joys. Those little dramas enacted by my past child-self were all reassuring to me, the spectator, after the lonely passage of death. Somehow I felt that what should have been the experience of everything being dead, breaking up, [but]

nothing was dead, nothing lost. There was the moving spectacle of childhood in this unrolling film – more, of course, learning my letters, lessons, youth, the social training of my period, my sisters being launched. Then my coming out, the hair being up, long dresses, shyness, gawkiness, grotesque, historical costumes – a costume play!

Mine was not a sudden, swift fall. It was a slow-motion picture in this film of memory.

The old woman can only write of it now because she has been watching it scene by scene, living again its varied emotions, its keen anxieties, its palpitating wonder, its fears, its hopes, and yet remaining detached, the spectator in the stalls.

That phase in my life [when her eldest son died] was like the tragic climax at the end of an act in a play. As I viewed it again, I was deeply caught by its conflicting emotions. But I, the spectator, could perceive the change it and the [First World] war wrought in my personality, There had been one change before that in 1908, [the death of her infant daughter Daphne] in my first grave loss through death. But actually I became sensible of the great change in myself in 1918.

“Judgment Day”

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) The “Judgment” is real enough, but it is not entirely concerned with the results of sinning and suffering. What is weighed is the growth of being which experience has produced. This is why the “publican and sinner” go often into heaven before the “good man.” So many of earth’s solemn judgments are reversed or overturned here, where the scale of values runs in terms of being and not of behavior.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The departed one has not gone to another world to be marched in front of a stern Judge, a Judge, moreover, so stern and unrelenting but that our lamentations will not bring some mitigation in the sentence to be pronounced.

And now [after death], what happens next? Just this: the person who has just passed into spirit lands goes to his own *self-appointed place*.

At the very outset, this would seem to suggest that I have overlooked what is known as ‘judgment,’ where every man shall be judged according to his merits and rewarded or condemned – received into heaven or sent to hell.

No, I have not overlooked it because there is no such thing as being judged at any time ... by any single soul that lives in the spirit world. There is no Judgment Day.

Man, himself, is his own judge. His thoughts, his words, and his deeds, recorded upon his mind, are his only judge, and according to how his earthly life has been lived, so will his place be in these lands of the spirit world. This is another natural law and, like all the laws of the spirit world, perfect in its operation. It requires no interpreters of it, no

exponents of it. It is self-acting and incorruptible, and, what is most important, it is impartial and infallible.

The old idea of a Recording Angel, whose especial function is to inscribe in a great book all our good deeds, is poetic enough, but completely wrong. We do our own recording for ourselves and this is one instance at least when we speak truly! We cannot hide our bad deeds, but, also, we cannot conceal our good deeds.

What really counts in our earthly lives is the motive behind our deeds. Our motives may be of the highest, but the actual deed may have a poor external appearance. And the reverse is equally true. For example, a man may give vast sums of money for some charitable purpose with the sole thought of personal publicity and self-aggrandizement. While the gift itself may do great good to those upon whom it is bestowed, the motive behind the gift will not be to the giver’s spiritual advantage. But if this same donor were to perform a small service to another person in difficulty or similar circumstances, all unwitnessed by a third party, and with the sole intention of helping a fellow mortal in distress, such unobtrusive and stealthy service brings a rich reward to him who performs it. It is motive, always, that counts.

The richest services are most often those that are performed without a fanfare of trumpets. So many of us here in the spirit world are surprised when we discover that some small service that we have done – and immediately afterwards forgotten – has helped us in our spiritual progression to an extent that we should scarcely have thought possible. But here we see things in their proper light - that is, in their true light - because they are registered within ourselves in their true light.

So, you see, we need no one to condemn us. No one could condemn us more strictly, more exactly, more truly and efficiently than we do ourselves. When we come to the spirit world at our dissolution, we thus find ourselves in the precise environment for which we have fitted ourselves. That environment may be one of darkness or of light, or it may be one of gloomy grayness. But, whatever it may be, we have ourselves to thank or blame for it.

Death-bed Repentances are Useless

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Souls are exactly the same the instant after passing into spirit life as they were the instant before. Death-bed repentances are of no avail, since the majority of them are but cowardice born of fear of what is about to happen – a fear of the theologically-built eternal hell that is such a useful weapon in the ecclesiastical armory and one that has perhaps caused more suffering in its time than many other erroneous doctrines.

Personalities Remain the Same

(*Newly arrived spirit, LHH.*) I have learned one thing already that it seems to me the earth people should be told. It is that *we cannot change our character at the moment of death*. What we have made of ourselves during our earth life determines what we will be here to a very large extent. I suppose one who was malicious or criminal there will in time change his character here: but the characteristics which caused him to turn to an evil life there will be his strong characteristics here; and he will have to learn how to turn these to better use.

I think this point is not at all realized on earth. Those who believe the Bible teachings are too often filled with the idea that repentance will remake them, no matter what kind of a life they have [led]. And those who do not have this idea are usually lacking in any conclusion on the subject.

I had formed no very definite ideas of this life, but I did have a firm belief that personality continued. I was not ill long, so I arrived with little loss of vigor, and with little to unlearn. I realize that I was extremely fortunate, for I see so many who have much difficulty in understanding what this life means.

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) Life goes on without any miracle The human soul begins here as it left off there There is no wonderful transformation of character Evil remains evil until the soul turns of its own accord toward the good Sin does reap its own reward ... There is no hell except the one created by one's own self... All, all, can rise through gloom, disappointment, sin and selfishness, to something high, holy and grand, and forever and forever live in happiness and usefulness: Are these things [not] worth the thought of mortals?

That is what we believe, and why we try to send the truths of this life to earth.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) No magical, instantaneous change takes place [upon death] either of mind or body.

We pass into the spirit world with all our earthly likes and dislikes, all our fancies and foibles, all our idiosyncrasies, and with all our religious errors fast upon us. We were just as we were on earth, though it does not follow in every instance that we will behave just as we did on earth. In the spirit world, we have more freedom of expression and, gravitating as we do to our own temperamental and spiritual kind, we are not diffident of giving open expression to our thoughts and feelings, and thus presenting, at last, a true picture of ourselves as we really are. Some minds are quick to grasp new ideas and new truths. Some are quick to grasp truth in place of falsehood or untruth. People of this mental caliber soon readjust their views, and so become in harmony with their new life and surroundings.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) When the soul leaves the body, it remains exactly the same as when it was in the body. ... [The soul]

retains the mind, the knowledge, the experience, the habits of thought, the inclinations ... exactly as they were.

Do you think that, if the bundle of passionate and eager forces which make up what you call your Ego were to come here, if the earthly house of your tabernacle were to be dissolved, that you would, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, be quite other than you are? Would that spirit of yours be freed from the characteristics which make you really you? No.... Individuality is not eliminated, but rather accentuated in its essence and harmonized in its accidents. The trouble in the world is that there, it is the other way. There is so much friction in the horns and hoofs and amour of individuality that the real individuality often perishes.

Though the conditions of existence are altered, the life itself remains the same.

When the man dies, he wakes up himself and no other. He is still he, she, she. If a child, he wakes up a child; if an old man, he wakes up an old man. If it were not so, you would lose your identity and imagine that you have been incarnated in another body.

There is much that a man must leave behind, but there are possessions which he brings over here. A proud spirit does not become humble because its owner has lost his wealth, nor does the spirit of jealousy die with death. These and many [other qualities] persist, just as kindness and sympathy and pity persist. And they torment their owners here as with you, only worse. The difference between the worlds is at the beginning, chiefly in the sudden loss of all the materialities of your world. The man comes naked into this world as he came into yours.

Where Do You Go?

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) Many worldly ones feel a keen disappointment when they first arrive, because all is so different, because all depends upon spirit knowledge, spirit powers, which they so entirely neglected to develop when on earth.

We think we have been *on this side* a long time, for we were unconscious longer than we could know. When on earth, we were not in accord with spiritualism. We had heard of it, but only the common medium, the fortune-telling variety, and we felt superior to that. If we had only tried it out, had only investigated in an unprejudiced way, we would have come into the heavenly life without the dreary waiting in darkness and doubt.

Q. 'Had you no religion?'

No, we were not even church members. We thought if we lived decent materialistic lives, we would come into the heavenly one - if there was one, which we really did not believe. Our guides tried to help us, but we were buried too deep in our own beliefs, and had to suffer the consequences.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) For the average [person], the experiences [after death] are very subjective, that is, emanating from his own thought-life, at first. A good deal depends, in the

first place, on whether the person realizes he has died. I think in ordinary times, most people do – at least that is the intention of the natural law. People should really live to old age and, gradually, as the physical body weakens, see a little through the “veil” into the next phase, and have relatives there to greet them.

Unfortunately, very frequently, this does not happen. Many people die prematurely of illnesses and their physical link is strong. Others, even when old, have not learnt much and are so obsessed by earthly predilections that they continue to live in them afterwards, in a complete illusion, created by their strongly woven thought images.

Really unpleasant types – and you’d be surprised: there are not so many as you’d think, for most people who behave badly do it through ignorance or weakness, or by being up against human laws which so far have usually operated in favor of the “haves” against the “have-nots” – well, anyhow, *really* nasty bits of work stay in their illusions, but in compulsory company with others like them, or with those they have wronged if the latter are full of resentful hate, and they are at the mercy of any unpleasant astral entity who may be around.

In the etheric and astral world – the “lower astral” being the earth-bound, and the “lowest” astral being the dregs of creation merging into negation – an entity lives for a time in its own previous thought world, drawn by magnetism to its own kind. If it is only slightly evolved, it is “earth-bound” as I described and often very lonely, unhappy or frustrated because it has all the disadvantages of being a “vapor” from an earth point of view and yet cannot acquire knowledge to use the overwhelming advantages of its new phase of existence.

But ... the average decent sort of chap senses light at once: a distant [glimmer] of light which pulls at him and, if he then wills to evolve, he is helped.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) All places are not open to us here. There are many realms where we are not able to enter except in very special circumstances, or only if our progression permits.

Each soul as it passed into spirit passed into that realm for which it had fitted itself when upon the earth – into that realm and no other. Edwin had in the beginning described this land as the land of the great harvest – a harvest that was sown on earth. We could judge for ourselves, then, whether we considered that harvest a good one or a poor one. We should find that there were others infinitely better – and others infinitely worse. In plain words, there are other realms immeasurably more beautiful than that in which we were now happily living; realms of unsurpassing beauty into which we cannot penetrate until such time as we have earned the right to enter, either as visitors or as inhabitants.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) What may happen to us immediately after the [magnetic] cord is severed may vary infinitely

according to the multiplicity of human temperaments which go to make up the populations of the earth and according to the wide divergence in degrees of spirituality possessed by the new arrivals.

We are not pontifically welcomed among the ‘elect.’ We are not made free citizens of these realms because we have been ‘saved’ through believing in some strange, obscure theological creed. We are not here because we have been ‘redeemed’ through the offices of another. We are here solely because we have, by our lives in earth or by our progress in the spirit world, earned the right to call ourselves citizens of these realms. We are here because no one can keep us out! Once we have the right to be here, no one can gainsay that right, no one can dispute it, no one *would* dispute it even if he could.

Letters from Men Killed In the War

This final section contains extracts from Lord Dowding’s Book *Many Mansions*. Lord Dowding was Britain’s Chief Air Marshall during WWII, so headed the Royal Air Force. Also a psychological researcher, he met with all the prominent mediums of the day, and gathered many stories from those in uniform who crossed over. Here are a few obtained through automatic writing.

(*A sailor, the son of an old friend.*) I was in an oil tanker and we were all drowned when she was hit. It was very quick and I did not suffer any pain but tremendous surprise at finding myself possessed of the most wonderful strength and able to heave away all kinds of wreckage. I was making my way through the debris when I realised that we were moving through deep water. It was so still that it was just like a dream. I remember feeling it was quite easy to move and there was no difficulty in breathing (if we were breathing), but now I come to think of it, it was a different sort of breath. I got free and so did some of my friends and we moved away without quite knowing what we were doing. We found a stranger had joined us; his clothes were quite dry and he walked through the water without it seeming to touch him.

As we walked, I saw that we were going towards what looked like a sunrise, the best I’ve ever seen, and I turned to look back over the way we had come. The stranger put his hand on my shoulder and said, “Not yet, you must go on out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death and then you can return if you want to.”

I said, “Oh, I don’t care,” and went on in a dazed sort of way until we came to a kind of garden, but it wasn’t enclosed. It was on the hillside with lots and lots of flowers; oh, they were lovely! By this time, I had realized that we were not walking in the water any more and I felt so tired and sleepy, and my feet refused to go any further. The stranger suggested that we should rest so I sat down on the grass and was soon asleep.

You cannot imagine my astonishment on waking to find myself in a strange place, and I couldn't at first remember how I got there, but it came back after a time, and I found some of the others and they helped me piece it together. But all the time, the stranger stayed with us, and he listened and said nothing, so at last I asked him where he had come from and why he'd brought us here.

He said: "Oh, I'm just a seaman like you, but I've been ashore for some time now so I thought I might be able to help you." Then, very slowly, we all knew we were what we used to call "dead," but it was so different that I couldn't believe it.

It's grand, just GRAND! I wish my mother could know about it. We are in a far better land than the one we left, and it's all okay. I'd love her to see it. Dad came to me soon after I realized this and we had a great time together. It seems queer to call him Dad; he's younger than I am now, at least he looks it. We are to have a job together soon, but I am not to be in a hurry.

(Gunner Simson, a New Zealander.) You do not know my people; they are far away and would never understand. I am one of the Colonial troops and my name is Simson. I came from New Zealand. I guess some of the lads have had their fill of fighting, but that was what we came for, and I am glad I came. I know it wasn't much use in the ordinary way, but we showed our loyalty to Britain, and that's the spirit that will prevail in the end. I was one of the casualties in Greece. I feel I should go home now, but I can't leave my mates. I could go as swiftly as a thought, and return equally quickly. Time doesn't matter now, but if I let go the contact with our lads, I may find it difficult to pick up again. I feel we can do something here now, and if that's so, let's go on doing it.

I am rather vague as to who is "alive" and who is "dead," they all look much alike, but the "dead" are far more active and don't get tired. I should never go back alive. But my parents would never understand how much more alive I am now, so it's no use my trying to tell them. I am going straight on with my job, under my own officer, and with many of my pals; we work for the rest, especially when they are asleep. Sometimes we raid the enemy's "dead" battalion, fighting with our thought weapons! It's a grand game. There are so few things we can't do now. One of the strangest things is that we all feel happy. I wasn't one of the naturally happy ones on Earth. I worried and fidgeted and found time lagged more than most people. But here there is a sort of care-free feeling, and no time to lag, so I can't work up any regret over leaving my body. I stay right here. Our boys are happy, too, all of them, and the others are having such a rough time that it's up to us to stay by them.

Question. "Can we help you? Do you need our help?"

Well, yes, we do. It's ever such a help to do this [automatic writing], it kind of gives me more pep to get into close touch with my pals. It would be much better if you

could have a talk with more of us. You give us confidence. So often we cannot see the result of our work, but now I can feel and see your reactions, and it makes it real, like I expect it does for you. Something to show for it. Thank you ever so much. I think that's all for now. Good night.

(A Highlander taken prisoner in Crete.) I was in Crete. I'm a Highlander. I was in the Marines and I stayed on in Crete among those who couldn't be taken off. It was one of the worst moments when I saw the ships leave and knew escape was hopeless. I got hit in the shoulder, and there was nothing for it but to give in and let them take me prisoner. I was put on to a stretcher and taken to hospital, but they did nothing for me except to give me a bed to lie on. My wound got septic and very painful. I got delirious, I suppose, and they questioned me, but I don't think they did anything for me, perhaps they couldn't. Anyway, after ages and ages of suffering, I seemed to pass into a timeless sleep, and when I woke up, there was no pain. I was out of doors so I thought I had escaped and I wandered about glad to be free, but I couldn't make sense of it all. I seemed unable to walk properly; I couldn't keep on the ground, and though I didn't fall, it was extremely difficult to move along. Then the whole place would grow misty. I would see places and people one moment and the next I saw something quite different. I thought I was delirious again.

Now I know that I was seeing two planes at once, and I hadn't learnt to manage my spirit body, it all worried me a lot and I got quite hopeless. People would come up to help me, and just as we were beginning to understand each other, I would see the outline of Crete, and be overcome by the desire to hide from the Germans. It was a sort of torture, and then at last they got through to me and I was able to sleep – the real sleep of death – the putting off of one life and the taking on of another. I don't know much about it, but this life seems so natural that I was anxious to try and write through you so as to test my power on the physical plane before going back to help those who have suffered like I did. I know we can and I don't want to waste time. It's grand finding that nothing has been wasted. I have all the faculties now that I longed to have on Earth. Oh, it's simply grand.

Goodnight.

(A tank officer.) Thank you, I am alive after all. I thought extinction was the only thing that could follow such an inferno. We seemed to go down on all sides, British and German alike, tanks and guns and planes. I had the feeling that we were being exterminated by the machines of our own creation, they seemed so much stronger and more vindictive than the humans inside them.

I prayed for help when we stuck in the sand and fire broke out, and prayed with all my soul. I knew we couldn't escape, but prayer seemed to strengthen me and I felt that nothing really mattered so desperately, except the feeling

of evil, and that had receded; I could not name it or explain it in words. I seemed to meet us from the sand and hang all around the tank battle. I felt sick and miserable, and then it passed off and I found myself standing outside the tank talking to my colonel. He seemed unconscious of the bullets that were raining down on us. I ran for shelter but he called me and told me not to bother. He was looking as young as a subaltern and as though he was enjoying the battle. He took me by the shoulder and said, "Don't you see, Kit, we are dead, and yet far more alive than they are. We can go on fighting, hampering the enemy, throwing dust in his eyes, putting ideas into our leaders and playing an invisible hand."

(Marine in the South Pacific fighting, February 4th 1942.) I was picked off by a Jap sniper. I fell face downwards in the swampy mud of the jungle, and I lay unconscious for some time in a sort of nightmare. My body was trying to reassert itself, and my spirit was trying to get free. Never think that when people seem unconscious, they really are so, at least I wasn't. It was a time of conscious paralysis, and when something snapped, I was free. I was awfully relieved.

I got back to our fellows and I soon realized what had happened when they didn't see me; but I was so interested in finding myself unchanged that I hadn't time to think of anything else. I wanted to tell them not to fear death, but I couldn't. After a time I began to see the Jap dead helping their own fellows. The living Japs could sometimes see and hear them, and they used all the information given. This made me feel that we should be able to do the same. I tried awfully hard, but I couldn't warn or suggest anything which could be accepted by the brains of our fellows, so I wandered off, wondering what to do next.

I didn't exactly want to leave them to it, but there didn't seem to be any alternative, so I wandered off into the forest, and for a time forgot all about the war, and all that my friends were going through. I was fascinated by the life I saw all around me. I know the jungle well, I have lived in it alone for months on end, and I came back to it, seeking rest and peace after the turmoil of war, and I found all I sought and more, much more.

I suddenly found I was seeing things that had been hidden from me during the whole of my physical life. I cannot describe the beauty of the life around me. The jungle is always rich in color, sound and beauty of trees and flowers but now behind everything I knew so well lurked a hidden meaning, and some beautiful ray or sound seemed to permeate the very texture of the jungle life.

I can't explain. I was superbly happy, and entirely myself, but that self had grown in comprehension, and in power to experience contentment and bliss.

Then a voice came to my ears, and gradually I sensed a beautiful shining figure that said to me: "Here you see the land of pure content but you have left behind a land of passionate unrest. Do you not wish to help others to find the key to this place of joy?"

I was so overcome at never having thought of anyone else for ages that I must have blushed like a schoolboy, but the Shining One didn't seem to notice. So I stammered that I really hadn't grasped my whereabouts yet, and could he help me?

He said: "No, you found the way, and the rest you must discover for yourself, but others may not be so fortunate and need help."

I didn't want to turn my back on this glorious place, but the Shining One promised to come with me and not leave me. He explained, "You can always return just by recalling this place vividly and wishing yourself here. Now equally you and I must see ourselves in the battle zone."

The jungle moved or dissolved and its place was taken by another sort of jungle full of men shouting orders and screaming in pain. I felt unable to bear it at first, but the Shining One said: "Come and stand by this man; he is about to pass over to our side." A second later, a bullet ripped through his stomach and he lay groaning at our feet. The Shining One bent down and touched his head and eyes. Instantly the groaning ceased and I saw his spirit leave his tortured body, and looking dazed and pale, joined us both in the deep foliage of the jungle. Before I knew what had happened, we were back in the wonderful jungle.

The man who had joined us was one of our own men. A dull-looking fellow. I hardly knew him. He took no interest in games and was always reading. Now he brightened up suddenly upon catching sight of me, and said: "Hello, sir, I didn't think you'd be here. I thought I'd seen you killed some days ago."

I said: "Yes, and I saw you killed some minutes ago."

The Shining One looked at me and I knew I shouldn't have broken the news so swiftly. But Burrows didn't seem to mind. "Oh, well, I've copped it, have I? Well, I don't care, it's awful fighting here and not much chance of getting out. What's it like here?"

I told him it was splendid, and that he had nothing to fear, and we walked about through the jungle clearing while the Shining One explained things to us. Soon we had both recovered from the shock and he took us back to the firing line to fetch more of our people and introduce them to this life. That is where we are now, and I wanted to get further and learn how to impress my thoughts upon the men in charge. I'm grateful to you for my first lesson; it doesn't seem to have gone too badly, but I'm tired now and I'll wish myself back in my jungle home of refreshment.

Good night.

PART TWO: THE ASTRAL PLANE

Chapter 4: Arrival

Introduction

The main theme of this chapter is spiritual preparedness. As we saw in the previous chapter, if you arrive with a belief system that denies the existence of the afterlife, you will hover on the border of asleep/awake, unable to see or hear the flurry of activity all around you, possibly for centuries.

Eventually, you may open your eyes and ears, and wonder what all those vague shapes are and realize that they are people, the “medical staff” of the facility you are in. Of course, as a reader of this book, you will cross over in full consciousness and not skip a beat as you begin your new life in spirit.

Hurried Through the Borderlands and the Lower Astral

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) My own passage ... was easy and comfortable and I was certainly not aware of any distress when the actual moment arrived for the magnetic cord to break from my physical body. As far as I was concerned, there was no shock or struggle, no unpleasant circumstances of any description.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) Edwin later informed me that I had passed through the lower spheres – and unpleasant ones – but that through the authority of his mission of coming to help me into my realm, we were both fully protected from any and every ... unpleasant influence. We were in effect completely invisible to all but those of our own realm and higher.

Where is the boundary between the earth world and the spirit world? Upon the instant of my passing, ... I was fully conscious, when I arose from my bed in response to a very definite urge. At that moment, I was in the spirit world. The two worlds, then, must interpenetrate one another.

The actual process of dissolution is not necessarily a painful one. I had during my earth life witnessed many souls passing over the border into spirit. I had had the chance of observing with the physical eyes the struggles that take place as the spirit seeks to free itself forever from the flesh. With my psychic vision, I had also seen the spirit leave.

There came a moment when the physical sensations attendant upon my last illness left me abruptly and, in place of them, a delightful feeling of bodily ease and peace of mind completely enveloped me. I felt that I wanted to breathe deeply and I did so. The impulse to rise from my bed and the passing of all physical sensations mark the instant of my physical ‘death’ and my birth into the world of spirit.

The final illness – the serious one – was too much for the physical body and my transition took place. And immediately I knew what it felt like to be a spirit person.

As I stood talking to Edwin I felt, physically, a giant, in spite of the fact that I had just departed from a bed of sickness.

As time went on, I felt even better. I had not the slightest suspicion of a twinge of pain and I felt light in weight. My mind was fully alert and I was aware of my [spirit] body only in so far as I could move my limbs and myself whenever I wished, apparently without any of the muscular actions that were but so recently familiar. It is extremely difficult to convey to you this feeling of perfect health, because such a thing is utterly impossible on earth and therefore I have nothing with which to draw a comparison or form an analogy for you. This state belongs to the spirit alone and completely defies any description in earthly terms. It must be experienced and that you will not be able to do until you become one of us here yourself.

There is a surprising number of people who do not realize that they have passed from the earth in the death of the physical body. Resolutely they will not believe that they are what the earth calls ‘dead.’ They are dimly aware that some sort of change has taken place, but what that change is they are not prepared to say. Some, after a little explanation and even demonstration, can grasp what has actually happened; others are stubborn and will be convinced only after prolonged reasoning. In the latter case, we are oft-times obliged to leave such a soul for a while to allow a little quiet contemplation to work its way. We know we shall be sought out the instant that soul feels the power of our reasoning. In many respects, it is tiring work, though I use the word ‘tiring’ in its strictly limited [earth] sense.

Need for Convalescent Sleep upon Arrival

(“Joe’s Scripts,” LO.) Some people leave their bodies and go directly to the Astral Plane and so take their convalescence on that plane rather than in the Borderlands. Usually their convalescence is shorter because their spiritual knowledge

is greater. The spirit longs to rest. There comes the great desire to sleep.

In that sleep, a great deal happens but I don't know enough yet to tell you all about it. It is not exactly a sleep, but your sleep in the earth life is very much the nearest thing to it. ... All you know is that you wake up another being. When the spirit comes out of that sleep, he knows where he is and what he is, as you sometimes wake up in the morning with some knotty problem solved.

Those who pass over with full knowledge and understanding of the life beyond do not need that sleep at all, unless they come over with their spirits tied by long illness or the worries of life. In practice, almost everyone needs the sleep period for a shorter or a longer time. The greater the difficulty of the spirit in adjusting himself to the new conditions, the longer and deeper the sleep period that is necessary.

How to describe what it feels like when you come out of that sleep? You know quite clearly that you are alive, without any muddle about thinking that you are still in the earth life. During that experience, something has taught us and told us.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) My friend [Edwin] asked me if I was tired. I had no ordinary sensation of earthly fatigue, but yet I felt somewhat the necessity for a bodily relaxation. He told me my last illness was the cause of such a desire and that if I wished, I could pass into a state of complete sleep.

Making myself 'comfortable' upon a couch [in my house], I sank into a delightful state of semi-sleep, in which I was fully conscious of my surroundings, yet at the same time, I could feel a down-pouring of new energy, which coursed through my whole being. I could feel myself becoming, as it were, lighter, with the last traces of the old earth conditions being driven away forever.

How long I remained in this pleasant state, I have no knowledge, but eventually I fell into a gentle slumber from which I awoke in that state of health which in the spirit world is perfect.

[Edwin] at once noticed a change in me and he congratulated me upon my regaining my full vigor.

Some Need Help to Awaken to Spirit Life

(Unnamed spirit in LHH.) When spirits first arrive, they are cared for much as patients are entered in a hospital. They are helpless, and often remain so for long periods. In this condition, they are little care. When sensation and consciousness begin to show, they need attention.

Many cannot be reached at all by their guides, as you know by those who have been brought to you. Sometimes they can be led from place to place, but that is all. Sometimes they need to be surrounded by guards to prevent them from running hither and thither without reason. When they can be made to realize that they still live and are in the spirit

world, they can be easily managed. But the progress of each is according to the ability to receive and understand the teachings given them.

We think we can truthfully say that one-fourth of those who come to this side are made to understand the needs of spirit life in a reasonable time. But the remaining three-fourths are our problem and care. We do not mean that all of this large number are unable to advance, but that they are slow, and sometimes very slow.

We have many, many, whom we seem unable to help at all. We do not know that it is impossible for them to advance, but we do know that many of them have made no advancement since we came; and we are told that some of them have been in this condition for centuries.

It is pitiful. It seems to us unnecessary. It does not seem to be so much because of difference in ability, as from a state of mind brought about by forming wrong opinions and ideas when in earth life. And the position they occupied in that life seems not to have much to do with it. This makes us think that it is unnecessary, and we wish some way could be found that would make the world understand what is needed.

"Hospitals" or Homes of Rest

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) Long illness has a tiring effect upon the spirit body – it would be more accurate to say an inhibiting effect upon the spirit body – and when, at last, the physical body is cast off, the spirit body usually goes to one of the numerous halls of rest with which the spirit world is plentifully supplied. There, the new resident will pass into a state of pleasant sleep, ultimately to awake fully refreshed and reinvigorated.

[We saw in the distance what turned out to be] a home of rest for those who had come into spirit after long illness, or who had had a violent passing and who were, in consequence, suffering from shock. ... As we drew near I could see that the [stately] building was in no sense a 'hospital' in outward semblance, whatever its functions might be. It was built in the classical style, two or three stories high and it was entirely open upon all sides. That is to say, it contained no windows as we know them on earth. It was white in color as far as the materials of its composition were concerned, but immediately above it there was to be seen a great shaft of blue light descending upon and enveloping the whole building with its radiance, the effect of which was to give a striking blue tinge to the whole edifice. This great ray was the down-pouring of life – a healing ray – sent to those who had already passed here, but who were not yet awake. When they were fully restored to spiritual health, there would be a splendid awakening and they would be introduced to their new land.

Occupying the whole of the floor space were extremely comfortable-looking couches, each of which bore a recum-

bent form, quite still and obviously sleeping profoundly. Moving quietly about were a number of men and women intent upon watching the different couches and their burdens.

I noticed as soon as we entered the hall that we came under the influence of the blue ray and its effect was one of pronounced energizing as well as tranquility. Another noticeable quality was the entire absence of any idea of an institution with its inevitable officialdom. ... Those in attendance on the sleepers did so, not in the attitude of a certain task to be done willy-nilly, but as though they were performing a labor of love in the sheer joy of doing it. Such, indeed, was precisely the case. The glad awakening of these sleeping souls was an ever recurrent joy to them, no less than to the people who had come to witness it. ...

Long illness prior to passing into the spirit world has a debilitating effect upon the mind, which in turn has its influence upon the spirit body. The latter is not serious, but the mind requires absolute rest of varying duration. Each case is treated individually and eventually responds perfectly to its treatment. During this sleep-state, the mind is completely resting. There are no unpleasant dreams, or fevers of delirium.

While gazing upon this perfect manifestation of Divine Providence, the thought came to me of those absurd earthly notions of 'eternal rest,' 'everlasting sleep,' and the many other equally foolish earthly conceptions, and I wondered if, by some chance or other, this sleep I was now beholding had been distorted by earthly minds into a state of eternal slumber, whither all souls pass at dissolution, there to await, in countless years' time, the awful 'last day' – the dread 'Day of Judgment.' Here was the visible refutation of such a senseless belief.

The patients resting upon their couches looked very peaceful. Constant watch is kept upon them and at the first fluttering of returning consciousness, others are summoned and all is ready for the full awakening. Some will wake up partially and then sink back again into slumber. Others will shake off their sleep at once and it is then that those experienced souls in attendance will have, perhaps, their most difficult task. Until that moment, in fact, it has been mostly a matter of watching and waiting. In so many cases, it has to be explained to the newly awakened soul that he has 'died' and is alive. They will remember usually their long illness, but some are quite unaware that they have passed over into spirit and, when the true state of affairs has been gently and quietly explained to them, they often have an urgent desire to go back to the earth, perhaps to those who are sorrowing, perhaps to those for whose care and welfare they were responsible. They are told that nothing can be done by their going back and that others of experience will take care of those circumstances that are so distressing them. Such awakenings are not happy ones by comparison with those who wake up with the full realization of what has taken place.

Were the earth more enlightened, this would be more often the case, and there would be a great deal less distress to the newly awakened soul. ...

We saw kind and patient spirits trying so hard to convince [some] people that they had really 'died.' And this hall of rest is but one place out of many where the same service is being carried on unceasingly, and all because the earth world is so very "superior" in knowledge!

In the great halls of rest, there are expert nurses and spirit doctors ready to treat those whose last earthly illness has been long and painful or whose passing into spirit has been sudden or violent.

We were shown another large hall similarly appointed, where those whose passing had been sudden and violent were also in their temporary sleep. These cases were usually more difficult to manage than those we had just seen. The suddenness of their departure added far greater confusion to the mind. Instead of a steady transition, the spirit body had in many cases been forcibly ejected from the physical body and precipitated into the spirit world. The passing over has been so sudden that there seemed to them to be no break in their lives. Such people are taken in hand quickly by bands of souls who devote all their time and the whole of their energies to such work. And in the hall of rest, we could now see the results of their labors. Had so many of these had but a small knowledge of spirit matters, these awakenings would have been so much happier.

I do assure you, it is not a pleasant sight to see these gentle, patient helpers wrestling mentally – and sometimes almost physically – with people who are wholly ignorant of the fact that they are 'dead.' It is a most saddening sight, which I can vouch for from first-hand evidence, for have I not seen it? And who is to blame for this state of affairs? Most of these souls blame themselves when they have been here long enough to appreciate their new condition, or alternatively, they blame the world they have but recently left for tolerating such blindness and stupidity.

In the halls of rest, ... the doctors and nurses are always in attendance, whatever else may be taking place in other parts of the sphere. Their devotion to duty is always instantly rewarded, for during the general celebrations of the realm, the illustrious visitors from the upper realms make a special journey to the rest homes where they personally greet every one of the staff. The latter can afterwards arrange amicably for their own family and friendly festivities.

Many with Spiritual Knowledge Do Not Need Convalescence

(Philip Gilbert, PTW.) There are, as you wrote in your messages, places ... created by very advanced entities, where people can go ... with fountains, birds and incredibly lovely color blending and rippling streams, and all the doings. They are used as rest-cure homes.

Fortunately I did not need one.

It is difficult for me to visualize the condition of those ... who cannot see the people here at the first because they think they are not [dead]. From the first, as soon as I saw Grandpa, I *knew*, and when I got to you and saw you, you were the glowing aura with a dark physical center that all human beings are. I could see the helpers all round you. There was never any plane of illusion for me, at all. After my little sleep, which cleared my confused thoughts, I soon got going, as you know, and was able, with Grandpa's help, to project a picture of myself on to your brain and to communicate with you. But then I was lucky to have a psychic mother who'd put me wise to it all, and to have a good deal of power myself, ready to tap, as I began to feel my way. In fact, to *me*, I'd come back to my real life!

Family and Friends Await Our Arrival

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) In these realms, we receive our friends amid great rejoicings. Another friend has come to join us. We wear no black, we do not recite long gloomy prayers or perform harrowing ceremonies. Nor do we have a reception committee of 'angels,' as many people are disposed to imagine. ... We merely behave in a normal, rational, human manner as one would expect from normal, rational, human beings.

There were ... numbers of friends who were waiting to meet me again after our long separation. (1)

(1) *Although placed in this order in this book, Monsignor Benson's meetings with his friends happened after his initial tour of the Summerlands, rather than upon his arrival there as the order of placement would suggest.*

At the home of rest I visited, I noticed that there were quite a number of people seated upon the grass in the grounds or walking about. They were relatives and friends of those who were undergoing treatment within the hall of rest and whose awakening was imminent. Although, doubtless, they could have been summoned upon the instant when necessary, yet, following their old earthly instinct, they preferred to wait close at hand for the happy moment. They were all supremely joyful and very excited, as could be seen by the expressions on their faces, and many were the friendly smiles we received as we walked among them.

The meetings with relations and friends are something that must be experienced in order to grasp the full significance and joy of reunion. Such meetings will only take place where there is mutual sympathy and affection. We will not, for the moment, consider any other. These gatherings will continue for some while after the arrival of the new resident. It is natural that, in the novelty both of surroundings and condition, some time should be spent in a grand exchange of news and in hearing of all that has transpired in the spirit lives of those who have 'predeceased' us. Eventually the time will come when the newly-arrived individual will begin to consider what he is to do with his spirit life.

(*Winifred Combe Tenant, SBS.*) After I woke up from the sleep of death, and following its uneasy dreams, some pleasant, some nightmares, my father and mother appeared to welcome me. Then your father and my sisters came. But my end was my beginning. I was too overjoyed perhaps at getting a glimpse of George, your brother, so father and mother soothed me, calmed me, took charge of me and gave me my first sense of locality and environment.

It as all rather gradual – time of oblivion and unawareness, then these two were there beside me – my parents almost like doctor and nurse, and they guided me back into real consciousness.

(*Helen Salter, LO.*) My parents, A.W. and Margaret, came from regions and appearances beyond my ken and *adopted the old disguises*. These are all in the litter of memory. They have appeared to me as I remembered them in the earlier years of my life. They brought with them my very old-fashioned home of long ago and its dear, comfortable ugliness, its books, its papers and its flowers, even the photographs that figured in numbers in Victorian sitting-rooms, drawing-rooms, studies. How I am enjoying its dear atmosphere! I was very tired and it has been so restful to me – imbued as it is with the fragrance of many distant memories. Oh, it will change, I know. Later on – visitors, friends, the setting of another scene in my life.

I was back in the old house, enfolded in its studious contentment. They did not have a number of visitors. It was kept quiet to be a refuge of sheltering peace for me.

Sometimes an Interlude Intervenes

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) When the soul wakes up on this side, it is often encompassed about by those whom it has loved and served in life. But sometimes a little space intervenes, as was my case.

When the disembodied soul arrives here, there is often an awkward pause. The new world into which he has entered is strange and he is a stranger. But the Agency which is at work here soon discovers what soul is friendless and alone. The angel who came to me was the servant of this Agency. The pause which is awkward is not longer than is necessary for the good of the newcomer. When he arrives, he will, after this pause time, if there is no preparation personal to himself, be addressed by the Receiving Angel, who, as I explained, may or may not assume wings as credentials. If the arrival is prepared to receive the news of his awakening, there is little difficulty. There was none in my own and I was at once taken to those whom I knew. None of them were very near and dear to me or they would have been waiting for me.

Friends and Relatives Can Assist the Bewildered New Arrival

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Relatives and friends who have passed on before us can help in such extremities [as when the newly-departed arrives in a bewildered state] and they frequently do so. But some mutual interest must exist first, even if it does not reach to the state of affectionate regard. Affection is the great linking force in the spirit world. ... If you have never given a thought while you are on earth to those who have passed into the spirit world before you or otherwise shown any friendly interest in your 'deceased' family and friends, there is not much incentive or encouragement for your relatives and friends to display any concern on your behalf. Mutual interest, affection, or regard provide the active living link between individuals. Without them, a gulf develops, and each and all of the parties will become detached and wander away to other interests and attachments.

Spirits Respond to Our Ignorance

Earth's Lack of Knowledge of Death is Appalling

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The whole process of leaving the earth – of dying – is a perfectly natural one. It is merely the operation of a natural law. But for thousands of years, the generality of people have lived in entire ignorance of the truth of 'dying' and of the 'hereafter.' And in this, as in so many cases, ignorance, or lack of knowledge, means fear. It is fear of the future following upon 'death' that has surrounded the act of transition with so many mournful and morbid solemnities and doleful trappings.

If only knowledge of the laws and conditions of spirit life were universally diffused throughout the earth world, what a wealth of difference it would make to each soul as he came to reside in these lands.

Was anyone ever so ill-equipped for a journey as the average person for the journey into the spirit lands?

It is a journey that all, all must take, and how many even bother to think about it during their earthly life?

This voyage is inevitable, without failure, but so many thousands of people are perfectly content to dismiss from their minds all thought of it until the time comes to take it. Many have no chance even at the last moment to think about it, so sudden is their transition.

How many people living on earth would be foolish enough to undertake a journey with their eyes blindfolded, not knowing how far they were traveling, or whence, or to what conditions of living? Yet so many are willing to embark upon the first great voyage of their lives in absolute ignorance of all these factors. We in the spirit world are constantly seeing these bewildered souls arriving and we do our best for them. We have then no need to chide them, for

they are the first to blame themselves. And more often than not, they do so in good, round terms!

The Impact of Ignorance of the Spirit Life

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) We are among those who on earth did not believe in this farther life. We lived a material existence in a material world, and looked forward to the long, long, unbroken sleep. When we came here, we *did* pass into a long sleep, but awakened to conditions and possibilities for which we were not prepared, and another long time of unhappiness awaited us before we began to see the orderliness of spirit progression. Then we began – perhaps you might call it the first letter of the spiritual alphabet. And from the first small letter has come the whole perfect and beautiful story. But years have been wasted, worse than wasted, because we absorbed the time and power of beautiful spirits who might have long been in happier pursuits.

I feel now as if I had been such a blunderer. To think of us over there! – poor humans chasing around after little specks of happiness we hoped to find, and missing a universe of joy in our future! We should think, and as far as possible, live this life before we come here.

Q. You were a golf-player here. Do you play it there?

Not that. But you needn't think we are a psalm-singing, harp-playing lot of people over here. Joy, pleasure, study, helping others when we can. Strange, that even over here, there are souls living in poverty of – well, a lack, utter lack, of happiness because of their own unbelief! I was one of the unbelievers there, but I did not stay so. One glimpse of the glory, and my soul was filled with joy; and never again has doubt assailed my mind.

You did not know, I guess, how far my unbelief went. But I could not find God anywhere in my business, and of course, I could not find any immortality, or soul, or spirit life. Fool that I was!

Knowing about the After-Life is a Good Thing

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Transitions have been taking place since the world began thousands of centuries ago, but mankind in general is content to remain in ignorance of what is to happen to him when he leaves the earth for the spirit world. He either asserts that it is impossible to know or else he prefers to abide in his ignorance. And yet if he had but the knowledge of even the simple facts such as I have detailed to you, what a wealth of difference it would make to his mind. It would drive out that dreadful fear of the unknown 'hereafter' which can be, and is, such a crushing nightmare to sensitive minds.

There is an enormous number of people throughout the entire earth who prefer to leave the whole subject of an "afterlife" alone. These people regard it as an unhealthy subject and treat the very thought of 'death' as morbid. If such people were truly honest with themselves, they would ad-

mit that such a state of mind merely increases their fear of 'death' and the 'hereafter,' instead of reducing it. They believe that by sweeping the question completely from their minds, they will also have dismissed the real fear that so many people have – an instinct, they would say, of self-preservation. Others who are more fortunate and who have no such fears, will divide the unseen world into two principal departments; namely, a place where the wicked will go when they leave the earth, and a place where the not-so-wicked – in which category they would, perhaps, place themselves – will eventually find themselves.

The average earth-dweller has no notion what kind of place 'the next world' can possibly be, usually because he has not given much thought to the matter. How those very same people regret their indifference when they eventually arrive here in the spirit world! "Why," they cry, "were we not told about this before we came here?"

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) It seems as though all the most doleful phrases are specially reserved for the simple act of passing from your world to ours. Of course you do not need to remind me that, from the point of view of parting from a loved one, it is no time for cheerfulness and 'joy abounding.' Yet were the truth known and realized, what a world of difference it would make, especially if that happy state of things were to exist to the end that all the mournful trapping so closely associated with transition were to be ruthlessly cast out. Is not the event, at the present day, sufficiently harrowing in itself without adding to its gloom by the adoption of so much black?

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) You can understand that we are not pleased with the willful stupidity of some earth folk who persist in closing their eyes and ears to the truth, and so causing an enormous amount of misery to friends and relatives who have passed into the spirit world before them. Their blind ignorance in refusing to look at the facts of spiritual truths, their blatant assumption of mental superiority over the whole subject of spirit life, their self-satisfied attachment to their own erroneous views, all these taken together or individually have the effect of giving us work to do in the spirit world which a knowledge of the truth would render totally unnecessary.

(*Spirit Controls, LHH.*) You are all seeking the same truths, that of spirit life and spirit occupation. We have tried to give you news from here, but you must know that words are inadequate. We can only say again, think spiritually, act spiritually, and trust us to help you on your way.

Q. 'You say, think spiritually. Can you tell us just what you mean by that?'

Mary believes, first of all, the recognition of the Great Wise Power, whom you on earth call God. Then think of the life on this side and of how best to prepare for it. Dee says, "You know when we were preparing for our Europe-

an trip, we read books of description, we prepared our wardrobe, and our thoughts were turned to the prospect before us. Suppose you apply this preparation spiritually. There are many, many, books to read, not only those of earthly writers, but also those whose inspiration has come from here. Then we might find a parallel in the thought of the clothes as compared with spirit clothed in unselfish thought, and in the white robes of spiritual intuition, and spiritual help for others."

Spirits Want to Communicate with Loved Ones after "Death"

(*John Heslop, SABL.*) What are the facts? When anyone dies, upon awakening in their new surroundings, they naturally think of those they have left behind. If they are in great happiness, they long to tell their loved ones not to grieve for them. They want to describe the new and beautiful country to which they have come. With their clearer vision, they are often able to guide those on earth in their human affairs, and, above all, they want them to realize how love is deeper, stronger, purer, than ever it was on earth.

Well, then, the cords of their great love draw them back to the earth and, in spirit form, they enter the old home. Their first sorrow is their total inability to make their presence known, their desire to comfort is unavailing; they watch the agony of grief and can do nothing. In their distress, they often seek someone of psychic development and send a tender message of love and consolation. But, alas! Too often, the bereaved will not receive the message. They are only frightened or incredulous.

Again they try, by abiding in the old home, to make one member, more receptive than the rest, realize their presence. But this time their touch, or partial manifestation, creates terror instead of joy and they are reluctantly obliged to resign themselves to knowing that in the home of which they were the center, their name is often never mentioned and they are regarded only as dead in the tomb, which friends with loving hands decorate with flowers and water with their tears.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) You naturally are absorbed by the new, and only after you have felt and seen and understood what the new things are, does your mind revert to those whom you have left, and you wish to go back and tell them of what you have experienced.

Dream Visits to the Departed

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Many souls who are mourning those who have passed into the spirit world, leaving sad hearts behind then, can bring comfort and consolation to themselves, even if only in a limited degree, by nightly visitations and meetings in the spirit world with those whom they mourn. Many a soul so afflicted has arisen from his bed in

the morning with an unaccountable feeling that comfort has come to him in some mysterious fashion. This means of lessening the distress of separation is but another instance of the perfection of the dispensation that is the very foundation upon which the whole spirit world is built and upheld.

(Philip Gilbert to his mother, PTW.) We had a long trip last night – a trip of healing for you. We went into the Empyrean, to the wide plains of Light you used to speak of. We held each other's fingers – finger-tip to finger-tip – so that the current of Power flowed through us both. This is how spirits unite to achieve extra Force. Tuning ourselves into the Chief, and with a joint effort of will, we soared and the fluid ecstasy poured through us both and a ray of healing was directed on you via me. The atmosphere seemed to be a velvety violet with flakes of power like sparkles and bubbles seething around us.(1)

(1) Psychic Alice Gilbert and her son, Philip, who had recently transitioned at this time, remain connected in a mission to report on conditions of life after death. Both are developed souls and the sort of trip that Philip described may not be a common kind of experience.

(Private Dowding, TSR) I am a little farther along my new road. I have been helped. Also I have recovered from the 'shock,' not of my transition but of my recognition of it. I am no longer alone – I have met my dear brother. He came here three years ago and has come down to welcome me. The tie between us is strong. William could not get near me for a long time, he says. The atmosphere was so thick. He hoped to reach me in time to avert the 'shock' to which I have referred but found it impossible. He is working among the newly arrived and has wide experience.

It appears that there are Rest Halls in this region, specially prepared for newly arrived pilgrims. I shall use your language. We can only convey our experiences approximately. To describe conditions here in words is quite impossible. Please remember this. My brother helped me into one of these Rest Halls. Confusion at once dropped away from me. Never shall I forget my happiness. I sat in the alcove of a splendid domed hall. The splashing of a fountain reached my tired being and soothed me. The fountain 'played' music, color, harmony, bliss. All discordancies vanished and I was at peace. ...

On earth, the study of crystal formations was a great hobby of mine. To my intense delight, I discovered that this splendid hall was constructed according to the law of crystal formations. I spent hours in examining various parts of it. I shall spend hours and days and weeks there. I can continue my studies and make endless discoveries. What happiness! When I have regained a state of poise, my brother says I may help him in his work outside. I am in no hurry for this. ...

I am beginning to meet people and to exchange ideas. Strange that the only person I came across for a long time was my brother. He tells me that I have never been really alone.

I shall remain near earth conditions whilst learning lessons I refused to learn before. It is dangerous to live to and

for oneself. Tell this to my fellows with emphasis. The life of a recluse is unwise, except for the very few who have special work that requires complete silence and isolation. I was not one of these. I cannot remember doing anything really worth while. I never looked outside myself.

I must dwell on this. Live widely. Don't get isolated. Exchange thoughts and services. Don't read too much. That was my mistake. Books appealed to me more than life or people. I am now suffering for my mistakes. In passing on these details of my life I am helping to free myself, What a good thing the war dragged me out into life I In those nine months I learned more about human nature than I had conceived possible. Now I am learning about my poor fossilized old self. It is a blessing I came here. Earth ties will tighten their grip, yet you will be unable to respond. ... Each of us creates his own purgatorial conditions. If I had my time over again how differently I should live my life! I was not one of those who lived only for the purpose of satisfying ambition. Money was a secondary consideration. Yes, I erred at the other extreme, for I neither lived enough among my fellow-men nor interested myself sufficiently in their affairs., Well, I have created' my own purgatory. I must live through it somehow.

On returning to my alcove in the Rest Hall [after the previous automatic writing session] I found someone else there. He told me he was a messenger from another sphere, higher up. Certainly wisdom shone from his eyes. ...

[He said:] "You are speaking to earth. Do not hurry to describe your new life and surroundings. Take my advice: do a little living first."

I think he saw surprise in my face. "Do you know," he continued, "that most of what you have conveyed to your friend at the matter end of the line is quite illusory?"

"What do you mean?" I cried.

"You will gradually find out for yourself. Remember what I have just said."

This conversation has perturbed me. I try to dismiss it from my mind, but it sticks. It makes me feel smaller still. Am I really the fool rushing in where angels fear to tread After all, what do I know about my present life? I have not mastered the natural laws of this place. I have not even mastered myself. ... Evidently I am in a state of consciousness not far removed from earthly existence. I am journeying towards a wider, truer life, but I am not yet there. I have no right to speak with any authority of my experiences here. I am ashamed of having troubled you. One thought consoles me. If this really is a state of illusion, or illusory ideas, in which I find myself – well, others must pass through it too. Perhaps the ideas I have tried to express may help some of those who are not yet here. Anyway, my life seems quite as real as it did on earth, even more real. There is something that lives and moves within me that is not illusion, That something will forge its way out into the light some day.

Chapter 5: Orientation

Introduction

Here we learn that our station in Earth life has no bearing in the afterlife, and that over there, *who you are* is all important, and *what you were* on Earth counts for very little. Thus a simple woman who prayed her rosary every day may have more standing than the pope who headed her religion.

T. E. Lawrence is the major contributor as he describes how his spirit guide, Mitchell, began to work with him on the character flaws that drove his life as Lawrence of Arabia.

Getting Our Bearings

The Law of Affinity Dictates Meetings on the Other Side

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) The basic law is affinity. One can only hope to contact minds with which one has or could have had affinity, a relationship of kind with kind, however different in development.

When the earth life is over and one comes here, the Law of Affinity takes one into congenial conditions and the general alleviation of circumstances removes all outer sources of conflict.

The real 'classes' into which [spirit people] are separated are divided in space because they have to obey the primal Law of Affinity. Near and far mean likeness ... in development and there is a compulsion in the association of groups of similar levels.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Affection is the great linking force in the spirit world. ... Mutual interest, affection, or regard provide the active living link between individuals. Without them, a gulf develops, and each and all of the parties will become detached and wander away to other interests and attachments.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) Each person, especially those of a positive, determined nature, tends to attract the type of astral world which suits him – for the astral world is 'fluid,' and can shift and change. 'Good' and 'evil' emanations attract others and form a sort of nucleus, a sphere of influence. Or strongly musical, poetic, or scientific influences attract others of the same kind. For that matter, they do on earth, but it's much harder to resist these 'pulls.'

It is almost like a clearing house [here], for the positive and negative currents seem to focus there, and each have tremendous force, which is reflected into the earth form in which incarnate people live. These forces are let play uninfluenced upon the newly-dead. They are attracted by their kind and repelled by their opposites, and so the process of 'separating the sheep from the goats' begins, slowly but in-

exorably. It is upon this plane that the fiercest struggle between 'good' and 'bad' takes place, but the advantage, to those who have tried to live decent lives, is that it is so much easier to be 'good' here. Freed from the worries of the physical vehicle, equipped with a fleet and subtle body, and with that marvelous light gleaming afar off, seeing the worthwhile work there is to do, appreciating as never before the amazing conception of Universal Law and one's own part in it, and tasting that deep joy, one feels every time one has aligned oneself with this harmonious whole – all these make it easy to be 'good,' if one is given that way.

But, of course, the reverse also applies so that, to the average person who is a mixture of good and bad, there is still plenty to fight. One can only enter, even for a flash, the next stage of 'consciousness' if the 'good' (harmony) in one's make-up outweighs considerably the 'bad,' because, as you know from your writings, it is a matter of rapid 'power vibrations' given out from an everlasting Source.

Average people, of an earthy, material, greedy type, find themselves – they don't quite know how – with similar people, once they have worked out (and this in itself may take centuries because it is far easier to impress a record on the mind than to erase it) their strong earth impressions. It is all so difficult to explain.

We Meet and See only Those with Whom We Have a Bond

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) In the spirit world, all previous generations of a family are co-existing.

Families ties, *as such*, have little significance in the spiritual world. Here, the one deciding factor in this matter of human relationships and family ties is the bond of affection and mutual interest that prevails between any two or more people. The rule applies in all circumstances. It applies to husband and wife, to brother and sister, to father and mother, and to all the remaining degrees of family relationship. And it applies to ordinary friendships between individuals of different families and between both sexes.

Names

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Our surnames have no significance in this world. In fact, to the new arrival, there might also appear to be some irregularity in the employment of names generally; no fixed custom or order about it. Here it is always a matter of personal identity, and not family identity.

There is at least one fixed order of names here and that is with the names that are of purely spirit world origin, names that are formed or built up in accordance with rules. Each one of them has a distinct meaning and belongs to no earthly language. Names of that kind are given after they have been earned, and are only obtained through beings of the highest realms.

When higher personages go to the earth to speak to friends there, they are usually known by some name that has been specially chosen or invented for them.

The visitor I'm telling you about is an eminent personage from the higher realms, but his identity has been concealed under the simple yet effective name of *Blue Star*, and it's derived in a sensible, straightforward fashion from the fact that part of his personal insignia, if I may call it so, consists of a magnificent jewel, made in the form of a star of brilliant blue precious stones, more precious ... than anything that could be found or made upon earth.

"Call me Blue Star. Everybody does and why not? It's my name, after all – one of them. Some of us have several names. On earth, I believe, if one has too many names, one is apt to be regarded with suspicion, but here it is different. The name I had on earth has caused the most trouble, I fancy. But that is not *my* fault, but the fault of people who have used it a shade too freely."

Earth Fame Fleeting

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Several of the earth's world famous people have spoken to me of their awakening in the spirit world and they have told me of the shock of revelation they received when they beheld themselves for the first time as they really were.

I was told that many people, whose public favor was considerable when they were incarnate, discovered, when they had shed their earthly bodies, that their fame and high favor had not preceded them into the world of spirit. Gone was the admiration which had been their common everyday experience. It naturally saddened such souls to leave behind their earthly prominence and it gave them something of a sense of loneliness, the more so when, in addition, the earth world quickly forgot all about them.

Many who were great upon the earth found themselves very small in spirit. And many who were unknown upon earth found themselves here so spiritually well-known as to be almost overcome by it. It is not all, by any means, who are destined for the beautiful realms of eternal sunshine and summer.

Fame in the spirit world is vastly different from fame in the earth world. Spiritual fame carries with it distinctions of a very different order from the earthly distinctions, and it is gained in one way only – in service to others. It sounds almost too simple to be feasible, but such is the case and nothing will alter it. Whether the earthly famous will reside in the realms of light immediately after their dissolution remains with themselves. The Law [of Affinity] applies to all irrespective of earthly position.

A certain inquisitiveness concerning the general fate of those well-known upon the earth-plane is possessed by most people who are in their early days of psychic study. The mere fact of their being well known is sufficient. But none calls forth more curiosity than the historically famous people. Where are they – the masters in all branches of earthly endeavor, the names that are familiar in the history books? They must be somewhere. Most certainly they are. A good number of them are to be found in the dark realms where they have been living for centuries, and they are more than likely to so continue for more countless centuries. Others are in those exalted realms of light and beauty, where their noble lives upon earth have found their just reward. But there are many, a great many, who will find themselves within these realms [i.e., the Summerlands] whereof I have tried to give you some account.

We do not revive our memories for the purpose of self-glorification or to impress our hearers. Indeed, they would not be in the least impressed, and we should succeed in making fools of ourselves! We recognize the truth here and our true worth is for all to see.(1)

(1) See Chapter 23 for some examples.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) What ... is earthly fame, of one sort and another? It depends upon what the fame rests. It is possible to see on the earth at present many whose fame rests upon a reputation of utter fatuity. That's not so much their fault as that of the empty-headed people who give them such generous support.

There are people, too, whose earthly reputation and fame were of a very unsavory kind, but who have since risen to the realms of light and are profoundly glad that their portraits on earth are inaccurate delineations.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) There is another thing that surprised me not a little, and that was or is the discovery of the ... entire nothingness of most things which seemed to one on earth the most important of things. For instance, money, rank, worth, merit, station, and all the things we most prize when on earth, are simply nothing. They don't exist any more than the mist of yesterday or the weather of last year. They were no doubt influential for a time, but they do not last; they pass as the cloud passes and are not visible anymore.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) If people on earth could only grasp the complete reversal of values which takes place here. I didn't

read the Bible much, but I do remember a text about ‘the first shall be last,’ etc. It is too funny to see how some important people arrive here swollen like frogs with a sense of being the great ‘I AM,’ and, inevitably, they gravitate, struggling and indignant, to their mental kind, who may be dustbin men [i.e., garbage collectors], prostitutes or South Sea islanders. I have seen a great financial magnate find himself compelled to keep company with the conceited ruler of an African tribe, for their inner motives and points of view were exactly similar!

Everyone Equal

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Who I am really matters not. Who I was matters still less. We do not carry our earthly positions with us into the spirit world. My earthly importance I left behind me. My spiritual worth is what counts now, and that, my good friend, is far below what it should be and what it can be.

He was what was known as a ‘Prince of the Church’ [in his earth life]. ... But the deference that his position upon earth had always evoked, he utterly cast aside when he came into the world of spirit. He would have none of it Respect is one thing, for we all respect each other in these realms; but deference that should be given to others of greater spirituality is another thing altogether. He early recognized this, so he told us, and from my own personal knowledge of his innate humility I could guess that such would be the case with him.

One will meet many people here who were famous upon earth in all sorts of places and pursuing all sorts of occupations, some ... a continuation of their earthly calling and some, perforce, entirely new. All alike are approachable, without formalities of any kind whatever. We need no introductions to men and women whom the earth knows as famous. Their gifts are at the disposal of all, and happy, indeed, are they to assist another who comes to them for help in any difficulties, whether it is in art or science, or in any other form of activity. The great who have gained their greatness through the various expressions of their genius consider themselves but the lowly units of a vast whole, the immense organization of the spirit world. They are all striving – as we are too – for the same purpose and that is spiritual progression and development. They are grateful for any help towards that end and they are glad to give it wherever possible.

Judge Not

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) On this side, things seem so topsy-turvy. The first are last, the last first. I see convicts and murderers and adulterers, who worked their wickedness out in the material sphere, standing far higher in the scale of purity and of holiness than some who never committed a crime, but whose minds, as it were, were the factory and breeding-

ground of thoughts which are the seed of crimes in others. I do not mean by this that it is better to do crimes than to think them. Only that the doing is not always to be taken as proof of wicked-heartedness. The sins of impulse, the crimes perpetrated in a gust of passion – these harm the soul less and do less harm than the long-indulged thoughts of evil which come at last to poison the whole soul.

If the first words of my message are, “God is Love, and those who love are living in God,” my second surely must be: “Judge not, judge not.” For you cannot see, you cannot understand. You are all as children in the dark, making guesses at the color of shadows thrown upon a screen. You do not see the color, and yet you pronounce confident judgment. Just not until, at least, you see the man as he is.

Often what seems to you the worst things are the best. Sometimes the apparent best are among the worst. Motive is not everything, but it is a great deal – so much that those from whom motive is hidden cannot judge fully. My own experience of all this was very varied, and I soon became accustomed to disregard the distinctions I had made so much of when in life.

It is the motive rather than the act which counts here. Acts sometimes entail consequences beyond the grave, but not so constantly as motives. As a man thinketh, so he is. And many things that seem to you crimes of the deepest dye seem to us quite otherwise. And many things which in your eyes seem to be quite virtuous are here seen to be soul-dwarfing, sight-blinding sins.

Etiquette

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Discretion is something we soon learn to exercise and it is embodied in our never prying into the facts and circumstances of other people’s earthly lives. That does not mean to say that we are debarred from discussing our earthly lives, but the initiative always comes from the person concerned. If he wishes to tell anyone of his life on earth, he will ever have a sympathetic and interested ear awaiting him.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) [Roger, referring to the ability to jump to a place just by thinking about it:] “Is it customary for people on visits to ... walk through the grounds rather than ‘think’ themselves into the room?”

[Monsignor:] “Yes, Roger. That is the method we’ve employed all along in the few calls we’ve made round about. There’s no law about it, you know; merely what good sense and good taste dictate. If the need for one’s presence were vitally urgent, then we might use the thought method of getting us wherever we wanted to be and so appear right in a person’s presence without delay. But in all ordinary circumstances, we behave like ordinary folk and so present ourselves, walking upon our two legs, and, if necessary, we should knock on the front door – though I don’t ever remember doing that part of it.

“You’ll find, Roger, as you go on, that you’ll instinctively do the right thing. So don’t let that detail trouble you. Calling upon our friends on earth is different matter altogether.”

Working with Spirit Guides

The Process of Purgation: Completing Unfinished Earth Experiences

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) I can see now that all this while [almost thirty years of Earth time], I have been half-consciously trying to complete my earth experience; to fill in its gaps and make good some of its deficiencies.

I am now very alive to the defensive egoism which spoilt and wasted my years on earth. Now by the clearer vision born of suffering, I am being set free from this self-imposed imprisonment. It is becoming easier to allow myself to flow out in freedom to others and to take what they offer without constraint. But nothing can compensate fully for what I have missed; nothing here can parallel the all-and-everything condition of close human relationships on earth.

I suppose the great task we have before us in this stage of being is to free ourselves from a sense of guilt, notwithstanding our clearer view of the harm our wrongdoing has occasioned. One cannot just lay down the burden with a sigh of relief and go on free of it. Burden is an inadequate metaphor; the mischief is in us, a dark cloud at the heart of our emotional being. It is a disease that has to be cured. Seeing it in these physical terms makes it plain that the old idea that sin can be paid for by another is an illusion. We each have to wrestle with our own mortal illness until we can achieve a cure. I am attempting to understand my own case; all I know is that the smart and shame of wrongdoing make a hard core of unease at the heart of living. I am aware of some amelioration of my state from time to time but complete cure is yet a long way off. Mitchell counsels patience and assures me that the healing process will go on perhaps the better if I can cease to brood over it and give myself more fully to the life around me.

[Lawrence looks back on his own life as a soldier in Arabia] Fame! I am trying to be honest and I saw the situation in the East during the First World War as being made for exploitation by my ambition. I did exploit it too, in every subtle and hidden way that opened; watched it for my own advantage and worked and planned for my opportunity. I buried all this in an unquiet conscience. True, I loved my country and wished to serve her, but I knew that I sinned in every life I sacrificed to my ambition. In the upshot, many lives paid for my success and perhaps years of enduring mischief, even to those I most wished to benefit, came from the hopes I raised and failed to satisfy. This failure had always tasted to me like treachery and it poisoned all my achievement. It poisoned all my ensuing life on earth and now I

have to know that the aftermath of fame is injuring those I loved.

[Mitchell to Lawrence:] ‘Remember, there is no blame; there is only cause and effect.’

What I have to face here and now is threefold: first my knowledge of the evil I did; then my knowledge of its continuing effects on earth; and lastly, my knowledge of what it has made me, the visible and tangible evidences of which I bear about in my present bodily form.

The process of purgation through which we pass leaves the soul more free from its straitjacket and more impelled to follow a path which will lead finally to union with the Godhead.

Hell exists, as it has always done, in the feelings and spirits of men, and it can indubitably be brought here with them. Purgation there is, since none of us comes here in perfected form, and the wise man will set to work here and now to judge and know himself and to begin to correct these errors, falsenesses and weaknesses which he discovers in his soul. Death will launch him into a world where his emotional being, healthy or diseased, will be the physical equipment with which he starts a new life.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) I am realizing, in my work here, how much these mental ‘sound-tracks’ matter. It takes *centuries* to wear them out. I suppose they must wear out in Eternity, eventually.

One is subject to incessant impacts and inflowing from other ‘sets of vibrations,’ other thought forces. One *can* get help if one can attract it, but, by and large, one is dependent upon oneself and one’s own personality a good deal.

That is what you people still on the earth-plane just won’t grasp. Most people are trying to prop themselves up on someone else – on being ‘saved,’ or on ‘spirit guides,’ or this and that – anything to push responsibility on some other factor.

In the ultimate result, one is alone to face one’s own problems here as there, but it is much easier to be ‘good’ here in one way, because one is subject to this power-attraction and gravitates to people like oneself so that one is receiving the impact of their power, to bolster one up.

On the other hand, it is much harder to snap out of any folly or obsession, for the same reason. But the ‘lower’ type of ‘vibrations’ have not intrinsically the force that the swifter, more impregnated ones have.

New Arrivals Are Counseled

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) We settled down for a long talk in the course of which, [Mitchell, Lawrence’s guide upon arrival] told me plainly that in order to be able to help me, he would have to probe into my past. I do realize now that accustomed reticence is no longer possible and that in this queer life, one’s only chance of prospering is to accept what one is and try to do something with it. This conclusion brings a refreshing easing of tension and a sense of release.

I can no longer hide inconvenient aspects of my personality and ... if I left myself resent their discovery, I make an atmosphere which drives everyone away. Luckily Mitchell had great delicacy and adopted such an objective attitude that I could just bear his scrutiny with equanimity.

Then he startled me. "I am worried about the repressions you have practiced and don't think we can get a proper balance until you have let go of them," he said.

"You mean—?" I asked.

"You have lived a monk-like existence and my advice to you is to go and experiment with all the experiences you missed on earth. Go on a proper spree. Don't tell yourself that you are too fastidious and don't want to. Deep down, you both want to and need to. Unless you can release some of the forbidden desires, the amount of stored and dangerous emotion will constantly upset your equilibrium and keep you in a state of turmoil. Hence my advice for you to open the safety valves. There are many things to make clear to you which will make such a course less distasteful. My dear fellow, I am not counseling irresponsibility but at present, you are such a dangerous volcano of eruptive forces that you will not be able to make progress here. If I am to get you right for this plane, you must be content to go lower for a while and compensate by some really riotous living for all you have chosen to miss."

This diagnosis was a shock and has thrown me into a worse state of turmoil than ever.

I can begin to understand ... that the advice is good. The reserve of emotional power which has driven me so hard in life, the restless activity, the impatience, the craving for speed – this overload of power is now too strong for its frailer body. Some blood-letting is indicated.

[After Lawrence's sexual experiences are completed:] "You have broken down one of your worst inhibitions," [Mitchell] said to me. "You can feel for yourself how this release of energy has relieved the tension under which you were living. I think you will also find that the anxiety factor which was an indication of your fear of living has been reduced. Your big difficulty is a scorn of slowness and impatience of mediocrity and, if you will forgive me, a really horrible feeling of superiority to most of the pleasant and ordinary people you are meeting here. They cannot avoid recognizing your reaction to them and so they keep away from you. Now how are we to get that right?"

[Mitchell] knows how to take the horrid emanations into his own clear being and transform them there. If he returned them in kind, the resulting state of all of us would not bear thinking of; it would no doubt approximate to the state of the gloomy town I had cause to remember too well. But in thus accepting and transforming the waves of negative emotion we sometimes send out, he shames us into fresh effort. For he suffers. The delicate fabric of his body is harmed and hurt, although he tries not to flinch when he is scorched by our beastly reactions. I can see that this kind of living, naked

to emotional stress, imposing candor and demanding innocence, cannot be successfully carried out without training.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The percentage is low, deplorably low, of people who come into the spirit world with any knowledge at all of their new life and of the spirit world in general. All the countless souls without this knowledge have to be taken care of and helped in their difficulties and perplexities. ... It is a type of work that appeals to many of the ministers of the church of whatever denomination. Their experience upon earth stands them in good stead and all of them – perhaps I should say all of us! – know that we are now members of one ministry, with one purpose, serving one cause, and all of us possessed of the same knowledge of the truth of spirit life, without creed, without doctrine or dogma, a united body of workers, men and women.

Seeing One's Own Selfishness

(*"Stranger," LHH.*) Here I am, trying to get back to the old earth, when I was so disgusted with it in life that I was ready to leave. I was a business man, and one of those despised creatures sometimes called politicians. We were a queer lot, and I often cringed inwardly at the selfishness and deceit we all practiced. But one selfish idea led to another, and I guess we were too deep in the mire to pull ourselves out onto firm land, to a firm basis of honesty and unselfishness. I had to come here to realize the depths of trouble and wrongdoing with which we were connected. And yet we passed for pretty respectable men there, and were looked up to as promoters of industry and big business.

Well, I see clearly now. It is *not* easy to see clearly there, when manifold interests and many people are concerned in the success of a certain something.

Q. 'Is there any special message you wish to send?'

I wish I *could* say it! I wish I had the power to make my words sink deep, deep into the consciousness of every leader of men, of everyone connected with the money-making business of life! It does not need to be big business either, for the dishonest methods are insidious, and start far down the scale, with pennies and dollars as well as with millions of money.

Ah, well! The old world will go on, I suppose, sending all sorts to this side. But there is an awakening here, and a poignant sorrow for wasted opportunities.

Seeing One's Own Ignorance

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) What a mystery! What a wonder! What a joy it all is! We are here trying to express the inexpressible! Can you understand? ...

I am one who never thought or cared for the future, the future beyond the mortal life, just interested in the occupations and pleasures of the present. What shall I say to help souls there to begin to *think, really think*, along the borders of the Unseen. Mortal mind cannot comprehend *fully* this

life, the human brain is not capable; and probably a wise ruler intended that we should live one world at a time. But there is no reason why the human brain should not accept one thought and make it the center of influence in the mortal life. If I could give the thought, it would be something like this:—

‘I am living in a mortal world which is the first stage of the human existence. During this stage, I am preparing for another one, and that other and farther existence is dependent upon the unseen qualities of my soul, and the education I give to these qualities.’

(*Julius, LHH.*) My name is Julius. We would not be known to you. Many souls are wandering through the heavenly places, and many look back longingly to their old home on earth; for some of us have left there those we loved, and we wish to tell them that *all is well*. We are of those who wish to send good news to earth and tell those we love that *Heaven is Heaven* after all, for we were of a company who scarcely believed in any life beyond the grave, nor did we realize any God in the universe.

We were [fed] realism and atheistic literature, and our lives were spent without hope of any existence beyond the earthly one. And so we have remained in the unconscious state for a long time — *years*, I think, though one does not measure time here in that way. Now that we have come into the consciousness of life, *real and unending life*, we wish to send the wonderful news to those who, like ourselves, were groping in darkness.

Mary is not here, but I do not think she would object to our writing. I am writing for several, I mean I am trying to express the thought of several. I have not been conscious long, but I begin to see the marvels here and the possibilities for the soul.

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) I am here, greatly to my surprise. I did not think of death, nor of heaven, nor of the future life,

except perhaps in some flash of emotion that passed almost as quickly as it came. And so I am not well prepared to analyze or describe the visions and wonders of this life. But it is a delight to know that the old earth is not entirely lost to us, and that echoes of old familiar voices can be heard across the silence.

I have not been here very long, and perhaps that is the reason I look a little longingly back to the old home place on earth. Everything here is so far above me, so far advanced, that I feel sometimes that I do not belong here, that I am in a great and wonderful world without proper equipment; in a society of wonderful people, yet feeling myself hopelessly ignorant. Can you guess how that is?

I have been slow to adapt myself because I had no fitness to begin with. I was not blessed with either a psychic or a poetic or a spiritual nature, just an ordinary man, working along material lines, and never dreaming that I needed any other outfit for this plane except an honest endeavor to live a decent and upright life. And here I am, glad to be accepted, but feeling my ignorance and unworthiness painfully.

The Possibility of Falling Back

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) By degrees we are learning our lesson, and if control threatens to slip, we go away by ourselves so that no one else needs to endure our nastiness. The conviction that is brought home to us that, unless we can clear ourselves of evil emotions, it will not be possible for us to remain among the decent people on this plane. The alternative will be to leave it and find homes in conditions where the astral bodies of the inhabitants are coarsened by habitual indulgence in anger and hatred, and where the air they breathe is infected with their hot and murky emanations. I have already had a glimpse of these dark conditions and can imagine the misery of being condemned to stay there for any length of time.

Chapter 6: Spirit Faculties

Introduction

In this chapter, we learn of the etheric body we will have on the Astral Plane and the wonderful faculties we will be blessed with: thought transference, thought control for personal transport and moving inanimate objects such as ships, and using thought to materialize objects such as buildings.

The Nature of the Astral Body [aka Etheric Body]

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The spirit body which we all possess is the normal body. The earthly body, which temporarily covers the spirit body during its earthly passage, is a modification of the spirit body, an accommodation to earthly laws and conditions and modes of life.

The average person does not know of what he himself is composed. He knows he has a physical body, of course. There are not many who can easily forget it!

The physical body he is fairly conversant with, but what of the soul and spirit? Of these two, man knows little indeed. What he does not realize is that he is a spirit, first, last, and always. The physical body is merely a vehicle for his spirit body upon his journey through his earthly life.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The spirit body is, broadly speaking, the counterpart of our earthly bodies. When we come into the spirit world, we are recognizably ourselves.

We are not confined to keeping our feet on the ground. If we can move ourselves laterally over these lands by the power of our thought; we can also move ourselves vertically.... If we could sink beneath the waters without harm, but rather with enjoyment, then, of course, we must be able to mount into the 'air' with the same safety and enjoyment!

Any supernormal or subnormal conditions of the physical body, such as excessive stoutness or leanness, vanish when we arrive in these realms, and we appear as we should have appeared on earth had not a variety of earthly reasons caused us to be otherwise.

We all preserve our natural characteristics – they never leave us. But we find that many minor physical features that we can profitably dispense with [are gone]; we shake off with our earthly bodies certain irregularities of the body with which, perhaps, we have been born or that have come upon us during the course of the years. How many of us are there, I wonder, when we are incarnate, who could not think of some small improvement that we should like to make in our physical bodies, were it all possible?

If [one's earthly] life has been spiritually ugly, the spirit body will be similarly twisted. But if the earth life has been spiritually sound, the spirit body will be correspondingly sound. There is many a fine soul inhabiting a crooked earthly body. There is many a bad soul inhabiting a well-formed earthly body. The spirit world reveals the truth for all to see.

How does the spirit appear anatomically, you will ask? Anatomically, just exactly the same as does yours. We have muscles, we have bones, we have sinews, but they are not of the earth; they are purely of spirit.

Does it seem strange that a spirit body should possess finger nails and hair? How would you have us be? Not different from yourselves in this respect, surely? Would we not be something of a revolting spectacle without our usual anatomical features and characteristics? This seems an elementary statement, but it is sometimes necessary and expedient to voice the elementary.

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) The mechanism you have is fine, and is for use so long as needed by mortal life. But beyond this equipment is the more delicate one of spirit power. We here are so conscious of the difference, so conscious of the super-excellence of our spirit power, that we cannot help expressing this to mortals when the talk turns toward the activities of the human body, with its machinery for its limited stay upon earth. The spirit life, with its spirit equipment, is so enormously better and finer than the mortal, we would like to have you understand a little of the advantages and joys of spirit existence. Never doubt them.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) Another astonishing change has reconciled me to any loss of the prestige of a riper age. A small man suffers from his lack of inches and is influenced by it in many undesirable ways. He is impelled to try and compensate for it and often does so ruthlessly, to his own and other people's hurt. However great in spirit, he will hardly ever feel safe enough to forgo the defenses he builds around his puniness. In my own case, my proper growth was stunted by an accident in youth and so my small stature was only incidental to my form. To my great joy, this disability is removed and I have now attained a normal height.

I still miss the weight of my earth body, I suppose, although I should be sorry now to have to drag it about. Yet in spite of my lightness and weightlessness, I am moved by powerful pangs of emotion which I find almost impossible to control. In a peculiar way, these feelings are more exterior to experiences; I myself, the real 'I' seems to have retreated further inside and these emotions, although they are mine and powerful, are not felt as the essential inward things they were on earth. This new body is very responsive to incoming impressions; too much so for my present comfort. It is

like driving a very fast and powerful car when one has only been used to a slow second-hand one. I dislike the insecurity and uncertainty this gives me, although I cannot help being exhilarated by the potential power at my disposal. More than all, I dislike the idea that these waves of emotion, whether they are desirable or not, are apparent to everyone I meet.

Speaking of these impressions to Mitchell, he explained to me that my present body, solid as it seems, is now really composed of a kind of matter which on earth I thought of as 'emotion'. This 'feeling stuff' is more exterior to the real me and has no physical drag to slow down its activity. Hence the frightening release of emotional energy and the impossibility of masking it. I now have to practice, not to mask my feelings, because this is no longer possible, but to control them and to work at getting rid of the undesirable ones altogether. He warned me that it would be hard work at first, but that with help, I should soon become adjusted.

The being is unshielded by the inertia of the physical body. All experiences here are tried out on the quick of the being and, in their keenness and piercing reality, are beyond anything possible on earth.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) We do have bodies, do use hands, arms and feet, can talk, can sing if we wish. These are the mechanical processes that are puzzling you. We cannot throw entire light upon it all, but perhaps it may help you to think of the material from which our bodies are constructed. This body is unseen by you, but is with you now, else how could you think, how could you move, speak, sing; or how could the emotions stir your heart and brain? Invisibility is not nothingness; nor is spirit substance invisible to us.

Q. 'We have been told that the spirit body could be contracted so that many could come into the room; that spirit could even balance on a needle point?'

"We know that is a problem with you. We could stand on a needle point because we could balance there and our weight would not destroy the needle. It means "lightness" rather than "smallness" there. We can go into a room, many, very many at a time, because we can contract a little. Do you not sometimes fold your arms tightly, or draw your feet under your chair, to create more room?"

"Something like this occurs with us—I mean analogous to that. We can fold ourselves more readily, and into smaller compass than the material body can do. But the effort is nearly the same. And no one feels crowded if one's arms and hands are contracted, or if the body is drawn into its smaller circumference."

Q. 'I suppose we are invisible to you?'

"Yes, you are nearly as invisible to us as we are to you, for our vibrations are too high to be of use in earthly material. But we do dimly perceive, and by practice, we can get a fair idea of human beings and earthly material."

The Vibrancy of the Astral Body

(Philip Gilbert, PTW.) The [physical] body ..., believe me, is a poor affair! If you only knew what one *can* do [here].

We are all, it seems, walking dynamos. I am more vibrantly alive, and my surroundings also, than I was before.

The body I have here, once one has learned to control it, is a wonderful vehicle almost unlimited in its ability to transport me on its own plane, at least, and also able, in flashes, and with the help of the Advanced People, to expand itself to higher planes ... which is a tremendous advantage over the dense physical body, so limited and easily disarranged.

The Age of the Astral Body

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) I appear to be approaching my 'proper' age. This is a phenomenon of which Mitchell [my guide] warned me. It seems that every human being has a true meridian of age at which his being is unfolded at its peak of achievement. For some, it is youth; for some, a riper middle age; for others, even an advanced age. Whichever manifestation of the being was most full and characteristic, at this age, the man or woman rests. So it matters not at what age in earthly reckoning a man dies, he reverts by degrees to his ideal age when he comes here. Most of the persons I meet seem to be young but there is an admixture of the mature and elderly.

I have achieved equilibrium at about twenty-eight and shall stay there very thankfully. I am young and have the vigor and enthusiasm proper to what is obviously my real age and now can hardly envisage being any older.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) I have since learned that to try to guess the ages of people here is a difficult and almost dangerous task! For you must know ... that it is the law that, as we progress spiritually, so do we shake off the semblance of age as it is known on earth. We lose the wrinkles that age and worldly cares have marked upon our countenances, together with other indications of the passage of years, and we become younger in appearance, while we grow older in knowledge and wisdom and spirituality.

There is a stage in our lives on earth which we know as the prime of life. It is towards this that we all move. Those of us who are old or elderly when we pass into spirit will return to our prime-of-life period. Others who are young will advance towards that period.

In the higher spheres, the beauty of mind rejuvenates the features, sweeps away the signs of earthly cares and troubles and sorrows, and presents to the eye that state of physical development which is at that period of our earthly lives which we used to call 'the prime of life.'

(Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.) In the spirit world, age in years doesn't count. What happens is that the period known as the prime of life is the normal and permanent age. If one

arrives here before that time, ... even tiny infants, then you proceed gradually towards that prime of life and there you remain. If you should come here after you've reached it – one may have gone far past eighties and higher – then you revert, you return to the prime of life. In other words, you become younger.

There would be nothing to indicate positive agedness in such outward signs as wrinkles and lines, and all the other familiar landmarks of passing, or passed, years. ... This is an ageless world, ... and some of us, at any rate, would appear to be the same. No lined faces, no white or graying hair, no suggestions of that additional weight with which on earth we manage to burden ourselves, or, on the other hand, no indications of shriveling up and wasting away; no slowing down of our movements, or alterations in the pitch of our voices; no loss of mental vigor. No second childhood. Eliminate this melancholy catalogue and you have us as we are, restored to a second prime, those of us that need it, instead of advancing into a second childhood.

The Organs of the Spirit Body

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) We have our full complement of limbs, our sight and our hearing; in fact, all our senses are fully functioning.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) We have no waste matter that must be eliminated from the body.

The organs we possess, therefore, have their very definite purpose for their existence. We do not carry about with us organs that are redundant. Their purpose is to act as a channel for the life force, the etheric power, if you wish to call it so, that emanates from a multiplicity of sources. There is no fear that some organs, or all of them, will become atrophied because they do not seem to be employed in the same manner as their counterparts in the earthly body. The organs of assimilation of the earthly body will become seriously affected if a sufficient quantity of food is not passed through them. No such situation could arise in our spirit bodies because the life-force here amply sustains them and keeps them in proper working order and thus they fulfill their objects.

In company with many others, I have seen and spoken to at least one illustrious being whose period of life, in years, reaches astronomical figures. He possesses, just as do you or I, the ordinary normal complement of limbs; he has hair upon his head. His hands, anatomically like yours and mine, have their full number of fingernails. And so we might go on, through the complete catalogue of the parts of the human anatomy as it exists in the spirit world. The exalted nature of his being and the elevated realm in which he resides make him no different, anatomically, from the rest of us. His spirituality and wisdom and knowledge are, of course, in their high degree incomparable with us here. But we are not considering that for the moment. What we are consid-

ering is that when man, who has lived upon earth, comes to the spirit world to continue his life here, he sheds with his earthly body all such organs of that body as will be superfluous to his new mode of living. ...

The body I possess is not a hollow drum, a mere empty vessel in the ownership of which I am able, in some mysterious fashion, to carry on my life. There is good rich blood flowing through my veins. There is no doubt about that, for I can observe the flesh-pink tinge it gives to my skin, as it does to us all. We have the complexions of healthy individuals, though the former may vary in the depth by virtue of the various racial characteristics which you can easily call to mind. Whatever may be the precise shade of our complexions or of our skin in general, we none of us have the pallor that is usually associated with a poor state of health or with some particular form of earthly occupation.

The spirit body, coming first in the order of 'creation,' is the standard of human form and figure. The earthly body resembles it, but it has certain other organs added by which it carries out certain processes that are essential to its continued survival upon earth. The two principals of these processes are the means of assimilating food and the means of perpetuating human life on earth. Food we do not need in the spirit world, and the population of spirit lands is derived, with the exception of those beings in the higher and highest realms..., entirely from the earth in so far as this spirit universe is concerned.

In discarding my earthly body at my physical dissolution, I found that my spirit body was without certain organs, the possession of which would be entirely redundant. Such organs have no counterpart in the spirit body.

A question may naturally be asked as to how we can live with some of our organs missing. The answer is that they are not missing; they were never there! The spirit body performs perfectly because it is perfectly constructed, complete in all its parts, and only possesses such organs as it requires – in number slightly less than those required by the earth body.

How the Spirit Body is Sustained

(Mike Swain, LO.) When you first arrive here, ... the routines of eating and drinking and sleeping are too firmly established to be eliminated at one fell swoop. So if you think you need to sleep, ... you sleep for as long as you want. If you think you need to eat, then you eat your fill. There are no excretory organs in our bodies. ... When I drink water, it just diffuses itself throughout my system and that's that!

In other words, it's converted into energy. If I see a beautiful apple tree with bright red apples on it, I can reach up and pick one off. ... It has the effect of recharging our batteries.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) The spirit world has air just as you have on earth and we have lungs in our bodies with which

to breathe it. And it does 'oxygenate' the blood in what would be the spirit world equivalent of that process. Upon earth, the air you breathe will help to purify the blood. In the spirit world, we have good rich blood running through our veins and we breathe the beautiful, clean, fresh, fragrant air, but while your blood undergoes the process of oxygenating, our blood is *reinvigorated* by the spiritual force and energy that is one of the principal constituents of the air we breathe here.

Could one exist without [air]? Hardly. It gives us a measure of life-force just as it does you on earth. But you could not exist upon air alone. You must have food and drink. We do not need these latter two commodities, as you know, but we derive another part of our sustenance from the light of these realms, from the abundance of color, from the water, from the fruit, when we wish to eat of it, from the flowers, and from all that is beautiful itself. As these realms positively abound in beauty, you will see why we enjoy such perfect health.

But we also take in strength from the great spiritual force that is being constantly poured down upon us all It is, as it were, an eternal magnetic current that is forever charging us with force and power and giving us life.

It really comes to this: that we derive our life-force from a score of different sources; sources, moreover, that we do not have to seek as do you with your food and drink, but which literally envelope us wherever we go, whatever we do. We cannot shut ourselves off from the means of life nor can the means of life, be denied us or ever fail us here. The air we breathe cannot become polluted nor can the water become in a similar state of impurity.

Health

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) In the spirit world, our bodies are always in a state of absolute perfection of condition. (1)

(1) *It is probable that Monsignor Benson is restricting his comments to the Summerlands in which he lives; on the dark plane, the inhabitants are often misshapen, reflecting their thoughts.*

In the spirit world, there are no such things as germs of any description; therefore, there can be no disease of any sort whatever. Moreover, the spirit body is completely impervious to any kind of injury. It cannot be damaged by accident and it is imperishable and incorruptible. So that whatever organs we possess they can never become disordered in the slightest degree. We are constantly enjoying a state of *perfect* health, upon which there are no two opinions among all of us here in these realms. The slightest trace of ache or pain is something not only unheard of, but, from our point of view, *fantastically impossible*.

The organs with which he now finds himself are forever beyond harm of every description. No germ can attack the body; no destructive force can exert the slightest influence upon it. It is incorruptible. Its various organs, such as the heart and lungs, act *perfectly*. For example, the beating

of the heart remains constant and normal under all conditions. We cannot *literally* become breathless. ... Our respiration, like the action of the heart, remains always at its normal rate. And so it is throughout the rest of our bodies.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) We suffer from no ailments – that would be impossible in the spirit world. Therefore our bodies do not require constant looking after to maintain a state of good health. Here our health is always perfect because we have such a vibrational rate that disease, and the germs that cause it, cannot exist here. But spiritual malnutrition – that is, of the soul – does most certainly exist. A visit to the dark realms and their neighborhood will soon reveal that!

(F.W.H. Myers, RTI.) Actual pain is not felt in any of the parts of this new image of man. For now, the mind has greatly increased powers and, though it may experience pain in the spiritual or intellectual sense, such is its control of its outward form ... that form cannot hurt it in the earthly or physical sense, and cannot be, in any respect, the ruler.

The Mind Belongs to the Spirit Body

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) The mind belongs to the spirit body. Every human experience, every thought, word, and deed that go to make up the sum of earthly human experience is infallibly and ineradicably recorded upon what is called the subconscious mind through the agency of the physical brain. When the time comes for man to leave the earth, he discards the physical body for ever ... and passes into the realms of the spirit world. His spirit body, he will find, is a counterpart of the earthly body he has just left behind him. He will then find that what he called the subconscious mind when he was incarnate has now assumed its rightful place in his new scheme of existence.

In the spirit world ... we have no heavy physical body. The body which we possess is in every respect equal to our minds. Our minds have no heavy vehicle by or through which they have to function. Thinking is at once translated into action, but without the intermedium of a physical brain such as you know it. The brain which is resident within our heads is not as your physical brain; our bodies are not as your physical bodies. With us, our whole being, our limbs, our muscles and so forth, are completely subservient to the mind in so far as their acting according to our will is concerned. For the rest, our bodies are subservient to the natural laws of the spirit world.

We also perform certain actions subconsciously in exactly the same way as you do. For example, we breathe in precisely the same way as you breathe. Our hearts beat in a fashion exactly similar to yours and they are subject to the same subconscious maintenance in their beating. But we have that which you do not have, namely, complete and absolute mastery of the muscles of our limbs. When we come to learn

some new art or endeavour to become proficient in some task that requires the mastery by the brain over the muscles, then you can see just how perfect is the attunement of our minds with our muscles. It is not really a mastery of the one over the other, although I have expressed it in that way. To be more accurate, it is an absolute attunement, the one with the other.

Spirit World a World of Thought

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The spirit world is a world of thought; to think is to act and thought is instantaneous.

When we are living upon the earth plane, we are constantly being reminded of our physical bodies in a variety of ways – by cold or heat, by discomfort, by fatigue, by minor illnesses, and by countless other means. Here we labor under no such difficulties. By that I do not mean that we are just unfeeling logs, insensible to all external influences, but that our perceptions are of the mind and that the spirit body is impervious to anything that is destructive. We feel through our minds, not through any physical organs of sense and our minds are directly responsive to thought. If we should feel coldness in some particular and definite circumstances, we undergo that sensation with our minds and our spirit bodies in no way suffer.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) The longer I stay here, the more I realize that there is no ‘magic’ or unlimited power in the post-death state. We have simply changed the form of our ‘incarnation.’ We are still ‘incarnated’ but in a different form – just as a butterfly evolves from a caterpillar or a frog from a tadpole, and we are still limited by the laws governing our new state.

But it is infinitely freer than the physical body because we are now directly using our thought-force as a means of transit and linkage. If a person’s thought force is deficient, diffused or undeveloped when he dies – then it is just too bad! His activities are limited in proportion, but, if his life has been reasonably honest and ‘upstriving’ in the sense that he has not been too grossly material and selfish, then it seems he can attract more developed people, who do try to help him along.

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) You no doubt think we have told you so much of this life, there is little more to tell. But it will not take you long when you come to see that we have given you only an outline. It is not the material surroundings, as you might call them, that I mean, so much as the mental life that opens out before one. It is a strange condition, if you will stop and think, to be where you have what might be called a mental existence only. It is by the mind that everything is done. And to do all that concerns life by just using the mind is a new sensation, and to most people, a new idea. We make ourselves just what our minds are capable of desiring that we should be.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Our host told us that the power of thought is almost unlimited in the spirit world and that the greater the power of any particular effort or concentration of thought, the greater the results. Our means of personal locomotion here is by thought and we can apply that same means to what the earth world would call ‘inanimate objects.’ Of course, in the spirit world, nothing is inanimate and, because of this, ... our thoughts can have a direct influence upon all the countless things of which the world of spirit is composed.

We can open our minds – or close them – to the many delectable perfumes that spirit nature casts abroad for our happiness and contentment. They act like a tonic upon the mind, but they are not forced upon us – we merely help ourselves to them as we wish.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Thoughts are very real ... and can reach us here from earth as easily and as surely as they can reach us here between ourselves. And ours can go to the earth people too, though they don’t always notice them.

Thought has direct action here. That’s where the real difficulty is. Because thought has such direct action, folk on earth think that the results must be intangible, dream-like, and capable of being, or liable to be, dispersed upon the slightest provocation, or upon none at all. Our thoughts in these lands have far greater power and scope than on earth. To make things concrete on earth, one had to get past the thinking stage. Here one is always in the thinking stage because that is the last stage.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) In the spirit world, our bodies are under complete control by our minds. The former do just that which the latter wishes or commands. A wish becomes a command in this case. Now, with you, your mind may wish to be in a certain place, and no matter how hard you may wish it, you are entirely at the mercy of your physical body.

When the spirit world is described as being a world of thought, where thought is the great creative power, and where thought is concrete and perceivable by all men, the conclusion is very often erroneously drawn that the spirit world is an unsubstantial place, and that we, its inhabitants, are vague, shadowy people, lacking any real substance, and answering for all purposes to that very earthly designation of ‘ghosts’! Pursuing this mistaken deduction, the life of the spirit world people must inevitably be somewhat dream-like and illusive.

The incarnate think along these lines because, to them, thought is something that can be practiced unseen and unheard. On earth, thought is secret to the thinker until such time as he wishes to give verbal or other expression to his thoughts. It is customary to say on earth: our thoughts are our own; we can think what we like; thoughts can never harm anyone, etc. So that when we of the spirit world assert

that our world is a world of thought, the incarnate immediately revert to their own thoughts and their unsubstantial nature, and thereupon place the spirit world in the same category of tenuous things.

Generally speaking, upon earth, thought must have some form of concrete expression for it to be effective. The architect must first think of his cathedral or whatever it may be, commit his thoughts to paper in regular order and with exactitude before the builder can make any commencement upon the outward and visible expression of his original thoughts. And so it is with a multitude of other things, from the simplest article to the most complicated instrument or ornate building. One earth thought must have a medium of some sort before it can find the slightest trace of outward expression. For this reason, among others, the incarnate are prone to regard the earth as being the one certain and substantial world in which it is possible to exist. The spirit world becomes the very opposite.

The incarnate do not realize the force and power of thought, or else they would never think along such lines as I have indicated. Every thought that passes with force and purpose through the mind of an earth dweller is projected from his mind as a thought-form. To speak unscientifically, it is registered, at least for a time, upon the surrounding ether. It depends, of course, upon the thought itself and of what it consists. If it is merely one of those passing thoughts that all folk upon earth have in their minds at various moments during the day, then such thoughts will be registered in the manner I have just indicated. If the thought is directed towards some friend who is now resident in the spirit world, that thought, if it is properly directed with purpose and intent, will inevitably reach that friend. It will reach him or her just as it is sent, no more and no less good or bad or indifferent.

Thought is upon a different plane, a higher plane of existence from the organ of the earthly body, the brain, through which thought functions on earth. Thought is upon the same plane of existence as the mind and the mind belongs truly to the spirit world. And by 'higher plane,' I do not mean a higher spiritual plane, but one that cannot be observed by the ordinary physical organs of perception. In the spirit world, thought has direct and instantaneous action upon whatsoever it is directed, whether it be upon a human being or upon what earth called 'an inanimate object.' (I cannot use the latter term appositely in connection with spirit world objects because all objects, things, have life, certain and unmistakable. There is no such state as that of being lifeless in the spirit world.) It is not until you come into the spirit world that you really know just what thoughts can do. And I do assure you, my good friend, that some of us are positively horrified when we find out for the first time!

In the spirit world, thoughts do not become visible immediately upon their passing through a person's mind. They are not flying about in a loose fashion. The idle

thoughts of which I spoke travel no further than your immediate earthly surroundings. Thoughts directed to some friend in the spirit world will reach that friend and they cannot be classed as loose thoughts.

Imagine to yourself the state of confusion, of congestion almost, and of embarrassment if all our thoughts in the spirit world were visible. But because they are not immediately visible, that is not to say that they are not potent, for assuredly they are potent. ... They will unfailingly reach their destination wherever it may be. If directed towards some friend upon earth, in many cases, it is problematical whether the friend will perceive them; or, perceiving them, whether he will know whence they have come. But if our thoughts be directed to some friend in the spirit world, there will be no such doubt or uncertainty.

Power of Thought – In Traveling

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Distance becomes annihilated by our immensely rapid means of transit. If we think ourselves into a certain place, we shall travel with the rapidity of that thought and that is as near instantaneous as it is possible to imagine. I should find that it was the usual mode of locomotion and that I should soon be able to employ it.

My friend [Edwin] said that it would be better if we did not use the customary means of locomotion – our legs. He then told me to take hold of his arm firmly, and to have no fear, whatever. ... I at once experienced a sensation of floating such as one has in physical dreams, though this was very real and quite unattended by any doubts of personal security. The motion seemed to become more rapid as time went on, and I still keep my eyes firmly closed.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) In thinking of the town and what it might hold, I found myself drifting towards it and thus got my first indication of the way movement here is affected by thought. I obstinately resisted this drift towards the town and turned away to explore the open country.

As though the wish had the power to direct me, my steps were drawn in the right way and before long, I saw the roofs and chimneys of a small town ahead.

I had stumbled upon at least one principle which might have valuable consequences. My own desire could lead me towards its fulfillment if I knew clearly what I wanted.

Forgetting what a strong desire can do, I was wishing for [Mitchell's] presence when my feet carried me swiftly out of the room, down several corridors and into a quiet room where my friend sat writing. He half turned from his desk as though expecting me and he laughed when he saw my surprise. 'You must not be so imperious in your wishes if you do not want to be rapidly whirling about all the time,' he said.

Traveling on foot is no hardship; fatigue is never felt and desire impels one swiftly and surely onward.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) We both felt that we should like to try exactly what the power of thought can do, but, as before, in other circumstances, we were both devoid of knowledge of how to put these forces into action. Edwin told us that once we had performed this very simple process of thinking, we should have no difficulty whatever in the future. In the first place, it was necessary to have confidence, and in the second, our concentration of thought must not be a half-hearted affair. To borrow an earthly allusion, we ‘wish ourselves’ there, wherever it may be, and there we shall find ourselves! For the first few occasions, it may be required to make something of a conscious effort; afterwards we can move ourselves whithersoever we wish – one might almost say, without thinking!

It must be remembered that thought is as instantaneous as it is possible to imagine, and there is no possibility of our losing ourselves in illimitable space.

The absence of a sense of direction in no way interferes with our initial thought function in personal locomotion. Once we have determined to journey to a certain place, we set our thoughts in motion and they, in turn – instantaneously – set our spirit bodies in motion. One might almost say, “It requires no thinking about.”

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) We each of us carry our own transport system with us, the most efficient and the most rapid in the universe. ... Personal locomotion is done by the thought process and it’s perfectly easy to do when once you’re shown how; then it becomes second nature. It may sound like a contradiction in terms, but the thought process of locomotion hardly requires thinking about when you’re accustomed to it.

If there’s any need to hurry, one can be “there” as quick as thought.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The muscles and the various parts of our bodies will respond as instantly and as rapidly as we wish the moment we set the thought in motion. We set the thought in motion, the thought sets the limbs and its parts in motion. There is no lagging, no perceptible fraction of a moment between our thought and its action. It will recall to your mind the familiar phrase: to think is to act. That is literally what takes place in the spirit world.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) When I began to move, I walked as I used to walk and it seemed natural to do so. My Guide walked beside me and we saw the world as it was with spirits moving among men. ... Then I saw that [the spirits] moved sometimes as if they were still in the body [i.e., by walking] and at other times, as if they were angels [i.e., by thought transport], coming and going with great speed, and I remarked upon it to my Guide.

He said, “Yes, they can do as they please, for it is in the power of the mind to go slow or fast.”

Then I thought, if they can, I can. And I asked, not speaking, but thinking in my mind, if this were so?

My Guide, without my having spoken, answered and said, “This is also possible for you.”

I said to him, “May we go as they go wherever we are going?”

He smiled and said, “As you will, so it will be.”

Then I had my first experience of the new freedom of locomotion.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) I am practicing concentration regularly. It is the only way to achieve anything here, where any sudden impulse is apt to transport one, disconcertingly.

Grandpa and I tried together [to materialize an object]. We manufactured a car – a Rolls-Royce. But when we had got it, we didn’t quite know what to do with it – motion here is so very different and much swifter.

[Philip, in answer to his mother, Alice Gilbert’s question about his way of traveling:] Each individual is linked – somehow – with the main stream of this dynamic [thought] energy and can, in a way of speaking, switch it on and off.

Think of the way one electric power dynamo will light a whole town and yet each citizen can control it by the [flick] of a finger on a switch. That is this same force, translated into its material terms, as it affects dense earth matter. ...

But what we did not grasp on earth was that this Force motivates the whole Universe in its varied manifestations and that it is an exterior aspect of the Source of which we know very little except that Unity and Harmony seem to be basic attributes.

So you see, when I want to move round, I perform an act of mental switching on of the current – mind you, it becomes as automatic as walking on earth – and whoosh! – I’m off! Gosh, what a grand sensation. Speed in perfection! You know nothing of it on earth. The way man craves for speed is really an urge from his sub-conscious spirit which knows what real speed can be!

Yesterday, with my thoughts turned on speed, as they were after talking to you, two other fellows and myself tried a bit out. We whooshed round the earth, from Australia to Hong Kong and from Hong Kong to London in no time – literally – no time!

Power of Thought – In Moving Objects

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Ships are meant to float and move about on the waters; they are animated by the living force that animates all things here and, if we wish to move them over the water, we have but to focus our thoughts in that direction and with that intention, and our thoughts produce the desired result of movement. ...

[Our host] guided the boat in the usual manner, with a rudder operated by the wheel in the deck-house. That, he said, was because he found it sufficient work to provide the movement of the boat. In time, if he wished, he could combine the two actions in one. But he much preferred to use the old method of steering by hand as it gave him physical

work to do, which was, in itself, such a pleasure. Once having given motion to the ship, he could forget about it until he wished to stop. And the mere wishing to stop, however suddenly or gradually, brought the vessel to a standstill. There was no fear of accidents! They do not – cannot – exist in these realms.

Power of Thought – In Communicating

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Personal communication by the thought process obviates any difficulty in the language question. That process is without nationality. But when folks are awakening in these lands, they use their vocal organs and so do we. That's natural. ...

"I noticed that Omar and his friend both spoke English and without a trace of accent too." [said Roger] ...

"Can you think of any reason at all why Omar shouldn't speak English or any other language?" [replied Monsignor Benson.] ...

"You know what the memory can do here, Roger. Once something goes into the mind, there it stays. Why, Omar could learn any language well so as to speak it fluently. ... [Omar] wished to cover a wide range of matters as lucidly as possible, and so he went deeply into the task of learning English."

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) The mode of communication here is not confined to the utterance of words. One never needs to express in words one's feeling for another. It is always apparent in the immediate reaction of one's body and cannot fail to be read correctly. Where there is affection and trust, there will be an outflowing of warmth and light; where there is polite indifference as when one meets a stranger, the auric color will continue steady and unaffected by the encounter; dislike or contempt cannot be hidden; they will flow out in waves of confused and muddy color pleasant neither to see nor to feel. ... So the immediate feeling will always be fully apparent and will need no words.

The transmission of meaning involves not the emotional body alone but the as-yet imperfectly formed spiritual body. Where there is affinity of spirit and closeness of emotional regard, meaning is often carried between friends without the clumsy intervention of words. It 'jumps the gap' and is immediately and fully apprehended as it could never be if it had to be trimmed to fit a pattern of words.

Words are most useful in everyday and trivial matters, and they continue to be used whenever necessary. Our independence of language is only partial but it is enough to make us realize the artificiality of language barriers. When you can see the feelings of a man of different race far more clearly than you can see his 'color,' and you know from this that he is friendly and interested, when you can also exchange enough meaning to prove kinship of your minds, then the obstacle of language is defeated and the fatal misunderstandings due to ineffectual exchanges in words are avoided.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) If we can move ourselves by the power of thought, then it follows that we should also be able to send out thoughts by themselves, unhindered by all ideas of distance. When we focus our thoughts upon some person in the spirit world, whether they be in the form of a definite message, or whether they are solely of an affectionate nature, those thoughts will reach their destination without fail, and they will be taken up by the percipient.

Although we can thus send our thoughts, it must not be assumed that our minds are as an open book for all to read. By no means. We can, if we so will, deliberately keep our thoughts to ourselves; but if we should think idly, as it were; if we should just let our thoughts ramble along under a loose control, then they can be seen and read by others. One of the first things to be done upon arrival here is to realize that thought is concrete, that it can create and build, and then our next effort is to place our own thoughts under proper and adequate control.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) When a thought is passed between one and another of us ... the thought is invisible in transit, [and] it arrives at its destination instantaneously, when it manifests itself before us as a pleasant but compelling flash of clear light; and we can then hear the voice of our communicator speaking close to the ear, as it seems.

(*Unnamed spirit teacher, LHH.*) We have little use for vocal communication. Not that we do not often use it, but we more frequently receive the thought by direct impression. And in any communication of some extent, this is always the method, except when there is need for accurate statements that are not so easily presented by the action of thought. We often listen to lecturers in both ways; for a lecture is given vocally. But we can follow the thought at the same time. We do not always get a double impression in this way, for we can in a measure turn our attention to either method, just as you may listen to one person speaking when others are also talking near you. We think over these lectures when alone and fix them in our memory. In doing this, we do not send out any thought that any one else could get. We also have here a sort of selective process. Our own thoughts are private unless we will that they go out.

When several are together and thinking on one subject, there is a wave of harmony that is often felt or sensed that is sometimes an aid in fixing the thoughts in memory. So it is not unusual for a class to remain together while studying the information given by a teacher or spoken by a lecturer. You will thus see that the custom on earth of having pupils together probably has merit. You may not now be able to perceive any such influence, but the time will come when it will be recognized.

We also find that different persons have different ability in sending out thoughts. There is as much difference in personality in this respect as you there find in the quality of

the voice. We learn to recognize thoughts in the same way. You speak of hearing a familiar voice. We comment on recognizing a familiar thought or way of thinking, and our language has a word that expresses this, which you do not have.

If we desire to impress several friends with a thought, we have to express it, or give it out, with a little more emphasis than if given to one person. Not so much to make it stronger, as to be sure that the varying receptive powers fully grasp all its intricate waves. For some persons detect one's thoughts easier than others.

We are all accustomed to talk vocally when speaking to a stranger. We seldom succeed in clearly impressing a thought on a stranger until we each learn the other's peculiarities of thinking and receiving. In speaking to a stranger, we have a rather formal mode of speech. It is used because it is found best to adhere to one particular style so that all may be sure to understand. In our own circle, we lapse into familiar expressions, and some circles who have been together for a long time have acquired what might almost be termed a different dialect. But at large, one language is used for all, and our pet expressions are carefully avoided.

You will be surprised when you come to see how we can chatter when we have a particularly congenial number together. We are far more free and familiar than you might expect. We have some wonderfully good times, but they are just a little difficult to explain to earth people, for we grow into different customs and adopt different methods of thought and conversation. No one need fear, though, that enjoyment is lessened. We think it is greater in every way, for we have so little to detract from it, and so many things to enhance it."

(Philip Gilbert, PTS.) Grandpa and I once tried to play chess. We easily conceived the men and board and settled down and, as we could read each other's thoughts, the game became a real test of mind against mind. But when three ex-service chaps and myself tried to play bridge, it was impossible, as we all knew what the others held!

Power of Thought – In Manifesting

(Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.) Immediately upon the thought, there follows the concrete article. I don't mean for one moment that we merely think of what we need or desire and ... there it is. ... This house ... was carefully thought about, planned, and then the masons and builders got to work. But *their* work was performed by thought alone. There were no intermediaries in the form of the procuring of materials and the erection of scaffolding, and so on. Those friends *thought*, and thought produced this very real and solid house. And here it will remain.

(Julia Ames, AD.) When the soul leaves the body, it is at the first moment, quite unclothed as at birth. ... When the thought

of nakedness crosses the spirit there comes the clothing which you need. The idea with us is creative. We think, and the thing is. I do not remember putting on any garments. There is just the sense of need and the need is supplied.

My dear little sister was the loveliest and dearest of all. I saw before me the semblance of her childhood, just as she was in the long years ago, when I had parted with her it seemed for ever. But she was only assuming the child-form to gain recognition. After a time, when I learned more about the life here, she revealed herself to me as we see her now, as a spirit who is a woman grown. There is no difficulty in our assuming whatever form we need for the purpose of the moment. No, I do not mean to say that I could assume permanently any disguise, but you can make yourself appear for the time that you think you wish to be. For the subtle thought is as an artist not merely in color or marble, but to all apparent semblance in the actual person.

When a newcomer arrives or when we have to manifest ourselves to you who are still in the body, then we need to use this thought-creation and bring forth the visual tangible appearances with which you are familiar.

(Philip Gilbert, ITE.) Whether I create my own image to project a portion of myself as a form, or create a thought dwelling as Ross does, I visualize it first and build into it with a putting of Me into It, which takes shape and form. It is an emotional act but sustained by my mind force and will. ... First one IS the concept; then it takes a form in thought. In time, if strong enough, this will take a physical form.

(John Heslop, SABL.) You want to know how we on this side (1) "construct objects for our use." ... The spirit constructs a thought-form, clothing it with spiritual tangibility ... and the spirit operator wills it into any form he desires. When it has served its purpose, he then absorbs it back into himself. It can be dispelled by thought, as well as produced by thought. It is in this way that we show ourselves to mortals. We reproduce the very garments we wore on earth, with many details to insure recognition.

There is a further stage in which, after great development, some spirits can use the etheric fluid of the physical life. With this they can build up a form, a reproduction of themselves, solid and substantial, and animate it with life. (2) This is called a materialization and is the most convincing of all proofs of survival after physical death.

But it is very difficult for spirits to accomplish this and few mortals can stand the strain. Again, by collective willing, under the influence of the Infinite Mind, we can in our own world fashion buildings, such as schools or colleges.

(1) The speaker is a resident of the "Christ Sphere" beyond the Mental Sphere.

(2) Cf. Sir Yukteswar Giri in Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 43.

("Joe's Scripts," LO.) You find, and it seems very curious and fascinating, that you can change ... things by wishing them

to change. You can only do it with small and unimportant things, but for instance – you can look at a pine needle on the ground, where you are sitting, and begin to think of it as a real needle, a steel needle, and then it is an ordinary sewing needle and you can pick it up.

You can't change big things. You can't change the whole scene around you. That is because it is not only your scene. It belongs to lots of other spirits too, but you can change any little thing when the changes won't affect anybody else. ...

That makes you understand how little belongs to you alone so that you can do exactly what you like with it individually and how much belongs to the whole concourse of spirits of which you are a part.

Mental Privacy

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) However wandering may be our thoughts, they are not visible like the flame of light in the sunshine. Things are far better ordered than that in the spirit world! We do have mental privacy here. Without it, social intercourse would be trying, to say the least. We are living in a land of truth, that is certain; but we do not carry things to such an extreme that we must voice the truth openly upon all occasions. As with you, so with us; there are moments and occasions when silence is golden!

But it is essential that one should learn to think properly as an inhabitant of the spirit world. One of the first things one has to do here, as a new arrival, is to think properly. It is not a difficult achievement, and not nearly so formidable a task as it may sound. It concerns one's thoughts about people rather than thoughts of a general nature upon things. When thought is concerned with a person, the thought, if it has sufficient force behind it, will travel to that person. If it happens to be of a pleasant or complimentary description, or of a jovial and genial nature, then the percipient will be happy to receive it. But all thoughts are not of this innocuous sort and our mental secrets may have passed out of our minds only to have found their destination in the very last place we wanted them to be, namely in the mind of the person of whom we were so freely thinking.

The thought, however, must have sufficient measure of directive power behind it to send it upon its journey, and this factor is the saving of many of us because so many thoughts are mere birds of passage in our minds and while they are there, they have little really deep concentration upon the individual concerned. But the very prospect of what can happen is enough to make us keep a strict watch upon our minds and in a brief period, it becomes as second nature to us.

Thought in the Near-Earth Region and in the Astral Plane

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) That part of the spirit world which is immediately interpenetrating your world [near-earth region], that is to say, the invisible world in the immediate

vicinity of the particular spot, for example, where you are reading these words, this spot is not part of the realms of light. It is dark. It may have its minute patches of light in certain well-defined places, but the greater part of it is dark.

Thought of the kind that contains no evil within it will be bright and therefore it will show up in the surrounding gloom, just as the light of a tiny flame will illumine the gloom of a chamber from which all other light is excluded. Even a limited diffusion of light will be the case. But take the tiny flame into the bright light of the sun and the diffusion seems to end, the feeble light having become absorbed by the greater light of the sun. The flame will still be visible, but its light will be strictly limited to its source.

This somewhat elementary analogy will serve, I hope, to illustrate the difference between thought in the invisible regions closely adjacent to your world and thought as it is in these bright realms where I live.

The Sobering Effect of Learning the Opinions of Loved Ones About Oneself

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) I often go and look at people I knew, just for fun.... I make them remember me and then study their reaction. I can see that the ability to do this must be the reverse of pleasant to a great many people when they go back to earth-life and hear the remarks of their nearest and dearest. In fact, in many cases, where people have been stupid and self-satisfied, but not really bad, this penance of seeing themselves as others saw them is the beginning of advancement. They snap out of their conceit once for all, and try to change themselves. Really, anyone with any intelligence has no reason to stick round in a static condition. There's so many ways of learning here, with the fuller vision that we get.

After-Death Powers of Learning, Recollection, and Reasoning

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) Birth into your world usually obliterates memory of what had existed before, whereas when born into this world, we remember more than we did – that is, we forget much, but we also recall much. Things which we remembered often on your side, we forget entirely; the necessary materialities, addresses, possessions, and names pass as we use them no more. But those things last which continue to bear fruit, these we remember, and there is a wonderful quickening of the memory, in some way almost miraculous.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) To acquire knowledge here is not tedious because the memory works perfectly – that is, unfailingly – and the powers of mental perception are no longer hampered and confined by a physical brain. Our faculties for understanding are sharpened, and intellectual expansion is sure and steady.

I have said that my mind was alert. That is an understatement. I discovered that my mind was a veritable storehouse of facts concerning my earthly life. Every act I had performed and every word I had uttered, every impression I had received; every fact that I had read about and every incident I had witnessed, all these, I found, were indelibly registered in my subconscious mind. And that is common to every spirit person who has had an incarnate life.

It must not be supposed that we are continually haunted, as it were, by a wild phantasmagoria of miscellaneous thoughts and impressions. That would be a veritable nightmare. No. Our minds are like a complete biography of our earthly life, wherein is set down every little detail concerning ourselves, arranged in an orderly fashion and omitting nothing. The book is closed, normally, but it is ever there, ready to hand, for us to turn to, and recall the incidents as we wish.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) I wish I could convey something of the flame-like lucidity of our process of reasoning. The emotional grasp of an impression is followed by an immediate awareness of the essential being of a thing and further thinking about it is process of apprehending depth upon depth of meaning dwelling in the thing itself and in its relations with its environment. I cannot tell you how slow, formal and dead your processes of reasoning appear to us. In a flash, we have made the whole journey to a conclusion, which it may take you hours of painful thought to reach and which you will only cover in a superficial manner since what escapes in your reasoning is the precious element of meaning – significance. This becomes heightened to a degree I cannot convey in words. Wordsworth anticipated our method of seeing when he said that the meanest flower that grows could give him thoughts too deep for tears; in other words, the perception was felt directly upon the emotions. It is this power of ours to grasp depth upon depth of the richness of meaning inherent in everything which, in retrospect, makes earth life look such a mean and poverty-stricken affair. If you can think of your most inspired moments – all too brief and infrequent in earthly experience – and imagine a life where this is the normal standard of living experience, you will have a faint idea of what the future holds for you.

It is obvious that the capacity to know, feel and understand in this scale of intensity has to be attained by degrees and that if it came before the cleansing process had at least been begun, it would be too keen an agony to bear. Even then, our scale of intensity is weak compared to that of the higher planes. I suppose, if you want to put it into pseudo-scientific terms, you will explain it as world upon world, each of a higher system of vibration than its predecessor, but this really conveys very little. I want to put it in terms of actual living and this is not easy.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) There are many things that we have to unlearn and re-learn when we first come to dwell in

spirit lands, but our minds, being then free of a heavy physical brain, are at liberty to exercise their powers to the full. We are enabled, therefore, to acquire rapidly the methods of living under different conditions of existence. Our memories behave as memories should; that is to say, they are not erratic in their retentive performance, but can be relied upon to act perfectly. You can see how invaluable such an attribute will be when it becomes necessary to learn afresh how to do things according to spirit laws. It is in this rapid way that so many common actions quickly become as second nature.

The Power of the Senses

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) Earthly wisdom, I believe, has not got very far in analyzing the process by which knowledge is obtained. I suppose if I had been asked when there, I should have made a tyro's effort and have said that knowledge originated in perception – seeing, hearing and feeling – and that this material was then worked upon by intellect to produce a reasoned scheme of things. No doubt many learned books of philosophy would be needed to give an adequate exposition of the process but since all earth-dwellers take it for granted in their daily experiences, we can let it go at that. However it may be for earth, when I came here, I soon found out that my ways of apprehending and reasoning about things were very different.

Perception, in the early days here, is very inadequate owing to the poor development of one's bodily senses. So one will expect that at first this world will have a misty and dreamlike quality. But, as this condition clears, the kind of perception that takes its place is not of the same order as that on earth. It must not be forgotten that one's new body is emotional in its very nature and that, therefore, its new powers will be based on emotions. The total reaction to all that is seen or heard – the keener awareness, the swifter response, involves the whole emotional being. For instance, when I see a bush or a tree, I am not able to perceive it simply in visual terms; I have to reckon on an emotional response to it. I like it, I value it, or even love it, or if I am not yet beyond a negative response, I may dislike it or even hate it; but there will still be a strong feeling reaction in either case.

Similarly with one's reactions to people. They awaken the strongest response of all. A cool, detached, merely intellectual reaction to anything is practically impossible while we are in this emotional body. We have to see, hear and understand with our feelings, and this gives a personal edge to all impressions.

(*Philemon, LFOS.*) Your sight ... is limited to *one* octave. *My* sight takes in *two* or more. I have no less sight than you except in the sense that I only see the octaves that you do not see, while you see *one* that I have lost the power to see, except from time to time through a psychic, I have lost one

octave and have gained *two*, and those the more transcendent and more beautiful.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU*.) Life here is derived directly from the Great Source. Beauty responds to, and thrives upon, the appreciation of it. The greater attention and recognition we give to it, so much the greater will be its response, and it assumes to itself still greater beauty. Spirit beauty is not abstract thing, but a real living force.

The Power of Emotions

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ*.) [Mitchell] explained to me that my present body, being of such a light, responsive kind, would express in its color and emanations every emotion I felt so that not the slightest change of mood could be hidden.

[Mitchell:] "I think you really feel that you ought to be able to find and meet the great people of the past whom you would perhaps regard as your equals, but my fear fellow, you are not yet fit to come near them. Look at yourself!"

I looked. Either I saw myself through his eyes or in some kind of immaterial mirror, but this is what I saw: shafts of keen blue light struggling to issue from a core of dark and muddied color – a tumult of angry, murky shadow at the centre and as a response to his merciless criticism, angry darting of red flying off from it. It was not a pretty sight.

"You see," he said gently, "we have to clear all that before you are ready to go on."

The shock broke me down.

I found myself in a strange world, moved by urgent emotions over which I had little control. I have less control of my feelings than I thought possible; in fact, they hardly answer to control at all. Great waves of emotion take me off my balance.

My emotions still shake me dangerously and I have to learn also to take the emotional impact of other beings with equanimity. I have become wary of impatience and anger; their manifestations are too repulsive. The slightest shift in feeling makes a corresponding change in appearance as well as in one's own feeling of well-being. Relations with people, when nothing can be hidden, become a high art requiring control and a larger sympathy than is ever needed on earth, where its absence can usually be covered by the conventional word or action. It really amounts to this, that one is not safe in this plane until all the twisted, negative emotions are cleared out of one. Then it will be possible to live fearlessly and freely, knowing that one cannot send out any harmful emotion.

I can see that this kind of living, naked to emotional stress, imposing candor and demanding innocence, cannot be successfully carried out without training.

By degrees we are learning our lesson and if control threatens to slip, we go away by ourselves so that no one else needs to endure our nastiness. The conviction that is brought home to us that unless we can clear ourselves of evil emotions, it will not be possible for us to remain among the decent people on this plane. The alternative will be to leave it and find homes in conditions where the astral bodies of the inhabitants are coarsened by habitual indulgence in anger and hatred, and where the air they breathe is infected with their hot and murky emanations. I have already had a glimpse of these dark conditions and can imagine the misery of being condemned to stay there for any length of time.

The world which has now to be conquered is the interior world of the emotions and the spirit. Before, one avoided physical suffering if possible and endured it with what courage one might if it was inevitable. Now, suffering is of the soul and the spirit and cannot be avoided if it has been incurred. It too has to be borne with fortitude and with help cured. Just as on earth, one speedily learned that fire burned, hard things hurt and sharp things cut and there were limits to human strength and powers, so here a whole new set of rules of conduct has to be mastered.

It is true to say that on this plane, most of us are getting clear of emotional faults so that we do present a bewildering variety of beautiful forms and colors; hence the usual reaction to each other is that of appreciation and love. I think the nearest approach to our normal response is the spontaneous feeling of wonder, joy and almost worship which can be felt on earth when something utterly innocent and beautiful is seen and grasped by the emotions. This is the poet's vision, the artist's, and perhaps the mystic's too. In such a case, perception is not processed by the mind which is a cold and logical instrument, but impinges directly upon the feelings. Our approach to our world, then, can no longer be cold and impersonal.

[Mitchell:] "To encounter active ill-will is for us a painful experience."

I felt suddenly constrained and diffident and the change must have been obvious to [Mitchell] for he said: "Don't do that, for God's sake, or I can't stay. You have to learn that your feelings create an atmosphere about you that alters your relationship to those you meet."

Emotion, as well as forming the stuff of our bodies, can be used as a very real force. They can be sent out from the body with almost lethal effect and the discharge of hatred, anger or cruelty can cause grievous injury to the one against whom it is directed. In fact, there is no longer any need to moralize about such things; they are no longer in the realm of the abstract, but are open and palpable offences for which a penalty must be paid.

Chapter 7: Common Elements

Introduction

In this joyful, uplifting chapter, spirits report their wonderment on arriving in the Summerlands, or High Astral. They talk of the lightness and freedom of their new bodies, of incredible energy levels, of colors and sounds not known on the Earth Plane, and of the bewildering array of things to do. Do not expect soaring spiritual themes, however. New arrivals are amazed at everyday things such as food, drink, water and clothing. This is the best evidentiary, not grandiose descriptions of God and angels.

The chapter closes with an account of someone leaving this level of the Astral Plane and ascending to the next, which is as far beyond this level as the Summerlands are from the Earth Plane. And these are only levels in the Astral; we're not even talking about the planes above that, at which the mind can only boggle.

Immediate Impressions of the Summerlands

All are Ecstatic with Their New Surroundings

(Unnamed spirit teacher, LHH.) I am sure you will find the life delightful. I have yet to meet one who does not, after he has arrived at a certain stage of his education. We do see, however, that in the early stages, there are many who find life here somewhat disappointing. One who can only think of existence as a means to outdo someone else in money-getting, is not attracted to study, is not happy in company with students, and in some ways, finds life a burden. If he has really learned how to use his spirit powers, he can find pleasure in the musical performances and in some other ways of entertainment. But as time passes, he usually begins to learn and to experience the pleasure of doing things himself; and then his true happiness comes. If life on earth could be viewed as one of actively acquiring happiness, instead of passively allowing happiness to be brought to them, the earth would become a far more enjoyable place, and the entrance into this life would be a matter of joy, instead of one of penance, which it often is.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) We cannot give a perfect description of this life; there are many things which we know are past your comprehension.

You know our lives here have become for us the *usual*, – all its brightness, its knowledge, its wonder, its variety, its purity, and – yes, its holiness. Only do not think of that word in its usual acceptance. But all these are our *usual* life.

We would like to fill your minds with the immensity of the world here. ... There is so much before us that life becomes the “great adventure.” There is no staleness, there is no weariness of mind; and day by day, vista by vista, time by time, brings us new joys and new experience.

Q. ‘What would be our first experiences if we should suddenly come there together from any cause?’

That is a question not easily answered. First, the unconscious period, which might be long or short according

to the spiritual advancement of each. Then the awakening, and then, ah, then! the beauty, the loveliness, and the surprise! We think then a quiet enjoyment, a quiet receptivity, while your spirits were becoming accustomed to the light and glory.

We know that you would soon gladly take up two occupations: – the one of learning the laws of spirit life, the accustoming your souls to the new atmosphere. And the second, the eagerness for two things: – to send back word to those on earth who loved you, that *heaven is heaven after all*; and then soon the law of spirit life would possess you, and study for improvement, for knowledge of this wonderful life, and then the immediate desire to draw toward you, those whom you loved on earth.

We know that many people cannot think of this life unless in terms of wonder and ecstasy. It seems that all who have had visions of this world have been so overwhelmed with its beauty that they picture it to others in terms that make it appear far different from the reality. They have caught the beauty and glory, but have not sensed the reasonableness, the orderliness, the harmony.

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) Heaven is here, life is here, happiness is here, and nothing to ever disturb us more. Why not be happy and joyful? ... We here in this circle have not tried for physical phenomena, nor for messages for mortal curiosity. We wish to lead you toward the higher life, for it is great, so wide, so deep, so satisfying, that all else seems puerile.

(William Andrews, LHH.) “How strange! How very strange it is, because [it is] so infinitely different from what we were taught, and in our half-hearted way tried to believe when on earth.”

Q. ‘You find it so different then?’

“Yes, although this is not the highest heaven; we might just say the border of the infinite kingdom. But all is so natural, all so beautiful, and so like our highest dreams, if we had such dreams and desires.”

I had only the old orthodox conceptions, a dim cloudy vision of harps and choirs and a sort of eternal Sunday. How

I wish I could describe it to you! But I think I can only give you the idea of a natural life on earth, but with all pain and sorrow removed, all bickering, all quarrels, wars, or epidemics or disease – in fact, all evil, all discomfort, removed, and only happiness and joyous health, and beauty of surroundings, and then friendships and occupations such as one’s heart desires. I feared to come, and regarded the approaching end as a fearful calamity, never knowing that it was the open door to a country so fair that I could have no regret.”

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) Q. ‘How old were you?’

“Something over thirty. But the years have all dropped away from me now, and when in some instant of remembrance, I see that wrinkled, careworn, ignorant and unhappy woman, I can scarcely believe or realize that it was I. But we must have a happy thought to part with. This is an awful picture that I have looked back upon. What picture shall I present? What but joy! Joy! Fullness of joy and love unspeakable!”

(*Willis Coleman, LHH.*) Q. ‘Well, I imagine you would be one who would appreciate the beauties there to the full extent?’

“You are right. My highest hopes, my deepest reverence, my desire for happiness, could not have brought me into more perfect conditions.” ...

Q. ‘Were you unconscious long after arriving there?’

“Not very long, they tell me. I was ill for a time and left the old earth in an unconscious state. It seemed to me I was drifting, drifting slowly into the dark, but not a terrible dark; a time of rest in which I was content. Then into the darkness came a faint light, and the light grew stronger and brighter, and through all my being, there ran a thrill of life, life in abundance. Then I awoke to a vision such as I had never dreamed. Beauty, love, all seemed blending in one beneficent power about me, and I felt enveloped and translated into a bliss I had never imagined. Such is heaven.”

(*Spirit communicator “A.H.,” LHH.*) And this is heaven! A heaven as far beyond what I imagined as the stars are above the sea.

I never realized that heaven was so dear. Why! It is like a perfectly beautiful, natural life on earth – if earthly people could ever attain such goodness and beauty! I always wanted to be beautiful, and never realized before, that while we are still on earth, we may be creating beauty that will last into eternity.

Oh, how easy it is to be good here, where there is no physical weakness, where there is no discord, where love is the law of life! I never knew what heaven was like. If only the ministers would tell their people of the love and thoughtfulness here, of the naturalness of this life, with its continuous unbroken kindness – and no Hell, except what we make for ourselves, the world would be saved.

“I wish I could give you some idea of the beauty of this life. I never dreamed it could be so different from earth life,

and yet so natural. It is perhaps the human life, with the wrong-doing and wrong-thinking eliminated, and all the pure, good and kindly nature left. I never understood it while on earth, and I am wondering now how I can make others understand. If the world could know, if it could realize, all would be well and sin forever discarded.

Q. ‘Are you happy?’

“Yes, happier than I ever believed could be possible. I do not quite know how to explain it; but think of a body that is never sick, never tired, and more full of life and pleasure than in the brightest hours on earth. Then imagine, if you can, the perfect peace and affection and unselfishness which are the laws of life here. Then imagine new studies, new opportunities, new surprises, all delightful ones, and a general companionship that fulfills every law of friendship. Then try to be sad or selfish, if you can! I can’t! Even with the remnants of my old human temper.”

Each and every one begins their beautiful life here, just by kindness and constant thoughtfulness for others. Never a selfish thought. Think of it! And I was so selfish!

Q. ‘What are you doing by this time?’

“Studying, I guess, only it seems like play, it is so easy. Oh, you don’t know yet the ease with which we can advance in learning. We are supposed to have left our brains in the coffin along with our bodies. But something has taken the place, and of such infinite improvement, I cannot describe it. Only there is no effort in acquiring knowledge: – you just want it, and it comes! You will never know a thousandth part of this life, for all the pages and pages and pages that have been written, until you come. Then, oh, then! Happiness and more happiness.”

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) Joy is joy wherever it comes. But here there is no background of sorrow or regret; no fear for the future. Many times our joy is an all-pervading contentment. Many times it is an infinite desire to give the world proof of the heavenly life. Sometimes a tender sorrow for those who cannot see or know.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) These realms wherein I live are, to all of us who inhabit them, a state of perfection so far as our present experiences takes us. The great majority of us can scarcely contemplate a state of greater beauty and happiness, that is, a state of greater perfection than this sphere where we have our homes and our life. We love every inch of these realms, we love every moment of our lives; we are supremely happy – we could not be more so; that is to say, we do not *think* we could be more so. But when we come to regard the strict truth we know that when we pass into a higher realm, we shall be happier still. We have not yet enjoyed that experience, but those of our friends who have already mounted to a more exalted realm are continually returning to visit us and to tell us of the greater happiness which they are now enjoying, happiness which they did not think possible, and to speak of the *greater perfection* in their

new realms of things which already seemed perfect to them. So that perfection, after all, is a matter of degree, of comparison, of experience, and it is not possible to set any limitation upon perfection, because we do not know as yet how far it is possible for perfection to extend. So that when I say that everything is perfect, I mean, of course, everything is perfect in so far as our present experience takes us.

There is no room for the unpleasant phases of human character that are so often exhibited upon earth. They cannot enter these realms. And in so far as such elements of character and temperament as we show upon earth are not the *true* reflection of our real selves, we shall at once cast them aside for ever as we enter the spirit world upon the moment of our transition.

I have previously said that a human being is exactly the same one minute after his dissolution as he was one minute before it. That is borne out by what I just said. It is the great difference between our real selves and the personality which we present for outward view. We are just the same in our true selves, but we may not be *recognizably* so. It is not so much that we have altered but that we are no longer subject to the stresses that produce the unpleasant qualities that were observable in us when we were on the earth. Remove the causes of the distempers and the latter will disappear also.

Here in spirit lands, we have nothing to disturb us. On the contrary, we have everything that will bring us contentment. Our true natures thrive and expand upon such glories and splendors as the spirit world alone has to offer. We work, not for an earthly subsistence, but for the joy that comes with doing work that is both useful and congenial, and above all things, work that is of service to our fellow beings. The reward which work brings with it is not a transient reward as is the case with so much mundane labor, but a reward that will bring us eventually to a higher state of living.

To us here in the spirit world, life is pleasure, always pleasure. We work hard, and sometimes long, but that work is pleasure to us. We have not the tiresome wearying toil that you have upon earth. We are not solitary beings fighting for our existence amid a world that can be, and so often is, somewhat indifferent to our struggles. Here in these realms wherein I live [the Summerlands], there is not one solitary individual of whatever nationality under the sun who would not come immediately to the assistance of any one of us upon the merest glimmering of our needing help. And such help it is! There is no false pride that precludes our accepting help from a fellow creature anxious to give it.

Millions of us though there be, yet there is not one sign, not one atom of discord, to be seen throughout the immense extent of these realms. Unity and concord are two of the plainest characteristics to be observed and understood and appreciated to the full.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) This freedom [that I now experience], this satisfaction, this sheer joy of living fill me to the brim

with a surging energy of being I could never know before. My earth life already feels more than a lifetime away; (1) remote and unreal and its cramping frustrating necessities just a bad dream. Day and night, cold and heat, inescapable hunger and thirst – all these have vanished out of existence. Here we still have a material aspect of life but it wears an easier air; hard necessities of an exterior kind are relaxed or non-existent.

(1) *Lawrence died in 1935 and Sherwood's book was published in 1964, so, at the most, just short of thirty years would have passed.*

With the exception of the border regions of misty unreality, our earth is as solid and actual to our senses as the earth is to its denizens. ... Once one's new senses have developed and are adjusted, this world has a solid surface with a clothing of grass, trees and flowers. True, these are of a finer texture and a more lucent beauty. Again, much of the contrast with earth may be due to our more ethereal senses but perhaps both the objective and the subjective reality are different. I do not want to paint a sentimental paradise but it is difficult to avoid it. There is a serene unity about our conditions. On earth you may go from the sordid hell of an industrial town to its clean and prosperous suburbs and through these to the open country in a very short time. But here the sordid hell is relegated to the lower planes and populated by those who feel secure and at home in such surroundings, and the pleasanter types of country are far removed from them. Thus in this region are stately cities with all that an urbane town-dweller can wish; noble buildings, churches, libraries and galleries and all the amenities of civilization for those who want them. There are stretches of lovely country with parks and mansions, wild regions of mountains and moor and rivers and seas of incomparable beauty.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) In the realm of which I am now speaking, all is exactly attuned to its inhabitants – its temperature, its landscape, its many dwellings, the waters of the rivers and streams, and, most important of all, the inhabitants one with another. There is therefore nothing that can possibly create any unhappiness, unpleasantness, or discomfort. We can completely forget our bodies and allow our minds to have free play, and through our minds, we can enjoy the thousands of delights that the same minds have helped to build up.

Never have I experienced such a feeling of real, genuine enjoyment as came upon me at this moment. I was in perfect health and perfect happiness...; unrestricted by time or weather, or even the bare thought of them; unhampered by every limitation that is common to our old incarnate life.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Life, you must know, is upon a gigantic scale here in the spirit world, how gigantic you can have very little conception until you yourself come here to dwell among us. But because its magnitude is vast, that is not to say that it is proportionately complex. Indeed, when one

comes to compare the earth world with the spirit world, it is at once apparent how complex the earth world is, and how much simpler is life in the spirit world. This may seem an astonishing statement to make; nevertheless, it is a true one.

(*John Heslop, FMABL.*) The third [Astral] and fourth [Mental] spheres are bright and beautiful, more like a glorified earth with their exquisite foliage and flowers and beautiful scenery. There are many intermediate planes in each sphere and these are more or less observed through the mentality and spiritual unfoldment of those who live there. Really it is an extension of a similar faculty on earth, where a beautiful scene will produce exaltation in one individual while another regarding it is quite unmoved.

Many of the higher spheres and interior states have originated by the combined thoughts of exalted beings from higher worlds and none are permitted to enter them until they have been purified and are advanced in spiritual perception. But those who by prayer, faith, and especially love, have their feet firmly planted on the right road while still on earth, rise rapidly from sphere to sphere.

A Home of One's Own

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) My friend [Edwin] then proposed that ... he would take me to a very nice 'place' that had been made ready for me. ... He hastened to explain that in reality I was going to my own house, where I should find myself immediately 'at home.'

After a short while, ... I was told to open my eyes. I did so. What I saw was my old home that I had lived in on the earth-plane; my old home – but with a difference. It was improved in a way that I had not been able to do to its earthly counterpart. The house itself was rejuvenated, ... rather than restored.

[Edwin] had, so far, left unanswered my question as to who was the kindly soul who tended my garden [around his spirit home] so well, but he read my unspoken thought and reverted to the matter himself.

Both the house and the garden, [Edwin] told me, were the harvest I had reaped for myself during my earth life. Having earned the right to possess them, I had built them with the aid of generous souls who spend their life in the spirit world performing such acts of kindness and service to others. Not only was it their work, but it was their pleasure at the same time. Frequently this work is undertaken and carried out by those who, on earth, were expert in such things and who also had a love for it. Here they can continue with their occupation under conditions that only the world of spirit can supply. Such tasks bring their own spiritual rewards, although the thought of reward is never in the minds of those who perform them. The desire of being of service to others is always uppermost.

It has often been said that we build our spirit homes during our earthly lives – or after. That is so only in a broad

sense. What we have built is the right to build, for it requires an expert to erect a house that would justify the name.

Our homes and our houses are not necessities, but additions to an already enjoyable life. You will find many people here who do not possess a home; they do not want one, they will tell you, for the sun is perpetually shining and the temperature is perpetually warm. They are never ill, or hungry, or in want of any kind and the whole beautiful realm is theirs to wander in.

(*Spirit Control Dee, LHH.*) When you come to this side, you will be met by loving friends, and you will soon acquire your spirit powers. In this way, you will be quickly introduced to the spirit home that is awaiting you. We only wish you could see [our home] now. You have a description of it, but you little realize its beauty. We have changed a few things since that was written, but it is still much the same.

You would think we were wonderful architects, no doubt. But you must remember that we have so much help in everything we wish to do, that we can acquire a ripeness of knowledge on such a subject in a time that you would consider marvelous. We have no way of picturing the comfort, the 'hominess', of our abode. It is all as our thought and desire have constructed, and in this way reflects our own personalities. We sometimes say that a home resembles its occupants, for it represents the character so truly.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) We have no need to think about which point of the compass our residence shall face. With you upon earth, it is the desire of most folk to obtain as much of the sun's light and warmth as possible; hence the desire that the home shall face towards the sun, with the principal rooms situated on the sunny side of the house. But here, the sun shines perpetually, a great central sun, and it shines with equal intensity from all directions. Its light penetrates with the same constant luminosity in every room in the house, irrespective of the room's position. The front of the house will be as bright during every moment of the day because we have no day, and therefore the phrase in its earthly sense becomes meaningless from our point of view – the front of the house will always be as bright as the back.

There is absolute freedom of choice as to what type of house one shall inhabit. Once you have earned the right to own a house which is to be your home, you are at liberty to choose just the style of domicile that pleases you most. It may be one that you have longed for all your life upon earth, but thus far have been unable to gratify your long-cherished desire. Here in the spirit world, your wishes are at length fulfilled.

Furniture and Other Furnishings

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) You who have only seen earth world furniture can have no possible conception of the richness of spirit world furniture. We have no mass-production methods; each piece of furniture, from the simplest article

to the most elaborate, is the work of a master craftsman whose pride in his work is only exceeded by our pride in the great dispensation that can provide such treasures for our greater joy and happiness. Much of the furniture which I have since added to my home contains some of the most exquisite carving it is possible to imagine; such carving, indeed, one could never have believed to exist. Even the simplest piece of furniture can be so treated as to make it fit for a king – to use the old expression.

We have no use for fire-places in our houses as a means of warming the room. We have no winter or autumn or spring in these realms.

Ownership Gained by “Spiritual Right”

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) There is ownership in the spirit world. Indeed, why should there not be? Ownership, however, is gained in a different way from that of the earth. There is only one right of ownership in the spirit world and that is the spiritual right. None other will suffice; none other even exists. According to our spiritual right, gained by the kind of life we have lived upon earth and afterwards according to our progression in the spirit world, so can we possess.

Many people arrive here to find themselves richly and abundantly provided with spirit-world possessions that are far in excess of those which they owned upon earth. And the contrary is often the case. Possessors of great earthly effects can find themselves spiritually poor when they come here. But they can gain the right to possess more, far more than they could own on earth and of greater value and beauty.

One must not be misled by appearances in regard to the size of dwellings here. Frequently, what on earth would be termed a ‘humble’ cottage is here the home of a celebrity in some particular branch of human endeavor, a name that perhaps was a household word on earth. In the spirit world, it is most unsafe to judge the inmate by the size and shape or style of his dwelling. It is not that the owner of the cottage or small house is glad to live thus after living on earth in some rather palatial residence. It is rather that the charm of the cottage type of dwelling appeals to him and no one will dispute his right to do as he pleases, and he will exercise that right still further when it comes to the matter of internal arrangements of whatever nature.

No Boundaries around “Personal” Property

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) I was struck by the fact that there were no signs of walls or hedges or fences; indeed, nothing, so far as I could see, to mark off where my garden began or ended. I was told that such things as boundaries were not need, because each person knew instinctively, but beyond doubt, just where his own garden ended. ... I was wholeheartedly welcome to go wherever I wished without fear of intruding upon another’s privacy. I was told I should

find that [hospitality] was the rule here and that I would have no different feelings with respect to others walking in my own garden. ... I had no notions whatever of ownership personally, although I knew that it was my own ‘to have and to hold.’ And that is precisely the attitude of all here – ownership and partnership at one and the same time.

Absence of Decay

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The incarnate person, upon the mention of spirit world houses, immediately thinks of them in terms of cleaning and upkeep, and the idea of houses in the spirit world then becomes distasteful.

Here again arises a confusion between your world and ours. Recollect what I have said about our world being incorruptible and you will see at once that the two words *dust* and *dirt*, which are such a nightmare to those of my friends on earth who have the care of their own homes in their hands, simply cannot have any meaning in the spirit world. Dust and dirt are merely disintegration in progress and, so, where you have no disintegration, as in the spirit world, so you will have no dust and dirt.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) There is no such thing as waste matter in these realms. That which is not wanted either ceases to exist altogether or is returned to the source whence it came. By ceasing to exist, I do not mean that which is not wanted is annihilated, but that it ceases to exist in the form it held *before* it became unwanted.

Our homes will require no attention throughout the whole period of their existence and that may be hundreds of years of your time. A house wholly unoccupied for such a protracted period would be, at the end of that time, as immaculate as on the first day of its erection. And that entirely without the least attention having been paid to it.

The fabric of the house comes under the same conditions and these conditions are a law. We have no winds in the spirit world that will wear away the stones or bricks of which a house is built, nor do we have a smoke-laden atmosphere which will eat into the surface of our buildings or cause them to crumble away into dust. We have no rains to cause rot and rust to set in and so to require various replacements. All our possessions within doors, our furniture and our hangings, our personal belongings, such as our books, all alike are subject to the same splendid law. They cannot deteriorate, receive damage, become soiled; the colors in our hangings and upholsteries cannot fade or become shabby. Things cannot get broken or cracked with age. We cannot lose our small possessions by mislaying them. The floor-coverings on which we walk can never become worn out with constant tread of feet.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) There is no decay [here]. Nor is there any smoky atmosphere to cause blackening or discoloration!

The surfaces of the stone [used in building] are as clean and fresh as on the day when they were raised up. There is nothing to soil them, no heavy smoke-laden atmosphere to eat into them, no winds and rains to wear down the works of exterior decoration. The materials of which they are built are of the spirit world, and therefore they have a beauty that is not earthly.

What is there to disturb the order of [our houses]? There can be no dust because there is no decay of any sort whatsoever. There can be no dirt because here in spirit, there is nothing to cause it. The household duties that are so very familiar and so very irksome on the earth-plane are here non-existent. The necessity for providing the body with food was abandoned when we abandoned our physical body. The adornments of the home, such as the hangings and upholstery, do not ever need renewal because they do not perish. They endure until we wish to dispense with them for something else. And so what remains that might require attention? We have, then, but to walk out of our houses, leaving all doors and windows open – our houses have no locks upon them and we can return when we wish – to find that everything is as we left it.

Extent of the Realm

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) This realm in which we were now living ... reached as far as the eye could see – and that was a great deal farther than we could ever see upon the earth-plane on the finest and clearest day in the summer. This in itself was too wonderful for words, but it also gave an indication of the immensity of this particular realm. And we had only seen the tiniest fraction of it so far! We still thought in terms of earthly distances. Was there any boundary to this realm? Did it stretch still farther beyond the range of our vision? If there were any termination, what was beyond? Could we go and see for ourselves?

Certainly there was a boundary to this realm, Edwin explained to us. And we could go and see it for ourselves whenever we wished. Beyond this were other and still more realms.

One Long Sunny Day

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) It is always light; but we do know when your sun hides its face from you, and we use your expressions of day and night which you would understand better than our continuous light and our limitless activity. For spirit sight does not require the sun.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) We have no night. ... We have no division of night and day.

The sun is always shining in these and other regions, there's no unpleasant wind or cold. It's always the same, steady, unvarying, genial warmth you can feel now. So there's nothing from which we need protection as on earth, in the way of elements.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) It is perpetual day [here]. The great celestial sun forever shines. ... I had observed that there did not appear to be what we should commonly call shade beneath the trees, and yet there did not appear to be any glaring sun. It seemed to be that there was a radiance of light that penetrated into every corner, and yet there was no hint of flatness. My friend told me that all light proceeded directly from the Giver of all light, and that this light was Divine life itself, and that it bathed and illumined the whole of the spirit world where lived those who had eyes spiritually to see.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) We have no winter or autumn or spring in these realms. We have only the glories of perpetual summer. Winter-time on earth can have its beauties and grandeur in the countryside, with its leafless trees and dark earth, with the mist upon the landscape and the feeling of quietness while all nature seems to sleep. But winter can also have its miseries and unpleasantness. The bitter cold, the storms of wind and rain, the fog that descends and narrows the earth till distance is lost. Certain it is that you have the spring and summer to help to compensate for these trials, but who is there who would not wish to prolong the earthly summer far and beyond its allotted period, if it were possible? Now, if you were to take the most perfect summer's day as far as the weather was concerned, you would still be far, far below the splendor of the heavenly summer of these realms. And with us every day is summertime.

Incidentally, we never become tired of it. I have not found one single, solitary individual in these regions who has at any time expressed the wish for a change of weather. When you come here and sample it for yourself, you will feel the same about it, I am certain. If not, then you will be the one interesting exception that will prove the rule!

Temperature

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) There are no extremes of temperature so another spur to effort is missing.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) I noticed, too, that a comfortable warmth pervaded every inch of space, a warmth perfectly even and as perfectly sustained. The air had a stillness, yet there were gentle perfume-laden breezes – the truest zephyrs – that in no way altered the delightful balminess of the temperature.

Time

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) We never think of the passing of time, for it means nothing to us. You have no idea what a sense of freedom this gives. The feeling that one must do certain things at a certain time is gone, and yet it brings no sense of laziness. We have more ambition in every way. There is pleasure and interest in every moment.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) All arbitrary and exterior standards are gone, and time and space are felt in direct relationship to one's present experience.

The sense of duration, which is each individual's measure of passing time, is checked and regulated on earth by exterior standards set according to earth movements and position with regard to the sun, hence time is a highly formalized concept which over-rides the individual sense of duration. Here the exterior checks are absent and we begin to realize that our sense of duration is a function of our kind of consciousness and alters as the scope of that consciousness widens. In other words, the rate of experiencing quickens as we ascend and so the change over from time to timelessness comes about gradually as we are fitted to adjust to it.

I have reached a stage of consciousness where I am aware of a great difference between my rate of living and the tempo of all my activities and those of men still on earth, but taking one's experience in working with a medium as a guide, I find that I can only with difficulty slow down my rate to work with a mind still subject to earth conditions. It is tedious and fatiguing and sometimes I think nearly impossible, but it can just be done. At a higher stage, I imagine that a word-for-word communication would become impracticable and there would have to be just a swift interchange of thought.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Here there is no night and day by the alteration of which time can be measured.

We have no recurrent seasons, no alterations of light and darkness as external indications of time and, in addition, we have no personal reminders, common to all the incarnate, of hunger and thirst and fatigue, together with the ageing of the physical body.

Neither do we have the many other indications of time that force themselves upon the earthly consciousness – such, for example, as hunger and fatigue. Nor in the more lengthy passage of time such as the ageing of the physical body and the dulling of the mental faculties. Here we have no recurrent seasons of spring, autumn, and winter. Instead we enjoy the glory of perpetual summer – and we never tire of it.

Those of us in the spirit world who live in the realm of happiness and perpetual summer will have no cause to find 'time hangs heavily.' In this sense we are simply not conscious of the flight of time.

Some people, who would not otherwise have done so, have returned to the earth world for the very purpose of satisfying their curiosity as to the number of years they have been in the spirit world. I have spoken to some who have made this journey and they were amazed to discover the unsuspected scores of years that had passed by since their transition.

In the spirit world, time can ... be made to stand still, and we can restore our sense of it by quietly resting or walking. It is only our general sense of time that we restore, not the passage of time.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) When you get here, you'll see that time doesn't really matter.

It is difficult to know where one is in earth-time, which doesn't exist here in our sense, though, to an extent, my body is limited by certain conceptions of time and, if one is clever at thinking oneself back into earth conditions, one can think back into earth-time.

Timelessness can only be when one's consciousness has reached infinite heights. But values of time are different here.

(*Philip Gilbert, ITE.*) Yes, it is an anniversary of parting – 19 years in earth time, but, to me, a flash – yet I can, by an act of will, illumine each year or moment of the flash and expand it like a telescope. It is no-time, endlessly great, endlessly small – to us it is NOW.

Space

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Space must exist in the spirit world. Take my own realm alone, as an example. Standing at the window of one of the upper rooms of my house, I can see across huge distances whereon are many houses and grand buildings. In the distance, I can see the city with many more great buildings. Dispersed throughout the whole wide prospect are woods and meadows, rivers and streams, gardens and orchards, and they are all occupying space, just as all these occupy space in the earth world. They do not interpenetrate upon the earth-plane. Each fills its own reserved portion of space.

And I know as I gaze out my window, that far beyond the range of my vision, and far beyond and beyond again, there are more realms and still more realms that constitute the designation "infinity of space." I know that I can travel uninterruptedly through enormous areas of space, areas far greater than the whole of the earth world trebled in size, or greater. I have not yet traversed anything like one fraction of the full extent of my own realm.

One thousand miles of earthly space is a great distance, and to cover it takes some considerable time if the slower means of transport are employed. Even with the fastest method, a certain time must elapse before the end of the thousand mile journey is reached. But in the spirit world, thought alters the whole situation. We have space, and we have a certain cognizance of time in relation to space. Thought can annihilate time in its relation to space, but it cannot annihilate space.

I can stand before my house and I can bethink myself that I would like to visit the library in the city which I can see some 'miles' away in the distance. No sooner has the thought passed with precision through my mind than I find myself – if I so desire it – standing before the very shelves that I wish to consult. I have made my spirit body ... travel through space with the rapidity of thought ... but the space still remains there with everything it contains, although I had no cognizance of time or the passage of time.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) All the planes, even the highest, are interpenetrating, and yet no entity bounded by one can get into another.

Space is illimitable, as you know, yet the difference between your phase of consciousness and mine does not seem to be one of space exactly – at least it need not be, though, naturally, many things are happening in ‘our space,’ which you would think of as thousands of miles away.

But if you could expand your consciousness, as you partly do in thought, to perceive through the solid wall of matter which bounds you in the body, but which is really only an image, you might discover, on what you call this point of space, the astral world with its beings busy on their activities. Yet each being is ‘insulated’ by his aura, good or bad, from direct vibrational onslaughts on his core of sensitivity, which is the real self.

Sound

(*Philemon, LFOS.*) Q. Is there sound of voices or music in your world?

P. The soul of sound, of color, of fragrance, of taste even – I cannot convey these things, except to say that all these earth joys are almost infinitely multiplied in our world, rightly called heaven. You remember Tyndall – no, I think it was Huxley, who talked of *hearing* the grass grow. You know about the microphone, which renders a fly’s footfall like the tramp of an elephant. Sound is a substance, sound is creative, sound is form. Music is the language of the spheres, the means of intercourse between the worlds of interstellar space. All these glories – even on earth they are such – are *minus* quantities and qualities compared to their after-death equivalents. These are all that the earth *minuses* are, *plus* the heavenly qualities for which you have no name and of which you can only vaguely conceive. They are *real, actual* as on earth, only more so, infinitely more so.

(*John Heslop, FMABL.*) When you come here, you learn that musical expression, which on earth you had regarded as a pleasure or luxury, is the language of every soul as it rises into higher and ever higher spheres. It is part of everything and interprets us, as speech expresses your longings and desires.

Music and Color Produce Each Other

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Color and sound – that is, musical sound – are interchangeable terms in the spirit world. To perform some act that will produce color is also to produce a musical sound. To play upon a musical instrument, or to sing, is to create color, and each creation is governed and limited by the skill and proficiency of the instrumentalist or singer. A master musician, as he plays upon his instrument, will build above himself a most beautiful musical thought-form, varying in its colors and blends of shades in

strict accordance with the music he plays. A singer can create a similar effect in relation to the purity of the voice and the quality of the music. The thought-form thus erected will not be very large. It is a form in miniature. But a large orchestra or body of singers will construct an immense form, governed, of course, by the same law.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) Everything here looks so much more vivid and color is so much more delicate!

The Permanence of Spirit

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Let us contrast [this earthly impermanence] with life in the spirit world and with the dwellers therein. Perhaps one of the most heartening, reassuring of feelings that we in the spirit world can harbor is the feeling of *permanence*. Firstly, as to ourselves. We are incorruptible. We have shed our earthly and corruptible bodies as we entered the spirit world and we stand as we truly are, incorruptible. We do not age. On the contrary, *we grow younger* if we should happen to have passed our prime of life when we left the earth. That in itself is something in which to make one rejoice, but most of all, to make one feel secure and *permanent*. Our clothes do not wear out or deteriorate in any way. Our homes are governed by the same law of incorruptibility.

The imposing buildings which are such an outstanding feature of these realms – among so many outstanding features – are as fresh and clean and sparkling as upon the day when they were first erected. And when I tell you that no spot of decay or deterioration or dirt or dinginess can ever be detected upon any one of them, and when I also tell you that a great many of them have been standing there for *thousands of years*, I think you will agree with me that we are fully justified in considering ourselves and all that is about us and surrounding us in the agreeable light of *permanence*.

Earthly Necessities not Needed

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) As for the rest, be assured that we do have the spirit counterpart of all the blessed things on earth: – libraries, homes, flowers or lakes or groves. But we do not have the clumsy and awkward material things which are found necessary on earth. We do not need cars, or balloons or automobiles. Oh, no! Life is easier than that; and travel a luxury, and movement a delight.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) [Think] of myriad things we don’t need here. In an idle moment, you could compile such a list of commodities that are not required for life in the spirit world as would reach the dimensions of a store’s catalogue.

Think now. Start with the domestic arrangements of a house. Food, for instance. We don’t need food, so that means the elimination of a huge industry comprising all the various departments of eating and drinking, and all the vessels

and utensils for manufacturing it, cooking it, and serving it.

Our clothes are provided for us by the operation of a natural law – another vast industry dispensed with.

The transport system you have already seen here! ... Then think of all the trades and professions that have no counterpart or equivalent in these lands. ... Of shops there are none ... because there is no commerce of any kind.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) With us, all those harassing and troublous minutiae of daily life are absent. ... We have no need for food and drink, so that we do not require the indispensable earthly kitchen. The space, therefore, that would upon earth be occupied by this culinary necessity is devoted to other purposes in the spirit world homes. We have no lack of uses to which we can put such rooms.

(F.W.H. Myers, RTL.) These wayfarers find themselves in familiar surroundings amongst people of a similar mentality. But they find very frequently that their actual needs are not the same. They are not condemned to some mechanically performed task for the greater part of their existence, because their etheric bodies do not require food. They draw what is essential for their well-being from that all-pervading invisible substance. On earth, men are slaves of the physical body, and, therefore, slaves of darkness. In the Hereafter, we may truly say that, given certain conditions, they become servants of the light. As food, or its equivalent – money – is not the principal object of their existence, they have at last time to serve the light. That is to say, they are in a position in which they can reflect at their leisure and begin to reach towards this strange and marvelous life of the mind.

Sleep

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) [Our] fatigue must not be thought of in terms of earthly physical fatigue. The two are not really comparable. With us, there is no heaviness of the limbs, no aching joints, no leaden weariness that makes the very movement of ourselves a misery to us; nor yet must it be thought that our fatigue is comparable with your earthly mental tiredness, where you have the inability to focus the mind upon anything except for the briefest possible time. Nor, again, do we lack interest in our affairs or feel restless and ill at ease. The word “fatigue” is the best I can find. There really is no word that adequately describes the situation.

With you who are incarnate, physical energy will be expended during the course of your daily life until such time as it is necessary for you to rest. Rest is essential to you if you are to continue to function upon the material plane of the earth. When you retire to rest and to sleep, and while your spirit body is absent, your physical body is replenished with the energy that keeps you alive and active. Your body is, as it were, charged with force enough to carry you through your day and beyond it, if necessary. It constitutes

a reservoir of force.

With us, it is different. Force is continuously flowing through us from the source of all life. We are a channel for this inexhaustible energy which flows to us according to our needs of the moment. We have only to ask for a greater supply of force for some special purpose or for the accomplishment of some particular task upon which we are engaged, and it is immediately forthcoming. We have no need to recharge ourselves through the medium of sleep as do you. Our fatigue – for want of [a] better word – is more in the nature of a desire for a change from what we were doing, whether it be pleasure or work which is occupying our energies.

The rest of the newly-arrived person is frequently advisable, or necessary, to allow of adjustment of the spirit body to its new conditions of life. It has been accustomed to being very securely fastened to the physical body where it can receive whatever unpleasantness the physical body may be submitted to during the course of its earthly term. An alert mind can quickly throw off these physical repercussions and adjust itself to the new life. Other types of mind will be slower and more leisurely. The long and painful illness will be one of the unpleasantnesses to which I have just referred, and so a period of rest is undergone.

In no sense is the spirit body impaired by any earthly illness that caused its permanent transference to the spirit world. But earthly illness reacts upon the mind, which in turn bedims whatever natural brightness the spirit body may possess. It is purely a matter of thought and has no reference at all to the personal brightness of spiritual progression. No ill-health or illness can take that away. A period of rest will therefore restore the spirit body to its proper and natural tone, both of color and harmony with its life and surroundings.

(Philip Gilbert, PTW.) One just stretches oneself out whenever one feels like it and ‘sleeps’ – that is, one goes into a sort of blissful blank which seems very useful. I don’t often feel like it. I could go on and on endlessly exploring and investigating all I can see and sense.

Food

(Philip Gilbert PTW.) My new body does not need food in your sense; it is nourished, they tell me, by magnetic currents emanating from the Source of Power.

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) Hunger and thirst can no longer prove one’s undoing since one can go on indefinitely without food or drink. ... The necessity of producing and consuming food is no longer a factor in our economy.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) The necessity for providing the body with food was abandoned when we abandoned our physical body. ... The essential requisites indispensably associated with an earthly homestead were, of course, com-

pletely superfluous here, for example, the severely mundane matter of providing the body with food. That is one instance of the difference. And so with others it is easy enough to call to mind.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) It is difficult for you on earth to imagine yourself without hunger and the need for food. To be hungry and thirsty is instinct with human nature on earth. When you come to reside permanently in these realms of the spirit world, you leave your hunger and thirst forever behind you. You will never, therefore, miss the food and drink for which you no longer have any need. And that state in turn becomes instinct with human nature in the spirit world.

Food – Fruit Optionally Available

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) Our host led us into the orchard where I beheld many trees ... in full fruit. He looked at me for a moment, and then he took us to a splendid tree that looked strongly like a plum tree. The fruit was perfect in shape, with a deep rich coloring, and it hung in great clusters. Our host picked some of it, and handed it to us, telling us that it would do us both good. The fruit was quiet cool to the touch, and it was remarkably heavy for its size. Its taste was exquisite, the flesh was soft without being difficult or unpleasant to handle, and a quantity of nectar-like juice poured out. My two friends watched me closely as I ate the plums, each bearing upon his face an expression of mirthful anticipation. As the juice of the fruit streamed out, I fully expected to spill an abundance upon my clothes. To my amazement, although the juice descended upon me, I could find, upon examination, no traces of it. ... They hastened to explain to me that as I am now in an incorruptible world, anything that is ‘unwanted’ immediately returns to its own element. The fruit juice that I thought I had spilled upon myself had returned to the tree from which it was plucked.

Our host informed me that the particular type of plum which I had just eaten was one that he always recommends to people who have but newly arrived in spirit. It helps to restore the spirit, especially if the passing has been caused by illness. ... The various fruits that were growing were not only for those who needed some form of treatment after their physical death, but all enjoyed eating thereof for its stimulating effect.

As to the actual supply of fruit, our host said that all he knew was that as he picked his fruit other fruit came and took its place. It never over-ripened because it was perfect fruit, and, like ourselves, imperishable. ... There is no earthly fruit I know of with which comparison can be made. We can only, at any time, give such an indication to the senses by comparison with that which we have already experienced. If we have not had that experience, then we are at a complete and absolute loss to convey any new sensation, and nowhere is this more appreciable than in the sense of taste.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) I have already remarked that we are never hungry, from which it might be inferred that our social gatherings are entirely without refreshment. Such is not the case. We have the most delicious fruit in abundance. Our host or hostess, whoever it may be, will always see to that. But it is fruit that is very unlike yours on earth, we eat it for a different reason, and it produces a totally different effect upon us.

To take the fruit itself first. We have a much greater variety than do you, even taking into account the diversity to be found in the different parts of the world. All the fruits that you have we also have here, but with the quality there is no comparison. And the size, too, is remarkable. That you must see to believe!

The fruit contains a great quantity of nectar-like juice, at the same time leaving the flesh of the fruit firm to behold, and its appearance does not belie it, for it tastes even more lovely than it looks. In eating the fruit, we are not conscious of internal satisfaction such as you are on earth with your fruit. We feel at once a powerful force running through our whole system, a feeling of exhilaration, both mental and physical. We have no physical hunger that calls for satisfaction; whatever fruit we eat acts as a life force, and, as it were, stirs up mentally and charges us with vigor.

You would ... find that you could manage very nicely if you were never to partake of any fruit here, but once you have tried it and sampled its rich benefits, you have discovered a pleasure that you will never want to deny yourself. And there is no need to deny yourself upon any grounds whatsoever. There is plenty of it to be had simply for the gathering of it and you may ‘tuck in’ without fear of being dubbed a glutton.

Where does the fruit grow? Most people have a garden attached to their houses and they are bound to have a favorite fruit tree tucked away in some corner that will amply supply them both for the requirements of hospitality and for their own personal needs. But there are large tracts of land here that are entirely applied to growing fruit of various sorts and for various purposes.

Drink

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) I have spoken to you of food in the limited extent of fruit, but what of drink? Do we never feel the need for liquid of some sort? Never. But you must know that there is an enormous quantity of juice to be found in the fruit which would be sufficient to quench any thirst of reasonable dimensions!

However, the spirit world is not an arid waste, as you will by this time have gathered. There is water in abundance in the rivers and streams and brooks, and every drop of it not only fit to drink, but, indeed, like no water to found upon earth.

Clothing

(*Spirit communicator "A.H.," LHH.*) The spirit shows externally here, and a white soul will have a pure external, not always white, but a shining and beautiful garment. We wish you could see Mary and Dee. They are lovely in dress as in soul, for the outer garment here is sure to express the inner nature.

Q. 'Mary has been described to us as dressed in silvery white.'

She is often dressed in that way; and your Dee has most wonderful garments. A Parisian dressmaker would be enchanted. But he would try in vain to reproduce such beauty. It is the soul that shines through, and the life that expresses itself in the outer garment.

I haven't much of a wardrobe yet. I'll hope for a white dress by the time you come.

Q. 'What color have you now?'

A mixed color; some white, but other colors mixed in. I have not overcome my mortal faults or thoughts entirely. But I am trying, I am!

Q. 'What do the men wear?'

They wear a sort of flowing robe, like the classic robes of the Greeks, I think, a little, and these take on the colors of the character too.

(*Spirit controls Dee and Mary, LHH.*) [Q.] 'What are you wearing as robes now?'

[Dee:] Mary has on her usual white and glistening robe. Mine – do you remember the colors I loved? – sometimes a pink, sometimes a lavender, but in delicate shades not known on earth.

Q. [Humorously] 'And you do not have to send [them] to the cleaners, or keep extras hanging in a closet!'

Not much! Thought, or the thought method, performs the work. We can throw them aside and assume others at will. What has he learned at even earthly séances? Has he not seen the seemingly perfect materials dematerialize? [This referred to a time when the questioner had seen the clothes on a materialized spirit change before his eyes from an ordinary suit to a military suit with brass buttons.]

Q. 'How are the clothes of the newly arrived supplied?'

They usually appear in white, because that is the spirit color.

Q. 'Who supplies them?'

We think that belongs to spirit appearance. I should except, however, the criminal ones who come over steeped in their own wickedness. They appear in dark colors, sometimes quite repellent.

It will help when you come. There will be no strangeness for you over here, we think. Thought prepares the way, and you will all feel that you are just coming home.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) I can will myself into any clothes I want. I usually get myself into my tweed coat and flannels.

It is true what you read in *Many Mansions*. Some people go about seeing themselves in the most fantastic outfits. They are dressed as their inner nature builds them up. That is why, at first, Grandpa so often 'showed' to mediums in a sort of black cassock, like a clergyman.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) It is difficult to describe [our] costume because so much rests in being able to give some comparison with a particular earthly fabric. Here we have no such materials, and all outward appearances are produced, not by the texture of the material, but by the kind and degree of light that is the essence of a spirit robe. Those that we now saw [at the home of rest, on the relatives and friends awaiting their loved ones' awakening] were in 'flowing' form and of full length, and the colors – blue and pink, in varying degrees of intensity – seemed to interweave themselves throughout the whole substance of the robes. They looked very comfortable to wear, and like everything here, they require no attention to keep them in a state of perfect preservation, the spirituality of the wearer alone accounting for that.

How is the spirit body covered? A great many people – I think it would be true to say the great majority – wake up in these realms dressed in the counterpart of the clothes they wore when upon the earth-plane at the time of their transition. It is reasonable that they should, because such attire is customary, especially when the person has no foreknowledge whatever of spirit world conditions. And they may remain so attired for just as long as they please. Their friends will have told them of their true state of being and then they can change to their spirit clothing if they so wish. Most people are only too glad to make the change since their old earthly style of clothing looks very drab in these colorful realms. It was not long before I discarded my old clerical attire for my true raiment. Black is altogether too somber amongst such a galaxy of color.

Spirit robes vary in themselves almost as much as the realms vary. There always seems to be some subtle difference between one person's spirit robe and another's, both in color and form, so that there is an endless variety in the two particulars of color and form alone.

All spirit robes are of full length; that is, they down to the feet. They are sufficiently full to hang in graceful folds and it is these very folds that present the most beautiful shades and tones of color by the effect of what on earth would be called 'light and shade.' It would be impossible to give you anything like a comprehensive account of the different additional features that go to make up the whole composition of spirit vesture.

Many people will be found wearing a girdle or sash around the waist. Sometimes these will be of material, sometimes they appear to be of gold or silver lace or tissue. In all cases of the latter, they are rewards for services performed. No possible conception can be formed of the superlative

brilliance of the golden or silver girdles that are worn by the great personages from the higher realms. They are usually adorned with the most beautiful of precious stones, fashioned in various shapes and mounted in beautifully wrought settings, according to the rulings that govern such matters. The higher beings, too, will be seen to be wearing the most magnificent diadems, as brilliant as their girdles. The same law applies to these. Those of us of lesser degree may perhaps be wearing some such embellishment as I have just described, but in a greatly modified form.

There is an enormous wealth of spirit lore behind the whole subject of spirit adornments, but one fact can be plainly stated: all such adornments must be earned. Rewards are given only upon merit.

We may wear what we like upon our feet and most of us prefer to wear a covering of some sort. It usually takes the form of a light shoe or sandal. I have seen numbers of people here who have a predilection for going barefoot and they do so. It is perfectly in order and it excites no comment whatever. It is natural and commonplace with us.

The material of which our robes are made is not transparent, as some would perhaps be inclined to imagine! It is substantial enough. And the reason why it is not transparent is that our clothing possesses the same vibrational rate as the wearer. The higher one progresses, the higher this rate becomes and consequently, dwellers in those elevated sphere will take on an unimaginable tenuousness both of spirit body and clothing. That tenuousness is the more apparent to us than to them – that is, externally apparent.

We seldom wear any covering upon our heads. I do not remember seeing anything of the sort anywhere in this realm. We have no need for protection against the elements!

[Monsignor Benson on trading his earthly attire for a spirit robe:] Immediately I had expressed the wish to follow Edwin's suggestion of discarding my earthly style of clothes, those very clothes faded away – dissolved – and I was attired in my own particular spirit robe – of the same description as those I could see about me.

We do not know what natural process comes into operation in the making of [our spiritual clothes]. There are many things that we must know first and so we take things as we find them.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) Q. 'Do different nationalities show any difference in dress?'

"Not much. The clothing seems to express their thoughts or character, and Russian or [Hindu] may express the same thought or character."

Water

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) Water is fully alive in the spirit world.

As the water pursued its course, it gave forth many musical notes that constantly changed and weaved them-

selves into a medley of the most dulcet sounds.

I let some of the water run over my hand, expecting it, by its very look, to be icy cold. What was my astonishment to find that it was delightfully warm. But still more, it had an electrifying effect which extended from my hand right up the arm. It was a most exhilarating sensation, and I wondered what would it would be like to bathe fully within it. My friend said that I should feel myself being charged with energy.... When I withdrew my hand from the brook, I found that the water flowed off in flashing drops, leaving it quite dry.

All we needed for the purpose of enjoying a bath was the necessary water in which to bathe! Nothing could be simpler. We were just to go into the water precisely as we were. Whether we could swim or not was of no consequence. ... The water felt more like a warm cloak thrown round me than the penetration of liquid. The magnetic effect of the water was of like nature to the brook into which I had thrust my hand, but here, the revivifying force enveloped the whole body, pouring new life into it. It was delightfully warm and completely buoyant. It was possible to stand upright in it, to float upon it and, of course, to sink completely beneath the surface of it without the least discomfort or danger. Had I paused to think, I might have known that the latter was inevitably bound to be the case. But beyond this magnetic influence there was an added assurance that came from the water, and that was its essential friendliness, if I may so call it. It is not easy to convey any idea of this fundamentally spiritual experience. That the water was living, one could have no doubt. It breathed its very goodness by its contact, and extended its heavenly influence individually to all who came within it. For myself, I experienced a spiritual exaltation, as well as a vital regeneration, to such an extent that I quite forgot my initial hesitancy and the fact that I was fully clothed. ...

My mind was saved further perturbation when I recalled that as I withdrew my hand from the brook, the water ran off it, leaving it quite dry. I was already prepared, then, for what ensued as we came out of the lake. As I emerged, the water merely ran away, leaving my clothes just as they were before. It had penetrated the material just as air or atmosphere on earth will do, but it had left no visible or palpable effect whatever. We and our clothes were perfectly dry!

And now another word about the water. It was as clear as crystal, and the light was reflected back in every ripple and tiny wave in almost dazzlingly right colors. It was unbelievably soft to the touch, and its buoyancy was of the same nature as the atmosphere, that is to say, it supported whatever was on it, or in it. As it is impossible to fall here by accident, as one does on earth, so it is impossible to sink in the water. All our movements are in direct response to our minds, and we cannot come to harm or suffer accident.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) [The water] glistens and sparkles; it is crystal clear; it is buoyant; one can slip beneath its sur-

face and enjoy its warm embrace as it folds its living arms about you. It soothes, it invigorates, it inspires. It will produce the most beautiful sounds when it is disturbed on its surface. The ripples of the wavelets will reflect back a multitude of rainbow tints and will emit the purest of musical tones. Have you any water like that upon earth? I cannot remember ever seeing such when I was there.

There is no such thing as stagnant water here; every drop of it is everlastingly living water of jewel-like purity. We can bathe in it, we can ride upon its surface in many a splendid vessel, or we can descend beneath it without harm to ourselves because it is our nature that no harm can come to us.

The Sea

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Never had I expected to behold such a sea. Its coloring was the most perfect reflection of the blue of the sky above, but in addition, it reflected myriad rainbow tints in every little wavelet. The surface of the water was calm, but this calmness by no means implies that the water was lifeless. There is no such thing as lifeless or stagnant water here. ...

A short walk down a pleasant winding path brought us to a sandy seashore. Edwin informed us that it was a tideless ocean and that at no place was it very deep by comparison with terrestrial seas. Storms of wind being impossible here, the water was always smooth and, in common with all water in these realms, it was of a pleasantly warm temperature that could occasion no feelings of cold – or even chilliness – to bathers. It was, of course, perfectly buoyant, possessed no single harmful element or characteristic, but it was, on the contrary, life-sustaining. To bathe in its waters was to experience a perfect manifestation of spiritual force. The sand upon which we were walking had none of the unpleasant features associated with the seashore of the earth-plane. It was never tiring to walk on. Although it had every appearance of sand as we had always known it, yet to the tread, it was firm in consistency although soft to the touch of the hand. In fact, this peculiar quality rendered it more like well-kept lawns to walk on, so closely did the grains hold together. We took some handfuls of the sand and allowed it to run through our fingers and great was our surprise to find that it lacked every trace of grittiness, but seemed to the touch more akin to some smooth, soft powder. Yet examined closely, it was undeniably solid.

Our little experiment with the sand led us to place our hands in the sea. Ruth fully expected it to taste of salt, but it did not, much to her surprise. As far as I could observe, it had no taste at all! It was sea more by virtue of its great area and the characteristics of the adjacent land than anything else. In all other respects, it resembled the water of the brooks and lakes.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) When viewed from an elevation that is fairly high above sea level, the water presents a scin-

tillating expanse of color. There are no storms to agitate the surface violently; at the same time the sea is not always of a glassy smoothness. The gentle breezes will play lightly upon the waters, rippling the surface and forming little waves which take on a hundred tints in the smallest space so that these rays of reflected light are for all the world like the flashes of color that are to be seen issuing from the purest of diamonds.

It is a thrilling experience to behold for the first time this glittering effect that is natural to all water in the spirit world. When I first beheld it, I could hardly believe my eyes, so unbelievably inspiring was the spectacle. And even now, although I have become to some extent a seasoned resident of these realms, I can still be thrilled by the interplay of color whenever I come within sight of river or lake or sea. And that applies to all of us here. Familiarity has not made us indifferent. There would be something radically wrong with ourselves if it did.

Absence of Earthly Problems

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) We do not have the problems that constantly harass and worry earth people, problems, for example, of religion and politics, which throughout the ages have caused social upheavals that are still having their repercussions in the earth world at the present time.

Temporary Indulgence of the New Arrival

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) Clothing and luxuries are available freely for those who think they want them, but greed so easily satisfied soon dies of a surfeit.

The fact that no one *needs* food or any particular kind of clothing or housing removes the tension and fear from living altogether and, with this new freedom, a great deal of the element of greed has vanished proving, if proof is needed, how entirely greed is the child of fear and insecurity. When people first arrive here, the ease with which any desired goods can be obtained sometimes goes to their head and they begin to clutch and hoard as they would have done on earth; but this is usually only a temporary phase. If it is a deep-seated trouble, they probably gravitate to a lower plane where such attitudes can be tolerated but as a rule, it is only a short-lived madness.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) [All] is purely a matter of choice and we can all suit ourselves in the matter. But whatever we do, we shall not be considered eccentric if we wish to indulge some fancy. Our friends will recall *their* early days in the spirit world when they were similarly situated, and, accordingly, we shall have their sympathetic support and cooperation in the fulfillment of our desires, whatever they may be.

Absence of Fear, Loneliness and Insecurity

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) I could moralize a lot about the effects of the removal of fear among us. In retrospect it is easy to see how it plays the devil in human affairs and is at the root of evils of various kinds. This is illustrated clearly by the effect of its absence. For what have we to fear? We no longer fear death; it is a discredited bogey. We no longer fear hunger nor thirst; they do not exist. We no longer fear cold nor heat; our climate is equable, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that our bodies do not register change of temperature. There are no insurmountable barriers of distance or difficulty; if we want to go to the ends of the earth, it is all open before us and our own desire will guide us surely to any destination. With all these material freedoms, there is no frustration to engender anger or bitterness, no fear to breed hostility, no ‘haves’ to cause envy and greed in the ‘have-nots,’ and above all, no death to be feared as the ultimate evil.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Such a thing [as loneliness] does not exist in this realm.

Absence of Depression

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) Q. ‘What do you do there when things go wrong, and you get ‘blue’ and discouraged?’

It doesn’t happen! We do sometimes wish we had more Power, that our influence could travel further, or that we ourselves were of greater influence. But this is always met by our guides or helpers by encouraging words and helpful and loving advice.

Absence of Compulsion

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) It is essential to understand that every occupation and every task performed by the inhabitants of this and higher realms is done willingly, for the pure wish of doing so, and never from the attitude of having to do it ‘whether they like it or not.’

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) No person is forced in these lands to submit to anything of which he disapproves. He is at liberty to seek elsewhere in the avoidance of offence to his fastidious susceptibilities. Equally, he is at liberty to emerge from his obscurity or seclusion if he eventually feels that he was mistaken. The latter is what always happens!

If there is anything of which [people] disapprove when they come here, they are at liberty to depart, to remove themselves, leaving us in the enjoyment of our own mode of life, while they betake themselves elsewhere and create their own bleak void – and live in it.

There *are* no indolent natures here. We are always occupied in some way, but that doesn’t mean that this is a life of eternal work as opposed to the *old* – and still current – idea of eternal rest. We all, every one of us, have our time off, and no one will come and tell us if it’s time to start

work again in the earthly sense. We have all the recreation we need and desire, and we come and go as we please.

Absence of Discord

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Before you dismiss my statement as highly improbable, or all the painting of a picture of perfection impossible to attain except within the very highest realms of all, let me state the simple fact that discord and disagreement ... could not possibly exist in this realm wherein is my home. ... Whatever gifts we may possess in spirit, it is part of the essence of this realm that we have no inflated ideas of the power or excellence of those gifts. We acknowledge them in humility alone, without self-importance, ... and we are grateful for the opportunity of working, *con amore*, with our colleagues in the service of the Great Inspirer.

Sense of Aliveness and Humor

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The joy of living is a phrase of which you cannot even have the barest understanding while you are yet upon the earth-plane. It is not surprising, therefore, that we should exhibit a little of that joy when we visit you on earth. Some of us, even, dare not show ourselves to you as we really are, because some folk might be shocked! There are so many people on earth who regard us from a restricted self-conscious point of view. There would seem to be a feeling of piety in the air sometimes which we are not pleased to see when we visit you. To receive us with bated breath is not a reception according to our liking.

(*Philip Gilbert in PTW.*) [From the spirit side, Philip reports to his mother, Alice Gilbert, what went on “backstage” at a séance led, from spirit’s side, by “Mandy”:] Yesterday ... I did a very effective tango with [Mandy] in my best Eastern manner after we’d finished talking to you. What a shock the worthy ladies at the circle would have got, had they been clairvoyant! But the kick was gone out of it, really. One needs a physical body for a tango.

Sense of Safety and Supportiveness

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) There is a law of gravity here in the spirit world, but we are not subservient to it. All else is, but we human beings are not so. Or to put it another way, our minds can and do at all times rise above it. That again is second nature to us. If we should tumble down, we cannot hurt ourselves because our spirit bodies are impervious to all injury in whatever shape or form.

Incidentally, we do not often fall because we have not the heavy and rather clumsy bodies that are essential upon earth. It is mostly newly-arrive folk who do the tumbling! When we have become fully-acquainted with the power and force of our minds we never do such awkward things.

We Cannot Visit a Realm Above Us Unless by Permission

(*Philemon, LFOS.*) The only ones cut off from us are those below, unless we seek them. Our beloved can *always* come down to us, however far they have ascended. The more progressed, the more surely.

I have not seen R. B., (1) as yet. I sent him flowers and a greeting, but I did not see him. ... His grandparents met him. He will see me when the time comes. He is getting well and reconciled. He is in more beautiful surroundings than I am. (2) R.'s inner spirit was rebellious and bitter that a young life like his should have been cut off without visible, tangible reason.

(1) *R.B. is a mutual friend who died young of cancer.*

(2) *Philemon probably means that R.B. has gone to a higher realm than Philemon inhabits.*

"Races" Exist in the Summerlands

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The personality and individuality and attributes of the person are ... continued after his arrival in the spirit world. The physical distinctions of race will be preserved, borne upon his face, in the very color of his skin, and in other ways that will readily occur to you, and these he will retain in the spirit world.

Mixing of Eras

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) An interesting variation in our society is caused by the admixture of earth-ages as represented in any one plane. There can easily be people living in close harmony here together whose earth lives were separated by centuries, and this means that often, the generations widely separated in earth time are simultaneous here. For instance, I may be associating with my grandfather, great-grandfather and so on for some generations back yet we shall all be roughly of the same age. The differences in our earthly experiences give rise to piquant interchanges and contrast and what I may call the "living history" aspect of our society intrigues and delights the historian.

Since I have become free of a wider society I am realizing the possibilities of mixing with those of an earlier age.

I have a special friend who belonged to a knightly family in the middle ages. He went on a crusade and eventually lost his life in Palestine. We have found much in common in our knowledge of and love for the Near-East. Glimpses of the real campaigns of those days that I get from his accounts are a wonderful corrective to the inaccurate romancing of the history books. His first-hand knowledge makes nonsense of the usual methods of research. His language also delights me. I found it hard to follow at first with its strong admixture of Norman-French, but when words fail us, we can always get along by the exchange of thoughts. His interest in modern conditions and modern campaigns is as keen as mine in those of the past, so we are intensely pleased with

each other's company. He is a simple soul whose creed of fighting loyally, feasting royally and thinking rarely or never, has kept him in the lower planes for a long while where the fantasies of battle and feasting could continue. A gradual emancipation from these illusions freed him and he is learning now to adjust himself to a world where fighting is an anachronism, but his restless energy often has to be worked off by long expeditions to the East. Imagine visiting the desert in company with a fully armed Crusader! He keeps the fashion of his clothing and the accoutrements of his day, as most people do.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The people of the earth world may think it strange to walk through these realms and mingle with persons who lived on the earth-plane hundreds – and, in some cases, thousands – of years ago. A meeting of the past, as it were, with the eternal present. But it is not strange to us here. It may be so for the newly-arrived, but then there are many other things that may seem strange at first.

Socializing

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Here in spirit we need no formal introductions; we constitute one large united gathering in the matter of ordinary 'social intercourse.'

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) You have but to step outside your door to find people who would soon drive any loneliness away.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) There is no coercion here and no tyranny of time so when one kind of life palls, one can freely exchange it for another. There is a constant coming and going at the university and study, recreation and fellowship all play their part in its life, but students frequently go off for a spells of other kinds of experience and return when they are ready.

The structure of our society is therefore very diversified; it is stratified horizontally, as it were, and also vertically along the axis of time. Many people have been here for hundreds of years in earth time although they hardly ever realize this, and so one gets a mixture of the manners and customs of many ages and historical eras. There is certainly no danger of dullness because of a dead level of conformity; the bewildering variety of people, manners, and outlooks is endlessly fascinating. While I have been associated with Mitchell, it is understandable that most of my associates have been those recently arrived in these planes and most of them have been contemporaries of my own, or even from a later generation. The university, too, tends to be filled with recent arrivals.

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) Q. 'And what else [do you do]?'
Pleasure.

Q. 'Isn't all your work pleasure?'

So it is. But we do sometimes give ourselves up to pleasures which have no object except enjoyment. Do you see? It is our pleasure to study; it is our pleasure to help others; it is our pleasure to go to libraries, or to other circles to watch their methods of teaching and helping. But once in a while we have – well – just that, a good time!

Q. 'What do you do?'

I do not think I can tell you exactly, because everything happens on the spur of the moment. Someone has an inspiration and we are all swept into it. It isn't cards; it isn't dancing; it isn't motoring. It is just the delightful letting down of our serious selves, just the happy interchange of thought and action.

Q. 'I am afraid we do not understand much of spirit life.'

We know you do not. Neither did we before we came.

But not all here is serious. We are not always studying big problems. We do have the delight of variety, of geniality, of the play of wit, the charm of perfect companionship.

Interest in Earth Slowly Wanes

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) We do forget our earth lives, with all the appointments we treasured while there. You can hardly realize the complete transfer of interest when the change is made from the earth life to the spirit existence. We are hardly conscious of the earth life, for the change in every particular is so great, and every moment here is so filled with joy, or study, or care for others, we do forget – forget everything except the love we bear for the dear ones there.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) When, in my earlier letters, I spoke of the intense desire of those who had passed over to communicate with those who are left behind, I wrote truly. I was at the time but newly arrived, and I was amid the multitude of the newly arrived, and among them, I did not exaggerate the grief, the indignation, the heart-break of a love which was doomed to see those whom they loved but were not able to communicate with them or to staunch their tears. Now, after more experience, and, with better opportunities for observation, I should say that the number of the 'dead' who wish to communicate with the living are comparatively few. With the exception of those whose influence by writing or acting persists, and is therefore a living link with the living world, there are few, possibly not one in a million, whose interest in the survivors is an active force.

It is with us as with immigrants to my former country. When they arrive, their hearts are in the old world. The new world is new and strange. They long to hear from the old home and the post brings them more joy than the sunrise. But after a very little time, the pain is dulled, new interests arise, and, in a few years, sometimes in a few months, they write no more. With us here, the change is even more rapid. For the new life is more absorbing and the survivors constantly recruit our ranks. When the family circle is complete, when those we loved are with us, why should we trou-

ble to communicate? The whole planet with its 1,500,000,000 inhabitants is full of strangers, our life lies on our own plane. Therefore, do not think that what I said of the eager, passionate longing of those on this side to communicate with you is true of any but those in the midst of whom I was when I wrote [earlier].

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Viewpoints change very much when one comes to live here. What we deemed so very important when we were incarnate, we find is not nearly so important when we arrive in the spirit world.

When once we have left the earth-plane, we are inclined to forget our earthly birthday since the greater contains the lesser. It is only our earthly connections, if we have any, that will serve to remind us.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) A great number [of the newly-arrived] show no further interest in their old earthly life and mode of living, but will concentrate all their energies upon the larger world that is opening out before them.

Many people here regard their advent into spirit lands as their second birth, and they keep up the celebration of the second birthday with a deal more vigor than they ever did their birthday on earth.

(*F.W.H. Myers, RTI.*) Usually [the average man after death] is like a blind puppy after birth. He writes of what he cannot see. When perception comes to him, when sight is bestowed on the eyes of his soul, he does not, so far as I am aware, look towards the earth again. He feels his own mental impecuniosity. He has not the power to express in words, which he must borrow from earth minds, the amazing character of life after death. So he is silenced, and no echo comes from behind the dark curtain which will even faintly convey the music of that other life, yield to man the strange rhythm of a universe within a universe, a life within a life, and all lying, as ships in harbor, within the infinite imagination of God.

Relevance of "Trivial" Details

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The spirit world is a *real* world, peopled with *real* individuals.

You who are upon earth do not know what it is to *live*, really to live. And you will never know until you come here for all time. So that it is only by comparing some of the 'trivial' details of our respective modes of living that you can gather any kind of idea of this perfect land in which I live. Merely to give a broad sketch of our life in the spirit world might be satisfactory as far as it goes, but it would leave a great deal unsaid. Much detail would be missing and it would thus be left to your imagination and speculation to supply the missing information necessary to make a fuller and more comprehensive picture.

To wave aside such particulars as I am giving you because they seem trivial and very earthly and unworthy of

consideration when ‘heaven’ is under discussion is to hold a totally wrong conception of spirit lands. We are live people living in a beautiful land, a land far more solid than the earth. We love the countryside and the city; we love our houses and gardens; we are blessed with delightful friends. But the country and the city; the houses and the gardens; and, lastly our friends, have more substance about them than can be found upon earth, and this substance is made up of such details as I am describing to you.

Relationships and Sexuality on the Spirit Planes

Relationships Grow Closer

(*Unnamed spirits, LHH.*) We are two spirits, like an earthly marriage, as far as choice of companionship and love are concerned. Do you believe this to be possible with spirits?

Q. ‘Why not?’

Yes, why not? For love remains.

(*Ruler of the Spirit Realms to Roger, MALIWU.*) You will never want for wise and willing friends to help you in whatever way you need. You have already in this brief period gathered friends about you, from whom nothing can separate you, for you now live in a world where no such separation can take place. We are always here, even as you are.

We are No Longer Relatives

(*Raymond Lodge, SOLR.*) Bear in mind that I am not now the son of my father from my last lifetime. That was one life episode. Neither am I the child of my parents in the life before that, or the one before that. Those relationships do not carry on and it is a mistake to expect them to. They carry on for a while after death; in the case of an elderly married couple who pass on within a few years of each other, for example, it is part of their healing and adjustment to be together again as man and wife briefly in the spirit and have what we call a second honeymoon. But, after they leave the vestibule, they won’t think of each other as man and wife in the physical sense. They will, however, continue to be aware of each other for a long time. That’s why they chose to get married in that specific lifetime.

Family relationships pertain to one given lifetime. I don’t mean to disrupt the unity of the physical family with these comments. That’s a sacred thing. But it is important to realize that everyone is so much more than the child of his physical parents or the child of his physical parents in his last lifetime or the husband of his wife ten thousand years ago. We can’t hold all of these ties, and it was never meant that we should. On the other hand, we do know each other; I frequently talk with people I knew in a lifetime I had in the sixteenth century. We still know each other. We’re friends, but we don’t think of each other as relatives.

When you consider that we live forever, then obviously any one of us has had ten thousand times ten thousand families. That’s a lot of relatives.

Marriages May or May Not Continue ...

(*Imperator, ST.*) [Stainton Moses: It having been said that a friend and his wife who had frequently manifested were now removed to other spheres of work, I asked whether the marriage ties were perpetuated:]

That depends entirely on similarity of taste and equality of development. In the case of this being attained, the spirits can progress side by side. In our state, we know only of community of taste and of association between those who are on the same plane and can be developed by mutual help. All things with us are subordinated in the education of the spirit, which is perpetually being developed. There can be no community of interest save between congenial souls. Consequently no tie can be perpetuated which is not a help to progress.

The uncongenial bonds which have embittered the soul’s earth life, and marred its upward progress, cease with the bodily existence. The union of soul with soul, which in the body has been a source of support and assistance, is developed and increased after the spirit is free. The loving bonds which encircle such souls are the greatest incentive to mutual development, and so the relations are perpetuated, not because they have once existed, but because in the eternal fitness of things, they minister to the spirit’s education. In such cases, the marriage tie is perpetuated, but only in such sort as the bond of fellowship between friends endures, and is strengthened by mutual help and progress.

All souls that are mutually helpful remain in loving intercourse so long as it is profitable for them. When the period arrives at which it is more profitable for them to separate, they go their way without sorrow, for they can still commune and share each other’s interests. The reverse of such law would only perpetuate misery, and eternally bar progress. Nothing is permitted to do this.

Spirits filled with mutual love can never be really separated. You are hampered in understanding our state by considerations of time and space. You cannot understand how souls can be far apart, as you count space, and yet be, as you would say, intimately united. We know no time, no space.

We could not obtain really close union with any spirit unless the intelligence be absolutely on the same mental and progressive plane. Indeed, any such union would be impossible for us. Soul may be linked with soul in bonds of affection, without an intimate connection such as we mean by being on the same plane of development.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) In the spirit world, we are at liberty to live as we wish. If we desire to join forces with one or more companions, we shall soon be able to find others, similarly inclined, to unite with us and share the one domicile.

There are many couples to be found living in charming houses here; for example, a husband and wife who were happily married when upon the earth, admirably suited to each other and with a real bond of affection between them.

(Philemon, LFOS.) The union between those who love truly grows ever closer and closer. On this side, when I met my beloved wife, I became herself – she was transformed into me. All that she *knew and felt* became the content of my consciousness. All that I had attempted and achieved, all that I had failed to accomplish, yet battled and struggled to complete, was known to her as no words, no thoughts even, as earth uses the terms, could have conveyed. We were one, yet individually our own very separate selves, knowing as we were known, to the full extent of each other's capacity. Capacity is the only limitation in the spiritual realms.

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) We know that there are certain fundamental truths, just as you know there are certain fundamental laws. But in the various things which surround these truths, there are matters which we can interpret according to the impressions they make upon us. We might use, as an example, the attitude that most of us take here in regard to the union of the two sexes. When I first came over, I was thoroughly convinced that there was no marriage in heaven, and for a long time, I could not see that there was anything to indicate it. I saw men and women associating freely and independently, and although I saw apparent friendships of more than usual intensity, I did not think of them as inseparable. If I had been communicating with earth at that time, I would have conscientiously said that there was no mating here that was lasting. But now I know that the two sexes are drawn together here some time by indissoluble ties.

(Schoolteacher, LHH.) "We are anxious to tell you our story. It is a little different from most you have, and may interest someone there.

I was a school teacher on earth in a western village. I worked hard, almost starved at times in order to buy the other things I craved. I was never married, and had little attention from the male sex. I was not old when death relieved me from further efforts to keep body and soul together.

The one who is my companion now was a man much above me in intellectual station when he was on earth. He was a college graduate, a successful teacher, and had a comfortable living. He too remained unmarried. We met here soon after his arrival, as I was caring for some of the newcomers. I was attracted to him by his undoubted culture; and when he was able to understand this life, he seemed drawn to me by the fact that learning and knowledge meant so much to me. I was not then ready to form an alliance, for I had never felt any necessity for such a partner. So we drifted along. I went on with my work of helping the poor souls who came in such multitudes with every passing day.

When I next met my friend, he had climbed high in the study of astronomy, which you know is one of the fascinating attractions here. I was induced to join him in one of the excursions for observation, and during the journey, my inner self began to realize the need for a more constant companionship with someone. And after our return I allowed the intimacy to grow. It soon ripened into the great attraction that draws all of opposite sex together at some time in their journey through eternity."

We have been together now for a long time, and the bliss of close companionship is what I would somehow like to tell you about so that the world can get some faint understanding of this part of our life and happiness. But how can I tell it! It is the most wonderful experience of one's life, as those on earth know who have had the good fortune to realize it there.

We see many who come here who have thought they had made an alliance which would last forever, who had no real conception of such happiness. It is felt only once by anyone, and can never be mistaken when it really comes. I have watched the growth of several such attractions here, and I realize that the earth life seldom encounters the real thing. Many married people continue together here for a long time, and yet gradually drift apart as they learn the true laws governing such mating. It is always happiness, however. Such separations here are never accompanied with sorrow.

It may seem a little indelicate to you for me to enlarge upon so intimate a subject. But we here know that it is the ultimate happiness of everyone, and something which most here are ready to take into consideration at any time. If you will remember who is writing this, you will find, when you come, two of the happiest souls whom you will have the pleasure to meet. But it is always so, isn't it? All lovers think their case is the very best the world ever saw or knew. We here know, of course, that it is only a question of temperament and character that determines the depth of the happiness that comes with each mating. But for those concerned there is never any other that compares with theirs.

But Love Continues

(Imperator, ST.) Love unites spirits at whatever distance. You see that in your low state of existence. The brother loves the brother, though vast expanse of ocean separates their homes; the long years have rolled away since the eye looked on the form and the ear listened to the words of the absent one. Their pursuits may be widely different; they may have no mutual idea, yet mutual love exists.

The wife loves the degraded besotted ruffian who mutilates her body and strives to crush her spirit. The hour of dissolution will free her from slavery and pain. She will soar while he will sink; but the bond of love will not be snapped, though the spirits may no longer consort together. Even

here space is annihilated; with us it does not exist. And so you may dimly understand that with us, union means identity of development, community of interest, mutual and affectionate progression. We know no such indissoluble ties as exist with you.

Mutual Love is a Merging

(*Rev. Charles Fryer, LO.*) Mutual love in our regions ... is so different from human sexual intercourse. ... We feel our mutual love with varying degrees of intensity and the greatest degree is accompanied by a sort of temporary merging of one with another. It is done always in complete privacy. ... It is something very sacred and entirely lawful with a chosen partner who is of full affinity and it leaves afterwards a sense of happiness which no words can express. Such unions are not meant to increase the population of Paradise, but are purely private expressions of love.

Sexuality

(*Thavis, TIH.*) You are going to ask about sex. ... First, you must define the word so that we have no misunderstanding. If you define sex as the gratification of lust, there is no sex here because there is no lust. If you define sex as the act essential to procreation, we could have no sex because there is no need to procreate. God and God alone creates souls. If you define sex as the melding of two souls in love who are sharing both a physical and a moving, tender, spiritual experience, then I must explain very carefully.

First of all, there is no human exaltation that can approach the ecstasy of the spirit. I have told you in the past that there is no aphrodisiac as powerful as the human mind. ... We have no need for what you know now, what I once knew, as sex. ... You will have something far better.

T.E. Lawrence Compensates for Missed Experiences in Earthly Life

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) I do not propose to detail all my hesitations and doubts nor my struggle with diffidence and life-long inhibitions. The monk and the prig in me were very strong, but I found at last a companion who was minded to follow the same course [of releasing inhibitions] and he took me to various haunts of his. 'These girls,' he said, 'are not prostitutes or anything like it; they are women who have missed sexual experiences during their earth life and need to work out this lack before they can progress, just as we do. So we are all in the same boat and start equal. You will find some lovely people here.'

Much of my reluctance had left me when Mitchell [Lawrence's guide for the newly arrived] explained the differences between sexual relationships here and those known on earth. To understand them, it is necessary to remember that there has been a total change in the body substance and that the basis of all relationships here is purely emotional.

One does not think how handsome, nor how plain another person is but judges them entirely on the quality of their auras or emanations. When an attraction between the sexes is felt, it is a pure emotion of love and the urge is to draw near and share the warmth and beauty one desires. Lust as such is hardly possible in this plane. If union takes place, it is an interfusion of the two bodies and an ecstatic and satisfying experience far more lovely than anything one could experience in an earthly body. There is no question of the procreation of children so that all the more sordid side of sexual relation is unnecessary.

'You know,' said my friend, 'you are wrong to try and minimize the importance of sexual life. It is one of the problems most men have to solve when they come here. We have to come to terms with a body compacted of emotion and far more highly charged than before. There are other regions where things are done just as on earth although no children are produced. I have known men who have been with us for a time but have been so obsessed with this business they hankered after the old ways. They will probably find them unsatisfying after a while and will come back to us again, but they have to work it out for themselves.'

We entered a large and friendly gathering of young people and were made welcome. Groups formed and dispersed, and there was an air of expectation and excitement about which had its effect on us all. I found a girl who pleased me and who was gracious enough to approve of my company and we were both glad to improve our knowledge of each other. She was small and slight, radiant yet veiled in her own tentativeness. We wandered away together, absorbed in comparing our earth experiences, and soon we became friendly and comfortable together. I was charmed by the ease of this feminine comradeship; we were both curious and expectant; we both admitted freely our lack of experience and our need to remedy it, yet we shared a great diffidence and a sensitive approach.

I did not return to the home for a long while. We two have wandered happily in an enchanted land exploring the delights of an intimate companionship crowned by the magic of union. She is very lovely; at her heart is an innocence, joined to a flame-like ardor and between us, we create a burning bliss of union. I am intoxicated with happiness and, for a time, have forgotten all my problems and difficulties. Without sorrow, we both begin to feel the beginning of the inevitable withdrawal and we have discovered that neither of us had expected a permanent relationship. This has brought no disappointment but rather gratitude for a perfect experience shared.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) We in this beautiful realm of light are all working for our spiritual advancement. It is not restricted to those who live in the dark regions. The people who inhabit the magnificent spheres above this wherein I dwell, are all moving forward and upward in their trium-

phant progressional march. It never ceases, and spiritual progress is the birthright of every single soul.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) Only by finding a task which seems peculiarly my own can I work out my salvation at this difficult stage. [Mitchell, my guide] counsels patience and a quiet persistence in meeting and co-operating with others until I find my own path.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Edwin ... proposed that perhaps I would like to join him in his work, which was principally concerned with taking in hand newly-arrived souls whose religious beliefs were the same as we had held upon earth, but who, unlike ourselves, were unable as yet to realize the truth of the change they had made, and of the unreality of so much of their religion.

Beyond the Summerlands

Ascension to a Higher Astral Subplane

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) [Spirit whom Lawrence refers to as "Dr. G"]: "There are natural periods in our time here and ... I am approaching one of them. I could perhaps disregard the intimations and stay on here, but if I did so, I should be perverting the pattern. So you see that even paradise may not be enjoyed for too long lest it thwart one's proper growth. ... I am growing old in this body and shall soon be done with it. Then I shall go on to explore this wonderful universe in another level."

Even as he spoke, ... the illumination of his wise spirit made a glory all around him and was more convincing than many words.

I had heard of this second death and transition to the next sphere but my own development is as yet so imperfect that I had not given it any serious thought. Now it seems that I may be privileged to watch it happening to another.

Death bears an aspect of gloom while one is on earth and cannot see beyond it, but now one can see that death [i.e., ascension to a higher plane] is a simple change of condition necessary for growth. As our present [spirit] body fulfils its purpose and is outworn, the succeeding and more glorious form glows through it, and a gradual metamorphosis begins which finishes in a period of unconsciousness and an awakening in a higher sphere.

[Dr. G.] is continuing his usual work with his students and is always available to his friends but we watch the progressive concentration of his life into a glowing interior brightness. It is as though the light and warmth that normally flow out from him to bless his friends is being withdrawn and collected within so that this illumination burns through and is wasting away his outer lineaments.

The end came suddenly. I called on him and was told that he was sleeping. We stood around and watched his still

form and the light which waxed and waned there. In a breathtaking second, the change came. The light gathered itself together and burnt itself to a keen *thought* of light so intense and inward that we gasped and turned aside. Then it had gone and only a wraith of our friend remained which shrank away and disappeared as we watched.

We sat speechless, absorbed in the beauty and meaning of the transition. It was long before anyone broke the silence and then one said: 'I have heard that some time is needed for a spirit to get used to the new conditions, just as we needed time to adjust when we first came here, so we must not expect our friend to come to us yet. I suggest that when an interval has elapsed, we should meet here again and wait and hope for his coming.' We agreed to this and went off full of thought to our various occupations.

Coming and going between ourselves and a higher world is possible to a limited degree.... This interchange [between one who has gone forward and one who stays behind] tends to be a one-way traffic, because although the higher can come back to the lower at the cost of some deprivation of light and speed of being, the lower cannot easily bear the higher conditions until ... changes in the bodily make-up occur.

Dr. G. has kept his promise to come to us but he appeared when we were least expecting him. Some few of us were sitting quietly talking when his voice suddenly took up the parable and as we looked up, startled, we saw the outlines of a form which speedily filled in and took substance, and there he was among us again. He brought with him an exalted energy and we felt his presence as a spiritual baptism, a stream of pure joy absorbed hungrily by our thirst beings. Light and happiness glowed up in us too with the pleasure of heightened being. He stayed only a short time, made a characteristic remark about the "sordid fug" in which we chose to live and left us again. We knew how to interpret this; his finer being could only with difficulty tolerate our conditions and to try to detain him would have been unkind.

As to the questions we put to [Dr. G., from a distance], they were at first mainly to do with the conditions of his new life and he did his best to describe them to us. He had the same difficulty in conveying the differences to us as I have in making our conditions clear to an earth intelligence.

Feelings of Those Left Behind

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) There are no sad partings, no dispersals of pleasantly situated little communities of relations or friends by the natural procedure of spiritual progression. We do not experience that crushing, almost overwhelming depression that you can experience upon the earth at the departure of one who is greatly loved.

Even if a cherished friend has departed into higher regions, and we should feel ourselves becoming saddened by the event, it must be remembered that we are in instant-

neous touch with each other here. A thought sent out will bring back the absent one in a twinkling to our side, if that should be the only remedy for our desolation. But that would be an extreme case, a highly improbable eventuality, and scarcely ever to be encountered.

There is always movement, especially among [spirit] people. How, otherwise, could we eventually pass to the higher states if it were not so? At some time or another, certain small communities of a few friends or kindred souls, who are occupying the same domicile together and working in concert, must come under the influence of the universal law of change that is one of the great elements of spirit life. But these re-groupings, with their consequent severance of earlier ties, are not terrible tragedies. They are the natural outcome of the march of progression. We must move onwards, as the will to move exerts itself within us. None would hold us back, although we might elect to stay until other circumstances prevail. But you can be sure of this – we are all completely satisfied under this scheme of things; we know that no other plan would be feasible and, what is most important from the point of view of our feelings in the matter, we are supremely happy under it.

Voluntarily Remaining Behind

(Spirit Control, LHH.) [Unnamed spirit discussing spirit controls Mary and Dee]: Mary and Dee could progress to higher planes if they so desired. But their love for those on earth keeps them here where they can be in touch with you.

Q. ‘Having no sin or selfishness to overcome, I should have thought [the two boys who passed over as infants] would be on a higher plane by this time?’

[Mary]: They could go at any time, and they are connected with circles who are studying higher things. But their father preferred to remain near the earth-plane, and they have loved him and stayed with him.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) It is not by any means certain that we shall take our next step in progression when it comes. If I may so express it.

There are many people to be found in these and other realms, both higher and lower, who have earned for them-

selves their undoubted removal into a higher sphere of spiritual life, but who prefer to remain where they are for a variety of sufficiently good reasons. For example, some of the great teachers in these realms are fully entitled to live in a higher realm, and actually possess houses in those higher states, but they have chosen to remain where they are and carry on their present form of work. This act of self-denial is itself a means of still further progression, though it is to be doubted if any such thought ever enters the head of the individual who elects to adopt this course of action.

When I say teachers, I do not mean only teachers of spiritual truths and so forth, but instructors of all kinds in the various arts and crafts of these particular realms. There are thousands of people here who are learning some form of work that is new to them.... In this case it is the work itself and the joy it brings in the service to their fellow-beings that prompts such folk to postpone their advancement of spiritual estate. One day, however, the time will come when they will betake themselves into their rightful sphere, since to remain longer in a lower realm might cause them some discomfort. But they can return whenever they wish and make prolonged visits to their old friends and resume for a limited period their former tutorial occupation, needless to say, to the extreme delight of their colleagues and pupils.

It is not only teachers who postpone their permanent elevation and remain where they are, although entitled to reside in a higher realm. It is open to anyone, without exception, to do the same whenever the circumstances arise. The circumstances, in fact, are many in which this can happen. To instance one case: two people are mutually attracted while upon earth, a husband and wife, shall we say? The wife passes into the spirit world and attains to a certain sphere. Later on the husband in turn passes into spirit life, but goes to occupy a realm lower than that of his wife. But the mutual attraction still exists, and so the wife takes up her life in the lower sphere in order to be with her husband and to help him in his progression. Thus they will be enabled to advance together for all time, or until such other circumstances arise as will cause a natural severance of their present ties.

Chapter 8: The Higher Summerlands

Introduction

If you live by the Golden Rule and cross over with good energy in your heart, by the Law of Affinity, you will gravitate to this level. It is a level of indescribably beauty, where even the air and water are alive and eager to recharge your batteries. Truth, love and harmony epitomize this level, which truly can be called 'heavenly.'

The chapter draws mainly on Monsignor Benson and T. E. Lawrence as they receive their guided tours.

Flora - Flowers

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Earthly gardens at their best and finest are of the very poorest by comparison with these that we now beheld, with their wealth of perfect colorings and their exhalations of heavenly perfumes. To walk upon the lawns with such a profusion of nature about us held us spellbound.

We have the most glorious flowers here, some of them like the old familiar cherished blooms of the earth-plane, others known only to the spirit world, but all alike are superb, the perpetual joy of all of us who are surrounded with them. ... They are always in bloom, they never fade or die, their perfumes are diffused into the air where they act like a spiritual tonic upon us all. They are at one with us, as we are with them.

Spirit flowers, as well as all other forms of nature, are created by the Great Father of the Universe through His agents in the realms of spirit. They are part of the immense stream of life that flows directly from Him and that flows through every species of botanic growth.

There are blooms, and plenty of them, that are expressly there to be picked, and many of us do so, taking them into our houses just as we do on earth, and for the same reason.

These severed flowers will survive their removal for just so long as we wish to retain them. When our interest in them begins to wane, they will quickly disintegrate. There will be no unsightly withered remnants, for there can be no death in a land of eternal life. We simply perceive that our flowers are gone and we can replace them if we so wish.

When we take the tiniest blossom within our hands, ... we ... feel such an influx of magnetic power, such a revivifying force, such an upliftment of one's very being, [and] know, in truth, that those forces for our betterment are coming directly from the Source of all good.

The flowers and all growing things respond immediately to those who love them and appreciate them. The music that they send out operates under precisely the same law. An attunement upon the part of the percipient, with that with which he comes into contact or relationship, is a prerequisite condition.

As one approached any particular group of flowers, or even a single bloom, there seemed to pour out great streams of energizing power which uplifted the soul spiritually and gave it strength, while the heavenly perfumes they exhaled were such as no soul clothed in its mantle of flesh has ever experienced. All these flowers were living and breathing, and they were ... incorruptible.

There was another astonishing feature I noticed when I drew near to them, and that was the sound of music that enveloped them, making such soft harmonies as corresponded exactly and perfectly with the gorgeous colors of the flowers themselves. ... These musical sounds were in precise consonance with all that I had so far seen – which was very little – and that everywhere there was perfect harmony.

Already I was conscious of the revitalizing effect of the heavenly garden to such an extent that I was anxious to see more of it. ... I walked the garden paths, trod upon the exquisite grass, whose resilience and softness were almost comparable to 'walking on air,' and tried to make myself realize that all this superlative beauty was part of my own home. [He is being shown the garden outside his new home, in spirit.]

[Ruth] told us how some friends had shown her the method of gathering from the flowers all that the flowers had so lavishly to give. ... By placing the hands, she said, round the flower so as to hold it in a sort of cup, I should feel the magnetism running up my arms. As I moved my hands towards a beautiful bloom, I found that the flower upon its stem moved towards me! I did as I was instructed, and I instantly felt a stream of life rushing up my arms, the while a most delicate aroma was exhaled by the flower. She told me not to pick the flowers because they were forever growing; they were part of this life, even as we are ourselves.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) We each of us keep our gardens alive, in every sense of the term, by the affection which we shower upon them. There is no constant battle with weeds and wild growths; nor are we at the mercy of the elements, whether wind or rain – or lack of rain; of cold or frost; or of too great heat.

(*Philemon, LFOS.*) Q. Are the flowers and gardens a symbol only, or have you the real thing—not only your own thought taking form?

P. The flowers, the gardens, the rivers, the mountains, the scenery of our world would exist if none of us from the Earth Plane had ever come here.

Flora - Trees

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) There were many splendid trees to be seen, none of which was malformed, such as one is accustomed to see on earth, yet there was no suggestion of strict uniformity of pattern. It was simply that each tree was growing under perfect conditions, free from the storms of wind that bend and twist the young branches, and free from the inroads of insect life and many other causes of the misshapeness of earthly trees. As with the flowers, so with the trees. They live forever incorruptible, clothed always in their full array of leaves of every shade of green, and forever pouring out life to all those who approach near them.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) It's more like a holiday here. We're not bothered with all the troubles of things on earth, the weather, for instance – most of all the weather; or the right soil; and everything to do with the planting, and so on. It's a long process on earth from the moment the seed is planted to the time you come to pick the blooms from the market. But here ... we *make* our plant with its blooms already on it, in all varieties and mixtures of colors. We can have single blooms or double, as we fancy, or as others fancy. And once we've made them and planted them out, well, there's nothing more to do, so to speak. But we're not idle for all of that – even if it is merely showing people round.

"You would think, Roger," I said, "that our gardener here has precious little to do. Don't be deceived. He is the genius behind all our gardens, the designer in chief. He and his colleagues, brothers in the art, are responsible for the loveliness of the many gardens you've seen."

We followed our guide along path after path, from flowerbeds to avenues of trees and shrubs. The super-abundance seemed overwhelming, but our friend assured us that everything we saw would be put to good use and was not there merely for display.

We were shown into a spacious apartment containing many shelves filled with large volumes. Our friend took down one volume and opened it at random. It showed a picture of a tulip, exquisitely drawn in color. It was not an artistic reproduction in the strict sense of the term; it was a purely botanical picture, without background, and revealed full details of the flower and its foliage so that anyone viewing it would know exactly how the flower was composed. Especially true was the coloring of it, so we were informed.

"It is from these paintings that our pupils learn all the details of the flowers before they commence the actual process of creation. Before you can begin to build a flower, or anything else if it comes to that, you must know precisely all the details necessary for a faithful reproduction. 'Near enough' is not good enough. It's got to be perfect. And the

only way to make it so is to know by heart every twist or turn of the object that is to be created. You could take it right [from] the drawing, so to speak; in fact, that is what the beginner always does. But, afterwards, he will study the picture – or an original, if he prefers it – and that leaves him free, when the work commences, to devote his whole mind to the object in hand.

"In all these volumes, you will find colored pictures of every flower we make here, both the earthly kinds and those that belong to the spirit world alone.

"In addition to these books, we have the prints hanging separately on the walls in another room. That's done for the convenience of anyone who wishes to view them without going through the volumes. Come across the hall into the big room."

We entered a very large chamber where, hanging upon the walls, were magnificent pictures of every type of garden to be seen in these lands. It was impossible to assess the greater beauty of any one over that of another. They were all equally wonderful.

"Some of these sketches have been presented to us from other nursery-gardens, in the same way as we pass on drawings and sketches that portray some particularly happy novelty. A regular exchange goes on, for..., in these lands, we are always on the move in things."

Flora – The Soil

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) [The soil] is perfectly dry – I could detect not a trace of moisture. I found that it ran off the hand in much the same way that dry sand will do. Its colors vary in a wide range of tones, but never does it approach the dark heavy look of earthly soil. In some places, it is of a fine granular formation, while in others, it is composed of much coarser particles – that is, relatively coarser.

One of the unexpected properties of this soil is the fact that, while it can be taken into the hand and allowed to run from it smoothly and freely, yet when it is undisturbed, it remains fully cohesive, supporting as firmly as the earthly soil all that is growing within it.

The color of the 'earth' is governed by the color of whatever botanic life it supports. And here again, there is no special significance, no deep symbolic reason for this particular order of things.

Cities

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) I could clearly perceive what had all the appearance of a city of stately buildings, for it must be remembered that all people here do not possess a uniformity of tastes, and that even as on earth, many prefer the city to the country, and vice versa, while again some like both. I was very keenly interested to see what a spirit city could be like. It seemed easy enough to visualize the country here, but cities seemed so essentially the work of

man in a material world. On the other hand, I could advance no logical reason why the spirit world should not also build cities.

My mind had reverted to the narrow streets and crowded pavements of the earth; the buildings huddled together because space is so valuable and costly; the heavy, tainted air, made worse by streams of traffic; I had thought of hurry and turmoil, and all the restlessness and commercial life and the excitement of passing pleasure. I had no conception of a city of eternal beauty, as far removed from an earthly city as the light of day is from black night. Here were fine broad thoroughfares of emerald green lawns in perfect cultivation, radiating, like the spokes of a wheel, from a central building which, as we could see, was the hub of the whole city. There was a great shaft of pure light descending upon the dome of this building, and we felt instinctively – without Edwin having to tell us – that in this temple we could together send up our thanks to the Great Source of all, and that there we should find none other than the Glory of God in Truth.

The buildings were not of a great height as we should measure and compare with earthly structures, but they were for the most part extremely broad. It is impossible to tell of what materials they were composed because they were essentially spirit fabrics. The surface of each smooth as of marble, yet it had the delicate texture and translucence of alabaster, while each building sent forth, as it were, into the adjacent air a stream of light of the palest shade of coloring. Some of the buildings were carved with designs of foliage and flowers, and others were left almost unadorned, as far as any smaller devices were concerned, relying upon their semi-classical nature for relief. And, over all was the light of heaven shining evenly and uninterruptedly, so that nowhere were there dark places.

This city was devoted to the pursuit of learning, to the study and practice of the arts, and to the pleasures of all in this realm. It was exclusive to none, but free for all to enjoy with equal right. Here it was possible to carry on so many of those pleasant and fruitful occupations that had been commenced on the earth-plane. Here, too, souls could indulge in some agreeable diversion which had been denied them, for a variety of reasons whilst they were incarnate.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) The cities of the earth are mere concentrations for reasons of commercial convenience. There being no commerce in the spirit world, we have no need for such concentrations. But what has been done is to place all the great halls of learning of these particular realms in one locality. There is no pressing need that they should be so disposed; with equal facility they could have been distributed throughout a wider area of these regions. But it was felt that a number of magnificent buildings, such as are the halls of learning, would present a much more imposing appearance if they were arranged in an orderly plan, each within a moderately close distance of the other. We can think of no

better arrangement. And so the buildings were erected many aeons ago. They occupy an immense area of ground and each is standing in gardens and grounds of peerless beauty. Exactly in the centre of this group of buildings is a temple of unsurpassed grandeur. It forms the hub of the city and from it radiate all other buildings of whatever nature.

There are no municipal or civic rights to be considered, no parochial boundaries to be thought of, no suburban or rural privileges to intervene in any way. The city is part of the countryside; the countryside is part of the city. The life of the one is the life of the other, simply because of the continuity of existence in the spirit world and because of the perpetual day-time and perpetual summer-time. There is no hot and stuffy city to make a visit to the country air so pressing. There is no great commercial attraction of the city to draw folk towards that centre. So that, in effect, the country and the city are one.

When you come to view the countryside here, you find that without hedges and walls and other boundary marks, the whole landscape becomes one vast expanse of parklands interspersed with rivers and streams and wooded land. Standing amid all these beauties are the dwellings of the inhabitants of these regions of the spirit world, and in a part of the countryside, there stands what we call the city. Where one ends and the other begins, it would be difficult to say.

Roads

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) We have no roads as they are known on earth. We have broad, extensive thoroughfares in our cities and elsewhere, but they are not paved with a composite substance to give them hardness durability for the passage of constant stream of traffic. We have no traffic and our roads are covered with the thickest and greenest of grass, as soft to the feel as a bed of fresh moss. It is on these that we walk.

In such places where smaller paths are desirable and where grass would seem unsuitable, we have such pavements as are customary in the earth world. But they are constructed of very different materials. The paving is, for the most part, a description of stone, but it is without the usual drabness of color. It closely resembles the alabaster-like material of which so many of the buildings are constructed. The colors vary, but they are all of delicate pastel shades.

This stone, like the grass, is very pleasant to walk upon, though, naturally, it is not as soft. But there is a certain quality about it, a certain springiness, if one may so term it, something like the resilience of certain timber that is utilized in the making of floors. That is the only way in which I can convey any idea of the difference between earthly stone and spirit stone.

Buildings

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Of the magnificent buildings in the spirit world, ... we have all types, from the earliest known to you on earth down to those of the present day. A type that is a great favorite among us here is that which is commonly known to you as Gothic. But all ages are represented.

The materials of which they are constructed have a semi-translucence, an alabaster-like appearance with a superb variety of delicate colors that seem to change their tones as the beholder changes his viewpoint.

Schools and Universities or Halls of Learning

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) [Thomas] tells me that he used to be a clerk in a printing house and always had longed to take a more effective part in the production of books, but a defective education and consequent lack of opportunity denied him advancement. ... He was able to take advantage of the better education offered by the university [here]. How very much of the joy of our lives here consists in this freedom to overpass the frustrations of earth!

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The school was the home of realized ambitions to most of the students within it. I chatted with a number of them, and each told me that what he was studying now, he had longed to study on earth, but had been denied the opportunity for reasons that are all too familiar. Some had found that commercial activities had left no time, or that the struggles of living had absorbed all the means to do so.

The school was very comfortably arranged; there was, of course, no hint of regimentation. Each student followed his own course of study independently of anyone else. He seated himself comfortably, or he went into the lovely gardens without. He began when he wanted, and he finished when he wanted, and the more he dipped into his studies, the more interested and fascinated he became. I can speak from personal experience of the latter, since there is much that I have studied in the great library since my introduction to it.

Our Ability to Study

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Of course, when we are in the spirit world, our memories are persistently retentive. When we follow a course of study in any subject whatsoever, we shall find that we learn easily and quickly because we are freed from the limitations that the physical body imposes upon the mind. If we are acquiring knowledge, we shall retain that knowledge without fail. If we are following some pursuit where dexterity of the hands is required, we shall find that our spirit bodies respond to the impulses of our minds immediately and exactly. To learn to paint a picture or to play upon a musical instrument, to mention two familiar mundane activities, are tasks which can be performed

in a fraction of the time that they would take when we are incarnate. ... We are not all endowed with keen intellects the moment we shake off the physical body. If that were the case, these realms would be inhabited by supermen and superwomen, and we are very far from that! But our intelligence can be increased; that is part of our progression, for progression is not only of a spiritual nature. Our minds have unlimited resources for intellectual expansion and improvement, however backward we may be when we come into the spirit world.

(*"A.H.," LHH.*) [I am] studying, ... only it seems like play, it is so easy. Oh, you don't know yet the ease with which we can advance in learning. We are supposed to have left our brains in the coffin along with our bodies. But something has taken the place, and of such infinite improvement, I cannot describe it. Only there is no effort in acquiring knowledge:—you just want it, and it comes! You will never know a thousandth part of this life, for all the pages and pages and pages that have been written, until you come. Then, oh, then! Happiness and more happiness.

(*Grace Gordon who transitioned in early childhood, LHH.*) Q. 'What have you been doing all these years?'

Oh, at first just study and recreation, just getting acquainted. Then more study, an acquiring of knowledge with such ease that study became a delight. And so the years have passed; pleasure, study, work for others, and through it all an ever increasing pleasure. This is life as we know it here.

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) This was my first experience of the new life. Afterward came the desire to fit myself into the wonderful surroundings; and studies were suggested. Studies? Why, pleasures, I should say! For thought is so quick here that study is the wrong name.

Then came moving from place to place, growing acquainted with other spirits. And though I have not risen very high in heavenly learning, I am thrilled with new power and look forward to an eternity of knowledge, growth and happiness.

Different Ways of Studying

(*Unnamed spirit teacher, LHH.*) Knowledge is always the goal here for those who have come to know what spirit life really means. But knowledge has to be sought; it is not to be picked up like wild fruit in the forest. It is here in abundance, but we do not always know where to find it. We each have our own desires. Some incline to one study, some to another. If a student makes some discovery, it is heralded abroad so that others can get the benefit. But before such discovery can be made, there is much preparation in the way of reading, attending lectures, and in conversation with other students.

If a class wishes to follow an entirely new line of study or thought, they usually induce some advanced spirit to

outline a course of study for them. In following this, it is surprising to see the different methods that the members of the class will adopt. Some are for reading all that has ever been written on each small phase of the subject. Some try to post themselves on just the main features. Others decide to only glance at it and run to something more to their liking. All are free to do as they please. There are no class rules laid down by some authority. As a consequence, the class, which may have been quite uniform at the beginning, will before long be in all stages of advancement on the subject.

You can see from this that we are constantly changing, constantly meeting other students, constantly finding new angles to the study. We do not study all the time though. You must not think of our world as a university where each is striving to outdo the others and gain honors in some scholarship. Life is far different from that. I am only describing the study part. We all have our lighter moments, some more than others, to be sure, but no one studies every moment of the time.

Libraries or "Halls of Literature"

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Not only do we have copies of earthly books upon the shelves, but there are also volumes that have their source solely in spirit. By this, I mean that such books have no counterpart on earth. Included among them are works concerning spirit life alone, the facts of life here, and spiritual teachings written by authorities who have an infallible knowledge of their subject and who reside in the higher spheres. There are also the histories of nations and events, with the facts set down in strict accordance with the absolute truth written by men who now find that equivocation is impossible.

This was the hall of literature, and it contained every work worthy of the name. ... To anyone who has a knowledge of earthly history, the volumes with which the shelves of this section of the great library were filled, would prove illuminating. The reader would be able to gain, for the first time, the truth about the history of his country. Every word contained in these books was the literal truth. Concealment is impossible, because nothing but truth can enter these realms.

I have made another discovery that for the first time left me astounded. I found that side by side with the statements of pure fact of every act by persons of historical note, by statements in whose hands was the government of their countries, by kings who were at the head of some of those countries, side by side with such statements was the blunt naked truth of each and every motive governing or underlying their numerous acts – the truth beyond disputation. Many of such motives were elevated, many, many of them were utterly base; many were misconstrued, many distorted. Written indelibly upon these spirit annals were the true narratives of thousands upon thousands of human beings,

who, whilst upon their earthly journey, had been active participants in the affairs of their country. Some were victims to others' treachery and baseness. None was spared, none omitted. It was all there for all to see – the truth, with nothing extenuated, nothing suppressed. These records had no respect for persons, whether it be king or commoner, churchman or layman. The writers had just set down the veridical story as it was. It required no adornment, no commentary. It spoke for itself. And I was profoundly thankful for one thing – that this truth had been kept from us until such time as we stood where we were now standing, when our minds would, in some measure, be prepared for revelations such as were here at hand.

Who ... writes the book of truth in spirit? The author of the earthly volume writes it – when he comes into the spirit world. And he is glad to do it. It becomes his work, and by such, he can gain the progress of his soul. He will have no difficulty with the facts, for they are here for him to record, and he records them – but the truth this time! There is no need to dissemble – in fact, it would be useless.

Books

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) We have our methods of printing, but they are totally unlike those of the earth. We have our experts, who are also artists at their work, and it is work they love doing, or else they would not be doing it. The method of reproduction here is wholly a process of the mind, as with all else, and author and printer work together in complete harmony. The books that result from this close cooperation are works of art, they are beautiful creations which, apart altogether from their literary contents, are lovely to look upon. ... The books thus produced are not dead things that require a concentration of the whole mind upon them. They live just as much as the paintings we saw were living. To pick up a book and begin reading it meant also to perceive with the mind, in a way not possible on earth, the whole story as it was being told, whether it be history or science, or the arts. The book, once taken in hand by the reader, instantly responds, in very much the same way as the flowers respond when one approaches close to them. The purpose is different of course.

(*Philip Gilbert in PTW.*) One can read books, but in a swift, all in-taking way impossible to explain.

I was reading your book with you just now, but it's an irritating process for I get the gist of a page and see, as it were, the whole before your physical eyes have read half of one.

"Museums"

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) It may be thought that what we had seen as yet were nothing more than celestial museums, containing, it is true, magnificent specimens not to be seen

upon earth, but museums nevertheless. Now earthly museums are rather cheerless places. They have an aroma of mustiness and chemical preservatives, since their exhibits have to be protected from deterioration and decay. And they have to be protected from man, too, by uninspiring glass cases. But here there are no restrictions. All things within these halls are free and open for all to see and hold in the two hands. There is no mustiness, but all the beauty of the objects themselves sends out many subtle perfumes, while the light of heaven streams in from all quarters to enhance the glories of man's handicrafts. No, these are no museums; very far from it. They are temples, rather, in which we spirit people are conscious of the eternal thanks that we owe to the Great Father for giving us such unbounded happiness in a land of which so many upon earth deny the reality.

(Mother of Stainton Moses, MM.) [The Hall of Evolution:] In the centre was a large structure and this we entered and found ourselves in a large and spacious hall, the only compartment in the place. It was circular in shape and round the walls were carvings of a curious kind. We examined them and found that they were representations of the heavenly bodies; and one was the earth. But they were not fixed, but turned on pivots, half in and half out of the wall. There were also models of animals and tress and human beings, but they were all movable, and stood on pedestals in niches or alcoves. We inquired and were told that this was a purely scientific Institution.

We were taken up to a balcony on one side of the circular space. It projected somewhat and so we could see the whole at once. Then we were told that a small demonstration would be made for our benefit in order that we might get some idea of the use to which these things were put.

At length a blue mist began to fill the central space. Then a ray of light swept round the hall and rested on the globe which represented the earth. As it hovered about it, the sphere appeared to absorb the ray and became luminous, and, after a time, the ray being withdrawn, we saw the earth globe was shining as if from within. Then another ray was sent on to it of a deeper and different kind and the globe slowly left the pedestal, or pivot, or whatever it rested on, and began to float out from the wall.

As it approached the centre of the space, it entered the blue mist and immediately on contact began to enlarge until it became a great sphere glowing with its own light and floating in the blue space. It was exceedingly beautiful. Slowly, very slowly, it revolved on its own axis, evidently in the same way the earth does, and we were able to see the oceans and continents. These were flat patterns, like those on the terrestrial globes used on earth. But as it revolved, they began to assume a different aspect.

The mountains and hills began to stand out and the waters to sway and ripple: and presently, we saw minute models of the cities, and even details of the buildings. And

still more detailed grew the model of the earth till we could see the people themselves, first the crowds and then the individuals. This will be hard for you to understand, that on a globe of some perhaps eighty to a hundred feet in diameter we are able to see individual men and animals. But that is part of the science of this institution – the enabling of these details being seen individually.

Still more distinct grew these wonderful scenes, and, as the globe revolved, we saw men hurrying about the cities and working in the fields. We saw the wide spaces of prairie and desert and forest and the animals roaming in them. And as the globe slowly circled, we saw the oceans and the seas, some placid and the others tossing and roaring, and here and there a ship. And all the life of earth passed before our eyes.... Soon the scenes began to change on the revolving sphere, and we were taken back thousands of years of the life of the earth and the generations of men and animals and plant life which had been from the present to the ages when men were just emerging from the forest to settle in colonies on the plains. ... When we had satisfied our eyes for a while, the globe gradually became smaller and smaller and floated back to the niche in the wall, and then the light faded out from it and it looked like an alabaster carving, just as we had seen it at first set there as an ornament. ...

The animals about the walls were also used for a like purpose. One would be vivified by these powerful rays and brought into the centre of the hall. When so treated, it could walk of itself like a live animal, which it was temporarily and in a certain restricted way. When it had ascended a platform in the centre space, then it was treated with the enlarging rays – as I may call them, not knowing their scientific name – and then with others which rendered it transparent and all the internal organs of the animal became plainly visible to the students assembled.

Then it was possible to bring over the living model a change so that it began to evolve backwards- or should I say 'involve'? – towards its simpler and primal state as a mammal, and so on. The whole structural history of the animal was shown in that life-like process. ... Also it was possible for any student to take charge and continue the development according to his own idea and this not of the animals alone, but of the heavenly bodies and also of nations and peoples, which are dealt with in another hall, however, specially adapted to that study.

Art in the Astral World

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) Another great point of dissimilarity [between earth and in the spirit world] – and the most important – was the fact that here all these pictures were alive. It is impossible to convey any idea of this paramount difference. These spirit pictures must be seen here to understand it. I can only just suggest an idea. These pictures, then, whether landscape or portrait, were never flat; that is, they

did not seem to have been painted upon flat canvas. They possessed, on the other hand, all the completeness of relief. The subject stood forth almost as though it were a model – a model whereof one could take hold of all the elements that went to the making up of the subject of the picture. One felt that the shadows were real shadows cast by real objects. The colors glowed with life, even among the very early works before much progress had been made.

Art Galleries

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The first hall Edwin took us into was concerned with the art of painting. The hall was of very great size and contained a long gallery, on the walls of which were hanging every great masterpiece known to man. They were arranged in such a way that every step of earthly progress could be followed in proper order, beginning with the earliest times and so continuing down to the present day. Every style of painting was represented, gathered from all points of the earth. It must not be thought that such a collection as we were now viewing is only of interest and service to people who have a full appreciation and understanding of the painter's art. Such could not be farther from the case.

A number of ... pictures I recognized as I had seen their 'originals' in the earth's galleries. Ruth and I were astonished when Edwin told us that what we had seen in those galleries were not the originals at all. We were now seeing the originals for the first time. What we had seen was an earthly counterpart, which was perishable from the usual causes – for example, from fire or the general disintegration through the passage of time. But here we were viewing the direct results of the thoughts of the painter, created in the etheric before he actually transferred those thoughts to his earthly canvas. It could be plainly observed, in many cases, where the earthly picture fell short of that which the painter had in his mind. He had endeavored to reproduce his exact conception, but through physical limitations, this exact conception had eluded him. In some instances, it had been the pigments that had been at fault when, in the early times, the artist had been unable to procure or evolve the particular shade of color he wanted. But though he lacked physically, his mind had known precisely what he wished to do. He had built it up in the spirit – the results of which we were now able to see – while he had failed to do so on the material canvas.

Art Schools

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) In other parts of the same building were rooms wherein students of art could learn all there is to be learned. The joy of these students is great in their freedom from their earthly restrictions and bodily limitations. Here instruction is easy, and the acquisition and application of knowledge equally facile to those who wish to

learn. Gone are all the struggles of the student in the surmounting of earthly difficulties both of the mind and of the hands, and progress towards proficiency is consequently smooth and rapid. The happiness of all the students whom we saw itself spread happiness to all who beheld it, for there is no limit to their endeavors when that bugbear of earthly life – fleeting time – and all the petty vexations of the mundane existence have been abandoned for ever. Is there any wonder that artists within this hall, and, indeed, in every other hall in the city, were enjoying the golden hours of their spiritual reward?

Music in the Spirit World

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Our potentialities for music of the highest order are immeasurably greater than are yours on the earth-plane. The mind of a spirit person who has a deep love of music will naturally hear more, because he so wishes, than one who cares little for it.

I found that the greater the knowledge of music, the more it helped one to understand so many things of the life here, where music plays so important a part.

In music, it can be said that the spirit world starts where the earth world leaves off. There are laws of music here which have no application to the earth whatever because the earth is neither sufficiently progressed on the one hand, and on the other, because the spirit world is of spirit, while the earth world is of matter. It is doubtful that the earth-plane will ever become ethereal enough to hear many of the forms of spirit music in the higher realms. Innovations have been tried, so I have been told, on the earth-plane, but the result is not only barbaric, but childish as well. Earthly ears are not attuned to music that is essentially of the spirit realms. By some strange chance, earth people have essayed to produce such music on the earth-plane. It will never do – until the ears of those incarnate have undergone a fundamental alteration.

In the spirit world, all music is color, and all color is music. The one is never existent without the other. That is why the flowers give forth such pleasant tones when they are approached.... The water that sparkles and flashes colors is also creating musical sounds of purity and beauty. ... The sounds are in perfect accord with the colors, as the colors are with the sounds. And the perfect combination of both sight and sound is perfect harmony.

The whole attitude to music held by so many people of the earth undergoes a great change when they eventually come to spirit. Music is looked upon by many on the earth-plane as merely a pleasant diversion, a pleasant adjunct to earthly life, but by no means a necessity. Here it is part of our life, not because we make it so, but because it is part of natural existence, as are flowers and trees, grass and water, and hills and dales. It is an element of spiritual nature. Without it, a vast deal of the joy would depart out of our lives.

We do not need to become master-musicians to appreciate the wealth of music that surrounds us in color and sound, but as is in so many other features of this life, we accept and enjoy to the full, and in the enjoyment of our heritage, we can afford to smile at those who persist in believing that we live in a world of emptiness.

A world of emptiness! What a shock so many people have upon their coming into the spirit world, and how immensely glad and relieved they are to find that it turns out quite pleasant after all; that it is not a terrifying place; that it is not one stupendous temple of hymn-singing religion; and that they are able to feel at home in the land of their new life. When this joyful realization has come to them some of the are reminded that they looked upon the various descriptions of this life, that have come from us from time to time, as rather material and how pleased they are to discover that it is so. What is it, if not material? The musicians we heard playing were playing upon very real, solid instruments from very real materials. The conductor was a real person, conducting his orchestra with a very material baton! But the beautiful musical thought-form was not so very material as were its surroundings or the means to create it, in just the same relative way that as an earthly rainbow, and the sun and moisture that cause it.

The Hall of Music

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) There are actually ‘buildings’ of a very aerial cloud-castle nature. It is wonderful: in the hall of music, vast domes and amphitheatres, receding endlessly from the view, seem to blend with the sound, as it issues from the performers’ instruments. For most of them play instruments, just as real to us as earth ones are to you – but the most advanced entities, whom one rarely sees, seem to give out music like a ray. One absorbs it and blends with it, just as in *your* mind, a tune will remain all day. That is real to you, isn’t it – that mental music?

[In the hall of music] the advanced musical adepts – such as Beethoven – have thought-created all forms and ways of creating music.

Music Libraries

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The hall of music followed the same broad system as the other halls of the arts. The library contained books dealing with music as well as the scores of vast quantities of music that had been written on earth by composers who had now passed into spirit, or by those who were still upon the earth. What are called upon earth ‘master-works’ were fully represented among the musical scores upon the shelves, and I was interested to learn that there was hardly a work that had not since been altered by the composer himself since coming into spirit. ... The [music] library provided a complete history of music from the very earliest times, and those who were able to read music – not

necessarily instrumentally, but with a familiarity of what the printed notes indicated – were enabled to see before them the great strides that the art had made during the ages. Progression, it seems, has been slow, as in other arts, and freakish forms of expression have obtruded themselves. Needless to say, the latter are not entertained here for reasons connected with those that inspire composers to alter their works after passing here.

Also contained in the library were so many of those books and musical works that have long since disappeared from earthly sight, or else are very scarce and so beyond the reach of so many folk. The musical antiquary will find all those things that he has sighed for on earth, but which have been denied him, and here he can consult freely works that, because of their preciousness, would never be allowed into his hands on earth.

Music Schools

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Many apartments were set aside for students who can learn music in every branch, from theory to practice, under teachers whose names are known the earth world over. Some there are, perhaps, who would think that such famous people would not give their time to the teaching of simple forms of music to simple lovers of music. But it must be remembered, as with the painters, composers have a different [appraisal] of the fruits of their brains after passing into spirit. In common with us all here, they see things exactly as they are – including their compositions. They find, too, that the music of the spirit world is very different in outward results from music performed on earth. Hence they discover that their musical knowledge must undergo sweeping changes in many cases before they can begin to express themselves musically.

Musical Instruments

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The many types of musical instruments so familiar on earth were to be seen in the college of music where students could be taught to play upon them. And here again, where dexterity of the hands is so essential, the task of gaining proficiency is never arduous or wearisome, and it is, moreover, so much more rapid than upon the earth. As students acquire a mastery over their instrument, they can join one of the many orchestras that exist here, or they can limit their performance for their many friends. It is not by any means surprising that many prefer the former because they can help to produce, in concert with their fellow musicians, the tangible effects of music upon a larger scale when so many more can enjoy such effects. We were extremely interested in the many instruments that have no counterpart upon the earth-plane. They are, for the most part, specially adapted to the forms of music that are exclusive to the spirit world, and they are for that reason very much more elaborate. Such instruments are only

played with others of their kind for their distinctive music. For that which is common to the earth, the customary instrument is sufficient.

Musical Concerts

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) [The] concert hall ... was a very large hall capable of seating comfortably many thousands. It was circular in shape, with seats rising in an unbroken tier from the floor. There is, of course, no real necessity for such a hall to be under cover, but the practice merely follows others in this realm – our own dwelling-houses, for example. We do not really need those, but we like them, we have grown used to them while upon earth, and so we have them. ...

At the rear of the hall was the great center of concert performances. It consisted of a vast amphitheater like a great bowl sunk beneath the level of the ground, but it as so large that its real depth was not readily apparent. The seats that were farthest away from the performers were exactly upon ground level. Immediately surrounding these seats were masses of the most beautiful flowers of every possible hue, with a grassy space beyond, while the whole area of this outdoor temple of music was encompassed by a magnificent plantation of tall and graceful trees. Although the seating arrangements were upon such an expansive scale, much more so than would be at all practicable upon earth, yet there was no sense of being too far from the performers, even in the farthest seats. It will be recalled that our vision is not so restricted in spirit as upon earth.

The whole place, which was empty when Edwin had first brought us in, now contained many people, some strolling about, and others, like us, seated contentedly on the grass. We were in a delightful spot, with the trees and flowers and pleasant people all about us....

Edwin told us to walk over to the theater and look down over the seats once again. ... To our astonishment, we found that the whole vast hall was packed with people, where there was not a soul to be seen but a short time before. The musicians were in their places awaiting the entrance of their conductor, and this great audience had arrived as if by magic – or so it seemed. ... The organizers had merely to send out their thoughts to people at large who were particularly interested in such performances, and they forthwith assembled.

The orchestra was composed of some two hundred musicians, who were playing upon instruments that are well-known to earth, so that I was able to appreciate what I heard. As soon as the music began I could hear a remarkable difference from what I had been accustomed to hear on the earth-plane. The actual sounds made by the various instruments were easily recognizable as of old, but the quality of the tone was immeasurably purer, and the balance and blend were perfect.

We noticed that the instant the music commenced, a bright light seemed to rise up from the direction of the or-

chestra until it floated, in a flat surface, level with the top-most seats, where it remained as an iridescent cover to the whole amphitheater. As the music proceeded, this broad sheet of light grew in strength and density, forming, as it were, a firm foundation for what was to follow. So intent was I upon watching this extraordinary formation that I could scarcely tell what the music was about. I was conscious of its sound, but that was really all. Presently, at equal spaces round the circumference of the theater, four towers of light shot up into the sky in long tapering pinnacles of luminosity. They remained poised for a moment, and then slowly descended, becoming broader in girth as they did so, until they assumed the outward appearance of four circular towers, each surmounted with a dome, perfectly proportioned. In the meanwhile, the central area of light had thickened still more, and was beginning to rise slowly in the shape of an immense dome covering the whole theater.

This [light] continued to ascend steadily until it seemed to reach a very much greater height than the four towers while the most delicate colors were diffused throughout the whole of the etheric structure. I could understand now why Edwin had suggested that we should sit outside the theater proper, and I could follow, also, why composers should feel impelled to alter their earthly works after they have arrived in spirit. The musical sounds sent up by the orchestra were creating, up above their heads, this immense musical thought-form, and the shape and perfection of this form rested entirely upon the purity of the musical sounds, the purity of the harmonies, and a freedom from any pronounced dissonance. The form of the music must be pure to produce a pure form. ...

By now the great musical thought-form had assumed what appeared to be its limit of height, and it remained stationary and steady. The music was still being played, and in response to it, the whole coloring of the dome changed, first to one shade, then to another, and many times to a delicate blend of a number of shades according to the variation in theme or movement of the music.

It is difficult to give any adequate idea of the beauty of this wonderful musical structure. The amphitheater being built below the surface of the ground, nothing was visible of the audience, of performers, or of the building itself, and the dome of light and color had all the appearance of resting on the same firm ground as were we ourselves.

This has taken but a brief while in the telling, but the musical thought-form occupied such time in formation as would be taken by a full-length concert on the earth-plane. We had, during the period, watched the gradual building of the outward and visible effect of music. Unlike the earth, where music can only be heard there, we had both heard and seen it. And not only were we inspired by the sounds of the orchestral playing, but the beauty of the immense form it created had its spiritual influence upon all who beheld it, or came within its sphere. We could feel this although we were seated outside the theater.

The expert musician can plan his compositions by his knowledge of what forms the various harmonic and melodic sounds will produce. He can, in effect, build magnificent edifices upon his manuscript of music, knowing full well exactly what the result will be when the music is played or sung. By careful adjustment of his themes and his harmonies, the length of the work, and its various marks of expression, he can build a majestic form as grand as a Gothic cathedral. This is, in itself, a delightful part of the musical art in spirit, and it is regarded as musical architecture. The student will not only study music acoustically, but he will learn to build it architecturally.

Dramatic Theatres

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Each [dramatic] theater of this realm is familiar to us by the type of play that is presented in it. The plays themselves are frequently vastly different from those that are customary upon the earth-plane. We have nothing that is sordid, nor do the authors of plays insist upon harrowing their audiences. We can see many problem plays where social questions of the earth-plane are dealt with, but unlike the earth-plane, our plays will provide a solution to the particular problem – a solution which the earth is too blind to accept.

We can go to see comedies where, I do assure you, the laughter is invariably much more hearty and voluminous than is ever to be heard in a theater of the earth-plane. In the spirit world, we can afford to laugh at much that we once, when incarnate, treated with deadly seriousness and earnestness.

We have witnessed grand historical pageants showing the greater moments of a nation, and we have seen, too, history as it really was, and not as it is often so fancifully written about in history books! But surely the most impressive, and, at the same time, interesting experience is to be presented at one of these pageants where the original participants themselves re-enact the events in which they were concerned, first as the events were popularly thought to have occurred, and then as they actually took place. These representations are among the most widely attended here, and never are there more attentive and rapt members of the audience than those players who, during their earthly lives, played the parts, in stage plays, of the famous characters whom they are now seeing ‘in the flesh.’

In such pageants, the coarser, depraved and debased incidents are omitted entirely because they would be distasteful to the audience, and, indeed, to all in this realm. Nor are we shown scenes which are, in the main incidents, nothing but battle and bloodshed and violence.

At first, one experiences a strange feeling in beholding, in person, the bearers of names famous throughout the earth world, but after a time, one becomes perfectly accustomed to it, and it becomes part of our normal existence.

Approachability

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Edwin said that we should always be welcome should we ever wish to call upon any of the teachers. The exclusiveness which must necessarily surround such people when they are incarnate vanishes when they come into spirit. ... Some have progressed to a higher realm, but they still retain their interest in their former sphere, and continuously visit it – and their many friends to pursue their teaching.

Recreation

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) We do not suffer from bodily fatigue, but at the same time we do not continue endlessly at the same occupation; that would mean monotony, and there is no monotony here such as we used to endure on earth.

In the spirit world, we do not suffer fatigue either of body or mind, but to continue unremittingly in the pursuit of any one occupation, without any intermittent change, would soon produce feelings of mental dissatisfaction or unrest.

The most noticeable difference between our two worlds, in this matter of recreations, is created by our respective requirements. We have no need here to take bodily exercise, vigorous or otherwise, nor do we need to go out into the ‘fresh air.’ Our spirit bodies are always in perfect condition, we suffer no disorders of any kind, and the air, which cannot be other than fresh, penetrates into every corner of our homes and buildings, where it fully retains its purity. It would be impossible for it to become vitiated or contaminated in any way. It is to be expected, then, that our recreations should be more upon the mental plane than upon the ‘physical.’

We have no changes of weather during recurrent seasons. The great central sun is forever shining; it is never anything but delightfully warm. We never feel the necessity for a brisk walk to set our blood circulating the better.

There are such wonders in these lands that we want to know all about, there is so much congenial work to be done, that there is no cause to be cast down at the prospect of there being few of the earthly sports and pastimes in the spirit world.

Residents Visit Higher Realms

Temporary Ascents or Visits to the Higher Realms

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) [Edwin said:] “In journeying to a lower realm, one sees the terrain gradually degenerating.

“As we draw towards a higher realm, just the opposite takes place: we see the land around us becoming more ethereal, more refined, and this forms a natural barrier to those of us who have not yet progressed sufficiently to become inhabitants of that realm.”

At the border of the higher realms, there is no need for such sentinels [as at the lower realms] to keep others from crossing, because the natural law prevents it. When those of a lower realm travel to a higher, it is always by authority, either vested in the traveler, or in some other person of a higher sphere, who will act as an escort. In the former case, such authority takes the form of symbols or signs that are given to the holder, who will always and upon every occasion receive – even unasked – every assistance he may need. Many of these symbols have the power in themselves of preserving the traveler from the overwhelming effects of the higher spiritual atmosphere. The latter would not damage the soul, of course, but a soul thus unprepared would find itself in much the same situation as upon earth when one emerges into brilliant sunlight after a prolonged stay in complete darkness. But as in the case of earthly sunshine, one can, after a suitable lapse of time, become again perfectly at ease in the normal bright light, it is not so in the case of the higher realms. There is no such adaptability there. The ‘blinding’ effect will be continuous to one of a lower state. But with a perfect dispensation, means are provided so that the visiting soul shall undergo no spiritual discomfort or unhappiness. And that is just what one would expect, since such visits are made for happy reasons, and not as tests of spiritual stamina and endurance. When it is necessary to make a journey to even higher spheres, it then becomes imperative, in many cases, that an inhabitant of those realms should, as it were, throw a cloak over his charge, in just the same way as Edwin, upon a lower scale, threw his protecting arms about us when we journeyed to the lower sphere.

Higher Astral Plane Levels

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) In the transition from plane to plane, alterations in the scope of consciousness produce baffling changes in the very framework of thought; categories of space and time are radically modified so that to an unchanged consciousness, more limited in its scope, these are almost incommunicable. His world was like ours, he said, but matter was more fluid and more easily influenced by thought. Here on this plane, as I have said before, a desire to find any person or place sets one’s feet moving in the right direction; there, Dr. G. told us, transit is swifter and more independent of the time-space factor. One’s movement is almost simultaneous with one’s thought so that to desire to be with friends is to find oneself among them. The speed with which thought is translated into act and the lessening of material hindrances to desire is all part of the increased tempo of living and, since one’s body is now far lighter and more responsive, such a speed of living feels right and natural to it.

Language is less used, and thought and feeling are directly and fully apprehended. Ease in all the processes of living speeds up its rate so that even the swiftness of ex-

change among [Lawrence’s group] is to [Dr. G.] tedious and sluggish. Light, the concomitant of life and an index of its speed and intensity is far more keen and pure. Color, he tells us, is less to be seen by the eye, but its essence is piercingly known by the spirit. So with all the joys of the senses; they are there in a purity of essence which makes all our slower, more outward enjoyment like a vague dream. We got here a swift glimpse of an entirely different way of sensing one’s world: by a direct and immediate spiritual awareness of its spiritual qualities.

Should a man try to live in that rarified spiritual air who carried still in his being the uncleansed stains of earth, his sufferings would be terrible, as intense as the joy of which he would be capable when he is cleansed of them.

The Border of the Next Higher Level

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) We traversed the distance [between our own realm and the one above ours] that we were unable to observe the gradual alteration in our surroundings. Otherwise, we should have seen the country taking on a higher degree of etherealization, a greater intensification of color and brightness, observable not only in the physical features of the realm, but also in the spirit raiment of those whose homes approximated the more closely to the border.

We found ourselves upon grassland, but with a striking difference. The turf upon which we were walking was infinitely softer than that of the interior of [our] realm. The green of the verdure was even brighter than we had thought possible. The flowers were growing in still greater profusion, and the intensity of color, of perfume, and of health-giving power transcended anything we had encountered. The very air seemed to be imbued with rainbow tints. ...

Just as we had been heavy with chill and oppression at the borderline of the dark spheres, so were we now warmed and filled with such an elation that we were almost silent in wonderment. As we moved along, bathed in radiance, we felt such a spiritual exaltation that Edwin’s description of the visitations of personages from the higher realms at once came to mind, and I almost knew what to expect when I should be fortunate enough to witness such a visitation. Standing here, one had the overwhelming desire to strive for that progression that would entitle one to inhabit one of the lovely houses [I saw behind me], and to qualify for the honor of serving one of the dwellers in this higher sphere at whose gateway we were standing.

We walked a little way forward, but we could proceed no farther. There were no visible barriers, but we felt that we could not breathe if we went onward. The whole atmosphere was becoming so much the more rarified the farther we penetrated, that in the end we were bound to retrace our steps on to our own ground.

Chapter 9: The Mid-Astral Plane

Introduction

This short chapter describes a pretty boring level of the Astral Plane that's home to the bulk of those crossing over with little or no prior thought of spiritual matters, which is a very good reason to be reading this book. This may not be a level in its own right, but just part of the degradation from the High Summerlands to the Stony Plane described in the next chapter. Based on these sketchy descriptions, it's possible that the residents are biding their time until reincarnating.

The Terrain Degenerates

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) [Edwin:] In journeying to a lower realm, one sees the terrain gradually degenerating.

Possible Descriptions of Inhabitants

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) There seems to be an amorphous mass of entities of a 'passive type,' (1) not acutely 'evil,' but in no sense positively 'good,' and they just stick here in masses, still glued to their old conceptions. I don't know what cosmic urge will, in due course, dislodge them. They're not happy, yet not acutely miserable. The more intelligent try to communicate with their friends on earth through mediums and, by doing that, may get a glimmer of the Truth. But the others – who never felt deep emotion in their lives, just negatively selfish – are hopelessly bogged here, as far as I can see. And the helpers here are not specially interested in them. They like much more to go and help more actively mistaken people. It is rather terrible. I avoid them; their eyes are dull, cod-like and stupid.

(1) *Philip does not identify these discarnate beings as residents of the Lower Summerlands, or mid-Astral. It is a guess to locate them here.*

I am amazed – not one percent of the people who come over here are capable of advancing in knowledge, yet. They stick around, living in their thought-images, just as people on earth do. It's only if they happen to have been kindly, if stupid, that they can attract teaching and help. Otherwise, they cling round in amorphous masses and often begin to long so intensely for familiar surroundings and 'solidity.' They are incapable of conceiving their true reality or even that there is a reality beyond the wall of their illusion. Yes, I am now beginning to understand Myers' plane of illusion. Having missed it myself, I couldn't get what he meant, but in my work, I come up against it constantly. I don't understand the Universe yet! Far from it! But it is a thrill.

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) Some persons on earth have difficulty in thinking of abstract subjects. Such spirits are longest in comprehending the use of spirit powers. They are not always to blame. Many times, they have inherited dullness that can never be overcome there, and are always much slower here. It is not the same as being materially minded. Many bright, alert minds think only of a sensual, material life. They are delayed seriously here.

Chapter 10: The Stony Plane

Introduction

Level 2 of the Astral Plane is not quite the hellish Level 1, and is home to those who led selfish, uncaring lives. However, denizens are often rescued, as most have some glimmer of good in their energy.

The Passage Leading to the Lower Regions of Darkness

(Spirit communicator Arnel quoted in MM.) There is a region which is still in the sunshine, but ends in a steep descent, where the bottom lies in darkness. As we stood there to view, we looked across the deep valley which seemed to be filled with gloom so gross that we could not penetrate it from our standpoint in the light. Above the murky ocean of mist and vapor, a dull light rested from above but could not sink beneath the surface for that ocean was so dense. And down into that we had to go.

So we took the path downwards and, as we went, the gloom became more gloomy and the chill more full of fear. But we knew we went to help and not to fear aught and so we did not hesitate in our steps, but went warily.

(John Heslop, FMABL.) Briefly, the lower spheres are more or less interwoven with your earth. This includes Borderland, and the first and second spheres, with all their astral planes; also the Grey World, which is the first of those below Borderland on the downward grade. Below the Grey World there are lands of gloom and sadness, till you reach the land of total darkness.

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) The scene as I approached it (1) was so like any town I might have visited in earth that the ever-present thought that this was not earth but the country of the dead began to leave me. So ordinary, so drearily earth-like were the outskirts of the hamlet; rows of small, mean houses, shops, even the usually depressing chapel I passed and so went on towards the centre which might have belonged to any English market town. There were people going about their business. They were not prepossessing in appearance or manners. They took no particular notice of my unclothed condition (2).

(1) Lawrence later describes this area that he arrived in as one of "the border regions of misty unreality." It's a guess that Lawrence awoke in this plane.

(2) According to Julia Ames, "When the soul leaves the body, it is at the first moment quite unclothed as at birth. ... When the thought of nakedness crosses the spirit there comes the clothing which you need. There is just the sense of need and the need is supplied." (Julia Ames, AD.) Evidently Lawrence was unaware of thought manifestation, and describes going to a clothing store and selecting garments to wear.

[Mitchell explains this region to Lawrence:] "They have not yet developed the power to live in any other way. They make their own atmosphere by the emanations of their own rather horrid emotions and I see that you found it uncongenial enough to get free of it quickly. They are not very pleasant folk there and they might soon have sensed your difference and have resented it and then there might have been trouble. Not that they could have injured you in the physical way you are thinking of, but a lot of undesirable emotions would have been let loose and you would have suffered from these."

[Lawrence leaves these domains and goes to the brighter region known as the Summerlands:] [Mitchell] took me quietly over an ever-brightening landscape.

[Later in his after-life:] I have found out how to get back to the dreary regions where once I was lost and now and again, I am able to guide a wanderer to a better place. Not that all souls have to pass through this Hades as I did; many are better prepared and come straight through to the light.

Toleration of these lower conditions is hard for me, however, and my endurance of them is short-lived. Living in the pure air and brightness of this sphere, it is harder than ever to endure the murk and gloom. I have made a few returns and effected a few rescues, but now I have left this work to those who are more practiced in it.

The border lands are probably unreal largely because we come upon them before our new senses are functioning properly; to those who make their homes there, no doubt they appear quiet real.

The Stony Plane – Level 2 (above the Dark Plane)

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) When we paid our visit to the boundary [between the Summerlands and the Lower Planes], we made our way there directly and rapidly, and we had no consciousness of the intermediate states through which we passed. ... Had we made our progress slowly, we should have perceived the gradual decline of all those pleasant and enjoyable features that constitute the heaven of this realm.

As we proceed slowly from our own realm towards these dark lands, we shall find a gradual deterioration taking place in the countryside. The flowers become scanty and ill-nourished, giving the appearance of a struggle for existence. The grass is parched and yellow, until, with the last remnants of sickly flowers, it finally disappears altogether, to be super-

seded by barren rocks. The light steadily diminishes until we are in a grey land.

We found ourselves upon a very wide expanse of grassland, but we both [Benson and Ruth] noticed that the turf felt less soft beneath our feet; it was, in fact, becoming hard as we walked along. The beautiful emerald green was fast vanishing, and the grass was taking on a dull yellow appearance, very similar to earthly grass that has been scorched by the sun and lacked water. We saw no flowers, no trees, no dwellings, and everywhere seemed bleak and barren. There was no sign of human life, and life seemed to be rapidly disappearing from beneath our feet, as by now the grass had ceased altogether, and we were upon hard ground. We noticed too that the temperature had fallen considerably.

As we approach the dark regions, the soil, such as I have described to you, loses its granular quality and its color. It becomes thick, heavy, and moist, until it finally gives place entirely to stones, and then rock. Whatever grass there is looks yellow and seared.

When one draws near the boundaries of the lower realms, the pavements become heavy in appearance, they begin to lose their color until they look leaden and opaque, and they have the semblance of extreme solidity – almost like the granite of the earth-plane.

Again we were on the borders of the lower realms. Edwin warned [Ruth and I] that we should feel that sense of chilling which we experienced before, but that by an effort of will, we could throw it off. He placed himself in the middle of us, Ruth and I each taking one of his arms. He turned and looked at us, and was apparently satisfied with what he saw. I glanced at Ruth and I noticed that her robe, as had Edwin's, had taken on a dull color, approaching almost grey. Looking at myself, I discovered that my own dress had undergone a similar change. This was certainly perplexing, but our friend explained that this toning down of our natural colors was but the operation of a natural law, and did not mean that we had lost what we had already gained. The practical application of such a law meant that we should not be conspicuous in uncongenial surroundings, nor should we carry the light of our realm into those dark places to blind the vision of those who dwelt there.

[We] returned to our journey. There were no paths to follow and the ground was becoming decidedly rocky in formation. The light was rapidly diminishing from a sky that was heavy and black. There was not a soul, not a house, nor any sign of life to be seen. The whole district seemed colorless and empty and we might have been wandering in another world. We could see dimly ahead of us, after the passage of some time, something which had the appearance of dwellings and we moved in that direction. ...

At close view it became clear that these dwellings were nothing more than mere hovels. They were distressing to gaze upon, but it was infinitely more distressing to contemplate that these were the fruits of men's lives upon earth.

We did not enter any of the shacks – it was repulsive enough outside, and we could have served no useful purpose at present by going in. Edwin therefore gave us a few details instead.

Some of the inhabitants, he said, had lived here, or hereabouts, year after year – as time is reckoned upon earth. They themselves had no sense of time, and their existence had been one interminable continuity of darkness through no one's fault but their own. Many had been the good souls who had penetrated into these Stygian realms to try to effect a rescue out of the darkness. Some had been successful; others had not. Success depends not so much upon the rescuer as upon the rescued. If the latter shows no glimmer of light in his mind, no desire to take a step forward on the spiritual road, then nothing, literally nothing, can be done. The urge must come from within the fallen soul himself. And how low some of them had fallen! Never must it be supposed that those who, in the earth's judgment, had failed spiritually, are fallen low. Many such have not failed at all, but are, in point of fact, worthy souls whose fine reward awaits them here. But, on the other hand, there are those whose earthly lives have been spiritually hideous though outwardly sublime; whose religious profession designated by a Roman [Catholic] collar, has been taken for granted as being synonymous with spirituality of soul. Such people have been mocking God throughout their sanctimonious lives on earth where they lived with an empty show of holiness and goodness. Here they stand, revealed for what they are. But the God they have mocked for so long does not punish. They punish themselves.

The people living within these hovels that we were passing were not necessarily those who upon earth had committed some crime in the eyes of the earth people. There were many people who, without doing any harm, had never, never done any good themselves, without a thought for others. Such souls constantly harped upon the theme that they had done no harm to anyone. But they had harmed themselves.

The dark places [lie] beyond the belt of mist that separates them from the light.

We began the descent [into them] by passing through a belt of mist which we encountered as the ground became hard and barren.

Before us, we could see nothing but a great bank of mist that gathered in intensity as we advanced, until finally we were within it. It swirled round in heavy, damp clouds, and it seemed almost like a dead weight as it pressed upon us.

We ... decided that we should like now to return to our own realm [from the dark planes]. And so we made our way back again to the land of mist, passed quickly through, and once again, we were in our own heavenly country with the warm, balmy air enveloping us.

Chapter 11: The Low Astral, or Dark Plane

Introduction

Definitely not a tourist destination, the denizens of Level 1 of the Low Astral Plane are malicious, sadistic murderers, abusers and torturers, i.e., those who committed truly evil acts while on Earth. They had no remorse for their actions, then and now. Again, no one is “sent” here other than by their own energy, and angelic helpers constantly patrol this level looking for any glimmer of atonement.

This chapter’s overwhelming message is that, although some evil-doer may escape justice while on Earth, true justice awaits on the other side. Far better, then, to live by the Golden Rule and avoid this level altogether.

Very unpleasant conditions, which are also illusory, though in a different way, surround those whose life was one of coldly selfish feelings and of self-imposed isolation. ... In the lower areas – it is almost impossible to avoid these geographical concepts – men discover their actual self to which on earth they preferred to remain largely blind. Now they can no longer avoid their real selves; it is unpleasant where they are because *they* are unpleasant. ... A very selfish man is often depicted as finding himself in a rocky landscape, surrounded by a grey, dark mist. How, then, it may be asked, is this a representation of familiar places on earth, for many selfish men used their life to acquire a rich and splendid house and a staff to surround them. This former earth setting is not now reproduced because it does not represent the reality of such a man’s internal state. ... What a selfish man built around him on earth and believed to be his is so different from what his real character now reflects in his surroundings that an extremely unpleasant shock faces him.

Details of this level have been included not to scare anyone but to show that in the larger picture, justice is *always* served, as the case studies at the end show. However, if you’re squeamish, feel free to skip this chapter.

The Existence of “Hell”

(*John Heslop, FMABL.*) Briefly, the lower spheres are more or less interwoven with your earth. This includes Borderland [Near-Earth Plane], [the Summerlands], also the Grey World, (4) which is the first of those below Borderland on the downward grade. Below the Grey World [the “misty regions”]. there are lands of gloom and sadness, till you reach the land of total darkness [Stony Plane and the Dark Plane.]

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) We do not mean that all enter into that happiness at once. The malicious, the criminal, the careless, the unbelieving, the cruel, have a long and weary way to go. The old philosophers in their religion called it “hell.” That may be a name for it; but, anyway, justice will not be cheated.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) People don’t believe in the hell of fire any more and they have by their recoil forgotten that there is a real hell.

You may shrink from it, but it is nonetheless true that sometimes, the departing finds itself in outer darkness in which it sees and feels nothing but a dread lostness, a desolation which oppresses, and which is described as Hell. And Hell is no fiction. ... Hell awaits those who have built it for themselves, as surely as Heaven awaits those who have built it for themselves. ... Not a hell that is punitive incidentally. Believe me, the law of the Universe ... is Love and no pain on this side or that is ever inflicted on anyone except in such a way that out of that pain and sorrow may spring joy and gladness of heart. ...

Hell is a great remedial agency. You see here the result of your life’s works, thoughts, deeds. What you have sown, you reap here. And you must not imagine that the law is here less stern than with you. It is not felt to be so stern because it is more easily understood. And the people who find themselves in Hell when they open their eyes in the darkness find the Beneficence and Mercy ... even in their affliction.

(*Helen Greaves, TOL.*) There are also Hells, though certainly differing from the physical hells and everlasting fiery torments of man’s warped imagination. There are ... the confining states of misery; dark, repressing and as real as the tortured consciousness of the dweller therein makes them. Yet these hells are not eternal. The man (or woman) in these mental torments need stay there no longer than his desires keep him. He is free to resist the hatreds, cruelties, lusts of his lower nature which he has retained from his earth life and which are keeping him in dark dungeons amid like-minded inhabitants. He can always choose to follow the Light of love, forgiveness and harmony and always, there are souls ready to help, to guide, to comfort and to assist.

No soul is left comfortless unless he wishes it.

That sounds like a paradox but then much that we learn here is different from the teachings of man, even men who are limited in their ideas. Existence on earth is a state of living in a thought world, illusory, and much more restricted and enclosed by the glamorous web of matter. Beyond physical death, the thought world is more apparent and certainly far more potent in its effects. Cause and Effect is still the Law on this plane of astral matter, as it is on earth.

The Shadow Land is a very real place indeed; a gloomy murk covers it to which one has to become accustomed; squalid dwellings inhabited by unhappy, tormented beings who jeer and mock and pursue their warped existences. Sometimes these poor souls live in hatred and rebellion, sometimes in apathy, and sometimes with fierce denial that there is any other state of existence possible.

The Border of the Dark Plane

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) I use the terms which use has consecrated. For the arbitrary division, Heaven and Hell. Although corresponding to the truth in its crude essence, [it] is very far from representing things as they are.

Heaven shades off into Hell, Hell shades off into Heaven ... by a million imperceptible gradations. Between the two, there is no great gulf fixed.... For the Borderland which divides the two is crossed by innumerable paths, along which the dwellers in Heaven are perpetually leading those who were spirits in prison, to whom those of us who are in the light of Love ... are preaching. Preaching in this sense, that of loving and making them believe in love and causing them to love. As I wrote, the joy of Heaven is emptying Hell and I never wrote a truer word. The task is not an easy one, but what infinite joy there is when the darkened eye is opened and a soul begins to live!

The Dark Plane

(*Therold, FMAB.*) Those who have deeply sinned, when they come here, pass through periods of mental agony and remorse, indescribably dreadful, and are only too thankful to work out their salvation in any way appointed for them. It is true, alas! That those who have lived evil lives, when they return to earth, try to gratify their animal instincts through human organisms and tempt their victims to sin. But no man who is attuned to righteousness can be hurt by these spirits of darkness. No one need fear them; they can only hurt those whom they find to be congenial spirits. Lovers of evil they were on earth and, until roused to something better, they continue to be so when they pass to this side.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The light steadily diminishes until we are in a grey land, and then comes the darkness – deep, black, impenetrable darkness; impenetrable, that is, to those who are spiritually blind. Visitors from a higher realm see in this darkness without themselves being seen by the inhabitants, unless it becomes vitally necessary to indicate their presence.

The light rapidly dwindled, dwellings were fewer and fewer, and there was not a soul to be seen anywhere. Great tracts of granite-like rocks stretched out before us, cold and forbidding, and the ‘road’ we followed was rough and precipitous. By now, darkness had enshrouded us, but we could still see all our surroundings perfectly clearly. It is rather a strange experience this, of being able to see in the dark, and

when one first undergoes it, there seems to be an air of unreality about it. But, indeed, it is real enough.

We had only been on the threshold of the lower spheres, but we had gone far enough to gather more than an inkling of what lay beyond.

Our visits have carried us to what we verily believe to be the lowest plane of human existence.

[In] those realms of darkness and semi-darkness, ... all is cold and bleak and barren. ... [There] souls have their abode, souls who can rise up out of the darkness if they so wish ... and will work for that end.

As the higher spheres had created all the beauties of those realms, so had the denizens of these lower spheres built up the appalling conditions of their spirit life. There was no light in the lowest realms; no warmth, no vegetation, no beauty. It is in the power of each soul to do so, and nothing stands in his way but himself. It may take him countless thousands of years to raise himself one inch spiritually, but it is an inch in the right direction.

You will recall my mention of the many heavenly perfumes and scents that come from the flowers and that float upon the air. Here in these dark places, the every opposite was the case. Our nostrils were first assailed by the most foul odors, odors that reminded us of the corruption of flesh in the earth world. They were nauseating and I feared that it would prove more than Ruth – and indeed I, myself – could stand, but Edwin told us to treat them in the same way that we had mastered the coldness of the temperature – by simply closing our minds to them – and that we should be quite unaware of their existence. We hastened to do so and we were perfectly successful.

[If the light regions are called the Summerland,] the dark regions might almost be called the ‘Winterland,’ but for the fact that the earthly winter possesses a grandeur all its own, while there is nothing but abomination about the lower realms of the spirit world.

It is not a pleasant subject, but I have been advised that the facts should be given, not with the intention of frightening people – that is not the spirit world’s methods or aims – but to show that such places exist solely by virtue of an inexorable law, the Law of Cause and Effect, the spiritual reaping that succeeds the earthly sowing; to show that to escape moral justice upon the earth-plane is to find strict and unrelenting justice in the spirit world.

As we climbed down through one of the numerous fissures in the rocks, I could see and feel the loathsome slime that covered the whole surface of them, a dirty green in color and evil smelling. There was, of course, no danger of our falling. That would be impossible for any dwellers in these realms.

After we had journeyed for what seemed to be a great distance – I should imagine it to have been one mile of earthly measurement, at least – we found ourselves in a gigantic crater, many miles in circumference, whose sides, treacherous and menacing, towered above us.

The whole of this area was interspersed with huge masses of rock, as though some enormous landslide or cataclysm had disrupted them from the upper rim of the crater and sent them hurtling down into the depths below, there to scatter themselves in every direction, forming natural caverns and tunnels.

In our present position, we were well above this sea of rocks and we observed a dull cloud of poisonous vapor rising from it, as though a volcano were below and upon the point of erupting. ... we could perceive with our intuitive faculties the degree of malignity of the whole place. Dimly, we could see through this miasma what might have been human beings, crawling like some foul beasts over the surface of the upper rocks. We could not think, Ruth and I, that they were human, but Edwin assured us that once they had walked upon the earth-plane as men, that they had eaten and slept, and breathed the earthly air, [and] had mixed with other men on earth. But they lived a life of spiritual foulness. And in their death of the physical body, they had gone to their true abode and their true estate in the spirit world.

We arrived at the border and looked out. Oh, the sight was enough to put us off going any further. It was dark and smelly. We promptly made ourselves invisible (that is easy – you just have to think it and you are). We walked slowly to the town, around which are smelly bog lands. It looked just like a foggy day in London. It is always semi-dark here, so there are no trees, shrubs and, needless to say, flowers. Oh, the misery! These poor, poor souls were all dressed in earth clothes and not very clean at that. They all looked miserable.... It was cold as well. They made their own amusement playing cards or musical instruments. There was a library full of books on learning, mostly for bettering themselves, but some never bother to read them. Here, as you may put it, live the villains who fight and quarrel among themselves. From time to time, High Spirits come here and walk invisibly amongst them. On seeing anyone making progress and thinking they would like help, they make themselves visible to help them. They have aided many hundreds to progress higher, but some alas will be here forever. ...

I made myself visible to talk to one. He was very sad, indeed, and openly admitted that he did not believe in “after-life,” for he said, if he had, he thinks he would have led a different life, for he had been a gangster in America in the '20s, and had done much killing and stealing ... to make up for his poor upbringing. He said ... he would not have thought a place like this existed. This was certainly “hell-fire and damnation.” It was far worse than any slums on earth could be. One top of that, it was always cold and dark. At least on earth, you did see the sun. He was making progress and I am sure will make the “Summerlands” one day.

There are many women here, but we saw on the whole far more men than women. Children do not come here, no matter how bad they are. They go first to the Stony Plane

and straight to school to teach them right from wrong, for a lot do not know; having had bad homes on earth, they have not had the proper grooming. Most make good progress and soon enter the land of the sun, where their relatives are waiting for them. If no one is there to claim them, there is a beautiful big home where most of them go. They are looked after by kindly men and women who spend all their time with them.

There is not much to do here. ... The main idea here is to get people out on to the next plane, so you cannot make it too comfortable. I am sure if I were here, I would “die of boredom” as the saying goes. I will never understand how they can sit around playing cards and dominoes for years on end. They have no ambition to go further, and yet on earth, that is all they thought about, and that is what got them here in the first place, for they let nothing stand in their way, whether it be murder, corruption, or torture. Some did ‘everything in the book.’

I talked to one or two and tried to tell them of the wondrous sights on the other planes, but some alas thought I was joking and said nothing could be as beautiful as I had described it. I could see I was wasting my time. ... It is quite sad, for many were very intelligent when on earth, but alas, I think they are too shaken at the whole thing and never get over the “afterlife” that they thought did not exist.

We walked around the streets and thanked God indeed that we did not live here. ... Many, I am sorry to say, deserve this, for they were evil, and they seemed to pass on their evil ways to others weaker than themselves. Here you have to be strong, and say to yourself, “I am not staying here for ever” and mean it.

Many of the houses were dark and small, many having only two rooms. The furnishings were dark and cheap looking. No carpets or rugs on the floor. No nice pictures to adorn the wall, in fact nothing very much, only the bare necessities. ... I suppose you can understand the state of shock some are in when they first see their homes after living in the lap of luxury on earth, everything and everybody at their beck and call. You have no servants in the etheric planes – everyone is equal.

Here in these dark lands, all is bleak and desolate. The very low degree of light itself casts a blight upon the whole region. Interspersed throughout the great area of this dreadful region were pools of some sort of liquid. It looked thick and viscid, and inexpressibly filthy, as, indeed, it was. Edwin told us that the stench that came from these pools was in keeping with all else that we had seen here. ...

We were horrified to see signs of movement in some of the pools and we guessed, without Edwin having to tell us, that frequently the inhabitants slip and fall into them. They cannot drown because they are as indestructible as we are ourselves.

Sin and Punishment

(*Imperator, ST.*) Punishment is ever the immediate consequence of sin; it is of its essence, not arbitrarily meted out, but the inevitable result of the violation of law. The consequences of such transgression cannot be altogether averted, though they may be palliated by remorse, the effect of which is to breed a loathing for sin and a desire for good. This is the first step, the retracing of false steps, the undoing of error, and by consequence, the creation in the spirit of another longing. The spiritual atmosphere is changed, and into it good angels enter readily and aid the striving soul. It is isolated from evil agencies. Remorse and sorrow are fostered. The spirit becomes gentle and tender, amenable to influences of good. The hard, cold, repellent tone is gone, and the soul progresses. So the results of former sin are purged away, and the length and bitterness of punishment alleviated. This is true for all time. It was on this principle that we told you of the folly which dictates your dealings with the transgressors of your laws. Were we to deal with the offenders so, there would be no restoration, and the spheres of the depraved would be crowded with lost and ruined souls. But God is wiser, and we are His ministers.

Of punishment we know indeed, but it is not the vindictive lash of an angry God, but the natural outcome of conscious sin, remediable by repentance and atonement and reparation personally wrought out in pain and shame, not by coward cries for mercy, and by feigned assent to statements which ought to create a shudder.

The Inhabitants of the Dark Plane

The Transition of Those Destined for the Dark Plane

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) There is, when the loveless soul comes here, as much care taken to welcome it as when the soul of love arrives. But the selfish soul is blind and dark, and shudders in the dark. Those whose acrid temperament and selfish disposition have gradually made them loveless and utterly self-seeking find themselves in this world like blind men in the presence of the glory of sunrise. It is there, flooding the world with color and splendor, but all its radiance does not exist for him because his [spiritual sight] is destroyed.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) People *are* where their thought is and anything ‘negative,’ vibrating very slowly (what you call evil) does not seem to be able to impinge on the more evolved people, even if they are on what you call the same spot of space.

But most people here, near the earth [Near-Earth Region], are a mixture of good and bad – just as on earth, and I’ve already seen some queer sights. I’m having to learn the lesson you learned – not to *fear* anything I see. I have *Power*. I’m learning to use it. They say that’s to be my job – not too savory, if you ask me, but it’s a job all right.

The Inhabitants of the Dark Plane

(*Imperator, ST.*) In these spheres, [the debased spirits] must remain subject to the attempted influence of the missionary spirits, until the desire for progress is renewed. When the desire rises, the spirit makes its first step. It becomes amenable to holy and ennobling influence, and is tended by those pure and self-sacrificing spirits whose mission it is to tend such souls. You have among you spirits bright and noble, whose mission in the earth-life is among the dens of infamy and haunts of vice, and who are preparing for themselves a crown of glory, whose brightest jewels are self-sacrifice and love. So amongst us, there are spirits who give themselves to work in the sphere of the degraded and abandoned. By their efforts, many spirits rise, and when rescued from degradation, work out long and laborious purification in the probation spheres, where they are removed from influences for evil, and entrusted to the care of the pure and good. So desire for holiness is encouraged and the spirit is purified. Of the lower spheres, we know little. We only know vaguely that there are separations made between degrees and sorts of vice.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) It is by the eyes that one can judge. Everyone’s *eyes* here show their real selves – sometimes it’s rather horrible. I am learning to drive away unpleasant eyes with my Power, but I’m still rather tied up with my earthly experiences.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) And then there are – fortunately few, comparatively speaking – those who are “evil” – negation – who cannot, when freed of the body, even stay in near-earth. They must “sink,” though that is not an accurate word to express their “disintegration” of being. They are in grey-black darkness, for there is no way for the light of creative force to illumine them, as they are not in alignment with it.

Their thought world may surround them. Sometimes, if they have been wealthy, it is a luxurious one which seems, at first, unchanged, but little by little a change does appear: a subtle aspect of corruption, an incursion of nightmare images – which they do *not* wake up and find are dreams! – a sensation of frustration, and no way out. There are all sorts of grades and facets of this – some worse than others. I try to help these people, at least the young in earth years. I concentrate on them for I feel sorry for them.

Really unpleasant types – and you’d be surprised: there are not so many as you would think, for most people who behave badly do it through ignorance or weakness, or by being up against human laws which so far, have usually operated in favor of the “haves” against the “have-nots” – well, anyhow, *really* nasty bits of work stay in their illusions, but in compulsory company with others like them, or with those they have wronged if the latter are full of resentful hate, and they are at the mercy of any unpleasant lower astral entity who may be around.

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) When those who have led evil lives first realize that they have left the earth life, they are often very hard to manage because of their disappointment. They think of their earth life as gone forever, and they have no desire whatever for anything of a spiritual nature; there is nothing to live for, and yet they are alive. It is much the same as life imprisonment on earth, and knowing that it was impossible to get free. Their disappointment often turns to rage, and they become for a time nothing but mad creatures. It is a very pitiful sight. Even when they begin to realize that their rage is useless, and they begin to listen to other spirits, it is still one of our most difficult tasks to arouse any ambition and get them started on the upward path.

The Experience of Time on the Dark Plane

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Those of us in the spirit world who live in the realm of happiness and perpetual summer will have no cause to find 'time hang heavily.' In this sense we are simply not conscious of the flight of time.

In the dark realms, the reverse is the case. The period of darkness will seem interminable to those who live there. However much such souls may yearn for a coming of the light, yet it never comes to them. They themselves must perforce take the first step towards the light that awaits them without their low realm. A period of existence within these dark regions, amounting to nothing more than a year or two of earthly time, will seem like an eternity to the sufferers.

Spirit Body Malformed Because of Evil

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Occasionally, we were able to catch a glimpse of the faces of some unfortunates as we passed along. Some were unmistakably evil, showing the life of vice they had led upon the earth; some revealed the miser, the avaricious, the 'brute beast.' There were people here from almost every walk of earthly life, from the present time to far back in the centuries. And here was a connecting link with names that could be read in those truthful histories of nations in the library we visited in our realm. Both Edwin and his friend told us that we should be appalled at the catalogue of names, well known in history, of people who were living deep down in these noxious regions – men who had perpetrated vile and wicked deeds in the name of holy religion or for the furtherance of their own despicable, material ends. Many of these wretches were unapproachable and they would remain so – perhaps for numberless more centuries – until, of their own wish and endeavor, they moved however feebly in the direction of the light of spiritual progression.

We could see, as we walked along, whole bands of seemingly demented souls passing on their way upon some prospective evil intent – if they could find their way to it. Their bodies presented the outward appearance of the most hideous and repulsive malformations and distortions, the absolute reflection of their evil minds. Many of them seemed old

in years, but I was told that although such souls had been there perhaps for many centuries, it was not the passage of time that had so dealt with their faces, but their wicked minds. ...

The multitudinous sounds that we heard were in keeping with the awful surroundings, from mad raucous laughter to the shriek of some soul in torment – torment inflicted by others as bad as himself. Once or twice, we were spoken to by some courageous souls who were down there upon their tasks of helping these afflicted mortals. They were glad to see us and talk to us. In the darkness, we could see them and they could see us, but we were all of us invisible to the rest, since we were provided with the same protection for the dark lands.

The inhabitants were variously occupied: some were seated upon small boulders and gave every appearance of conspiring together, but upon what devilish schemes it was impossible to say. Others were in small groups perpetrating unspeakable tortures upon the weaker of their kind who must, in some fashion, have fallen foul of their tormentors. Their shrieks were unbearable to listen to, and so we closed our ears to them, firmly and effectively. Their limbs were indescribably distorted and malformed, and in some cases their faces and heads had retrograded to the merest mockery of a human countenance. Others again we observed to be lying prone upon the ground as though exhausted from undergoing torture or because of expending their last remaining energy upon inflicting it before they could gather renewed strength to recommence their barbarities. We witnessed all manner of bestialities and grossness, and such barbarities and cruelties as the mind can scarcely contemplate. It is not my purpose nor my wish to give you a detailed account of what we beheld. We had, by no means, reached the very bottom of this foul pit, but I have given you quite sufficient details of what is to be found in the realms of darkness.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) It is possible for the sinner to resist here [i.e., to resist help from the transition guides or other spirit helpers] as he resisted with you [on the earth plane]. He will not listen, he will not see. And he takes a pleasure in consorting with others in whom love is not.

When the sinner, the evil man, the selfish blinded man, comes over here, he wishes to return. He is here in darkness and in poverty. For he has laid up for himself no treasures in this place. His possessions are all with you. He wishes to return and, if the door were wide open, he would return and never reform. Hence it is forbidden him.... Their hope of salvation, their chance of evolution, lies in their being deprived of the gauds and trumpery in which they invested their soul. Now [that] they are bankrupt, they may begin again. They are like people who have invested in bogus stock, which pays dividends for a year or two out of capital and then goes smash. They must be made to realize the worthlessness of the world-stock before they will invest in things

eternal. They must lose to gain. And what helps them [to maintain the illusion of the world's trumpery being valuable] is to be allowed out of the outer darkness to see the world in which they sank their all going on just as it did without their being able to partake of the pleasures and indulge in the sins they loved so well. It is a cup of Tantalus. To open up communication between them and your world is for them not good but evil. And for you also it is evil. Hence it is mercifully restricted.

When the sinner arrives here, he is as it were in a great hospital. He is allowed still his freedom and he is not forbidden to sin, nor indeed can he help going on in the path which he has fashioned for himself by the thoughts and actions of his lifetime. But he sees now their vanity. He realizes the emptiness of the things in which he spent his life. Not all at once. But he learns and he is unhappy and that unhappiness, bringing sorrow for sin, is the door through which the ministering spirits of Love and Sympathy can enter in. And then, when he opens his eyes, he sees, at first but darkly and with much wondering whether it is a deluding dream, then he has entered upon the path that leads from self to Love, from hell to Heaven. And as each onward step is made, he increases in the longing for the service which will enable him to undo the wrong and spread the light.

(*F. W. H. Myers, RTL.*) Cruelty perhaps cuts more deeply into human nature than any other ... perversion. It marks the human soul, scars it more deeply than almost any other vice. The cruel man who has changed his natural craving for affection into a longing to give pain to others necessarily finds himself in a world here where he cannot satisfy this craving. He has pandered to it during all his earth life, and so it has become an integral part of his soul. In the new life, he has not, for a time at any rate, the power to inflict pain on anything living. This means for him, with his greatly increased mental powers, a very terrible distress. He goes about seeking whom he may devour and finding naught. The misery of such an unsatisfied state is largely of a mental character. What use to him is a world of light and beauty while still this foul earth longing is unsatisfied? For him there is only one release from his mental purgatory. And until he can find a way of escape, until there is an actual change in his cold, cruel soul, he will remain in outer darkness. ...

Eventually this individual faces up to his own misery, to his vice; and then the great change comes. He is put in touch with a portion of the Great Memory. He becomes aware of all the emotions roused in his victims by his acts. He enters into a small part of the mighty super-conscious memory of his generation which hovers near the earth. No pain, no anguish he has caused has perished. All has been registered, has a kind of existence that makes him sensible of it once he has drifted into touch with the web of memory that clothed his life and the lives of those who came into contact with him on earth.

The history of the cruel man in the Hereafter would make a book which I am not permitted to write. I can only briefly add that his soul or mind becomes gradually purified through his identification with the sufferings of his victims.

I have wandered away from [my] theme It is a mental darkness into which the sinner plunges. His own perverted nature has drawn this suffering upon himself. He had free will, the power to choose, and, temporarily at any rate, he chose this mental darkness in the After-life.

Rescue Work on the Dark Plane

All Sincere Cries Are Heard

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) You must know that spirituality means light, literally, with us here in the spirit world. And absence of spirituality means darkness. The soul in the latter case will be just a dark image, the darker it is, the more repulsive and hideous, like the life it led upon earth and which is the cause of the blackness. But a dark life may have been relieved in some minute instance by a good action, some kind action, and that will provide [a] small glimmer of light.... We can work upon that, as it were, to recall to the mind and try to show its owner the difference between this tiny gleam and the rest of its dingy, dark habiliments.

If the soul will listen to reason, then we can make some headway and so increase the light by the owner's willingness to cleanse the rest of himself. If our words fail to affect the soul in any way, then, perforce, we must let it go upon its way until better thoughts and ideas and wishes come upon the soul in its darkness.

You can understand that this is exacting work for us, in spite of the fact that we do not suffer from physical fatigue. Nevertheless, we cannot continue in such enervating conditions without feeling mentally rather jaded and so we emerge once more into the light of our own realms. In the meantime, others will take our places so that no transition is left unattended.

(*Imperator, ST.*) In these spheres, [the fallen] must remain subject to the attempted influence of the missionary spirits, until the desire for progress is renewed. When the desire rises, the spirit makes its first step. It becomes amenable to holy and ennobling influence, and is tended by those pure and self-sacrificing spirits whose mission it is to tend such souls. You have among you spirits bright and noble, whose mission in the earth-life is among the dens of infamy and haunts of vice, and who are preparing for themselves a crown of glory, whose brightest jewels are self-sacrifice and love. So amongst us, there are spirits who give themselves to work in the sphere of the degraded and abandoned. By their efforts, many spirits rise, and when rescued from degradation, work out long and laborious purification in the probation spheres, where they are removed from influences for evil, and entrusted to the care of the pure and good. So desire for holiness is encouraged and the spirit is purified.

The Notion of Eternal Damnation to Hell

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Those dark realms are not the theological hell to which people are condemned for all eternity – once in, never out again. Every person, who at present is an inhabitant of those terrible places, has the free choice to emerge from them whenever he changes his mind. He can work his way out precisely the same way as *we* can work *our* way from these lovely lands into still lovelier. The law is the same there as here and applies to us all – there and here.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) But, you will naturally ask, having in mind orthodox religious teachings on the subject, are those who dwell in grayness or darkness confined to those regions for all eternity? No, no! Never for all eternity. They will remain there for just so long as they wish. Indeed, some of them have lived in the dark realms for thousands of years, but thousands of years is not eternity, although it may seem like it sometimes to some of the inhabitants of those regions. But every soul so situated in darkness is free to terminate his sojourn there whenever he sees fit. The choice rests with himself.

If the denizens of the darker regions show no aptitude towards spiritual progression and to lifting themselves out of the darkness, then they will remain where they are. No one forces them to stay there. They themselves elect to do so.

The instant that one of the unhappy inhabitants shows the most minute tendency to lift himself out of the sad conditions of those dark realms, such tendency becomes a wish that others higher up can see, and every help is given that soul to place his feet firmly and strongly upon the upward path of progression. That pathway may be steep and difficult, but neither so steep nor difficult that someone cannot help him to surmount all the obstacles upon the way. This is spiritual progression in the fullest sense of the word. It is open to all.

The whole crude conception of being damned for all eternity arises from a totally wrong conception ..., a grotesque conception that has found its supporters throughout the centuries and that has, in consequence, put fear into the hearts of mankind. It is a man-made belief without the slightest foundation in fact. And it is not long before a newcomer to the spirit world finds out that the whole idea of eternal damnation is an utterly impossible one.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Every soul who lives in those awful places once lived upon the earth-plane. The thought is dreadful, but the truth cannot be altered. Do not think for one moment that I have exaggerated in my brief description of these regions. I assure you that I have not done so. I have, in fact, given you an understatement. The whole of these revolting regions exist[s] by virtue of the same laws that govern the states of beauty and happiness.

The beauty of the spirit world is the outward and visible expression of the spiritual progression of its inhabitants. ... Beauty of mind and deed can produce nothing but beauty....

But ugliness of mind and deed can produce nothing but ugliness. The seeds of hideousness sown upon the earth-plane will inevitably lead to the reaping of a harvest of hideousness in the spirit world. These dark realms have been built up by the people of the earth-plane, even as they have built up the realms of beauty. ...

The denizens of the realms of darkness have, by their lives on earth, condemned themselves, each and every one, to the state in which they now find themselves. It is the inevitable law of cause and effect, as sure as night follows day upon the earth-plane. Of what avail to cry for mercy? The spirit world is a world of strict justice, a justice that cannot be tampered with, a justice which we all mete out to ourselves. Strict justice and mercy cannot go together. However wholeheartedly and sincerely we may forgive the wrong that has been done to us, mercy is not given to us to dispense in the spirit world. Every bad action must be accounted for by the one who commits it. It is a personal matter which must be done alone, even as the actual event of death of the physical body must be gone through alone. No one can do it for us, but by the great dispensation upon which this and all worlds are founded, we can, and do, have ready and able assistance in our tribulation. Every soul who dwells in these dreadful dark realms has the power within himself to rise up out of the foulness into the light. He must make the individual effort himself; he must work out his own redemption. None can do it for him. Every inch of the way he must toil himself. There is no mercy awaiting him, but stern justice.

But the golden opportunity of spiritual reclamation is ready and waiting. He has but to show an earnest desire to move himself one fraction of an inch towards the realms of light that are above him, and he will find a host of unknown friends who will help him towards that heritage which is his due, but which in his folly, he cast aside.

The thought inevitably came into my mind of the doctrine of eternal damnation, so beloved by orthodox religion, and of the everlasting fires of so-called hell. If this place we were in now could be called hell and no doubt it would be by theologians, then there was certainly no evidence of fire or heat of any kind. On the contrary, there was nothing but a cold, dark atmosphere. Spirituality means warmth in the spirit world; lack of spirituality means coldness. The whole fantastic doctrine of hell-fire – a fire which burns but never consumes – is one of the most outrageously stupid and ignorant doctrines that has ever been invented by equally stupid and ignorant churchmen. Who actually invented it no one knows, but it is still rigorously upheld as a doctrine by the church. Even the smallest acquaintance with spirit life instantly reveals the utter impossibility of it, because it is against the very laws of spirit existence.

Case Histories

The Man with a Lifetime of Anger

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) One day, [Mitchell] showed me a man who will be his superior. He took me to a gloomy region where he needed help. There we found a man, lost as I once had been. His being glowed with power and darted out brilliant rays of blue and purple, the colors of a high spiritual development, but he was enveloped in a cloud of anger and despair and, at the heart of him, was a black and composite nucleus of evil. We found him difficult to approach; twice we were driven back, choking with his emanations and at first he spurned our help. Mitchell told me afterwards that this was a great if erring soul beside whom any of us would be small and feeble once he was cured of his infirmities. I am intensely interested and shall follow his course. He has had no fame or fortune on earth; he might well have been one of those whom I should have despised; yet potentially he is one of the great ones.

But to return to Tom Harris. He grieved terribly for his wife and her grief for him affected him strongly... Fortunately for his passionate and powerful nature, there was no long waiting and the timing of her coming was perfect. Tom had almost cleared the dark cloud at the center of his being and so could meet her in his true form and nature at last. So another story had a happy ending, as I suppose all stories must have here. It is true that there can be great distress when a man and a woman are unified again here only to find their disaffinity and that their future course cannot run together. One may be unable to get beyond the early planes and the may be for onward; although one can hold back, voluntarily for awhile, sooner or later the second body must be discarded and the spirit released to go farther. Many of the ties made on earth seem to be of this evanescent nature. Sentiment and loyalty keep people together for a time who have no real affinity but, as soon as they are strong enough to face reality, they can part happily and go on to find their real mates.

The Ruthless Businessman

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) After a further passage through the mist, we found that it began to clear a little until it vanished altogether. We could now see our surroundings clearly. The landscape was bleak in the extreme with, here and there, a dwelling house of the meanest order. We came close to one of the latter and were able to examine it better.

It was a small, squat house, squarely built, devoid of ornament, and looking altogether uninviting. It even had a sinister look in spite of its plainness, and it seemed to repel us from it the nearer we approached it. There was no sign of life to be seen at any of the windows or round about it. There was no garden attached to it; it just stood out by itself, solitary and forlorn. Edwin and our new friend [a spirit

worker who came along with Ruth and Monsignor Benson] evidently knew both the house and its inmate quite well, for upon going up to the front door, Edwin gave a knock upon it and, without waiting for an answer, opened it and walked in, beckoning us to follow. We did so and found ourselves in the poorest sort of apology for a house. There was little furniture, and that of the meanest, and at first sight to earthly eyes, one would have said that poverty reigned here, and one would have felt the natural sympathy and urge to offer what help one could. But to our spirit eyes, the poverty was of the soul, the meanness was of the spirit, and although it roused our sympathy, it was sympathy of another kind, of which material help is of no avail. The coldness seemed almost greater within than without, and we were told that it came from the owner of the house himself.

We passed into a back room and met the sole occupant seated in a chair. He made no attempt to rise or give any sign of welcome. Ruth and I remained in the background while the other two went forward to speak to our unwilling 'host.' He was a man just past middle years. He had something of an air of faded prosperity and the clothes he wore had been obviously neglected, whether through indifference or other causes; in the light of my earthly recollections, I was unable to say. He rather scowled at the two of us as Edwin brought us forward as new visitors. It was a moment or two before he spoke, and then he railed at us rather incoherently, but we were able to gather that he deemed himself to be suffering under an injustice. Edwin told him in plain terms that he was talking nonsense because injustice does not exist in the spirit world. A heated argument followed, heated, that is to say, on the part of our host, for Edwin was calm and collected, and, in truth, wonderfully kind. Many times did the former glance at Ruth, whose gentle face seemed to brighten the whole dingy place. I, too, looked at Ruth, who held my arm, to see how this strange man was affecting her, but she was unperturbed.

At length, he quieted down and seemed much more tractable, and then he and Edwin had some private conversation together. At the end of it, he told Edwin that he would think about it and that he could call again if he wished and bring his friends with him. Upon this, he arose from his chair, escorted us to the door, and showed us out. And I observed that he was almost becoming affable – though not quite. He stood at the front door watching us as we walked away, until we must have been nearly out of sight.

Edwin seemed very pleased with our visit, and then he gave us some particulars of the strange man.

He had, he said, been in spirit some years now, but in his earth life, he had been a successful business man – successful, that is, as far as the earth-plane judges such things. He had not thought of much else than his business, and he always considered that any means were justified in gaining his own ends, provided they were legal. He was ruthless in his dealings with all others and he elevated efficiency to the

level of a god. In his home, all things – and people – were subservient to him. He gave generously to charity where there was likely to accrue the greatest advantage and credit. He supported his own religion and church with vigor, regularity, and fervor. He felt that he was an ornament to the church and he was much esteemed by all those connected with it. He added some new portions to the edifice at his own expense, and a chapel was named after him as the donor. But from what Edwin had been able to glean from his story, he had scarcely committed one decent, unselfish action in the whole of his life. His motive was always self-aggrandizement and he had achieved his purpose on earth at the absolute expense of his life in the spirit world.

And now his grievance was that, after having lived such an exemplary life – in his own estimation – he should be condemned to live in such comparative squalor. He refused to see that he had condemned himself to it and that there was none other to blame but himself. He complained that the church had misled him all along since his munificence had been received in such a fashion that he believed his gifts to the church would weigh heavily in his favor in the ‘hereafter.’ Again, he could not see that it is motive that counts and that a happy state in the spirit world cannot be bought for hard cash. A small service willingly and generously performed for a fellow mortal builds a greater edifice in spirit to the glory of God than do large sums of money expended upon ecclesiastical bricks and mortar erected to the glory of man – with full emphasis on the donor.

The man’s present mood was anger, which was all the greater because he had never been denied anything whilst upon the earth. He had never been accustomed to such degrading circumstances as those at present. His difficulties were increased by the fact that he did not know quite whom to blame. Expecting a high reward, he had been cast into the depths. He had made no real friends. There seemed to be no one – of his own social position, he said – who could advise him in the matter. Edwin had tried to reason with him, but he was in an unreasoning frame of mind, and had been so for some long time. He had had few visitors because he repelled them and, although Edwin had made many visits to him, the result was always the same – a stolid adherence to his sense of injustice.

Upon Edwin’s latest call, in company with Ruth and myself, and with the friend whom we had met on the way, there were distinct symptoms of a coming change. They were not manifest at first, but as our visit drew to a close, he had shown signs of relenting from his stubborn attitude. And Edwin was sure that it was due as much to Ruth’s softening presence as to his own powers of reasoning with him. He felt sure, too, that were we to return to him on our way back, we should find him in a different frame of mind altogether. He would be unwilling to admit too soon that the fault was his entirely, but perseverance will work wonders.

A Murderer and his Victim

(Dr. Margaret Vivian quoted in LO.) An old man came over here after an earth life that was by no means exemplary. He was a thief who had killed a man during one of his expeditions and, as soon as he arrived here, he met his victim. He did not know how to express his sorrow. But the victim had no ill feeling and told him that he was grateful for his release from a wretched earth life. ... He set to work to teach the old man that he must atone for his bad life, but that the punishment was automatic and not vindictive. After a time, the murderer and his victim became fast friends and made progress together. It is not always the apparently good people who get on quickly over here.

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) A friend who has made an unexpected appearance in my life is a young man named Edgar R., who came here a very long time ago. His story is a sad one and explains the length of time he has needed in this plane. Is it horrifying to know that he was a murderer? In a moment of frenzy, he killed his wife and the law then sent him to death with all the usual accompaniments of shame and violence. I can well imagine the impossible conditions into which at first he drifted. His own shame and despair drew him to the darkest regions of the early planes and his plight there was awful. He hid himself among the debased and brutal population of a town of ill-repute, afraid that his victim would find him and reproach him. Here he lived in a dark hell of his own making, a prey to fear and remorse. There are certain devoted souls who manage to penetrate to these regions in search of any who can be helped, and they found Edgar eventually and persuaded him to face his problem, come out of hiding and find his wife.

She also had suffered. Anger and hatred of him had prevented her progress, but by degrees, she was helped to see and understand the real situation for which she had been partly responsible, but which had been hidden from her by the mists of her own anger. These two poor souls were still bound to each other by wrong-doing which seems to make nearly as strong a bond as love itself. Until they had cleared the anger from their souls and the blindness from their eyes, they could not get free. They neither of them wished to remain together, or so they thought at first; yet when, by the help of those skilled in bringing about such adjustments, they did at last face the evil in themselves instead of condemning it in each other, the change in their whole condition produced a strange solution. They each laid hold again upon their essential innocence; they renewed the long-lost appearance of youth and charm and to their own surprise, they found that the bond which really held them together was love.

They are together now in an ideal relationship and the joy they take in each other has been won through long purgatorial suffering. So the clumsy bungling of human justice has been compensated by the justice of God. This is not a

sentimental notion of mere forgiveness of sins – that would alter nothing – but a true regeneration through suffering and the cleansing of the perilous stuff which would otherwise continue to poison the springs of living. Although I know of the black spots in this world where there seems to settle an irredeemable silt of the base and brutal, I am convinced by many such tales of rescue and redemption that ultimately all of these unfortunates will make their way up into the sunshine and will there work out their own salvation. Edgar then and his charming wife are happy and useful members of our community, and when the time comes, it looks as though they may be ready to go on together.

The Case of the Evil Official

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) We walked closer to one of the sub-human forms that lay sprawled upon the rocks. What remnant of clothing it wore might easily have been dispensed with, since it consisted of nothing but the filthiest rags, which hung together in some inconceivable way, leaving visible great gaps of lifeless-looking flesh. The limbs were so thinly covered with skin that one full expected to see bare bones showing forth. The hands were shaped like the talons of some bird of prey, with the fingernails so grown as to have become veritable claws. The face upon this monster was barely human, so distorted was it, and malformed. The eyes were small and penetrating, but the mouth was huge and repulsive, with thick protruding lips set upon a prognathic jaw, and scarcely concealing the veriest fangs of teeth.

We gazed earnestly and long at this sorry wreck of what was once a human form, and I wondered what earthly misdeeds had reduced it to this awful state of degeneration.

Edwin, who was experienced in these sights, told us that in time, we should gain certain knowledge in our work, which would enable us to read from the faces and forms of these creatures what it was that had reduced them to their present state. There would be no need to accost them to find out at least some of their life's story, for there it was written for the experienced to read. Their very appearance, too, would be a safe guide as to whether they needed help or whether they were still content to abide in their sunken state.

The object that was now before us, said Edwin, would warrant little sympathy as he was, because he was still steeped in his iniquity and was obviously showing not the least sign

of regret for his loathsome earthly life. He was dazed at the loss of his physical energy and puzzled in his mind to know what had befallen him. His face showed that, given the opportunity, he would continue with his base practices with every ounce of power that remained to him.

That he had been several hundred years in the spirit world could be seen by the tattered remnants of his garb, which bespoke a former age, and he had spent the greater part of his earth life inflicting mental and physical tortures upon those who had the misfortune to come into his evil clutches. Every crime that he had committed against other people had, at last, reverted to, and descended upon, himself. He now had before him – he had done so for hundreds of years – the memory, the indelible memory, of every act of evil he had perpetrated against his fellows.

When he was upon earth, he had acted under a false pretence of administering justice. In very truth, his justice had been nothing but a travesty and now he was seeing exactly what true justice really meant. Not only was his own life of wickedness continually before him, but the features of his many victims were ever passing before his mind, created out of that same memory which is registered unflinchingly and ineradicably upon the subconscious mind. He cannot ever forget; he must always remember. And his condition was aggravated by the anger of feeling like a trapped animal.

We stood together, a little group of three, but we could not feel one tiny vestige of sympathy for this inhuman monster. He aroused none within us. He was receiving his just merits – no more, no less. He had judged himself and condemned himself and now he was suffering the punishment he had, solely and entirely, inflicted upon himself. Here was no case of an avenging God, inflicting condign punishment upon a sinner. The sinner was there, truly, but he was the visible manifestation of the unalterable law of cause and effect. The cause was in his earthly life; the effect was in his spirit life.

Had we been able to detect one tiny glimmer of that light – it is a real light that we see – which is an unmistakable sign of spiritual stirrings within, we might have done something for this soul. As it was, we could do nothing but hope that one day, this dreadful being would call for help in true earnestness and sincerity. His call would be answered – unflinchingly.

Chapter 12: The Mental Plane

Introduction

This chapter is a welcome change from the previous chapter. Here we venture beyond the High Astral into the Mental Plane, which is even more thought-driven. F.W.H. Myers and Philip Gilbert are the main contributors and have a hard time conveying the nature of this plane in a human language. Suffice to say, once you are ready to move up from the High Astral, you will make exploratory forays to the Mental Plane to prepare yourself for that environment.

There are several planes beyond the Mental, but these are so ethereal as to defy solid description, and they are so far removed from the Earth Plane that residents rarely report back, so little is known of them. The importance of this chapter is that, even though we may spend decades or centuries on the Astral Plane, there are many more planes beyond that, each one even more beautiful and breathtaking than the one below, to expand into and continue our growth.

Philip Gilbert Ascends to the Mental Plane

(Philip Gilbert, PTW.) [Medium to Alice Gilbert:] There is a most wonderful young man building up, but in a blaze of light – brilliant white light – he is very advanced. He is far more advanced than you realized on earth. He is working very hard.

[Philip Gilbert to his mother:] As one acquires more knowledge and power, provided that one is in tune, one's consciousness seems to expand, one's whole tempo seems to accelerate, only one can't stand it for too long. Because, as I told you at first, I've deliberately attached myself to the astral plane to work and await you.

There is a new phase of existence beginning for me – very interesting. I am learning to keep two minds going, in a manner of speaking. I just don't know how to explain it. I can function mentally in two aspects of myself. I can be with you, keeping an eye on your doings, and I can also be having a math lesson! I have not yet tried to do my helper job as well as doing math. That would be more than I can cope with yet, as it demands all my resources. ... Advanced people here can actually project a sort of shadow image (equipped with power to think) of themselves into several situations, whilst their real Being is somewhere else. I think your Teacher once said something similar, but I am now trying this out and it is very queer. The projected image of me is attached by a thought-ray to my real Entity.

I was allowed to expand my consciousness for a longer period. I found that I could bear the increased light frequency and the surge of power for a much longer space – at least, it seemed to me. I think it is because all this time, I've been in a sense gradually absorbing it owing to the frequent calls on the auric power of the Chief that I make, to support me in my activities against the less 'amiable.' Anyhow, I 'rose,' though it is not really rising in height and, much to my pleasure, I found I could actually float and function for a time as an entity in this higher phase. I spent most of the time trying out motions and thought power. It was terrific.

Later, one goes through another sort of emerging process and acquires further power. I shall not do that till you

come. It is a willed and conscious act, not like death on earth. We shall be able to do it together. As one acquires more knowledge and power, provided that one is in tune, one's consciousness seems to expand, one's whole tempo seems to accelerate, only one can't stand it for too long. Because, as I told you at first, I've deliberately attached myself to the astral plane to work and to await you.

I am now realizing myself as the entity I am known as here, with a really [daring] past of adventures and strange knowledge, and I do find it rather difficult to feel myself back in the very short flash of life I spent in the 20th century, on earth. You also are to me the person I've known through the ages, and not 'mother,' and when you come at night, you sometimes emerge from earth ties and become your real self.

(Philip Gilbert, ITE.) My consciousness seems to be more and more in that luminous glow which is an ecstasy.

I am not physical at all now. I am very magnetized.

There are hardly words to give the nature of my new experience – I glow; the body which is the static ME is a form still; very powerful but composed of light irradiated particles – it is of the nature of flame. But this flame is creative. It can be molded by my Ego at will, or consolidate into an ordinary astral shape or blend in an ecstasy of mutual comprehension with others like me or with the more advanced. An inner withdrawal into a focus is the secret for acquiring transcendental knowledge.

I have surged outwards – now this shining luminosity must cloak itself and dip into the grey shadows and bring them into life – I am back in 'lower astral' but differently – I do not use the earlier techniques; I go in a dark cloak through which gleams light.

I lose the individual that you knew to an extent – but a pin-point remains and the thought image it builds is what you would see now – an ovoid glow.

First Impressions of the Mental Plane

(Philip Gilbert to his mother, *PTS.*) We are remote from earth consciousness. When you return [from your sleep travels], you “leave us behind,” for you have to reduce your frequency very considerably to get back to the physical.

Come into my world for a few minutes now and try to visualize it. It is a shimmering world, shifting and blending. ...

There are many ... spots of thought-created environments made “permanently” for our use by the higher people. An advanced being can develop enormous powers of exteriorizing thought without it turning into dense matter. He can hold such images fixed, and yet withdraw his surface attentions from them – leaving them in the background of consciousness. They project these images so that other people can live in them.

It seems that I was already attuned to a more rapid vibration than the astral, even when on earth.

The world where I live [is] to some extent a replica of yours.

(*W.T. Stead, BL.*) You will say, “Oh, then it is only a reflection of our world.” It is not that way – the earth is only a reflection of *this* world.

When we come to this land, we have ceased to desire food, drink and sleep; we are now pure spirit in the rough state; there is still more refining to be done in this next phase.

My life here has been a very normal, healthy and interesting affair, just as my life on earth was. I have been invested with no powers generally attributed to spirits and fairies; I am still just an ordinary man with an ordinary plain, blunt outlook on life; the change has in no way altered me. The only change there is in me is my greater ability to move speedily and to act quickly. I am rejuvenated, and this is a condition which becomes more marked as time goes on.

Our earth life may be forgotten, in so far as our individual task on earth is concerned, when that task was a matter of little or no interest to us. It is only the spiritual and mental knowledge and development which hinders and advances the individual here; and spirit knowledge is not hindered by whatever one’s job on earth may have been. In this respect, there is a great and sudden broadening of the point of view of all comers to this land.

(*John Heslop, FMABL.*) Many of the higher spheres and interior states have originated by the combined thoughts of Exalted Beings from Higher Worlds, and none are permitted to enter them until they have been purified and are advanced in Spiritual perception. But those who by prayer, faith, and especially love, have their feet firmly planted on the right road while still on earth rise rapidly from sphere to sphere.

The increasing beauty and radiance of the Higher Spheres can hardly be described in words. Every faculty and bent of mind receives its fulfillment here. Thus, there is the [Mental] Sphere, where the aspirations of your finest artists, poets and musicians are realized.

Awareness on the Mental Plane

(*F.W.H. Myers, RTI.*) The soul becomes possessed of a new awareness as well as of finer perceptions when he decides to go upwards rather than downwards on the ladder of consciousness; and, therefore, he enters the Fourth [Mental] Plane of being.

On earth, the average man’s normal ego is largely controlled by the body’s desires, though the spirit inspires its life and, at times, lights up the darkness of the human brain with luminous flashes. Still, the spirit, or what I call the deeper mind, can only faintly impress itself upon the ego. Now, in the [Mental Plane], the spirit is able to enter, with greater intensity, into the time measurement which I call the soul or ordinary consciousness. This soul becomes sensible of the change through his greatly increased intellectual powers. With that increased awareness comes greater concentration. The memory of the earth life, in its details, is for the time being lost. As long as the soul dwells in form, he is subject to the rhythm of the universe and, therefore, to some form of time. Conceive time and appearance as one symbol.

The soul bears with him, however, the fundamental emotional memory, or rather retains contact with it in the first stage on the Fourth Plane of life. This plane of color might be more aptly termed “The Breaking of the Image,” for on this level of consciousness, the soul learns how to control form, learns by myriad experiences the ghostliness of all substance. In the anterior period of his evolution, he has been controlled largely by substance. Slowly the graven image is broken, slowly the ego learns so to draw from the higher soul or spirit that he can, at will, break up his form and break from all forms, all appearances about him.

Of course, each individual’s experiences vary enormously. I take as my example a sensitive Soul-man who makes definite progress upwards, who does not, as do so many, journey with the undulatory motion of a sea wave, up and down, up and down, though always reaching a little in higher than before.

Now this sensitive Soul-man realizes first of all that he has entered a world of myriad colors, lights and sounds. He is sensible of a body entirely dissimilar from the human body. As regards appearance, it can only be described as being apparently a compound of light and colors unimaginable. The shape of this form is influenced by all the ego’s past acts so far as they have impressed themselves on his deeper consciousness. This colored compound may be grotesque, bizarre in form, may be lovely beyond words, may possess strange absurdities of outline, or may transcend the loftiest dream of earthly beauty.

In this many-colored region the form vibrates with extreme intensity, for now mind expresses itself more directly in form: so that we can hear the thoughts of other souls. At first only one at a time may break upon that hearing. But after a while we become sensible of the fact that we may hear the thoughts of several souls, each apart and distinct

from the other. We dwell in a world of appearances in some respects similar to the earth. Only all this vast region of appearances is gigantic in conception, terrifying and exquisite according to the manner in which it presents itself to the Soul-man. It is far more fluidic, less apparently solid than earth surroundings.

This many-colored world is nourished by light and life in a greater purity, vibrates at an unimaginable speed. The souls, who dwell within the first zone, realize that with increased consciousness they have gained a far greater sensitivity.

On this [luminous] plane, the struggle increases in intensity, the efforts expended are beyond the measure of earthly experience. But the results of such labor, of such intellectualized and spiritualized toil and battle also transcend the most superb emotion in the life of man. In brief, all experience is refined, heightened, intensified, and the actual zest of living is increased immeasurably.

The preceding remarks, outlining a more rarefied existence in the Super-terrestrial zone, must be regarded as merely a rough tracing of a very varied state of being. For instance, in that more spiritualized state, there are many forms of expression. In it the soul wears several bodies, passing from one to another as he advances. These become more and more subtle indeed, the fineness of their texture cannot be grasped or understood by even a super-scientist. One law prevails, however: your soul is only aware of those beings who possess bodies vibrating with the same intensity – that is, unless he puts himself into a state analogous to that strange sleep known as hypnosis.

When thus conditioned, he may go back, temporarily descend a rung of the ladder and make mental contact with a soul who inhabits a denser shape. He can even descend into Hades, enter its fog and come into touch with human beings. He is thereby frequently caught in the dream of the earth's personality; and it is as if the memory of his experiences on a higher plane were temporarily anaesthetized away. So he is incapable of conveying to earth – save with rare exceptions – any interesting or remarkable information.

Caught in the cocoon of earth memories, which frequently are not his own, he can merely speak of trivial material affairs. It is as if he were a drugged bee in a hive, a bee sated with honey.

His awareness on the [luminous] plane has vastly increased, but usually he cannot convey a sense of it to those individuals he may endeavor to contact if he chooses once more, like Orpheus, to go down into Hell in search of the beloved. These remarks will explain why so few ever receive any spontaneous impression of the departed. Indeed, men and women are as ghosts to us, and only when they seek us with faith and with love do they obtain any convincing suggestion of ourselves, of our earth personality. Such a search is legitimate and will neither hurt nor distress the one who is summoned or sought.

In his journey up the ladder, [man] is gradually emerging from that darkness in the sense that the light becomes brighter, more continuous. When he reaches the fourth stage [Mental Plane], his awareness is as brilliant as an ordinary man's awareness is feeble. There are far fewer gaps of unconsciousness, for the spirit can make a surer and more consistent contact with the soul by reason of the fineness of its body and its greater subtlety, by reason of increased intellectual activity on his part. The blind puppy is beginning to open his eyes at last.

Pray examine the picture of the night sea again. It is almost continually illumined by the beacon of the lighthouse. Only at long intervals does darkness descend. Now how is it possible to convey to human beings, by the primitive rude sounds called words, the implications that arise from this far greater awareness? For instance, the intensity of the thought processes of the emotional life seems limitless when compared with the sluggish movements of the human brain, with the crude passion that is roused in the stirring moments of earth life. Take the intellectual activity of a slug or a snail, compare it with that of a man and you will understand how different is the mental world of the soul on the Fourth Plane from that of the human being.

PART THREE: LIFE ON THE OTHER SIDE

Chapter 13: The Children's Sphere

Introduction

We begin our examination of life on the other side with this brief chapter describing an idyllic setting for children who cross over before their parents. They are cared for by loving experts in child psychology in a special part of the Astral Plane. At age 18, they move out into the main living areas. Grieving parents can be sure their child is in the very best of hands, and that grand reunions occur on the Astral Plane while they are dreaming, although they may not consciously recall the meetings..

"The Nursery of Heaven"

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) What of the souls who pass over as children; indeed, what of those, even, who pass into the spirit world at birth?

The answer is that they grow as they would have grown upon the earth-plane. But the children here – of all ages – are given such treatment and care as would never be possible in the earth world.

The young child, whose mind is not yet fully formed, is uncontaminated by earthly contacts and, on passing into the spirit world, it finds itself in a realm of great beauty, presided over by souls of equal beauty. This children's realm has been called the 'nursery of heaven' and surely anyone who has been fortunate enough to have it will say that a more apposite term could not be found.

The mental and physical growth of the child in the spirit world are much more rapid than in the earth world. You will recall what I told you about the absolute retentiveness of the memory here. The retentiveness begins as soon as the mind is capable of grasping anything at all, and that is very early. This seeming precocity is perfectly natural here because the young mind absorbs knowledge evenly. The temperament is carefully guided along purely spirit lines so that the possession of knowledge in one so young never takes upon it the obnoxiousness of earthly precociousness. The children are trained in strictly spirit matters first, and then they are usually taught about the earth world, if they have not already lived in it or if their earthly lives were very brief.

The [president] of the realm acts, in a general sense, in *loco parentis* and all the children, indeed, look upon him as a father.

The children's realm is a township in itself, containing everything that great minds, inspired by the greatest Mind, could possibly provide for the welfare, comfort, and education, and the pleasure and happiness, of its youthful inhabitants. The halls of learning are as fully equipped as are those larger establishments in our own sphere. Indeed, in many respects, they are more so since they have all the equipment for the diffusion of knowledge, and learning to those who are possessed of neither in the slightest degree and who must

therefore start at the very beginning, as they would have done had they remained upon the earth-plane. This concerns those children who have passed into the spirit world in their extreme infancy. Children who leave the earth world in their early years will continue their studies from where they left off, eliminating from the latter all that are of no further use and adding those that are spiritually essential. As soon as they reach a suitable age, the children can choose their future work and study for it accordingly.

(Julia Ames, AD.) When a newborn babe passes over, consciousness has hardly begun on earth. It is really born into this world rather than into yours. It has had no earth experience, no memory of this side.

(Philip Gilbert, PTW.) If you have not gone through the complete earth cycle to maturity – 21 – you have not a fully matured astral body either, unless you are re-incarnated. The astral body continues to grow, but, unless there is a special need, you don't learn languages!

Also, it is recognized here, so [spirit control Abdul Latif] says, that the person who completes his earth rhythm has had his full chance of spiritual evolution – his state in the astral world is what he has made it. But the young, who die through no fault of their own in battle, cannot be held responsible. It is unfair to leave them, unhelped, to face the inevitable consequence. Hence the bands of helpers who strive always to meet and aid.

Some children at once evolve, soon after death, into fully developed spirits if they have lived before.

(Spirit control Dee, LHH.) There are many who receive them, and they are very tenderly cared for until they awaken; that is, begin to see and hear by spirit means. We have watchers for them, like nurses in a hospital. And when it is noticed that one begins to show signs of wonder or curiosity, this one is taken to another place where experienced teachers look after them until they can understand that love surrounds them. This applies to those who were old enough on earth to have learned some things there.

When they are awakened enough and experienced enough to understand the loving thoughts that are sent to

their minds, they are examined carefully as to their different characteristics and their real mental ability; for we have learned that these manifest at a very early stage. No doubt this is much easier for us than for you, because we can usually read their thoughts quite readily.

When they have been studied and cared for in this manner for a time, they are placed in groups under such teachers as will be best fitted for their special characteristics. We have found that we make astonishing progress in their education by following this procedure, and we have wondered why it is not more understood on earth.

Q. 'Is this Dee writing?'

Yes. You know I have been teaching children nearly ever since I came. I have served in nearly all the various grades or wards. My classes have usually been those who were musically inclined, and it has been one of my greatest delights to see how readily many of them grasp the necessary ideas for a musical education. We have other teachers who are best fitted to teach those who seem destined for loving missionary work; and others who know how to encourage any scientific tendencies that may appear. We are often astonished at the precocity of some youngster in the way of mathematics. But possibly this astonishes me more than it would some because I was always so backward in that way.

With the younger children, there is of course more time spent in the earlier care, while their little minds are developing sufficiently to receive impressions. But even this time is much shorter than it is on earth, and a tiny babe is sometimes in the study class with marvellous quickness.

It is such dear work that it attracts a very loving class of workers, and if mothers on earth only knew what tender care they always have, there would certainly be less grief over the loss.

Q. 'Does a babe that dies before birth continue to live there?'

Yes, it lives, of course, and is cared for as tenderly as if years older. What difference does it make whether it is a few weeks old or many months old? It is a human being started on an immortal journey, which is only slightly interrupted no matter at what stage death may occur.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) The business of staying children is much exaggerated by the Spiritualists. You are a child for a while, growing an astral body, if you were a "new" individuality on your first earth-trip and died young. If you are re-incarnated and have built an astral body, you soon pass into your real self if you die young, yet, to an extent, once into incarnation, the etheric body has to pass through the whole process of growth, even if the physical vehicle is destroyed.

But, unfortunately, the law of "thought-ruts" operates for children, too: if they have been subjected to terrible mental experiences, they are affected here for a while, but we do all we can. There is a very big organization here for

tracking down newly arrived children. It is a favorite form of service, especially among women who come over.

The Situation of the Child Who Passes Over

(*Imperator, ST.*) [Stainton Moses:] Do children pass at once to a higher sphere?

No: the experience of the earth-life cannot be so dispensed with. The absence of contamination ensures a rapid passage through the spheres of purification, but the absence of experience and knowledge requires to be remedied by training and education, by spirits whose special care it is to train these tender souls, and supply them that which they have missed.

It is not a gain to be removed from earth-life, save in one way – that misuse of opportunities might have entailed greater loss and have more retarded progress.

Reunion of Parent and Child

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) There is always one question that arises in the minds of earth people in connection with children who have passed on: Shall we be able to recognize our children when we ourselves arrive in the spirit world? The answer is, most emphatically, yes, beyond all shadow of doubt. But how, if they have grown up in the spirit world and out of our sight, can that possibly be? To answer that, it is necessary to know a little more about one's self.

You must know that, when the physical body sleeps, the spirit body temporarily withdraws from it while still remaining connected to it by a magnetic cord. The cord is the veritable lifeline between the spirit body and the earth body. The spirit thus situated will either remain in the vicinity of the earth body or it will gravitate to that sphere which its earthly life, so far, has entitled it to enter. The spirit body will thus spend part of the lifetime of the earthly body in spirit lands. And it is upon these visits that one meets relatives and friends who have passed on before, and it is similarly upon these visits that parents can meet their children and thus watch their growth.

In the majority of cases, the parents are not allowed within the children's own sphere but there are plenty of places where such meetings can take place. Remembering what I have said about the retentiveness of the subconscious mind, you will see that, in such cases, the problem of recognizing a child does not arise because the parent has seen the child and observed its growth throughout the whole of the intervening years in just the same way the parent would have done if the child had remained in the earth world.

There must be, of course, a sufficient bond of attachment between the parent and the child, or else this law will not come into operation. Where such does not exist, the conclusion is obvious. That link of affection or kindly interest must also exist between all human relationships in the spirit world, whether it be with husband and wife, parent

and child, or between friends. Without that interest or affection, it is problematical whether there would ever be any meeting at all, except fortuitously.

Two Children Who Passed Over as Infants Try to Understand the Earth They Never Knew

(*Spirit Control Mary and two unnamed children, LHH.*) They look upon it [Earth life] as a mystery.

"We are not able to comprehend many things. We hear of the mechanical devices there and wonder much about them. We move in a flash of time. You are studying ways of getting about upon the surface of the earth, in the air, on the water, or maybe under the water. We have heard of your submarines and airplanes, automobiles and railroad trains. It all seems so slow, so difficult, so unnecessary! How do you ever find time to move from one place to another! Then you have to spend so much time in sleep. And Mary tells us that you have to spend time and strength and money in providing things to eat and drink. How can you be patient with it all?"

Q. 'Have you studied the earth enough to be able to sense or understand material things as compared with your spiritual objects?'

The reply seems to us to show that they do not fully understand, for they still refer to actions rather than to things.

"We try to understand. We try to move as slowly as your fastest travel, and we grow impatient. We can have some sensation of taste, but we cannot understand how people would ever be willing to spend much time at it. We have tried our best to sleep, but we could not succeed, and can only guess how that is accomplished. You see, we are handicapped when we try to help earthborn persons when they first arrive here."

[Much later:] Q. Are the children still there?'

"They are here, and are talking among themselves about earth affairs. They are as much interested about the earth as you are to hear about us."

Q. 'Have they just become interested since we began to write?'

"They did not know much about it before that. They were not drawn to it in any way, and simply lived the spirit life as it manifested itself here."

Q. 'What are they interested in? What do they wish to know?'

"About the daily life, the work and the pleasures and the conditions generally."

'I do not suppose they understand how we seem to get tired, so weary that it seems almost impossible to move?'

"Not at all. They do not know the sensations of weariness. They want you to tell them how it feels?"

Sis tried to picture such a condition.

"That, they think, must spoil life entirely!"

Then they themselves asked: "How do you get over it?"

Sis described how rest was taken.

"Well, what next?"

"We also recuperate our powers by eating. That you do not know much about?"

"No, not from necessity. We have tasted fruit here and think it good, only we forget to eat it as a rule."

Q. 'You do not know hunger then?'

"No. How does it feel?"

After that was described, they remarked: "What a bother! We are glad we do not live there. How do you get about?"

Q. 'I suppose you do not know much about our methods of travel?'

"No, only as you have told us."

Q. 'Do you have horses there?'

"Not that we have seen. I have heard about them."

We then tried to tell them the speed of the trains, saying that it was about a mile a minute. But as they knew nothing of either a mile or a minute, that did not mean anything to them. We then said that perhaps they had some idea of the length of a day because that was the time between one time of our writing and the next.

"That tells us a little. But we do lots of things between times. And we can travel, oh, so far! How far would it be in miles?"

Chapter 14: The Animal Kingdom

Introduction

Animal-lovers will be reassured to learn that our beloved pets also have sanctuary on the Other Side, either with a relative who is already there or in a special facility to await our crossing. And wild animals lose their “wild” and peacefully coexist with each other and humans.

Animals Have Lost the Need to Prey on each Other

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) The two chief earthly factors are gone from all the animals in these lands – the need for food, which makes them prey upon others, and fear of both their own creature-kind and of human-kind. Remove these two and there you have the result. They are a great joy to us – and to themselves.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The woods and park lands are a dream of enchantment to wander in and many are the occasions when we have strolled through them or rested beneath the trees while the deer, friendly and unafraid, have come to us and made themselves acquainted. They are beautiful creatures, enjoying such freedom as only the spirit world can give them and they form an integral part of the superb landscape.

(*W.T. Stead, BI.*) All the animals you have loved on earth and educated to understanding will be with you here. Those other animals who belong to no one in particular are here too, but they are in their own places.

Dogs – On Earth

(*Philip Gilbert to his mother, PTW.*) Your pup has a very high form of dog soul.

Q. Do dogs come over after death?

Some do. A dog can develop a real ‘soul’ if it lives in the right conditions, with people who treat it as if it were an intelligent being. The great bond of love which inspires it – really unselfish love in the end – cannot die. But the discarnate dog needs to attach itself to some discarnate person or it may stay around and live with its earthly owner. It suffers a bit at first through not being seen and spoken to, but people here who like dogs help it. Very few dogs, says A.L., evolve into the higher planes, and, if they do, it is probably by reincarnating as people. The great majority of animals reincarnate over and over again in a sort of group – that is the cause of ‘instinct,’ which so intrigues zoologists.

Now I’m going to tell you a queer thing about your dogs. The spirit of our dear wise West Highland Kirsty passed

into Jean the Golden Retriever and that beautiful dog-soul has now re-incarnated in Jean II, the Spaniel – you feel that same almost human wisdom of any exceptional type in them. No, Honey did not come in that category – she stayed with Grandpa, and still floats round with him. But a dog here is at the mercy of its impulses, as it does not learn consciously to control its comings and goings. Only the strong love-bond gives it spiritual life and it has to be helped by its master; otherwise it may blend into a group of its kind and re-incarnate.

Jean II [Alice Gilbert’s third dog] is a very highly-developed dog-spirit. Hence you are right in not allowing too much excitement and racing with other dogs. A dog has to suffer like a human being if its soul is developing. It is constantly straining upwards to an owner who is sympathetic. Adapting itself, learning to understand language, living in communion with a more highly advanced being, it constantly has, like ourselves, to suppress animal instincts. ...

The dog is growing a spiritual ‘body.’ And a very noble soul it is at best, as you know. Your Jean is really trying to talk. I can read her doggy thoughts. The little noises she makes are a vague fumbling effort to imitate your speaking.

Animals Sense Spirits

(*Thavis, TIH.*) Animals are different [than humans]. Their senses are far more acute than those of humans. Often some domestic animals – dogs and cats or even others, chickens and some pet birds – will sense that a soul is near them, unseen and without a scent. The animals or birds seem to know that something is there. They will often act in a manner that is not normal for them. Birds, chickens will get very excited. Dogs will often howl or will run away and hide. Wild animals in a forest have a much keener set of sense than domesticated animals.... But strangely enough, wild animals will sense a soul that is near them and it does not seem to disturb them at all. I do not know why this is so, but that is my experience.

Chapter 15: Hierarchy and Administration

Introduction

Here we are given a brief insight into the hierarchy that oversees the soul plane and the qualities needed by those who preside. The main contributor is Monsignor Benson, who describes visiting the home of the being who presides over the presidents of the various realms, and the latter's visit to Benson's home.

(In his books, Benson refers to these people as "rulers" but says that "president" is a better term, so to save readers the need to translate on the fly, that is the title used for this chapter only.)

"Government" by Natural Law

(*Monsignor Benson to new arrival Roger, MALIWU.*) However hard you look, you will see no signs whatever of any form of government. It is there, nonetheless. I dare say you were thinking in terms of legislatures, acts of parliament, by-laws, orders-in-council, decrees, and many more horrors of ordered life on earth.

The truth is ... that our "government" is by natural laws and therefore the best in the whole universe. Better, a million times, than anything that could ever be devised from man's ingenuity. Natural laws need no enforcing; they enforce themselves.

The natural laws on earth are not so easily perceived. Few, for instance, can see the natural law at work when thoughts are emitted. We can here, and their effect. Obviously, some of those laws have no effect whatever on earth. If you had tried to shift your physical body by the power of thought, as you are able to do now, Roger, you would have remained where you were.

The natural laws are not the only means of what might be called government here. We have presidents. ... Each realm has its president. ... I'm talking about the realms of light now. You can see for yourself how much pleasanter and easier it makes life. No falling of one government merely to make way for another equally bad or stupid or ineffective. No political fanatics with insane and inane ideas and, what is most important, no individuals holding office who are totally unfitted for it. If the people of earth would like to settle some of their worst problems, the spirit world could give them a hint or two on how to do it.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Each realm has a president ... and all the presidents belong to a higher sphere than that over which they preside.

The position is such that it calls for high attributes on the part of its holder, and the office is held only by those who have had long residence in the spirit world. Many of them have been here thousands of years. Great spirituality is not alone sufficient; if it were, there are many wonderful souls who could hold such office with distinction. But a president must possess a great deal of knowledge and experience of humanity, and in addition, he must always be able

to exercise wise discretion in dealing with the various matters that come before him. And all the president's experience and knowledge, all his sympathy and understanding, are ever at the disposal of the inhabitants of his realm, while his kindness and infinite patience are always in evidence. This great soul is ever accessible to any who wish to consult him or bring him their problems for solution.

A president's knowledge of the people over whom he presides is vast. Lest it should be thought that it is humanly impossible for one mind to carry so much knowledge of the affairs of so many people as there must be in one realm, it must be understood that the mind of the incarnate is limited in its range of action by the physical brain. In the spirit world, we have no physical brain to hamper us, and our minds are fully and completely retentive of all knowledge that comes to us. We do not forget things we have learned in the spirit world, whether they be spiritual lessons or plain facts. But it takes time, as you would say, to learn, and that is why the presidents of realms have spent many thousands of earthly years in the spirit world because they are placed in charge of so many people.

For the presidents have to guide and direct them, help them in their work, and unite with them in their recreation, to be an inspiration to them, and to act towards them, in every sense of the word, as a devoted father. There is no such thing as unhappiness in this realm – if for no other reason than that it would be impossible with such a grand soul to not smooth away the troubles.

Office of Inquiries, Headquarters, and Similar Hierarchical Lines of Organization

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) Lists have been kept of all people who have died violently in any way, recently, and of those who are still "unsettled" here.

It seems endless, the number of people needing help. Our control department has lists of them, running into *millions* – yes, literally!

I have now the habit of "telepathing" to our H.Q. for my assignments of work to be done, and, having digested this, I go first and make all the needed enquiries as to the location of the person I am to seek out.

[An English person] had lived at Amiens. She had lost her child during the war, not by death, but by loss when fleeing before the German onrush. ... But the child had been adopted by quite kindly parents and is now growing up a sturdy chap; this we found out through our Research Gang. Yet the mother still went on searching; she would not believe that she was dead. ... When at last she grasped what had happened, we took her to the boy, and she is happy, watching over him.

Q: What do you mean by the Research Gang?

A: There is a tendency among you people to think that we are omniscient – knowing everything and everybody! This is absurd – just as absurd here as with you. We can't trace an individual entity, in our world or yours, without some link. A physical link such as a letter will put us in touch with someone in the body, but to dig out a discarnate one – from trillions! – takes some doing. We have to link with the spot where he lived and pick up his tracks. One thing we have that you have not – speed! We can get on with the job in what you call seconds.

Well, just now [WWII], there are so many people lost, bewildered, out of the normal, one set of people, here devote themselves to perfecting this form of tracking down relatives and so on. It is often the only thing needed, but essential, as in the above case, to quieten and stabilize a person newly flung out of incarnation by violence. You see, it is all common-sense.

(Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.) Situated in the city, which is not far from my home here, is a large building which carries out the important functions of an office of records and inquiries. Here knowledge is to be obtained upon an infinite range and variety of subjects and affairs. Of all these, what closely interests us at the moment is that department which deals with the actual passing of folk from the earth to the spirit world.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) You are anxious ... to know when your friend is likely to be coming to the spirit world to reside; you want to know when his 'death' is going to take place. Your first step is to go to the inquiry office. There you will be readily assisted to consult the right person for your needs. You will not find yourself passed from one 'official' to another, nor will you be submitted to other forms of procrastination. All that will be required of you is to furnish the name of your friend and you will be asked to focus your attention upon him to establish the necessary thought link. When this has been accomplished, you will be requested to wait for a brief period – in your time it would amount to only a few minutes. The requisite forces are out into action with astonishing rapidity and we shall be presented with the information of the time of our friend's arrival. The actual date may mean very little to some of us.... Whatever our condition of proximity to the earth-plane, we shall be assured that when that event is close at hand, we

shall be informed of it without fail. In the meantime, we shall be given a conception of the closeness of the event or otherwise.

The organization that exists behind this one service should give you some idea of the vastness of the whole office of help and inquiry. There are many others. The same building houses people who can provide answers to the innumerable questions that arise in the minds of us here, especially among the newly arrived, and its extent covers the whole range of spirit activity. ... This office employs thousands of people, usefully and happily.

In the city, there is an immense building which exercises the function of an office of records and inquiries. (In the earth world, you have your multifarious offices of inquiry. Why should we not have ours?)

Here a great host of people is available to answer all manner of questions that are likely to arise both from the newly arrived and from those of longer residence. Occasions will occur when we need a solution to some problem that has arisen. We may consult our friends upon the matter, only to find that they are as uninformed as we are ourselves. We could, of course, make an appeal to some higher personage and we should receive all the help we wanted. But the higher beings have their work to do, in just the same way as we have, and we forbear to interrupt them unnecessarily. And so we take our difficulty to this grand building in the city.

Among its many important duties is that of keeping a register of people newly arrived in this particular realm. ... But a still more important service is that of knowing beforehand of those who are about to come into this realm. This information is accurate and infallibly reliable. It is collected through a varied process of thought transmission, of which the inquirer sees little or nothing. He is merely presented with the required information. The value of this service can be readily imagined.

In normal times upon the earth-plane, when transitions maintain a fairly steady level, it is valuable enough, but in times of great wars, when souls are passing into the spirit world in the thousands, the advantages of such an office are almost incalculable. Friend can meet friend and together can unite in helping others who are passing into spirit lands.

How Decisions are Made

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) As soon as some new building is desired, the president of the realm is consulted. ... Knowing, as he does, so intimately the needs and wishes of all in his realm, there never arises a case where some building is required for the use and service of all but that the wish is granted. The president then transmits the request to those in authority above him, who in turn refer it to those still higher. We then foregather in the central temple in the city where we are received by one whose word is law.

Now, this seemingly involved procedure of passing on our request from one to another may suggest to the mind the tortuous methods of officialdom, with its delays and protractedness. The method may be somewhat similar, but the time taken in performance is a very different matter. It is no exaggeration to say that within the space of a few earthly minutes, our request has been stated, and the permission – with a gracious blessing accompany it – has been granted.

Each and every form of work has its separate organization. There are no such things as haphazard methods. Every type of pursuit has those in charge of it who are experts and the administration admits of no muddle or fuss. There is no mismanagement, for everything runs with the smoothness of perfectly constructed machinery under the operation of efficient hands.

It must not be concluded from this that we are infallible. That would be a totally wrong estimation, but we know that whatever our mistakes may be, we are always sure that our perfect organization will come to our rescue and help us to put things right. Mistakes are never frowned upon as a piece of glaring inefficiency, but are regarded as very good lessons for us by which we can profit to the fullest extent. But because of this sympathy with our mistakes, we are not careless on that account, for we have our natural and proper pride in our work, which spurs us on to do our best always – and free from mistakes.

It is something of a proud boast upon the earth-plane that you have reached such an age of speed. By comparison with our rapidity of motion, why, you are scarcely moving! You must wait until you come to live here with us. Then you will know, too, what real efficiency and real organization are like.

They are like nothing upon the earth-plane.

The Spiritual Hierarchy Has Foreknowledge of Earth Events

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The earth world, in its blind ignorance, hurls hundreds of thousands of souls into this our land, but those who dwell in the high realms are fully aware long before it happens, of what is to take place upon the earth-plane, and a fiat goes forth to the realms nearer the earth to prepare for what is to come.

Personages from those [high] realms have more than astonished me with the accuracy of their foreknowledge of events that were to take place upon the earth-plane. Their means of acquiring this information is far beyond the comprehension of us in this realm.

Foreknowledge of terrestrial events both national and private is possessed by a certain order of beings in the spirit world and, when expedient, this knowledge is communicated to others who in turn pass it on to those principally concerned. Among the first to receive pre-knowledge of an impending war are the different homes of rest. The office of inquiry will be similarly informed.

Those wise beings in the higher realms are in possession of all knowledge of what is transpiring upon the earth world.

The President of the Spirit Realms

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Many of the presidents who [oversee] the realms here have been living here thousands of years. It requires the highest attributes to become one: for example, knowledge of humanity and sympathy, understanding, discretion, patience, kindness and spirituality. Those are a few that are demanded. A president's knowledge is prodigious. At least that is how it would appear to earthly eyes. But you know ... how memories work here. It's safe to say that the president of a realm has a vast knowledge of the people under his care, and that is what makes him so very different from other folk. For one thing, the presidents belong to realms higher than those over which they preside.

But over and above the presidents is one who is the greatest of them all, and *he* is the president of the spirit world.

A Visit to the President of the Spirit Realms

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) [Ruth and I] have even visited the high abode of the greatest of them all. ... Omar is himself in personal attendance upon him and is, in fact, his right hand.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) [The Chaldean, Omar] came, he said, with an invitation from the great soul whom we had assembled to honor upon that memorable day in the temple for us to visit him at his own home in the high realm in which he lived.

The illustrious personage, towards whose home in the high realms we were making our way, was known by sight to every soul in the realms of light. His wish was always treated as a command and his word was law. The blue, white and gold in his robe, evidence in such enormous proportions, revealed the stupendous degree of his knowledge, spirituality, and wisdom. There were thousands who named Him as their 'beloved master,' the principal among whom being the Chaldean [Omar], who was His 'right hand.' As to his special function, he was the president of all the realms of the spirit world and he exercised collectively that function which the particular president of a realm exercises individually. All other presidents, therefore, were responsible to him and he, as it were, united the realms and welded them into one, making them one vast universe, created and upheld by the Great Father of all.

To attempt to define the immense magnitude of his powers in the spirit world would be to essay the impossible. Even were it possible, understanding would fail. Such powers have no counterpart, no comparison, even, with any administrative powers upon the earth-plane. Earthly minds can only conjure up those individuals who ruled great kingdoms upon earth, who held sway over vast territories, it

may be, but who did so through fear alone, and where all who lived under him lived as serfs and slaves. No earthly king throughout the whole narrative of the history of the earth world ever presided over a state so vast as that presided over by this illustrious personage of whom I am speaking. And his kingdom is ruled by the great universal law of true affection. Fear does not, could not, exist in the minutest, tiniest fraction because there is not, and cannot be, the slightest cause for it. Nor will there ever be. He is the great living visible link between the Father, the Creator of the Universe, and His children.

But notwithstanding the supreme elevation of his spiritual position, he descends from his celestial home to visit us here in these realms, as I have described to you in a former occasion. And it is permissible for others of incomparably lesser degree to visit him in his own home.

There is nothing unsubstantial, vague or unreal about this regal being. We have beheld him on those great festival days that we have in the spirit world. He is not some 'spiritual experience,' some grand upliftment of the soul produced within us by some invisible means from some invisible source. He is a real living person, as firm as reality as we are ourselves – and we are more real than are you upon the earth-plane, though you are not conscious of it yet! ...

There are mistaken notions that the beings of the highest realms are so ethereal as to be practically invisible except to others of their kind and that they are utterly and completely unapproachable; that no mortal of lesser degree could possibly view them and survive. It is commonly held that these beings are so immeasurably higher than the rest of us that it will be countless eons of time before we shall ever be permitted to cast our eyes upon them even from a remote distance.

That is sheer nonsense.

[The Chaldean, Omar] came behind us and allowed his hands to rest upon our heads for a brief moment. ... The Chaldean told us that by placing his hands upon our heads ... would ... have the effect, in addition to giving us power to travel, of adjusting our vision to the extra intensity of light that we should encounter in the high realm. ... The Chaldean asked us to make ourselves completely passive and to remember that we were upon a journey for our enjoyment and not as a test of our spiritual endurance. 'And now, my friends,' said he, 'our arrival is awaited. So let us be off.'

We immediately felt ourselves to be floating, but this sensation ceased abruptly after what seemed but a second of time, and thereafter we had no sense of movement whatever. A light flashed before our eyes. It was extremely bright, but it was by no means startling. It vanished as quickly as it came and, coincidental with its disappearance, I could feel the solid ground under my feet. And then the first vision of this high realm opened before our eyes.

We were in a dimension of unparalleled beauty. There is no imagination upon the earth-plane that can visualize such inexpressible beauty and I can give you only some

meager details of what we saw in the limited terms of the earth-plane.

We were standing within the realm of a king – that was evident to us at once. We stood upon an elevation some height above the city; our good friends had taken us to this particular location to present us with this superb view. It would not be possible, they said, to spend more than a limited period here, and so it was the wish of the Chaldean's master that we should see as much as possible within that period.

Stretching before us was the wide stream of a river, looking calm, peaceful, and overwhelmingly lovely, as the heavenly sun touched every tiny wave with myriad tints and tones. Occupying a central position in the view, and upon the right bank of the river, was a spacious terrace built to the water's edge. It seemed to be composed of the most delicate alabaster. A broad flight of steps led up to the most magnificent building that the mind could ever contemplate.

It was several stories high, each of them being arranged in a series of orders, so that each occupied a gradually diminishing area until the topmost was reached. Its exterior appearance was, if anything, almost plain and unadorned, and it was obvious why this should be so. The whole edifice was exclusively composed of sapphire, diamond, and topaz, or, at least, their celestial equivalent. These three precious stones constituted the crystalline embodiment of the three colors blue, white and gold, and they corresponded with the colors which we had seen in the robe of our celestial visitor ... in the temple and which he carried in such an immense degree.

The blue, white and gold of the jeweled palace, touched by the pure rays of the great central sun, were intensified and magnified a thousandfold and flashed forth in every direction their beams of the purest light. Indeed, the whole edifice presented to our bewildered gaze one vast volume of sparkling irradiation. ...

The precious stones [the Chaldean informed us] were proper to the realm which we were now visiting. In our own realm, the buildings are opaque, albeit they have a certain translucence of surface. But they are ponderous and heavy by comparison with the upper realms. We had journeyed through many other spheres to reach this present one, but had we paused to observe the land through which we had passed, we should have seen a gradual transformation taking place until the relatively heavy-looking materials of our realm became transmuted into the crystalline substance upon which our gaze was now fastened. ...

We could see, surrounding the palace, many acres of the most enchanting gardens laid out in such fashion that, from the distant and elevated viewpoint which we occupied, they presented a huge and intricate pattern as in some superbly-wrought eastern carpet. ...

Though we could scarcely remove our eyes from the superlative glory of the palace and its grounds, yet the Chaldean gently drew our attention to the remainder of our prospect.

It extended for miles upon countless miles – or so it seemed to us. The range of our vision was increased in these rarified regions beyond all human conception, and so it seemed that literally an unending vista spread before us of more earthly miles than it is possible to contemplate. And all through this wide expanse, we could see other magnificent buildings built of still more precious stones – of emerald and amethyst, to name but two, and, far away, what looked like pearl. Each of the different buildings was set amid the most entrancing gardens, where trees were growing of unimaginable richness of color and grandeur of form. Wherever we cast our eyes, there we could see the flashing of jeweled buildings, reflecting back the rays of the central sun, the myriad colors from the flowers, and the scintillations from the waters of the river that flowed before us far away into the distance.

As we were gazing spellbound upon the scene, a sudden flash of light seemed to come from the palace directly to the Chaldean and it was acknowledged by an answering flash which he sent back to the palace. Our presence in the realm was known, and as soon as we had feasted our eyes upon the view, we were asked to walk within the palace where our host would be waiting to receive us. ... We therefore proceeded at once towards the palace.

By the same means of locomotion that had brought us into the sphere, we quickly found ourselves walking upon the terrace beside the river and up a broad flight of steps that led to the main entrance of the palace. The stonework of the terrace and the steps was pure white, but we were much surprised by its apparent softness underfoot, for it was like walking upon the velvet softness of a well-tended lawn. Our footsteps made no sound, but our garments rustled as we walked along, otherwise our progress would have been a silent one except for our conversation. There were, of course, many other sounds to be heard. We had not stepped into a realm of silence!

Our stay could not be prolonged beyond our capacity to resist the rarity of the atmosphere and the intensity of light, notwithstanding the charge of spiritual force that the Chaldean and the Egyptian had give us. As we passed through, therefore, we had but a fleeting glimpse of the grandeur that encompassed us. ...

As we walked down the corridors, we met and were greeted by the most friendly and gracious beings, who thus added to our welcome. Welcome, indeed, was the overmastering feeling that enveloped us as we first put foot within the palace. There was no coldness, but everywhere the warmth of friendliness and affection.

At last, we paused before a small chamber, and the Chaldean told us that we had reached the highest point of our journey. I did not feel exactly nervous, but I wondered what formalities were to be observed.... The Chaldean ... immediately reassured us by telling us to follow him and merely to observe those rules dictated by good taste.

We entered. Our host was seated by a window. As soon as he saw us, he rose and came forward to greet us. First, he thanked the Chaldean and the Egyptian for bringing us to him. Then he took us each by the hand and bade us welcome to his home. There were several vacant chairs close to that in which he had been seated and he suggested that we might like to sit with him there and enjoy the view. It was, he explained, his favorite view.

We drew close to the window and we could see beneath us a bed of the most magnificent white roses, as pure white as a field of snow, and which exhaled an aroma as exalting as the blooms from which it came. White roses, our host told us, were flowers he preferred above all others.

We seated ourselves, and I had an opportunity, as our host spoke to us, of observing him at close quarters where before I had but seen him from a distance. Seeing him thus, in his own home and surroundings, his facial appearance was, in general, similar to that which he had presented when he visited us in the temple in our own realm. There were differences, however, as we saw him here; differences that were largely a matter of light intensity. His hair, for example, seemed to be golden when he came to us. Here it seemed to be as of bright golden light, rather than of the color of gold. He looked to be young, to be of eternal youthfulness, but we could feel the countless eons of time, as it is known on earth, that lay behind him.

When he spoke, his voice was sheer music, his laugh as a rippling of the waters, but never did I think it possible for one to breathe forth such affection, such kindness, such thoughtfulness and consideration; and never did I think it possible for one individual to possess such an immensity of knowledge as is possessed by this celestial king. One felt that ... he held the key to all knowledge and wisdom. But, strange as it may sound, though we had been transported unfathomable distances to the presence of this transcendently wonderful being, yet here in his very presence, we felt perfectly at home, perfectly at ease with him. He laughed with us, he joked with us, he asked us what we thought of his roses, and had the Chaldean managed to keep us merry upon our way thither. He spoke to each of us individually, displaying an exact acquaintance with all our concerns, collectively and personally. Then finally he came to the reason for his invitation to us to visit him.

In company with my friends, he said, I had visited the dark realms and I had recounted what I had seen there. He thought that it would be in the nature of a pleasant contrast if we were to visit the highest realm and see for ourselves some of its beauties; to show that the inhabitants of such high realms are not shadowy, unreal people, but, on the contrary, they are like ourselves, capable of feeling and exhibiting the emotions of their fine natures, capable of human understanding, of human thought, and as easily susceptible to laughter and free-hearted merriment as were we ourselves. And he had asked us to visit him in order to

tell us himself that these realms, wherein we were now visiting, were within the reach of every soul that is born upon the earth-plane, that no one can deprive us of that right; and that although it may take countless years of time to reach those realms, yet there is all eternity in which to achieve that end, and that there are unlimited means to help us upon our way. That, he said, is the simple, great fact of spirit life. There are no mysteries attached to it; all is perfectly straightforward, plain, and unrestricted by complicated beliefs, religious or otherwise. It requires no adherence to any particular form of orthodox religion, which, of itself, has no authority to assure any single soul of its powers to secure the soul's 'salvation.' No religious body that ever existed can do that.

And so, this realm of incomparable beauty was free and open to all to work their way thither from the very lowest and foulest realm. It may take eons of time to accomplish, but that is the great and superb finale of the lives of the earth world's millions of souls.

Our good friend, the Chaldean, then mentioned to his 'master' that our stay had almost reached its limit. The latter said he was sorry to observe that it was so, but that such powers as had been invoked for us had their limitations, and, so, for our comfort, we must work within them. However, he added, there are other occasions and thus he extended further invitations to us.

We now rose and I could not resist the lure of the view of the roses from the window. I gazed out once more, then we made ready to depart.

Our gracious host said he would accompany us to the hill from which we had had our first glimpse of his kingdom. We followed a different route from that by which we had reached the palace. And what was our delight when it led us directly to the rose bed. Stooping, our host culled three of the most choice blooms that mortal eyes have ever beheld and presented one to each of us. Our joy was still further heightened by the knowledge that with the affection that we should shower upon them, the blooms would never fade and die. My one anxiety was that in taking them to our own realm, we should see them crushed, perhaps, by the unaccustomed density of our heavier atmosphere. But our host assured us that they would not, for they would be borne up by our thoughts of them and of the giver, and between the one and the other, they would be amply supported, and would so remain.

At length we reached our point of departure. Words could not express our feelings, but our thoughts passed un-faillingly to him who had brought us this supreme happiness, this foretaste of our destiny – and of the destiny of the whole earth world and the whole spirit world. And with a blessing upon us all, and with a smile of such affection, of such ineffable benignity, he bade us God-speed, and we found ourselves once more in our own realm.

I have tried to tell you something of what we saw, but words cannot be found to describe it because I cannot trans-

late the purely spiritual into earthly terms. My account must therefore fall far, far short.

The President of the Spirit Realms Visits

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) [Monsignor to Roger:] Do you remember you once asked us if we knew how old the spirit world is, and that we told you about *one* being, at least, who was in existence himself before the earth was? You remember, of course. Well, it is he who is coming and, incidentally, it is he who is the president of all the realms of the spirit world. ...

You know, Roger, there are folk on earth who believe that the beings of the highest realms never by any chance leave those realms because it would be too appallingly distasteful for them to leave the rarified state in which they live. That is absolutely wrong. Those marvelous beings can, *and do*, journey into the different realms. It sometimes transpires that an individual may be speaking to one such personage and be totally unaware of it.

He is not the Father of the universe.... He is known by sight, Roger, to every single soul living in the realms of light. How many thousands there are who name him their "beloved master" ... it is impossible to say.

He exercises over *all* the realms the function that the individual president exercises over the realm to which he is appointed. He unifies the whole of the realms of the spirit world into one gigantic universe, over which reigns the Father of us all. You cannot have the remotest conception ... of the magnitude, the immensity or the powers possessed by him, and yet, with it all, he is the most gracious being it is possible to contemplate. His position is one of absolute regality, if one can so term it, while he himself is indescribable.

You will be able to judge for yourself, very soon, the enormous degree of knowledge, spirituality, and wisdom he possesses. The colors denoting these three attributes are blue, white, and gold and he has them upon his robe in enormous proportions.

As we assembled before the house, we could perceive a distinct brightening of the light upon the outskirts of our small 'estate.' And we knew this for an unmistakable sign that our visitors were near. ... Another moment and we saw them approaching. ...

Our visitor took the hands of each of us, and spoke a word of kindly greeting. Franz and Peter [Haydn and Tchaikovsky, who happened to be visiting Benson] had each taken an arm of Roger to give him assurance, and the picture presented by this action at once amused our visitor, for it chanced that our two friends had taken a somewhat firm hold upon Roger's arm.

"What is this, my children?" he laughed. "You look to be holding the boy to prevent his escape from us. ... Come now, Roger, my child," he said, "what is there to fear? Would you be fearful of *me*? Give me your hand – so. Now banish

hence all fears, never to return. It sounds like an incantation, doesn't it?"

Roger's confidence was restored immediately and he was himself once more.

"I think it will be safe now to release your prisoner, Peter and Franz."

The two appeared somewhat confused because neither of them had realized, nor Roger, that they were still linked in arms. The rest of us enjoyed this little episode, trifling enough in itself, but filled with kindness and humanity, and revealing, as clearly as the noonday sun, that even the highest personages from the highest realms of the spirit world are not impossible beings, grim and forbidding, humorless and unsmiling, but that they breathe forth from the very essence of all that is warmhearted and human.

Roger never for an instant took his eyes from our illustrious guest, who was habited as he usually is upon such visits: that is to say, in a gossamer-like white robe, bordered with a deep band of gold, fastened by a great pink pearl. His hair was golden, though when this is seen in the high realm where he lives, the golden *hue* becomes golden *light*.

What seemed to attract Roger most of all was the countenance of our visitor, for following upon what we had told him of his immense *age*, as measured in earthly time, and running into millions of years, yet could Roger perceive no signs of the passage of time. Yet most assuredly when he spoke to Roger, the latter knew that there stretched behind him aeons of time, while he presented the outward appearance of eternal youthfulness.

At length we repaired indoors; our guest seated himself in the special armchair while we occupied a half-circle round

him – seated also, I need hardly add, for upon all such occasions, we behaved like rational human beings!

Our guest spoke to each of us in turn and here again, lest I should be misunderstood, let me hasten to affirm that our conversation was also upon rational lines. We were most certainly not like a group of school-children being submitted to an awful inquisition by some bloodless inspector. We were free to speak when we wished, subject to the demands of ordinary good manners. And what is most important, we had many an occasion for laughter – and we laughed. ... Our guest thanked the two composers for all their work, as well as that of their colleagues, and assured them of his ever continued help and inspiration. It was interesting ... to hear the three discussing a number of musical technicalities with lively vigor.

[After the president left,] what we had enjoyed was no 'spiritual experience,' such as the religiously-minded on earth might consider it to be. An overwhelming experience, it would be foolish to deny, and its spiritual value would be equally foolish to ignore, but the emotions we felt were deliriously bright, cheerful, happy, exhilarating emotions; never pious or sanctimonious, nor so awe-inspiring as to leave us bereft of all sense of complete enjoyment – for the latter is what is intended by the visit, and not something done solely for the 'good of our immortal souls.' Those same immortal souls would derive superabundant benefit in a natural way, without overlaying it with an unnatural, impossible religiosity.

Chapter 16: Soul Plane Activities

Introduction

Here we learn of the myriad activities available on the soul plane for work and play, but because work is often playful and play taken seriously, the line of often blurred. And almost all work has some element of service to others. This chapter makes mockery of the phrases “laid to rest” and “rest in peace.” Life over there is anything but idle.

Spirits Do NOT Spend Their Time in Prayer and Praise

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) The spirit world is at all times a place where human beings can live in such comfort and happiness as they were meant to do *from the beginning*. We do *not*, therefore, spend our eternity in constant ‘prayer and praise’ because that mode of life would be not life at all, not even mere existence. We do *not* occupy our time – or waste it – in profound theological discussions upon obscure theories, nor upon the more commonplace ones for the simple reason that we have something much better to do, in every way more profitable and infinitely more entertaining and enjoyable. Our conversation is at all times rational, natural, *and* normal. We do not speak to one another in terms of religious texts and scriptural quotations, nor are we endowed with wide knowledge and keen intellectual perception the instant we set foot in the spirit world at our dissolution. We are deeply thankful that we are ourselves and not as others would have us to be.

The Urge to Work

(*Ruler of the Spirit Realms to Roger, MALIWU.*) As you have seen for yourself, there is an abundance of useful things for you to do, the doing of which will bring great happiness to yourself and provide for your progress and advancement through the realms of this world. You will have seen too, my son, how we all perform our different tasks for the general welfare without thought of personal reward. Yet the rewards come, nonetheless – lavish rewards – and so you will discover for yourself.

Whenever you feel so disposed, the work awaits you, but that is not to say you must curtail your present explorations. No one in these or other realms would wish – nor, indeed, would they have the right – to put a definite term upon your desires for knowledge gained at first hand in this way. But there does come a time when the activity of the mind is such that there is a compelling wish to be doing something actively rather than to be a mere witness passively, as it were, to what is going on around you.

The Joy of Service

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) Joy is so closely united with service here that the two can scarcely be separated. You are thinking that this would not be so with the weak or the wicked. Possibly true. But through sympathy, understanding, teaching, or companionship, we learn that we help, and are joyous in that unseen help. Congeniality is the foundation of friendship here, and it leaves no room for friction or jarring notes.

We are happy, and glad to be of service to those who need us; and service is half of our life here. By this statement, we do not wish to make service seem unpleasant. It never is. For the joy of helping others is great; and too, it makes our own resting times or recreation times more happy.

No Need for “Rest”

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) A desire for change from what we are doing is a natural one common to both our worlds, but with us, prolonged activities never lead to literal tiredness of the limbs or of the mind. We could pursue the course of our work far, far beyond the limits that are imposed upon you of earth without any loss of efficiency in our task. We could, and we do, work for a number of hours that would seem incredibly long to you, without the slightest ill-effect either to ourselves or to our work.

With us, rest is a very elastic term. One may take rest through so many varieties of ways. Indeed, it is perfectly commonplace to see someone busily at work here displaying all the industry in the world, to discover that in reality, he is resting! So that anyone may be resting for all there is to show to the contrary.

Change of Tasks Natural

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) There seems to be an idea among certain schools of thought upon earth that in the spirit world, we are employed upon the same work for all eternity. Possibly this strange notion is but a variation of the absurd idea of a spirit life of ‘eternal rest’.... The spirit world is not static, neither are all its inhabitants forever occupied upon the same tasks, unremittingly and never changing. The work may never cease, but there are regular occasions when we cease to work. Among the glories of the life in the spirit world are the opportunities for constant change as taste de-

mands. We do not stagnate, or travel in a groove from which we cannot extricate ourselves. The desire for change of some sort comes upon us – and we change forthwith. That is our fatigue, as near as it is possible to describe it to you.

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) Q. ‘What is your work over there?’

“Oh, how I wish I could make you see it as I see it! But it cannot be described exactly. It is with the undeveloped spirits, even with the criminal, at times. But you cannot know how love can find entrance even into criminal lives, until you see its results here. I love my work, and there is much besides the teaching also. There is study of the most delightful kind; there is travel, which I longed for on earth but could never have; there is my home — my home — and I can hardly tell you how dear that is to me who never had one of my own on earth. And then through all, over all, surrounding all, is a peace and happiness which can only come from the ever present love.”

Many Earthly Occupations No Longer Needed

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) In [the hall of fabrics], you can inspect thousands of the most wonderful materials and cloths, some of them representing the fabrics that were upon earth – all parts of the earth – during the course of hundreds of years. Others are types of material peculiar to the spirit world alone, both in design and in texture.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) I want to try to give you some slight idea of the immensity of the range of occupations in which one can become engaged here in these realms.

Your thoughts will at once turn to the many and varied occupations of the earth world, covering every shade of earthly activity. But behind the earth world’s occupations is the ever-driving necessity of earning a living, of providing the body with food and drink, clothing and a habitation of some sort. Now, you already know that these last four considerations have no existence whatever with us here. Food and drink we never need; the clothing and the habitation we have provided for ourselves by our lives upon earth. As our lives have been on earth, so will our clothing and our domicile be when we come to spirit lands. We have, as you see, no physical necessity to work, but we do have a mental necessity to work and it is because of the latter that all work is a pleasure with us here.

Imagine yourself in a world where no one works for a living, but where everyone works for the sheer joy of doing something that will be of service to others. ...

A great many earthly occupations have no application whatever to the spirit world. Useful and necessary as they are, they belong essentially to the earthly period of life. What then becomes of people who occupied such a position as I have just mentioned? They will discover, immediately they are fully aware of their new state, that they have left their earthly avocation behind forever. They will see that the spirit

world does not offer the same or similar work for them. But this does not cause regret or unhappiness because the need for physical subsistence no longer exists with them, and in place of it such people feel gloriously free to engage themselves in some new work. They need never wonder what they are fitted for; they will soon find something which attracts their attention and draws their interest. And it will not be long before they are joining their fellows in learning some new occupation and thoroughly enjoying themselves.

[Paying another visit to the city] we walk through many beautiful gardens, which at some period have all been designed and created. Here, shall we say, is the first means of employment that we come across.

Now let us go into the hall of music and see what work we can find there. Someone, of course, had to plan and others to build the hall itself. ... The work of the architects and builders, with their various expert assistants, is among some of the most important in the spirit world.

Someone has to provide them with the necessary [musical] instruments. ... And so the instrument makers of the earth-plane find themselves at home in their craft if they wish to continue with it in the spirit world.

The librarians who take care of [the musical scores and books] and who attend to people’s wants in this connection fulfill another useful task.

In the hall of fabrics we shall find the same industry, the same happiness among all those who are working there.

Not that we need doctors but they can work here with their colleagues in investigating the causes of sickness and disease upon the earth-plane and they can help in alleviating them. Many a spirit doctor has guided the hand of an earthly surgeon when he is performing an operation. The earthly doctor is, probably, perfectly unaware of the fact and would ridicule any suggestion that he is receiving assistance from an unseen source. The doctor in spirit is contented to serve without acknowledgment from him whom he serves. It is the successful issue that he is concerned about, not who shall have the credit. ...

The scientist, too, continues his researches when he comes here. In whatever branch of science he may be concerned, he will find enough, and more than enough, to engage his attention for a long time to come. And so with the engineer, and scores upon scores of others. Indeed it would be impossible, or if not impossible, a little tedious, perhaps, to run through the long list of occupations so well known upon the earth-plane, of which we have a counterpart in the spirit world.

Nothing ever disturbs the ordered routine of our work. While the work continues, we may be retiring from it for a space, either to rest or to follow some other line of endeavor. We have no disputes, no domestic upheavals, no rivalries that produce dissatisfaction and unpleasantness. We have no discontented folk. We may have the urge to be doing something of greater moment, but that is not discontent,

but the prompting from within that denotes the steps of our spiritual progression. The humblest of us is made to feel that whatever his work, however insignificant it may appear beside other and seemingly greater tasks, he is performing something vital and significant that will bring with it its own inevitable reward that none can withhold from us, none can take away. In the spirit world, to work is to be profoundly happy.

No One Compelled to Work

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) It was a sensation common to all, sooner or later – the urge to be doing something useful for the good of others.

We have the constant urge to be doing something useful, something that be of benefit to others. However small [our] service may be, it will be valued as a service. To have only two forms of work with which to alternate is to give the lowest estimate. So many of us have a dozen channels through which we are usefully engaged. It must be obvious then that the supply of useful tasks is entirely adequate to the thousands upon thousands of us here.

No one is compelled, either by force of circumstances or from the mere need of subsistence, to do any work at all in the spirit world. Remember that all work is undertaken willingly, freely for the love of doing it, for the pride in creating something, for the desire of being of service to one's fellow inhabitants and to the realm in general.

We continue with our work for just that period during which we derive pleasure or profit from it. The moment we feel the need for a change of work or other diversion, we cease our work for the time being and turn to whatever we wish. The staffs of all the halls of learning are no different than others in this respect. They most certainly need change and recreation and so we find that the staffs alternate in their personnel as occasion demands. As some retire others take their places. It is the most natural thing in the world and the most practical. We need never fear that when we call to see some particular expert we shall be disappointed because he is not there. We shall be able to have all the help we need and, if it is vitally necessary to consult the absent one, either an instantaneous thought will answer our question or with equal rapidity, we can visit his home. We need have no misgivings about intruding upon him.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The spirit world is not static, neither are all its inhabitants forever occupied upon the same tasks, unremittingly and never changing. The work may never cease, but there are regular occasions when we cease to work. Among the glories of the life in the spirit world are the opportunities for as constant change as taste demands. We do not stagnate, or travel in a groove from which we cannot extricate ourselves. The desire for change of some sort comes upon us – and we change forthwith.

Rewards for Spirit Work Well Performed

(*"Blue Star" in Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) You see the wonderful characteristics of spirit world precious stones, my son. They need no reflected light; their luster, their brilliance come from within themselves. If you could, by some means, take this star, or any other jewel, into the dark it would shine out like the sun in beautiful color. Monsignor, I believe, has described it as 'living light.' That is absolutely so. The jewels on earth, lovely as they are, rely upon reflected light for their beauty and their effect. Take a priceless diamond, shall we say, into the dark on earth and all its glory is gone. There are many, many other wonderful jewels in the spirit world besides this one, my son, and all of them made of this same 'living light.' As I expect you know by now, these cannot be bought in the spirit world. ...

No buying and selling here; only earning. And isn't that true justice? It places us all upon an equal footing and each of us has the same level chance to earn many wonderful things – like this blue star.

I expect you wonder what [these jewels] represent. In strict truth, they represent nothing but their own worth and beauty. They are what we would call adjuncts to our life and are personal rewards for various services rendered. ...

These are not the insignia or jewels of exclusive orders, such as I understand exist on earth. Here they are open to all, without discrimination, who care to earn them, and they are not for certain privileged people as the custom is in some cases on earth. We carry no letters after our names because we are holders of such awards. That, I think, is a good idea because some of our names would appear very odd decorated in that way; and then there is no call for us to proclaim that we are holders of such an award.

Working as Horticulturists

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) As I had already sent a message to the 'owner' of the nursery, he was awaiting our arrival. ...

'You see,' [he] explained..., 'in the old earth plants, the flowers fade in due course and seed pods form so that you might have half the stem with blooms and half with seeds. You can see for yourself that, without this happening [here] and the whole stem being filled with blooms for its [entire] length, there's no comparison [with early blooms]. There's nowhere else but here – I mean, the spirit world – where flowers could be grown like these.

'Cast your eyes on those hollyhocks. Did you ever see such beauties as those – with blooms from top reaching down all that way? And no fading or dying? That's how we make them and that's how they stay.'

As far as we could see were bed upon bed of such perfect flowers as incarnate eye never beheld.

We can't give [a flower animation]. That *must* come from another realm and we don't ask for it until we are sure that what we have made is fitted to receive it. ...

[When we are ready] what we do is to send to that higher realm I mentioned [a] message; after that, all we know is that there is a rapid descent of the power we ask for. Of course, originally, it comes from *the* Source, but it is passed on to us from another personage. It is a natural process and procedure and the fact that we have created the flower or plant is sufficient. Our desire for its complete animation is fulfilled; our request is answered without fail and without question.

Working as Architects, Engineers, and Masons

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The act of building in the spirit world is essentially an operation of thought. It will not be surprising, therefore, when I tell you that nowhere were there to be seen the usual materials and paraphernalia associated with earthly builders, the scaffolding and brocks and cement, and the various other familiar objects. We were to witness, in fact, an act of creation – and as such no ‘physical’ equipment is necessary.

The ruler of the realm stepped forward a few paces and, with his back towards us, but facing the site upon which the new wing [of the library] was to arise, he spoke a brief but appropriate prayer. ...

His prayer brought an instantaneous response, which was in the form of a bright beam of light that descended upon him and upon those gathered immediately behind him. As soon as this happened, the architects and masons moved up close beside him.

All eyes were now upon the vacant spot beside the main building, to which we noticed that a second beam of light was passing directly from the ruler and the masons. As the second beam reached the site of the annex it formed itself into a carpet of coruscation upon the ground. This gradually grew in depth, width, and height....

Slowly the form gained in size until it reached the required height. We could now see plainly that it matched the original structure in general outline, while the carved devices [on the walls] similarly corresponded.

While it was in this state, the architects approached and examined it very closely. We could observe them moving within it, until at length they passed from view. They were gone but a moment when they returned to the ruler with the report that all was in order. ...

The downstream of light now became very much more intense, while the horizontal stream from the ruler and his collaborators assumed, after the lapse of a minute or two, a similar degree of intensity. We could now perceive the nebulous form acquiring an unmistakable appearance of solidity as the concentration of united thought laid layer upon layer of increased density upon the simulacrum.

From what I observed, it seemed to devolve upon the ruler to supply to each of the masons just that quantity and description of force that each required upon his separate task. He acted, in fact, as a distributive agent for the magnetic

power that was descending directly upon him. This split up into a number of individual shafts of light of different color and strength, which corresponded with his direct appeals to the Great Architect. There was no faltering or diminution of the application of thought substance to be perceived anywhere. The masons themselves seemed to work with a complete unanimity of concentration since the building attained full solidity with a remarkable degree of evenness.

After what appeared to Ruth and me a very short period, the building ceased to acquire any further density, the vertical and horizontal rays were cut off, and there stood before us the finished wing, perfect in every detail, an exact match and extension to the main edifice, beautifully alike in color and form, and worthy of the high purpose to which it was to be devoted.

(*Arnel, MM, 78.*) [The new building] is not put together in bricks nor blocks as of stone on earth, but grows of a piece in one together.’ The design is first made, and then a company of builders under a powerful leader concentrate their minds creatively on the foundations, and gradually and very slowly raise the stream of their willpower from the ground up to the roof and produce the outer building complete in outline but faint and transient duration. This is repeated many times, the company spacing themselves equally around, until the outer shell is completed in form and solidified. Then the interior construction is undertaken in a similar manner and finally the interior decorations and ornaments are attended to. The leader attends to the final inspection and correction of details and finally a great Angel Lord comes down to perform the ceremony of Consecration.

This creation of willpower is universal in the higher spheres and animals and flowers can be similarly formed; but it seems that in the lower spheres more mundane methods of building are employed. Raymond speaks of bricks being made out of emanations rising from the earth and, in the hells, stone and wood is apparently quarried and hewn as on earth.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) We have been inaugurating a new hospital, a great and new thought creation achieved by the advanced....

The creation of a new and “permanent” thought image is a solemn process and takes time. A number of the group get together and after thinking carefully over the details – our hospital is to use color-sound as treatment – they have a combined meditation on an inner picture presented to them and, as they do this, gradually the image takes shape and becomes visible. But it is motivated mainly from intense concentration on a high level – built from those powerful thought rays of the advanced. Yet the group who work for them also contribute. It is a vast combined effort.

It has been known, in order to bring in some of the new arrivals here, to create for them bricks and mortar so they actually work on the building, or think they do.

But the real work is done, in the background, by the advanced, who, as you know, are the only ones with suffi-

cient power to build “permanent” thought forms which can be used and seen by other people.

These building “thought rays” are very interesting. All our world seems to consist of fine “web-like” matter which responds to rays of thought. Several people converge, and, if you could see us, you might perceive around our oval-shaped form shells, a strong luminosity reaching upward to a point of power – the very advanced one who is the master. In this concentrated act, you would perceive this luminosity begin to quiver and vibrate with immense speed, and slowly become a mass of outgoing power rays, which, like little arrows, draw first an outline and then the mass of whatever it is that we are constructing.

Have you seen – I can remember it – one of those screen advertisements where a picture builds itself up before the eyes of the audience? That is something like the process I try to describe. If the matter is very important, our act of concentration must be quite a lengthy one. It took us quite a long time to get the outline even of our hospital.

Working as Spirit Healers

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Radiant Wing’s principal work was that of a healer to incarnate folk, which he carries on through the agency of an earthly instrument. ...

“You will understand,” [he] explained, “that it is essential for us to know all about human anatomy and the functions of the body, together with the many ailments that earth people suffer from, before we can even begin to heal them. We are no different in this respect from the doctors on earth. Our methods of treatment, of course, are entirely different. We use materials and forces which the earth doctors do not possess. They belong purely to the spirit world.”

Working as Musical Composers

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) “Call our friend Peter Ilyitch [Tchaikovsky], Roger, and look for surprises.” ...

We were shown into a spacious apartment that was both sitting-room and work-room. Close to a wide window there was a large table upon which were disposed many sheets of music-manuscript, some of which had already been written upon, while a further quantity of unused paper was ready waiting, and it was evidence that actual work was in progress.

Along one wall was a commodious couch upon which an old friend of ours was seated and who rose upon our entrance. He was presented to Roger as Franz Joseph [Haydn] and then resumed his seat. ...

“[Our friend] Roger does not suspect ... who you are.... I’m sure he doesn’t know who Franz is either.”

“Well, you know, my dear, we *have* changed a little since we came here.” ...

“It amuses us greatly when we hear the announcement made on earth before a broadcast performance, that “this is

the last work composed by so-and-so.” *The last work.* Naturally, one knows what is meant, but it sounds so funny to us, especially when one glances at those shelves [full of music manuscripts]. ...

“That is why they put up statues and monuments to us, my dear friend, said Franz Joseph. “They think we are finished and done for; not a note left in us. And now they are perfectly certain they know what was in our minds when we wrote any piece, large or small. If any of us had given the plain reason: to keep off starvation, they wouldn’t have approved of that. Not nearly mystic enough. Ah, well. *This is the life.*” ...

“Is it easier to compose music here or on earth?” asked Roger.

“Oh, here, without a shadow of a doubt. Consider how free we are from everything that might be – and so often was – a hindrance. Franz mentioned starvation, for instance. Call it plain hunger in this case and all that it means. In other words, caring for necessary bodily wants. We’re entirely free of that. Public apathy – there’s something else that’s thankfully missing here. Difficulty of getting one’s works heard or acknowledged. No trouble about that either – here. Somewhere pleasant to live: this little place is an example. Franz lives in a delightful house where he is as happy ‘as the day is long.’” ... “No music critics,” said Franz with a chuckle, “though fortunately for me I did not suffer much from those peculiar people. Not ... that my music was perfect but because I lived at a period when musical criticism was not the subject for every ignoramus who thinks he knows something about music, as I believe is now the custom on earth.” ...

“It’s safer here. We’re among friends, we are free of all troubles and cares, especially that awful bugbear, the fear of writing ourselves out. We can always have a hearing whenever we wish, without going hat-in-hand to some objectionable fellow who wants to exploit us. And it’s nice to be among ourselves as composers and musicians and be pleasantly rude to each other with the greatest good will in the world, and knowing that no unpleasant intent is involved. It’s a pity that there are no composers to speak of on earth, at present.” ...

[Monsignor Benson:] “You truly observed, Peter, that it’s been a good many years since any real composers came to join us here. Composers have undoubtedly come here but they were compelled to leave their musical monstrosities behind them. And there are others yet to come – and the same thing will happen to them.” ...

“That is the way of the earth at the moment – the cult of the hideous, the monstrous, the gigantically ugly. The poison has seeped its way into all the fine arts.”

“Here is [music] you must know, Roger,” I said, taking one of the scores from the shelf. ... I hummed an air known the world over, much to the amusement of Peter.

“Good gracious,” cried Roger, “that’s from—”

“From the book Monsignor is holding,” said Peter.

I passed the volume to Roger, who looked from the music to Peter, then turned to the first page where he read the title and composer's name, and appeared rather breathless.

Franz, from his seat on the couch, watched what was going forward. "So, Roger," said he, "you have discovered his awful secret at last. Does he, do you think, come up to expectation? Or did you expect someone far handsomer – like myself, for instance?"

As we walked through the woods, Robert expressed his delight and amazement that it should be so simple a matter to be able to talk and joke with a man whose name is a household word in the realm of music, in both worlds.

Scientific Study in the Spirit World

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) Think what it means to study any of the great sciences from this side! To study the stars and suns, for instance, the homes of multitudes of spirits. For each planet has a spirit zone surrounding it to which their own spirits go. There is, of course, intercommunication between the planets, and we are made happy by visitors from far away zones. They tell us of a spirit life the same as ours, but of differing conditions in each planet; and that their bodies are made to conform to the conditions.

(Spirit control Dee, LHH.) We visited another circle some time ago where they are especially interested in scientific work. We found there a number of spirits who on earth were noted for their scientific achievements, and they have formed a sort of scientific society here. It is through their influence that some of your important inventions have been perfected; and they are trying to impress further ideas on your workers there.

It is a wonderful circle, and is doing much to help the human race.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) The earth world has the spirit world to thank for all the major scientific discoveries that have been made throughout the centuries.

The laboratories of the world of spirit are many decades in advance of those of the earth-plane. And it will be years before many revolutionary discoveries are allowed to be sent through to the earth world, because the earth has not yet sufficiently progressed.

In the past ages, all the epoch-making discoveries have come from the spirit world. Of himself, incarnate man can do very little. Most people are content to consider the earth-world as sufficient unto itself. Indeed it is not! The scientist is fundamentally a man of vision; it may be limited, but it is there nevertheless. And our spirit scientists can – and do – impress their earthly colleagues with the fruits of their investigation. In many cases where two men are working upon the same problem, the one who is in spirit will be far ahead of his confrere who is still on earth. A hint from the former is very often enough to set the latter upon the right track, and the result is a discovery for the benefit of humanity.

In so many cases, humanity has so benefited, but, alas, in so many cases, humanity has suffered sorrow and tribulation through the devilish perversion of those discoveries. Every one of them that is sent from the spirit world is for the advantage and spiritual progression of man. If perverted minds use those same things for the destruction of man, then man has only himself to blame. That is why I affirmed that the earth world has not spiritually progressed enough to have many more splendid inventions that have already been perfected here. They are ready and waiting, but if they were sent through to the earth-plane in its present state of spiritual mind, they would be misused by unscrupulous people.

The people of the earth have it in their power to see that modern inventions are employed solely for their spiritual and material good. When the time comes that real spiritual progress is made, then the earth-plane can expect a flood of new inventions and discoveries to come through from the scientists and engineers of the spirit world. But the earth-plane has a long and sorrowful way to go before that time comes. And in the meantime, the work of the spirit scientists continues.

We were permitted to see the progress that had been made in locomotion, and we were amazed at the advance that had been made since the days when we were on the earth-plane. But that is as nothing to that which is to come. When man exercises his will in the right direction, there will be no end to the enormous rewards that he will gain in material progress, but material progress must go hand in hand with spiritual progress. And until they do, the earth world will not be permitted to have the many inventions that are ready and waiting to be sent through.

It was never intended that when the results of our scientists' researches are communicated to the earth, they were to be seized upon by the few to the exclusion of all others. Those that have done so find that they have to pay a very heavy price for their brief span of earthly prosperity.

All the major discoveries that are of service to the earth-plane have come and always will come from the spirit world. If man, employing his free will, chooses to put those discoveries to base ends, then he can thank himself for the calamities that follow. Inspiration devoted to whatever cause or pursuit comes from the world of spirit and from nowhere else. If it be for the good of mankind, the source of equally good; if the inspiration is obviously not for the good of mankind, then the source is unquestionably evil. Man has it within his own hands as to which source of inspiration he will lend himself – to good or to evil.

The earth world has given a poor exhibition of what has been sent through to it from the spirit world by putting to base uses what has been given for its benefit. Man has exercised his own free will, but he has been exercising it in a direction that ultimately brings destruction. The mind of man is but in its infancy, and an infant becomes dangerous when he has free use of that which can destroy. Hence, much

is held back from the earth world until man has reached a higher state of development. That day will assuredly arrive and a torrent of new inventions will come pouring through from the spirit world to your world.

Examples of New Discoveries in the Spiritual World Applied to Spiritual Life

(Philip Gilbert, *PTS*.) We have been working hard on some of our patients – this time in a kind of hospital where some of the earlier cases were taken. ...

There is a new form of ray which we are trying, rather complicated. We alternate two types of rays. ... It is used on people [in astral form], so many still suffering from the severe shock to the etheric body and so to the astral body which is built by it, caused by prolonged suffering inflicted by malice. ... A combination of physical pain and mental horror at an evil malice inflicting it, as it affects an average person not advanced in spiritual understanding, does usually have a very bad effect on the etheric body of the victim. It seems to become numb, “shriveled.” The state of such people when they come over has been pitiable, and we have found those cases difficult to heal, sometimes. ...

We could not get them to snap out of it until our research people found that by applying, in very swift alteration, two rays, one very tonifying, the other enervating, a result was obtained.

Halls of Science

(Monsignor Benson, *LIWU*.) In the hall of science, every field of scientific and engineering investigation, study, and discovery was covered, and here were to be seen so many of those men whose names have become household words, and who, since passing into spirit, have continued their life’s work with their fellow scientists with the full and immense resources of the spirit world at their command.

Here, they can solve those mysteries that baffled them when they were on earth. There is no longer any such thing as personal rivalry. Reputations have no more to be made, and the many material handicaps are abandoned forever. It follows that where such a gathering of savants can exist, together with their unlimited resources, the results must be correspondingly great.

(Monsignor Benson, *MALIWU*.) Perhaps of all the halls of learning, this, of engineering and chemistry, concerns the earth most closely since it is here that so many of the earthly engineering and chemical discoveries have their origin. Many new substances are invented in the spirit world that are subsequently transmitted to people on earth for the benefit of all.

As we passed from room to room, we could see chemists and their assistants experimenting with a variety of substances which in time will, when combined, form an entirely new product exactly fitted for its purpose. We were shown

how, by synthesis, exact replicas of earthly materials were compounded since it would be of no use whatever to invent a new substance of purely spirit materials which would not – could not – have any application to earthly uses. The scientist on earth must use earthly materials and the spirit world scientist must therefore work on a precise counterpart.

It so often happens, our guide told us, that a mere hint to an earthly scientist is enough to set him upon the track of a dozen or more other discoveries. All that the scientists here are concerned with is the initial discovery and in most cases the rest will follow.

Here also were new substances to be used as building materials for houses or large edifices and for many other types of building construction. New compounds were in process of being made that would eventually be converted into fabrics of all kinds, light and heavy, for personal clothing, for example, or for upholsteries in ... homes.

Typical Spirit Land Project: “Ross” Creates and Runs a Hospital

(Philip Gilbert and “Ross,” *ITE*.) [Ross:] Alice, I am making a hospital. I have many ideas and am putting them into form. ... I am trying to thought-build a mental hospital. I have got the walls and beds clear and am planning color schemes so as to give the patients baths in different color rays, but first I must impregnate them with some ray of my own. (1)

(1) “Ross” is the pseudonym that Alice Gilbert confers on this spirit. His real name is not known.

I sit and concentrate [on the hospital] – it is right inside me, then it rises in front of me. At first it is only a blur but I can make bits of it remain when I stop thinking it – I add to them.

It seems I have powers: all that agonized meditation on Yoga I did with such stress has been working on my inner being and now I can blend in the ray of the Master and use its force in my creativity. ... The walls vibrate not only with many colors, but with music made by the colors. I have now three patients whom I have succeeded in linking in thought into its vibration.

They are in various obsessive states of imagined misery. I try to talk to each one, to tune in to the inner being of each: it’s not easy yet.

In my hospital, much use is made of ‘massage by music.’ We actually create the music with thought, cellos and violins or sometimes a full orchestra, if there’s a musician helping me: from them emerges music far richer and more delicate than from physical instruments. I find I can direct the trend of a patient’s thought by applied music, for their thought is usually emotional. An obsession can be worked on and made to dissolve, if only temporarily, by the right combination of notes. ...

I have now more patients, mainly folk with queer obsessions – they think they are being persecuted or see strange animals. These animals symbolize their inner selves yet they

are so apparently 'real' that I myself can sometimes see them, but an act of concentrated thought on my part will dispel them.

I am beginning to sense a vast multitude around me; sometimes they emerge as clear-cut individuals. It seems by my wish to heal medically, I'm drawn to some of the less respectable ones. The drips, down-at-heel, muddled, distorted shadows, yet it's not one's idea of hell. Perhaps it's purgatory. They almost queue for the hospital. The thought seems to have gone round and I am kept very busy. There seems to be added luminousness to the walls and even the beds and tables vibrate and glow.

The [hospital's] vibration gets more powerful: I think it's attracting forces of healing that are being directed from other sources. Any powerful thought form seems to become a focus for its own kind – like a sort of etheric gravity! Some of the patients are not easy: they cling to their obsessions like limpets. ... But there is expansion in the hospital. Spears of light seem to break over it in a zigzag pattern at intervals and to have a stimulating effect on the patients. Their heavy apathy slips away at least for a time: they straighten up and move swiftly and even smile. When the spears cease, the effect may wear off but not entirely. The patients move with more verve and respond more alertly. Philip has managed to manifest and do some of his quick change acts, which create a sensation. I sleep and enter a world of harmony and light.

The hospital ... goes steadily like a beacon. There is a kind of path to it. They totter up and collapse before the door and as soon as their will is strong enough, the door opens and they are in.

There seems to be more responsibility coming to me and a deep sense of my duty to hold firm before the gates of my hospital, as if it were in itself an act of manifestation against dark floods. I am a sort of spear point and behind me is the whole force of Light. My work opens out.

I am like a rock at the hospital gate. There seems to be a great sword in my hand as if attack were feared. There is an immense Light and I am part of it. It seems my role is bigger than I knew and that something is imminent.

You have sensed vast processes – preparation on a universal scale for whatever may come and somehow I am involved in it. You would be surprised if you could see me now – I look as if I came off a Christmas tree! I still view the situation from my earth angle and I am amazed, but the Power holds me. There is a great pattern of work alternating with the Silence, like the vast swathes of a great corn field half cut.

New methods in the hospital – a technique of very rapid-seeming motion in a rhythm of sound based on certain notes. These combined in a bar of music appropriate to the patient have immense therapeutic value. There must be deep, pulsating intervals of Silence. It is a difficult treatment to apply. Color as always emerges from the sound [phases], sometimes as a built-up thought image.

But I have created myself a little room to retire into for rest: I put an armchair and a divan and I sleep there. I still really enjoy my sleep, which comes so sweetly and easily. One establishes a sort of rhythm of being here which is very restful. I don't know how long I sleep but when I sink into it, there is an ecstasy of beauty which surrounds me. After the stress of the hospital, it comes on me like the Voice of the Silence and I become it. It seems to be like a sort of Nirvana.

Philip: He enters the essence of Being in what he thinks is sleep – it is profound contemplation. You and I often go wandering, but his form of rest is merging.

Ross's Hospital is his heaven just now, in that it is the fulfillment of his earth aspiration which never materialized, but it is just as 'real,' perhaps more real, than any physical hospital. He has created a heaven out of his own hell on earth.

Ross: Sometimes the peace of the hospital can be menaced by sheer perverted hatred, dominating a patient, but, as all patients must have a core of Light at heart or they could not have got to us, we try to focus on that spot. Scenes are played over to him from his past and sometimes, an outburst of venom treated like that will become pure Light.

Philip: The paradox of the Opposites is a deep, potent law of this aspect of Being.

Whether I create my own image to project a portion of myself as a form, or create a thought dwelling as Ross does, I visualize it first and build into it with a putting of Me into It, which takes shape and form. It is an emotional act but sustained by my mind force and will. ... First one IS the concept; then it takes a form in thought. In time, if strong enough, this will take a physical form.

Ross: Alice, I have built a great tower on my hospital, triangle-shaped, reaching towards eternity. On the upper point there shines a Star, scintillating, sending out a ray of light which is linked with a point inside myself – the point of creativity which is the focus of our being here; from it is built the whole of whatever shape we assume. You have it too in the physical over the Heart. But here, it can be seen pulsating and even emitting sparks of force. The Heart is its physical expression – the first emanation on which is built the whole.

There's so much work to be done here – an endless stream of miserable people appearing.

We are training the patients to think into light – to think points of light. When they do this, colored flashes appear in their conscious minds. This convinces them. It is particularly good with those whose minds are negative, black blanks – people who have lived sordid, dull lives with fish and chips and pop music as their only light. Training such minds to be at all creative is a big task but we make a beginning.

I have just come from the hospital which now seems to be growing of its own accord, not by my conscious creativity. Will it go on expanding?

Philip: [Ross] could remain in the Light now but he comes back consciously and deliberately to the work he has chosen, yet he is not entirely aware when on the 'hospital' level of all this.

Ross: There are levels of thought, I find. I do know now that I can blend into a deeper stage in which the hospital is an 'illusion.' Yet it is real in its place. ... I am told that it will be permanent, that the power I generated was strong enough to build to last whilst there is a physical universe. Yet I feel a sort of shift of emphasis in my own being as if I were a part of another level of being even though I function in the hospital as vigorously as ever.

Earth Needs Guidance

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The earth has ... a completely exaggerated idea of its own cleverness. You need to be resident in the spirit world to see just how foolish mankind upon earth can really be! Here the mistakes are plain for all to see and we are sometimes amazed at the ignorance displayed.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) The spirit world works constantly to make its power and force and presence felt by the whole earth world, not only in personal matters, but through individuals into a wider sphere for the good of nations and national policies. But so little can be done because the door is usually closed to the higher beings of the spirit world, whose range of vision and whose wisdom and knowledge and understanding are vast. Think of the evils that could be swept from the face of the earth under the immensely able guidance of wise teachers from the spirit world. The world of spirit does its best through the limited channels available.

But it is safe to say that there is no problem upon the earth-plane that could not be solved by the help and advice and experience of those beings I have just mentioned. But it would involve one thing – an implicit adherence to whatever they advised or advocated. Many a leader, either of the nation's affairs or of religious thought who is here with us in the spirit world, is filled with sorrow when he looks back upon the wasted opportunities for bringing about a revolutionary change for the betterment of his fellow countrymen. He will confess that he had the idea in his mind – he did know then that it had been impinged thereupon by the spirit world – but he had allowed himself to be overruled. These souls sigh for the state into which humanity has degraded itself.

Humanity has, in effect, allowed the evil forces to dictate to it. But the evil ones, so beloved by the churches, have appeared in a different direction from that which those same churches allege they have come. The men and women who practice communication with us in all seriousness and earnestness and who enjoy happy meetings with their spirit friends as well as with noble teachers from the higher spheres, are accused of dealing with 'devils.' That is rubbish. The real devils are far too busy elsewhere, in places where they

can produce far greater results to their own evil satisfaction.

Small though the earth world may be, man still needs help in conducting its affairs – and that is another discovery that he makes when he comes here.

When we and our world gain full acceptance, you will then know what it means to live upon the earth-plane.

But we have a long, long way to go yet.

(*John Heslop, SABL.*) When those who love you come back to you, it is to comfort, guide, and instruct you. This helps, not hinders, their upward progress. Indeed, without our help in some form, your lives would be almost impossible. You must bear in mind that, though you do not realize our presence, we are with you just the same. We whisper words of consolation into your ears and raise your thoughts God-ward. We ward off evil influences from your homes, help your lives in a thousand different ways, and strengthen your bodies with vital forces. Often when you are wrapped in sleep, we carry you, in your spirit bodies, into these higher regions for teaching and refreshment. To tell you that it is evil to desire our return only shows total ignorance of the facts.

Spirits in Bands Attempting to Influence Earth Events

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) We are a large band, but divide our numbers many times and go to different places. We wish you to feel the spirit presence as you just now felt ours.

We are exerting much thought force upon mortals, and we grow into stronger power ourselves by trying to help others.

We are a band of workers and wish to add our knowledge. We wait not only in hope, but in certainty; for we go far and near and see all sides of the work among many people and many nationalities. There is a slow dawning of a great day. It is coming, coming surely; and we can watch it from afar.

You must remember that we are always trying to help the earth people in their progress. We usually keep this in mind in all our work, and if we feel that we have something especially valuable for them, we try to impress someone with the idea. In doing this, we are accustomed to work in large groups; we do not ordinarily work alone as we did on earth. When something new is discovered or thought of, it is usually common property, the combined thought of a large number. Then we try to influence as many as we conveniently can to work with us in sending this new thought earthward.

'Is this done by concentration?'

Yes, that is the way. We have stated times for this, sometimes large gatherings in one place. We have been aware many times that this influence was felt on earth, and we believe that much of the progress there is caused in this way.

We feel that a general good effect results from our efforts, so we consider that we are repaid. Out of the great

number on earth, we know there are some who will feel our influence. So we send a general impression and trust to its being picked up there by those who are sensitive. Then we wait for these to spread the influence among others. It is slow work; but evolution has always been slow. We wish the truth might be spread more rapidly. But we have to fall back upon the belief that we are only asked or expected to use our little influence in the cause of the great truth.

Spirit World Inhabitants Are Not Omniscient

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) An enormous amount of things are not told us, not because they are deep secrets, but because we have much to learn first. The fact is that with our necessarily limited knowledge and powers of comprehension, we should fail to understand them in our present state of advancement. ...

So we jog along and find we're none the worse off for not knowing the answers. Everything fits into its proper place in these lands, and none of us would be handicapped in our progression by lack of knowledge. The knowledge will be there at the right moment.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) In response to my question as to how [the fruits on his fruit trees] grow, [the owner] replied that, like so many other questions in this land, the answer was only possible from those of the higher realms, and even if we were told that answer, there is more than a strong probability that we should not understand until such time as we, ourselves, went to dwell in those realms. We are quite content, he said in effect, to take so many things just as they are, without inquiring into how they come about, and we know that those things provide a never-failing supply because they come from a never-failing Source. There is no real need to delve into such matters, and most of us are quite content to enjoy them with heartfelt thanks.

Indeed, the great scientists of the earth-plane find, when they come to live in the spirit world, that they have a completely new world upon which to commence a fresh course of investigations. They begin *de novo* as it were, but with all their great earthly experience behind them. And what joy it brings them, in company with their scientific colleagues, to probe the mysteries of the spirit world, to collect their data, to compare their new knowledge with the old, to record for the benefit of others the results of their investigations and discoveries. And all through, they have the unlimited resources of the spirit world upon which to draw.

There are many, many things here which we do not understand – and it will take eons of time before we even have a faint gleam of understanding them. But we are not asked to understand them: we are asked to take them as they are. It makes no difference to the soul's progression. We shall be able to progress far – and far beyond that – before we shall ever need to think about understanding such things.

Private Dowding Goes Back to School

(*Private Dowding, TSR*) My life is now divided into three parts: one spent in the Hall of Instruction, another in the land of the mists helping to dispel the fog and tumult, and the third in the gardens of rest, where I have a little house and garden of my own. We construct our own surroundings here by the creative power of our own thoughts. You are doing the same, although it is not so apparent to you. I repeat: you construct your own surroundings even in that opaque and circumscribed outer world by your own thinking. Where do your chains of thoughts lead? Are they chains holding you down or are they threads of light leading you upward? ...

Some of the thoughts left in my mind as the result of time spent in the hall of instruction will leave their trace upon you, and through you, upon others who may read what you set down. Many of the lessons in selflessness, self-control, the relation between reason and intuition, between intellect and emotion, are lessons which we should have learnt while still on earth. I spoke to you before about the supreme importance of emptying oneself of self in order to reflect the Divine Mind – and this lesson was drilled into us by the Teacher as of immense importance. Only those of us who had achieved some measure of understanding were allowed to leave the Hall of Instruction and spend some time as novices among the workers in the intermediary realm. The Teacher often accompanied us on those occasions. He showed how to protect ourselves from turbulent, sensual and fearful thoughts which shot in and out among the mists like crimson darts. Until we could protect ourselves from such attacks, we were unable to protect others.

The darkness caused by fear and hate and lust forms itself into pungent gases (I must use your terms) so that we often nearly lost consciousness. It is difficult to protect oneself against these dense vibratory conditions brought over into the mist realm by human souls in torment. The torments suffered by so many result from ignorance, from fear of the passage from one world to the next, also from what I call soullessness. This latter condition is only apparent and does not last for ever. It is seen among those who have lived utterly selfish or evil lives on your earth. I do not wish to dwell upon such conditions. They are met over here by purgatorial tests which gradually purify and ultimately release the souls in torment. Purgatory, unlike Hell, is a condition to be welcomed, to be bravely faced and lived through. I am beginning to rise above my own purgatory; otherwise I could be of no real service to others.

Chapter 17: Transition Guidance

Introduction

Because we are so woefully unprepared for the crossing over process, we need guidance in our transition, creating what is probably one of the most challenging jobs on the soul plane. Many people simply can't or won't accept that they have died, especially when it's sudden as in war and accident. And because every case is different, transition guides have their work cut out. However, being the first person to welcome a new arrival is extremely satisfying, and you make friends for "life" with them. This chapter really underscores the importance of being prepared for what to expect on the Other Side.

Usually, the guide's assignments are well-orchestrated, but as you will see, some guides go "scavenging" for "lost spirits" in the lower levels.

The Work of the Transition Guide

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) [Spirit communicates through a regular spiritual communication group:] We are not your usual friends. We came to this circle to watch its work, and we find it fine in every particular. We are of another group, and have for our special work, the teaching of new arrivals. You can hardly imagine the necessity of bringing the mortal thought into harmony with the heavenly. The mortal powers are for mortal minds, and are no longer used here. We love the effort to broaden their knowledge and turn their mistaken ideas of this life into true perceptions. ...

Many seem to cherish the teachings, thoughts and tendencies of their earth lives, even when they are guided into better ones. But finally all go to their "own place."

That place may be with pure and beautiful spirits, or with the evil ones who will not or cannot forsake their sins for a time.

(Unnamed spirit describing transition work, LHH.) Many come into this life in such ignorance that they sink immediately into a long, long sleep; and they may lose years, sometimes many precious years, before coming into spirit consciousness. Tell all who come in the circle of your influence that they are making their future now, and can almost control this future condition, if they will only seek the truth and abide by it while still on earth.

I do not often preach, but I feel like a sermon tonight. For the souls that come to this side come in such multitudes that they can scarcely be counted, yet *only here and there are the spiritually developed ones*, the ones who can enter into this life with joy, and commence the development of spiritual power at once. The pity of it gets hold of us here now and then, and we feel like trying to bombard the earth with spirit bombs: something to make people think, something to force them away from their material thoughts, pleasures and plans.

We are obliged to begin our work with them as we would begin with children, and not even in that way when they first come. They sink into a state that is hard to de-

scribe. They are not even ready to think. Brain and sense and heart and soul have so long been educated wrongly that silence and unconsciousness are the only remedies at first. Then there comes a confused awakening, with all their human habits of thought and all their evil selfishness predominant. What can be done then except to put strong forces in control, that they at least may be kept from influencing others. You cannot conceive of this work, I am sure, but it is very real here.

'But you do not do this [work yourself].'

No, but I watch others in the patient, self-controlled effort, and I realize how strong must be their faith and hope to continue in the work. They do succeed at last, but it is often a long and weary way; and but for the strong, bright and enduring faith of such workers and teachers, it would be almost unendurable.

'Such spirits are kept separate, are they not?'

Yes, surely. Each "goes to his own place," as the Bible says. But we can watch the work of transformation and we can give to the workers our own best thoughts and encouragement. That is our part of it. ...

[The dark plane] exists, and is one of the great opportunities for work for the great and blessed spirits who undertake it. ...

We are ... blessed with the sight of the brave spirits who are working with the depraved ones, and we are also blessed with the knowledge that their work is not in vain. Of course all who come are not vicious; only unspiritual, living in the material thought. These are slow to come into the life of the spirit, but come far more rapidly than those whose evil natures have to be transformed.

We ... have been watching the work of some of our fine spirits with the low and debased ones of earth, and were filled with the pity of it; the unnecessary waste of lives there and the unnecessary waste of time here in bringing them into spirit lives. Then, too, all these brave teachers who give themselves to this work might be released for other and pleasanter work, if only – if only – the earth people knew the truth.

The Transition Guides Receive Directions

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Death always seems to the beholder of it to be such a solitary business, as perforce, it must be to some extent. But our help is always at hand, though help comes usually after the severance of the magnetic cord, when the spirit body is free from the earthly body. The severance will take place in a perfectly natural manner, just as the leaf will fall from the tree. It is then that the moment comes for us to step in and offer our assistance. I say *offer* assistance because we do not force our services upon anyone. However, in all our experiences so far, our offers of help have never been scorned. On the contrary, people are only too glad to leave themselves entirely in our hands.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Part of my work consists of helping people at the moment of their physical death, people of all kinds, of both sexes, of any religion – or none – and of all ages, from young to the aged. ...

Now, you may wonder how we come to know when our services are needed, and who or what directs those services into the required quarter. The answer is a simple one: the office of records and inquiries. It is not part of our normal functions to be fully acquainted with all or any of the methods employed in the gathering of information by this central office. All that Ruth and I are called upon to do is to apprise this office with the fact that we are both free to undertake whatever task may present itself and we follow the simple procedure of awaiting notification that our services are desired.

Some indication must be given [you will say] somewhere *by* someone *to* someone that the passing of a particular person is about to take place, within, shall we say, a matter of an hour or two of earthly time. It is hardly likely, things being what they are, that a direct message would be sent out to us from earth people intimating that assistance was required at an imminent dissolution. ...

Strictly speaking, we who undertake this kind of work are not concerned with the minutiae of organization which terminate with our presenting ourselves at the side of the passing soul. That is part of the expert economic functions that are but a commonplace in spirit lands. This, however, can be said: the knowledge that a transition is about to take place, together with its precise location, is the result of a remarkable conveyance of information, passed from one to another, commencing with ... the individual's personal spirit guide, and terminating with us who undertake the work of escorting folk from the earth world to their homes in the spirit world. Between the former and the latter, there is ... an exchange of information by thought transmission, accurately and rapidly.

At the present moment, as Ruth and I were seated before our friend of the central office, all that remained was to receive our 'sailing directions.' These were given to us in this manner: our friend sent a message – by thought, of course –

to the spirit person who was in attendance at the place of dissolution, to the effect that we were ready to assume charge whenever he deemed it advisable. This brought an instantaneous response. We could perceive the light as it flashed to our friend, and by a sort of confluence, we were brought into the 'thought-beam.' We were now in direct *rapport* with our attendant friend 'at the other end'; as you would say. And now ... we had but to project ourselves along this thought-beam to find ourselves in the exact spot where our services were needed. How this happens, I have not the remotest notion. All that Ruth or I could tell you is what we do, how we do it, but not *how it happens!*

"Escort Duty" a Priority

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) The fact is that while we were [visiting two composers], a message was "flashed" to me, that was all. It was not urgent, otherwise I shouldn't be gossiping here like this. The message came from someone who constantly visits the earth to speak to many friends there and as we were upon pleasure rather than business, I responded at once that we were available. Had the message come when Ruth and I were upon "escort duty," the same kind as we performed for you, Roger, I should have sent back word of what we were doing and *in no circumstances* would we have been expected to place ourselves at the disposal of anyone else, *however illustrious*. On the contrary, we should more likely get into trouble for leaving our work of the moment. Everything works upon lines of sound common sense and reason in these lands, Roger.

Transitions Vary

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) There may appear to be a great similarity between one normal transition and another when viewed by earthly eyes, but from our point of view, the variations are enormous. They are as great, in fact, as the variations in human personalities. What to the earthly beholder is the end of life is, to us and the person chiefly concerned, the beginning of a new one. It is with the personality that we have to deal and, according to the personality, to the knowledge or ignorance of spiritual matters of the passing soul, so is our especial task governed and our course of action regulated. In short, every 'death' is treated and served with strict regard to its essential requirements.

As you can imagine, a great deal of patience has at times to be exercised when we are confronted with minds that are tenacious of old beliefs and ideas that bear no relationship to the truth and facts and realities of spirit life, and it may take much arduous work to free the newly arrived person of so much that is mentally inhibiting and spiritually retarding. You will see, then, the wisdom of choosing instruments who are ably suited in all respects to the work in hand so that a difficult or awkward case may not be rendered more so.

No trouble is spared. We have an infinity of time, a vast amount of patience, together with the services of a multitude of people always available. There is no bungling; there are no mistakes; nothing is left to chance. Our principal in the central office, ... knowing us, sends us upon our missions to earth with complete confidence in his choice of ourselves, while for our part, *we* have complete confidence that we are not being given a task beyond our powers of performance.

Methods of Operating

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) We have to explain *ourselves* first of all, which may sound [strange]. We have to convince the newly-arrived one that we are not 'ghosts,' unsubstantial beings whose sole function is to frighten people. We have become accustomed to being asked the question, 'Who are *you*?' – when we first approach some soul just arrived and in difficulties. And we are obliged to explain that we are very much creatures of 'flesh and blood,' and that we have come to help them if they will allow us to do so.

Sometimes, the homeliness of our attire and its familiar appearance bring some measure of confidence and assurance to their minds. Our voices, too, seem to be perfectly ordinary and recognizable. For you must know that any suggestion of our appearing as 'celestial beings' would most likely terrify the newcomer and defeat our purpose before we had even commenced to work. Indeed, we are so very matter-of-fact, displaying no suggestion of religious tendencies in our conversation, and speaking to them and treating them as though their present situation were a perfectly commonplace state of affairs – which it is to us, but not to them – that it is not long before an intelligent, receptive mind will grasp the situation in its fullness, and be glad to resign himself to our care.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Long experience has taught us that often the smallest, most insignificant incident can do far more to bring peace and mental quietude to the newcomer to spirit lands than would a hundred of the most brilliant dissertations.

In our conversation with Roger [a new arrival], *as with thousands of others* upon whom we have attended, we are just ourselves. After all, this is a world of life and activity and truth, not a sham, shadowy, sanctimonious mockery of existence. ... We prefer *our* form of 'heaven' to the strange conception current in some quarters on earth.

Assisting at a Transition or Passing

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Ruth and I found ourselves in a bedroom of a house of modest dimensions, unpretentious, and moderately prosperous as far as earthly possessions were concerned. A nurse was in attendance and relatives were close at hand. It was evidence that they believed the end was not far distant and the doctor appeared to have done all that he could to make things easier for his patient.

There also seemed to be some evidence that a minister of their church had not long left the room. There were distinct signs that prayerful petitions had been sent forth, but these being couched in the usual terms of theological obscurity and in addition being totally inapposite to achieve any purpose whatever beyond giving doubtful satisfaction to those then present. This was a matter, however, that Ruth and I were quickly able – and qualified – to set right. We did so, asking for a downflowing of helpful power to supplement our own natural resources and abilities. It was instantly forthcoming and was clearly observable in the bright beams of light that diffused themselves round about us.

It was plain to see that in a brief space, our friend would be joining us. Accordingly, we commenced our small preparations. Ruth stationed herself at the head of the bed within easy reach of the lad's head. Placing her hands upon his brow, she gently smoothed his temples.

We are never certain that our ministrations are perceived or felt unless the 'patient' reveals some sign or another that he – or she – has done so. In this case, it was patent that Ruth was making a decided impression because coincidental with her placing her hands upon the boy's head, he turned his eyes with an upward motion as though seeking or trying to perceive whence the pleasant, soothing sensation came.

It was possible that he could actually see Ruth; if that were the case, so much the better.

We had both assumed a replica of our former earth habiliments. Ruth being attired in a gay summery garment, looking very natural and normal, and altogether charming. It is necessary to emphasize this since it was – and always is – our aim to appear as unlike 'celestial beings,' should our presence be observed, as it is possible to be. (When Edwin came to meet me upon my own transition, he revealed himself to me dressed in his customary earthly attire. Had he presented himself to me in his spirit clothes, there is every reason to believe that I should have been sufficiently terrified to fancy that, if the worst had not come, it could not be long delayed!)

I perched myself at the foot of the lad's bed and directed my gaze upon him and there were evidence signs of his seeing me. I smiled to him and gently waved my hand to reassure him. So far, things were proceeding very favorably – would that all passings were as serene.

The great moment in the boy's life had now arrived. I moved to a position at about the middle of the bed upon the side opposite to Ruth. The boy had lapsed into a gentle sleep. As he did so, his spirit body rose slowly above his inert physical body to which it was attached by a bright silver cord – the lifeline as it is termed. I place my arms beneath the floating form; there was the slight momentary twitch, the cord detached itself, retracted, and disappeared.

To the relatives in the bed-chamber, the boy was 'dead' and 'gone.' To Ruth and me he was *alive* and *present*.

I held him in my arms, as one would a child, while Ruth again placed her hands upon his head. A gentle movement of her hands for a minute or two to ensure that the boy would be peacefully comfortable and we were ready to start upon our rapid journey to our home.

Throughout the transit, Ruth held one of the boy's hands, thus giving him energy and strength while I supported him in my arms. The journey, as with all such journeys, was soon over; we had left the dismal bedroom and we were in our own beautiful land and home. Quietly and gently, we laid the boy upon a very comfortable couch, Ruth seating herself beside him as I took a chair at the foot facing our new arrival. ...

All there was for us to do now was to await the awakening, which, in the nature of the case, would not be long delayed.

Our simple, but usually effective, arrangements had already been made. The couch upon which he had been laid was placed close beneath a wide open window in such a position that, without even the slightest movement of the head, a most enchanting view was to be seen of the gardens without, while through a gap in a line of trees, a distant view of our beautiful city was to be had, clear and colorful. Upon the wall immediately facing the lad there hung a huge mirror so that the reflection of the rest of the room, with all that it suggested in comfort and ease, could be observed with the merest turn of the eye. Children's voices could be heard in the distance, and the birds were singing with their customary vigor.

This was the pleasant situation awaiting our friend when he emerged from his short but refreshing sleep and this is often the moment when the *real* work begins!

Explaining Matters at the Awakening of the New Arrival

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Ruth was the first to speak when our friend [the spirit they had just brought over] had opened his eyes.

'Well, Roger,' she said, 'how do you feel?' (Our friend at the office had given us the boy's first name, which was sufficient for all purposes.)

Roger opened his eyes still wider as he turned to Ruth. 'Why,' said he, 'I saw you - when was it? A little while ago. Who are you?'

'Just a friend to help you. Call me Ruth.'

'And you, sir, I seem to remember you were sitting at the foot of my bed.'

'That's right,' I said. 'The memory will become clearer in a moment or two.'

Roger started to sit upright, but Ruth gently pressed him back upon the cushions. 'Now, Roger,' said she, 'the order of the day is that you just stay quietly there and not do too much talking.'

The boy stared out of the window.

'Lovely view, isn't it?' I said, pointing through the window. 'Feeling comfortable? That's right. Well, now, you are wondering what this is all about. Have you any idea what has happened? Only a hazy notion. But the great thing is that *now* you are feeling all right. All the aches and pains gone. Isn't that it?'

Roger nodded and smiled as the realization seemed to come upon him....

The boy was obviously not of the nervous sort, and there appeared to be no purpose in withholding the truth any longer. I caught Ruth's eye and she nodded in agreement.

'Roger, my dear boy,' I began, 'I have some pleasant news for you. You were perfectly correct, you *did* see Ruth and me a little while ago. We were in your bedroom at home and you were very ill, so ill that the doctor couldn't pull you through. So Ruth and I came to *bring* you through, through into another world, a lovely world. Do you follow?'

Then I've died. Is that it?'

'That's it, old fellow. You're not frightened?'

'No, I don't think so.' He paused. 'I never expected anything like this,' he added.

Work Affected by Pre-Existing Knowledge of Spirit World

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) With a long experience of transitions upon which to draw, commencing with *my own*, I know this beyond peradventure: when the last earthly breath has been drawn, and life has begun in the spirit world, there is never the slightest inclination, at that vital moment, to think in terms of learned theological disquisitions or indulge in any 'pious platitudes.'

Every soul who arrives in these or other realms of the spirit world completely untutored about life here is concerned with one thing and one thing only: what is to happen next? Just that. Because we are inhabitants of the spirit world, we have not become grand rhetoricians, who speak only in long, eloquent periods upon matters of the highest spiritual consideration. ... We are normal, rational people, who speak and act in a normal, rational way.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) A person who is uninstructed in spirit truths can be remarkably obstinate in clinging to his old earthly ideas of what exactly should have taken place when he 'died.' Some may have no views upon the matter whatever and so may be more amenable to reason and logic. Others may be good folk, but are completely dominated by orthodox religious views and this type, if anything, is perhaps among the worst of them all to deal with!

There is, over and above these, a certain type of religious mind that causes us a great deal of trouble and it is associated with those people upon earth whose religion is of a very crude, elementary description, founded upon a literal

interpretation of the scriptures according to their own primitive ideas.

They consider themselves among the ‘elect’ who are going to be ‘gathered up’ in some mysterious fashion into the celestial realms, there to be suitably rewarded for their great ‘faith.’ Their whole religious concept is just as vague in its content and meaning as is this my description of it. The basis is ‘faith’ in particular scriptural admonitions and precepts and prophecies. They verily believe that their ‘creed’ will see them through their earthly life into the next world. They believe they will be met by a heavenly host and escorted to their home among the ‘elect.’

It never occurs to these people that a life such as they imagine for themselves in a heaven would, if realized in all its completeness, become a veritable nightmare to them. They picture themselves spending all eternity in some form of simple worship, which incorporates a vast deal of hymn-singing and conversational quotation from the scriptural books.

You can imagine for yourself something of the shock that awaits such souls when they arrive here in the spirit world to find that they are totally mistaken in the true state of things. At first, they will gravitate to others of their own kind, if we find it impossible, for the moment, to convince them of their errors. At length, their homemade ‘heaven’ will begin to bore them, until they become thoroughly dissatisfied with their life and surroundings. Then we can step in and introduce them to a normal, natural way of living in the spirit world.

It is strange ... that we should have to expend so much labor, undertaken by so many of us here, in explaining to people, ordinary, normal, pleasant, amiable people, the very truth of their being *alive* in every sense of the word!

Transition Guidance

(*John Heslop, SABL.*) ... Our occupations are very varied. Part of our work is to help and teach those who come here ignorant of all spiritual life. When they pass from earth, they are often confused when they wake up so we go to them and help them to realize where they are.

Everything being entirely spiritual here, if they have no spiritual insight, they see no beauty around them. Hence you may remember in reading the accounts of such waking to spirit life, they say that they found a gloomy desert land. Now, when this is so, their distress and astonishment are very great, and we go to any who can see us and try to explain and give comfort where we can.

Then, when spirits who have lived entirely for self come here, they are confronted with the record of their lives and the revelation often drives them almost to despair. And we tell them how the past may be redeemed and the evil atoned for and undone, and take them to the place where they can do this and be helped to a higher life.

Others come timid and ignorant, but loving much. So, because they love much, there is a great welcome of love all ready for them, and we being them good tidings and they

are taught and comforted, and their weary spirits soothed and rested.

Rewards of the Work

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) We three, Edwin, Ruth, and I, have made literally countless friends through the instrumentality of our work. So many of them regard us as the first face upon which they cast their spirit eyes when death had closed their physical eyes. They regarded us then as friends in need, who had come to save them from heaven knows what nameless ordeals, and, if for no other reason than this, our work is repaid a hundred-fold by the look of heartfelt relief upon their countenances and by the exuberance of their gratitude as we explain some of the pleasant things that are awaiting them. And never was gratitude more genuine!

The Gilberts' Work as Post-War Transition Guides

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) [Philip's teacher:] “He will soon realize his identity – his ‘Egoic self’ – and will continue his mission in which you will help him. For a while yet, he is in the aura of his incarnation, but his gaiety and zest even now have their effect on those he meets.

“I was still ... uncertain what to think ... of strong ‘impressions’ crowding upon me ... that [Philip] was an advanced Ego, and that he had deliberately incarnated and been plunged into every form of young man’s experience, in order to work in the astral world among ex-service men.”

[Philip:] I tell you I’m having a grand time and I shall soon start working.

They tell I’m picking up all this so quickly because I knew it all before, as you did. I’m staying near the earth for the time, but I had learnt things in the next planes before I came here.

You know how interested I always was in people, don’t you? That’s to be my job here, when I’m properly established. There’s some queer specimens around!

They say that’s to be my job – not too savory, if you ask me, but it’s a job all right.

I’m not really working yet, and I still don’t understand much. They say that, as I have chosen to confine myself to this plane for the time, I have to remain bounded by its limit of consciousness, except in inner flashes.

The real person ... is alive and strong and well-equipped now and with a worthwhile job to do.

Q. What is your work exactly?

There is a mass of unevolved – unevolved to the point of pure negation – souls come across lately. Some are strong personalities with power to dominate. There is also a mass of young, untaught, earthy people cut off before they’ve developed much and not ‘old souls.’ The first crowd strive to overwhelm the second – to suck them into their magnetic current. This is the incessant battle going on, in this plane, and it is that I have to fight in.

Q. How do you fight? -

By the power of magnetic thought ... and by the power of oratory. ... Yesterday ... I got in a group of confused airmen killed before 'V'-Day and persuaded them to join in. I only had to explain to them. They could contact me because I am functioning on their plane, but they were too undeveloped to be able to contact anyone from the Higher Planes, yet, except to sense, vaguely, a glow of Light.

That, I think, was an easy job because they were not really bad, just heavy and stupid, spiritually.

I was sent to the [railroad crash]. They keep giving me jobs now. It's almost a routine like on earth. What happens is that, at a certain 'time' regularly, I tune in (as you do to me) to what we might call, for want of a better word, H.Q., and they tell me what to do.

I was sent to help some of these poor devils who had died - trapped under coaches. There were one or two evolved folks among them who soon came to and helped me with the others who were very upset and muddled. I thought myself into my uniform to help these people. I personally like to feel myself into my tweed jacket and slacks, but I find the uniform seems to re-assure earth-people who come over and to impress unpleasant ones like that Nazi.

We have been among the newly-arrived. By newly, I mean within the last year or so. Yes - it takes so long and more to some to adjust. Those who have evolved so far as to be able to attract help get in touch at once with people here who can help them.

The sphere in which you and I were working is the near-earth consciousness - the immediate post-death world.

I have been very much occupied again, but this time it was an easier job. There was a group of little boys who had died in concentration camps. They are still in their child form, for their spirits had newly-emerged and are undeveloped by any earth experience, but they rapidly become entities here with a little help. At present, they are still frightened and think they are hungry because fear and pain had been so deeply impressed on them in life that their etheric bodies were affected as well as their physical. I managed to create a football for them and showed them how to play it, in a sort of skimming way [thought travel]; they responded quickly and are now laughing and gay because they have forgotten. They needed a male entity to devise this way of curing them. Comfort from kindly 'female' (I mean ex-female) entities helped, but did not divert.

In the work I'm doing among newly-arrived people, I have not so far failed, but sometimes, I have to fight hard against that feeling of horror and fear when I come up against a really nasty bit of work. The only way is completely *detached* power to cope with these entities. It is true what you were told: they can only harm you by the fear they cause - but some can [make] a jolly tough attempt to arouse that fear.

But the surge of Power which comes over me when I project my thought towards our Old Man is so strong and

so heartening that I easily feel myself stiffening against the 'unevolved.'

Last night, we both worked ... at one of the hardest tasks in one sense, among some suicides. The Law, to me, seems hard on such people, but it is simply the inevitable consequence, I suppose. Spiritually, they are earth-bound unless they have been very highly evolved people who have performed the act for unselfish reasons. Any suicide for selfish reasons, however strong and urgent, finds himself tied to aura of his incarnation,' as the Chief put it to you. He cannot escape to the Light, though he may see it. Yet, to those who have been sorely tried, help can be taken. It acts in every case: if a person has been sufficiently in harmony to attract, magnetically, harmonious entities, then, whatever folly he has committed in earth-life, he gets help and inspiration here, in time. It may not be from the highest levels, but it is from higher levels than his own and there are billions of discarnate entities who have chosen to pay off debts of selfishness and greed by unselfish efforts to help in the astral world. They can often pay off 'Karma' in this way, just as well as by re-incarnating. There is no lack of help here - rather, a superabundance of it.

I went with you last night to do jobs. We worked together again, amongst concentration camp victims. It is these folk who seem to need most help after death.... It's not physical pain and hardship which upsets the etheric body. It's that mental and spiritual stress.

The result of the sort of treatment these people had was to corrode the spirit, except in the case of very exceptional souls, to reduce it to a fear-soaked servile jelly constantly reliving the hideous incidents of its daily round.

We went together - I in my uniform, which always seems to carry conviction - tribute to the British Navy! - and you in a sort of floating tulle effect which seemed to create a sensation and to set the female victims the pleasant task of trying to think themselves into a similar creation! We need our united psychic force to project rays of re-assuring peace so that they ceased to jerk and start.

Then I did a spot of magic and created a good spread of food for them and they sat down and thought they were eating it, and I worked very hard, by memory, to create the taste for them so that they could get the right effect. They ate enormously - or thought they did - but of course had no indigestion to follow!

Q. It was all illusion, really?

Oh yes - I think that's what [Frederick] Myers meant by the 'plane of illusion.' But he did not make it clear that this post-death 'illusion' is often created for the newly dead by their more advanced friends and helpers - or *by their enemies*.

I am getting busier and busier. This work has gripped my imagination, I think, though I always set a limit to it, in my mind. I say: 'Till you come over, and then we'll go exploring, at least for a while.'

But you see the need. The urgent need, for this 'Cook's courier' meeting of those newly come will be reduced as the effects of the war die off. For, usually, in the case of the average death-bed, there are [discarnate] friends and relatives ready to help the dying over the barrier.

It is the folk plunged suddenly into Eternity, and some after frightful suffering, who sometimes are confused and unhappy. I who passed over just like that, and most unexpectedly to my conscious mind, not even with the half expectation one has on the battlefield, can help, for I can visualize the confused muddle that I felt for the first hour or so, the strange inconsequence, the inability to grasp that I was killed.

But, in my case, the focus of my thoughts was a powerful occult center. I had only to get there and I was at once one of the crowd.

So, I still go on with this work. With all the Quisling [Norwegian collaborators] executions to come, there are foci of harm and ill-wishing to be let loose in this world, and they have to be coped with.

I am at [my work] pretty well all the time. Sometimes it's tracking down and helping people who need it, as I told you before – really similar sorts of jobs, among children, victims of cruelty and sometimes service men.

Each case is, of course, individual, with its special needs, and that's why the job is so interesting – no monotony, which you knew I hated. I have to use my wits, to think swiftly of some way to divert or teach which will do the trick. Hence, I've got to be the sufferer for a moment – to think myself into his thought processes so that a solution can come which just suits [the situation] – often something absurdly simple.

For instance, there was a middle-aged man killed rather lingeringly in battle. He'd not had a very bright life, either, a dull city life in a row of drab little houses, never any spare cash and no deep affection to sustain him. War and its horrors had upset him very badly and a long night dying untended in a ditch had not improved things. Getting into his thought images, it was quite absurd – I could see rows of neatly planted cabbages, runner beans, and so on, and I suddenly discovered that all he'd longed for was – a [garden] allotment! Just somewhere to dig and plant vegetables!

That was fairly simple to find. I know of several folks here who have got a good strong gardening thought-world going and are as happy as mud-larks, so I took him there and it was wonderful how his state of mind improved.

Sometimes it's grimmer. There was a very strong, dominating and possessive ex-airman pursuing his companion unceasingly. They'd had some sort of unlovely relationship on earth and the second chap was as weak as a rabbit. Yet he'd done many kindnesses and so deserved help and I was sent on the job. So I made a third in the party and talked magnetically to the rabbit and, being easily impressed, he began to listen eagerly to all I said. I then set a strong protec-

tive thought-wall around him and showed him how to concentrate. The other tried to butt in so I gave out power and held him back. He was an unpleasant, greedy brute and I willed him to gravitate to his correct sphere: he'd been so strong that he had temporarily resisted the magnetic urge to get to his kind. Finally, I saw him very slowly and unwillingly impelled towards a charming group of Nazis, Glasgow thugs and a gangster or two. There he can find his own level!

Yesterday I put in a little time ... in a job here. A young female – fille-de-joie – approached me. I didn't know how she managed to get into my aura, but she did! She tried all her little tricks and, when they failed, as I merely turned a quizzical and glowing green eye upon her, she began to weep in a puzzled and thwarted way. I felt sorry for the poor mutt, as I sensed she was a decent sort, so I sat down by her side very seriously and turned on all the battery of persuasive eloquence which I strive to cultivate here, and soon she was looking soulfully upon me. I nipped in the bud any tendency to mother me or to be a soul-mate, and led her to a vague conception of being a helper and I left her very pensive.

Yesterday, I went scavenging again. I picked up (not in the earthly sense!) a very attractive young woman – at least, she had been attractive! But so intently had she concentrated on what is known as 'make-up,' even in her bed, on earth, that the absence of facilities for it really worried her very 'earthy' spirit. She had, of course, no idea how to create for herself and she hovered miserably around the beauty parlors. Mixed up in her very selfish, stupid mind-images was a conviction, brought from very strict teachings as a child that, as she was dead – she'd got so far as to realize that because she'd known she was dangerously ill – she would soon have to 'meet her Maker' and be judged – and to do this without any facility for tidying herself up was unthinkable to her.

Yes, I know it sounds fantastic, but you've no idea how literal and unimaginative people's minds can be – how bound to the thought-rut they have created for themselves. During the war, that girl had frenziedly chased from shop to shop, seeking the exact brand of lipstick, the only cleansing cream for her skin. It had become an obsession and she spent far more than she should on it whilst a hard-working mother struggled at home on a minimum of comfort. It has become part of her astral 'make-up.'

I was rather rough with this young woman. I told her very straight and in time, she began to have a feeble glimmering of the truth. I left her trying to think herself back to her mother.

You have a regular round just now – about 10 people whom you visit regularly – everyone ex-concentration camp. That sort of trouble seems to attract your attention most quickly – more even than those who have died in battles or accidents. You always hated being 'ordered about,' didn't you? And you loathe cruelty so I suppose that's why you gravitate to these folk in your work.

An old acquaintance was trying to contact you last night. ... It was that German boy, Hans, with whom I had tea once in Lausanne. Later on you told me how he came to your flat, and unburdened his heart to you about how distressed he had been when he was sent, being a prominent member of the Youth S.A., to Prague and saw it invaded and saw three 1914 veterans who refused to cross the frontier shot through the head like dogs by their officer. You've often wondered what happened to him.

He was shot – also by his own officer because he protested at cruelty to a girl in Poland. He's helping [us] now with the band who specialize in coping with discarnate Germans, but I bumped into him last week. He is a very good sort. He was pleased when you thought of him kindly.

Yesterday I coped with a queer character – a young man killed in battle who still wanted to kill Germans. It had become an obsession – a blood-lust. Unfortunately, he was an intelligent and quite powerful person and had got on to the idea of thought-creating bayonets. All he'd done so far was to succeed in giving a few Huns some very bad dreams, but he might have got into much mischief had he not been checked. I put him to sleep with a great deal of power – this is not usually permitted – and suggested thoughts of harmony and service, but I don't think he is entirely cured yet – I shall have to keep a sharp eye on him.

Last night ... we had been to the lower strata and had coped with some of the Nazi gang. You felt throughout the presence of love and someone kissed you – it was me – in the midst of those rows of evil corpses.

We struggled together to subdue some of the Belsen crowd – the very worst, and most determined, who are trying to establish a certain domination over some of their discarnate victims, who are linked to them by deep hatred.

For *hatred* creates a strong link, just as love does. Those victims who had strong personalities, without any specially spiritual or high ideals, sometimes learned to hate with all the strength of their souls, the thugs who terrorized them. This is scarcely to be wondered at or blamed – and, yet, in the astral world, hate, because it causes intense pre-occupation of the mind with its object, draws, by inevitable consequence, the victim and the tyrant together in a dreadful bond. By hate, I don't just mean indignation, dislike, defiance, but the real emotion of deep, brooding, revengeful ill-will for retaliation.

On this, some poor wretches fed. They passed their days in phantasies of revenge on their oppressors so that these images became part of their spiritual make-up and afterwards they have to seek out the hated object and a hideous battle of wills ensues. Such victims were waiting – round those gallows!

Yet, although their minds had become a sewer of hatred, many of these people had done, in the past, kindly, loving acts, and so we were able to help them. It is an unpleasant job and you don't often go on it. But it was felt that you could help two women who had seen their babies gassed and had so brooded with this unhealthy hatred that the lit-

tle ones were not able to be brought through this dense and murky aura of vindictiveness they had created. You managed to persuade them that their children needed them and, little by little, you cleansed their minds, whilst I and others stood on guard, fighting off the evil though emanations which sought to penetrate your aura.

You see, I'm realizing more and more that the words of Christ usually contained deep, universal, scientific laws. "Do good to them that despitefully use you," "Turn the other cheek," do not mean "Weakly give in to oppression," but they mean "Don't think and brood evil revenge and hatred, because, if you do, you are actually forging a link in the astral world, an evil link which you will find difficult to break, and the stronger you are as a personality, the stronger link your thought-forms will create."

I find myself still more and more busy for events, railway crashes, air-accidents seem to be incessantly precipitating crowds of bewildered persons over here, but most of them are more or less routine. People are very ordinary in most cases. I just appear to someone – usually in my uniform – talk to them, tell them they're dead, study their reaction – usually amazement at finding they are more alive than ever – and, according to their intelligence, ... give them a short lesson in thought control and skimming. Some take to it like a duck to water – others are stupid and surrounded by a mass of firmly-fixed thought images into which I cannot penetrate. Most want to go and help their families, or someone they love, and I have to explain the difficulties they will encounter.

Masses of average people are over here, not knowing where they are, flung here in violent and disrupting ways.

Yesterday, ... I met a queer person in my work. He sat staring intensely at nothing, looking utterly forlorn. When I spoke to him, he did not move so I looked into his thought-images. There was a great tractor occupying the whole of his mind. He was sitting in it, trying to sow gold-dust. He said at last that he knew he was dead and that he had been given the job of sowing the gold for the pavements of Heaven! But his tractor would not work unless he concentrated on it as there was a devil holding it back.

In life I found he had been an ignorant but fanatically religious ploughman, believing literally in the Heaven legend. So, afterwards, his thought-images were presenting a strange muddled picture of his life and convictions.

I took him to the garden thought creation that I told you of before and left them to deal with him.

Q. What about language – do they understand?

Most Germans know either English or French, and I am learning German. ... But as you know, we talk by thought here a great deal, but not at first so much – it's better to create a sound form of words – they seem to grasp it more easily.

I must say that these little groups of war criminals are as nasty a job as I have to do. I unsay all I said in life about it

perhaps being propaganda. I never imagined such filthy, perverted thought-images as circle round in their shrunken, stinking auras. They sometimes even try to make passes at me! There is really nothing to do for these people, though yesterday there was one who had begun as a fairly good sort, and had helped some children to escape once. I managed to detach him from the rest, and he followed me, but I could not save him from the hate-thought images projected by his victims.

You see, when anyone dies at the hands of another in those dreadful ways, the *face* of the tormentor often imprints itself almost indelibly (for the time) on his mind images, hence he can easily, after death, gravitate there, usually filled with revenge.

Once, however, a saintly old Jew with the face of a picture of Christ came to a batch of those thugs whilst I was there and tried to drive off their victim enemies. It did not do much good to the Nazis, who were so debased that good revolted them, but all the hate-filled victims were permeated by that ray of divine forgiveness and followed the old man, who began to soothe and coax them as if they were tired children.

I am getting more and more busy with people. I brought in a group yesterday, men and women. They were some of the survivors of that rail crash and they could not realize that they were dead – it had come so suddenly. They thought they had got up and gone to rest in a cottage. There were six of them, all a bit earthy, but on the whole decent sorts. That's why they had stuck together. They were all much of a muchness. When they saw me in uniform, they crowded round and asked me to help them to get new ration and identity cards – they were dreadfully worried because they had all lost theirs. I could not at first make them realize they were dead. But I'm still becoming quite a magician in my own modest way – I can change my outer garb at will and I find this quite effective.

I did my Egyptian priest act, then my flannels and tweed coat, then a vigorous materialization as a good old cut-throat pirate, such as there was a picture of in my scrapbook, which impressed me a lot as a child, and eventually they had to concede that there was something odd! So then I got them to try to come through the door without opening it, and one by one they tried. It was funny to see their faces. That did the trick and once they realized the truth, then the new laws began to act and they faded away, some drawn to their families and some to further activities.

If people would realize how important it is to realize the nature of death, to help them make the best of the next existence. It may otherwise take centuries to get rid of their obsessions. Mental obsessions are so terribly strong, as you know, even in earth-plane conditions.

You were with me last night. We were on our job together. We went to some women who were killed in air-raids. They had not yet emerged from their state of earth illusion because they were very material: two little shop-

keepers in a small street who had been rivals, but one by a bit of backstairs, Black Market trickery, had begun to ruin the other who was just getting desperate when a 'V2' finished them both off, in the very middle of a terrible row, and they found themselves, still quarrelling, on the other side! In their minds was imprinted the strong conviction that each would get the better of the other, if not watched, and they would not move from each other's company, though they both had relatives here who wanted to contact them but could not, till the obsession was removed.

You and I did the trick between us. You were rather tough with them. You said you did not like them, but you could see a bit of kindness somewhere, especially in one of them, so you did your bit.

I'm very, very busy just now: helping to train a few helpers, new to the job as I was when I first came over. There are a number of ex-Service men getting into our band, though we are not such a big crowd as the main Helper body. We have certain qualities – that humor you know of and what you would call on earth a 'savoir-faire' tolerance because we've all seen many aspects of life which are not so common. It means we get sent on some of the less pleasant jobs!! ... In order to give the maximum help in grief or to promote evolution in another, one must have been through it oneself.

So we get some queer jobs to do, as I've told you! Yet the most difficult are not really in dealing with the dramatically 'wicked,' but in getting through to those people who have created a clear, vivid illusion for themselves based on earth-memories. These illusions are as real to them as earth-life is to you, and the only way to dissipate them is by exercising 'magic,' i.e., one's own power over thought creation and striving to make the objects in their illusion act queerly.

For instance, there were three R.A.F. pilots frenziedly mending their broken plane or what they thought was it. To them, it was all reality. They were good chaps, if not very advanced in knowledge, and we want all the help we can get just now, so I and another helper appeared and by a rather difficult feat of power, I managed to make their illusion plane perform the maddest antics and to create many 'cinema effects' in front of their amazed eyes! Little by little, it dawned on them that *this* was not reality as they had known it and so we were able to explain. Then, it was a case of teaching them the ropes here and not easy: they did not pick it up very fast.

So you see what odd jobs one has to do!

They say there never has been in all man's history such wholesale precipitation of souls into our world – very ordinary, unevolved people, too, not really bad, but not evolved enough to attract strongly advanced help by the operation of the Law. It is felt over here that these people did not have a fair chance as, had they lived out their complete earth cycle, they might have found themselves better off here and so we try to seek them out individually and to help them.

Rescue Work

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) It seems endless, the number of people needing help. Our control department has lists of them, running into millions - yes, literally! Of course, there are many helpers, too, but not nearly as many as we need, for these people often need more than one "visit." They need first getting at and then "nursing," in a way of speaking. In that way, it is just like real life welfare work.

I have now the habit of "telepathing" to our H.Q. for my assignments of work to be done, and, having digested this, I go first and make all the needed enquiries as to the location of the person I am to seek out. If he is a bad egg and in the lower astral, I get in touch with some of the band to go with me as "bodyguard." Sometimes it is a general "scavenging" trip there, to see if we can persuade a few people to follow us and escape. Those trips are very difficult and need all our determination.

(*Spirit communicator Philemon, regarding WWI rescues, LFOS.*) Q. Are you in touch with the spirits of the German slain?

P. I am a missionary spirit and know no divisions. This soul [a German officer] cried out to me, and I came to his aid. He had been over some time, wandering in darkness. I was with others, going into the highways and hedges of the "borderland," and met this and other poor remnants of humanity cast on the void by this great and awful, yet holy, war.

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) [Mary, of a spirit who has lived for years in a dream-like condition and has been brought to a spirit communication group for 'rescue':] "He is so surprised that he can hardly credit it at all. Yet he knows that only you could tell him some of these things. We will bring him again soon: it is a good beginning. He is startled, and can hardly believe; but will probably wish to investigate, as that is his turn of mind, and that is what we wish."

We asked if they could explain how he had been getting along all these years without learning more.

"Try to think of yourself in a dream, a long dream, and everything happening in ways that are strange, yet you do not wonder about it. Your dream accepts the things as true. That is as near as I can describe his situation. When he first came, he was met by his father and sister, but they failed to reach his reasoning mind and he has wandered on in this condition through all these years."

You have been in contact with some of the souls who have come here without the slightest preparation, and you know how helpless they are in spirit vibrations. Few indeed come who enter into heavenly glory at once. Often there is great disappointment. Usually they remain unconscious for a long time, during which their guides are sending messages to the quiet spirits, and endeavoring to prepare them for an awakening consciousness. But even then, it is many times difficult for them to perceive through spirit vibrations. And

this is why we appeal to our earth friends to help them through the lower earth vibrations, which they more readily perceive.

"He is dazed with the thought, but he will take it to think over as he did last time. You are certainly getting hold of him and we must keep it up."

'This is startling, Mary! How can such things be?'

"Will you believe that each one makes his own life; each one has the chance and must develop accordingly. Frank Chase's condition was caused by too much doubt, too much unbelief in a spirit life. He would not believe he was in a heavenly sphere and would not believe that he needed help; but argued himself into a strange and persistent unbelief until the desire for anything different almost disappeared."

The next time he came, Mary wrote for him as follows:—

"I am here. Your teacher will write for me. I have been so unbelieving that I could get nothing, of course; and so I had no proof of the connection between the two worlds. But what you have said convinced me, and I am studying now so that I too can get in touch with mortal lives."

Mary added: "There have been years, he says, when he believed he was on some plane above the earth, but he did not understand that this plane might be the beginning of heavenly life for him. It is hard to make you understand, and he says now it is hard for him to understand; and it seems to him more like a long, long dream than anything else he can compare it to. He is learning fast and is far happier than before and pursues his studies eagerly."

(*Spirit Control and earthbound spirit Dr. David Walker, LHH.*)

[Mary describes Dr. David Walker, an acquaintance of Dresser's, who has been in the spirit world twenty years and does not know he is dead:] "He has not developed far, for he was not advanced when he came to this side. He is not a stranger to us, though we have only now learned his acquaintance with you. He hardly realizes that he has passed over. He knows he is not at his home on earth, and he wonders about his conditions here. He was not a bad man, just indifferent toward all spiritual things, and thought that death ended all. He would have liked to have you place him, tell him where he is and how he came here. For he is in the condition of one who has partly lost his mind: the earthly brain gone and the spirit force not yet in control."

'I got the impression that he does not really know he has passed into another world.'

"No. He is really in a pitiful state, and we wish to bring him out of it. We think you can help."

'Tell me what to do.'

"When he comes again try to tell something about his earlier life, something that will strengthen his memory of the past. Through that memory we may bring him to realize his sickness and his death and his coming into this life." ...

'You have been away from home some time. Do you remember being sick?'

“Yes.”

‘Do you know what happened?’

“I do not remember.”

‘What happens when people do not get well? You have had such cases in your practice.’

“They died.”

‘Had you thought that your sickness might have ended that way?’ ...

“That is not true.”

‘What makes you think it is not true?’

“I am alive.”

‘Yes, but you are living under different conditions, are you not?’

“Rather.”

‘If you believe that you are alive, try to comprehend that there is a great future before you. That will help you to move forward into better conditions.’

“That is a new idea.”

Then after a short wait he asked: “Am I dead?”

‘Yes, what you think of as dead, that is, your body is dead.’

He seemed to ponder over this a little, then asked again: “I am asking if I am dead.”

‘Do you not think it might be true? Are you not different from what you were?’

“I am surprised.”

‘Have you not wondered where you were?’

“I did not know. Can you tell me where I am?”

‘In the spirit world; a certain portion of it, at least. You will see more of it after a while.’

Again there was a little wait; then:—

“Are you dead?”

‘No, I am still on earth. Can you tell us what your surroundings are like where you are now?’

“Something like the earth.”

‘Do you not move faster?’

“No.”

‘Perhaps you have not yet learned.’

“I have learned nothing.”

‘Do you see others about you?’

“Yes.”

‘If you will tell them what you want I am sure they will help you.’

Private Dowding Trained for Rescue

(*Private Dowding, TSR.*) The second part of our training was carried on in the mists which hang over the great river separating your world from ours. All souls must pass through

these mists on leaving their physical form for the last time. Three times, I have succumbed to the influence of that dark sphere; my light has become shrouded and my mind darkened. On each occasion, two of my fellow-workers carried me into a Hall of Healing where I slowly recovered consciousness and was able to return to my own home. Had I been selfless, the evil conditions could not have overcome me.

We must train ourselves so that fear and sensual thoughts will find no response within our minds and fall annihilated by their own inherent lifelessness. Remember that all evil thoughts and forms have no life of their own. They disappear soon as this truth is recognized and applied.

The task of workers in the mists is to destroy the (apparent) power of conditions created by discordant human thinking; to light up the avenue leading them from one world to the next with the torches of love, truth and wisdom.

These avenues need not be full of sorrow, fear, and darkness. They must become illumined by the true joy of life and understanding so that the sting of death shall disappear. I have more to tell you about this region. Many still in the flesh are called upon to work there with us during both waking and sleeping hours. I want to impress upon you the importance of such work. ...

There were nine of us in the group, all that had passed the tests out of eighty-one in the fourteenth circle in the Hall of Instruction. We were welded into an instrument of succor – we were initiated into spiritual mysteries – we were shown a portion of the plan, a small fragment of which we were destined to fulfill. Each one of the nine was allotted a special task and place in the ranks of the army of liberation. Our task is to free souls from the chains of their selfish thoughts which hang around them miserably upon their arrival on the Borderlands. You and many like you are members of this glorious army. ...

We were shown how to protect our own minds from gloom and fear, how to reflect light through our every thought and deed. We were instructed how to meet and transmute the evil ... let loose in the purgatorial regions by thoughts of fear and sensuality. We were taken up into the temple tower and shown a vision of the glories of the seven celestial spheres.

I am only allowed to indicate vaguely what it means to pass through the first gateway of initiation on the path of selfless service. Is it not wonderful that I am here? Am I not fortunate to have been chosen for such glorious work? Do not wait until you come over. Start at once upon the pathway that will lead you to the temple of initiation. All true worlds are one and interpenetrate.

Chapter 18: Spirit/Human Communication

Introduction

Two specialty activities on the soul plane are working with incarnate psychic mediums to convey information back to the Earth plane, and serving as a spirit guide, who attempts to keep you on track with the life plan your soul mapped out for you before you incarnated.

The Purpose of Spirit Communication with Earth

(Unnamed spirit, SWSL.) You do not realize the necessity in your world for a stronger and more compelling spiritual belief. We think it possible to create that belief through the influence and teachings from this side. We are trying to exert a power for good upon a world that sadly needs our help. All influences for good are needed.

For many, the church is sufficient; for some, a future life must be absolutely proved; others require manifestations or messages from the unseen world. But beyond these are the few who seek the larger field of spiritual truth. All ways are needed; if through them, we can teach the earth people that they are now, through their mortal lives, preparing either happiness or bitter regret or sorrow, for the future life. The thoughts, actions, habits of that life extend their influence to this one.

Lives filled with evil deeds, injustice, impurity, cruelty, dishonesty, cannot wash themselves clean by slipping out of the material body through that which you call death. Make it known, you who can see and tell it to others. Make it known to all who will learn!

Imperator Introduces the Group Working Through Stainton Moses

(Imperator, ST) [Stainton Moses:] Who are the spirits who [channel through me]?

Principally those who are nearest to the earth, in the three lower spheres or states of being. They converse most readily with you. Of the higher spirits, those who are able to return are they who have what is analogous to mediumistic power on earth. We cannot tell you more than that we higher spirits find it very difficult to find a medium through whom we can communicate. Many spirits would gladly converse, but for the want of a suitable medium, and from their unwillingness to prolong their research for one, they [do] not risk the waste of time. Hence, too, communications vary much at times. Communications which you discover to be false are not always willfully so. As time goes on, we shall know more on the conditions which affect communication.

I, myself, Imperator Servus Dei, am the chief of a band of forty-nine spirits, the presiding and controlling spirit, under whose guidance and direction the others work.

I come from the seventh sphere ... and, when my work is complete, I shall return to those spheres of bliss from which none return again to earth. But this will not be till the medium's work on earth is finished, and his mission on earth exchanged for a wider one in the spheres.

Under me is my deputy and lieutenant, Rector, whose business it is to superintend in my absence, and especially to control the band of physical manifesting spirits.

Associated with him is a third high spirit, who is the inspiring spirit, Doctor, the Teacher. He guides the medium's thoughts, influences his words, directs his pen. Under his general superintendence, there are the spirits of wisdom and knowledge, to be hereafter described.

Next come the guardians whose care it is to ward off and modify the baneful influences of earth, to drive away the hurtful, temper the painful, to shed around an influence. The inward yielding to evil can alone destroy their power. Yet again, there are two guardians whose care it is to ward off the evil influences of the spheres, the allurements of the lower spirits who would draw the medium from his allotted work and divert him from his sacred mission. These four guardians are my personal attendants, and these complete the first circle of seven, the whole band being divided into seven circles of seven spirits; each circle composed of one presiding spirit with six ministers.

The first circle is composed entirely of guardians and inspiring spirits – spirits whose mission is general and concerned with the supervision of the whole band.

The next circle of seven spirits is devoted to the care of love – spirits of love. Religion, love to God; charity, love to man; gentleness, tenderness, pity, mercy, friendship, affection; all these are in their charge.

They minister to the affections, inspire feelings of gentleness and mercy; love to God, the Universal Father; love to man, the common brother; tenderness for all who grieve; pity for all who suffer; desire to benefit and help all.

Next comes a circle – one presiding, with six spirit ministers – of wisdom. Under their care is intuition, perception, reflection, impression, reasoning and the like. They preside over the intuitive faculties and the deductions made from observed facts. They inspire the medium with the spirit of wisdom and drive away influences fallacious and misleading. They plant intuitive wisdom.

Next in order is a circle which presides over knowledge – of men, of things, of life, whose charge is caution and comparison, of causality and eventuality, and the like. They guide the medium's steps through the tortuous paths of earth-life, and lead him to practical knowledge, complement to the intuitive wisdom, of what is beneficial and profitable. To these kindred groups, wisdom and knowledge – which are under the general supervision of Doctor, the inspiring Teacher – succeed:

A circle who preside over art, science, literature, culture, refinement, poetry, paintings, music, language. They inspire the thought with that which is noble and intellectual, and lead to words of refinement and sublimity. They incline to that which is beautiful, artistic, refined and cultured; which gives the poetic touches to the character and elevates and ennobles it.

Next comes a circle of seven who have charge of mirth, wit, humor, geniality and joyous conversation. These give the lighter touches to the character, the sparkling, bright side, which is attractive in social intercourse, which enlivens the word spoken or written with flashes of wit, and relieves the somber dullness of daily toil. They are spirits attractive and genial, kindly and lovable.

Last of all come the spirits who have charge of the physical manifestations, which it is thought right at present to associate with the higher message. This circle is composed principally of spirits on their probation under guardianship of Rector, lieutenant of the band. It is his care to teach them and to allow them, by association with the medium and his circle, to advance from a lower to a higher sphere. These are spirits who, from divers causes, are earthbound, and who, by the manifestations which they are permitted to work out, are purifying and elevating themselves.

So you see, the band divides itself into seven groups, each with its peculiar charge. Spirits of love, of wisdom and knowledge; spirits refined and noble; spirits bright and genial, who shed a ray of that light which is not of your earth on the drudgery of existence in a lower sphere; spirits whose privilege it is to progress from an inferior grade to one higher and nobler through association with you, to whom such manifestations as they furnish are yet necessary.

In all these various circles, there are spirits who are progressing, who are giving experience and enlightenment, who are living the medium's life, and mounting upward as he mounts; learning as they teach, and soaring as they raise him to their sphere.

It is a labor of love, this guardianship of ours, a labor which brings its own reward, and blesses us, even as we bestow blessings upon the medium and, through him, upon mankind.

The Difficulties of Spirit Communication with Earth

(Spirit Control, LHH.) We have much difficulty in reducing the spiritual, the heavenly, the wonderful, into terms of human understanding. Then too, not all here are equipped with the power to perceive you of mortal life. Gifts are not all the same. On earth are the spiritual and unseen powers, and also the business and material opportunities. It is difficult to meet them all. We work half blindly, hoping that something of our thought and purpose may reach across the silence and help you to understand and to give to the earth people a new and satisfying view of this life.

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) I have reached a stage of consciousness where I am aware of a great difference between my rate of living and the tempo of all my activities and those of men still on earth. But taking one's experience in working with a medium as a guide, I find that I can only with difficulty slow down my rate to work with a mind still subject to earth conditions. It is tedious and fatiguing, and sometimes I think nearly impossible, but it can just be done. At a higher stage, I imagine that a word for word communication would become impracticable and there would have to be just a swift interchange of thought.

(Claude, CB.) I understand why spirits don't return and give more about the "make-up" of the spirit-world in a scientific way. There is so much that is so difficult to put into words at all, especially to have to imprint on another person (who is still in the limitation of the physical body – the medium) that which to us is a great shining light – the truth. We feel it, we move in it, we breathe it; but it's too great and vast a thing to explain in an hour or so, for no sooner do I start to explain one phase, than I find it leads me to have to explain another, and then another, and so on. We are nearer the Infinite than you are, and are therefore more naturally conscious of the power of the Infinite, and do not require to have it manifested in detail or in finite form to the same extent as you do. People on the earth-plane clamor for materialization; they are not conscious of those passed over unless they can see them in some form.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) [Edwin in response to Benson's question about channeling back to Earth soon after his crossing:] "Let me place a few considerations before you concerning this subject of communication with the earth world. You know full well that such is possible, but have you any conception of the difficulties surrounding it?"

"Let us assume that you have found the means to communicate. The first thing you will be called upon to do will be to furnish clear and definite identification of yourself. Quite probably, upon your first declaring who you are, there will be some hesitation at accepting your name simply because it carried weight when you were incarnate. However important or famous we happen to be when upon the earth-plane, as soon as we are gone to the spirit-plane, we are re-

ferred to in the past tense! Whatever works of a literary nature we may leave behind us are then of far greater importance than their authors, since to the earth-world, we are 'dead.' To the earth, the living voice is gone. And although we are still very much alive – to the earth people, we have become memories, something permanent, more often than not memories that rapidly fade, leaving mere names behind them. We know, moreover, that we are very much more alive than we have ever been before; the majority of earth people will consider that we could never be more 'dead.'

"You will be commanded, then, to provide a great deal of identification. That is quite proper in such circumstances, provided it is not carried to extremes as often it is. After fulfilling this condition, what next? You will wish to intimate that you are alive and well. If the people with whom you are communicating are no mere dabblers, no doubt will be placed upon your statement. But if you wish to send such news to the world in general through the customary channels, those who believe it is really you who have spoken will be those who already know of, and practice communication with the spirit world. For the rest, who will believe it is you? None – certainly none of your former readers. They will say that it cannot be you, but that it is a 'devil' impersonating you. Others will quite probably take no notice whatever. There would, of course, be a number who would imagine that, because you have passed into the world of spirit, then you will at once have become endowed with the profoundest wisdom, and that all you say will be infallible utterances. You can see some of the difficulties that will confront you in this simple matter of telling the truth to those who still sit in the darkness of the earth world."

(Unnamed spirit, quoted in MM.) [A recently-arrived spirit wishes to return to earth to broadcast the eternal verities and expresses his desire to his guide:] My companion made no attempt to interrupt me, but, as he walked beside me, I could see a half-amused, half-regretful smile play across his face, and when I had finished, he replied in his gravely quiet tone:

"There are thousands – millions of friends here who have been animated and swayed by the feelings which now move you; but, when the opportunity has come and they have proceeded to carry out their noble desires, they have found that which will yet be your own experience. In the first place, you will not be believed as to your identity and will be called upon to fight a long and by no means complimentary battle to prove you are a messenger from this life.

"Next, having gained this point in the presence of a few, they will begin to demand from you signs and wonders to strengthen this proof and gratify their curiosity. When you have succeeded in this and your heart is burning to begin your work, someone else will be brought in and they will demand that you shall go through the unwelcome process again for the gratification of the latecomer.

"In fact, this is the normal condition in which they desire to circumscribe our work and the greatest care is needed not to drive them away before we have attempted to sow some grain of truth. When you reach this effort, you will find that they will claim to know even more about this life than you yourself, and you must be prepared for contradiction and correction in everything you say, while many of them will generously and frequently tell you that the error you are trying to teach savors very much of the realms of darkness because it is opposed to their teachings and beliefs. Let me advise you not to grow too enthusiastic over your anticipated mission to earth; the great majority of mankind at present prefer to postpone any definite knowledge of this life until they arrive here."

(John Heslop to his wife, SABL.) And so I try to give you some dim and faint picture of a spiritual beauty and perfection far beyond your ken, but just enough for an impression of the glory and beauty and joy of this other side. But it is only as you cultivate spirituality while you dwell in the earth-life that you can enter at the death of the body into this glory. You cannot even see or partake of it, until either on earth or on this side, you desire it beyond all else that the divine love may fill you and be expressed by you.

Only those in spirit life realize the great difficulties we encounter when we try to impress people. Constantly, the spirit is thwarted by cross-vibrations. These may be produced unconsciously by those near you at the time. Or they may be left in the atmosphere. When this is so, it confuses the message we desire to send, just as you may hear something not intended for you through a telephone when the connection is not perfect. Now when you receive a message from us that does not seem quite correct, wait a while, go alone into other surroundings, and see if the communication will not come more clearly.

Don't rush to the conclusion that the faulty message proves that evil spirits are communicating, nor that untruths are being told you from this side, nor that your subconscious mind is deceiving you. Be patient with us and help us all you can. To reserve some spot, however small, where no one enters but yourself, is of inestimable value. Go there if you desire to communicate with us. Also in such a place, the divine essence can be concentrated and much spiritual help can be given you.

We often find channels of power and usefulness in the minds of very simple folk and it is through these we learn to speak and to manifest. Their very simplicity and absence of all doubt and questioning helps us to communicate. But here again, we meet with obstacles, such as the want of education to give grammatical expression to our thought, and the inability through poverty to publish and circulate what has been received.

Then there is the difficulty of answering the tests you impose upon us. They seem so simple to you, but often

they are impossible to us, while it may be quite easy to give you a voluntary test. So I would advise you, when investigating this subject, not to fix your own tests because if you try to confirm them – probably through a psychic who is new to us – and we fail, it has a disastrous effect upon the faith of the investigator.

Suppose, in order to prove the existence of a telephone, you demand that a special message, unknown to the operator, should be transmitted and this could not be done, would this be a real test of its existence and efficiency? Well, you impose far more difficult and impossible conditions upon us.

We know that you must have tests and we will give them to you, often when you least expect them. As you gain experience in inspirational or automatic writing, many beautiful things will be revealed to you of which you could know nothing in your normal consciousness and thus bring conviction that it is we who are communicating. When we find a mind still and receptive, we can give many convincing proofs. But, above all things, you must be patient with us and, should there appear to be mistakes or things happen that you do not understand, just go on quietly, undismayed. Later the mistakes will often be explained and the doubts vanish.

Again, there are questions given to us of so complicated a nature that to answer them, a long and elaborate process is required, the message having to be passed down through many spheres and many spirit-hands before it could reach the inquirer. And then, when all this has been accomplished, it would not repay the labor involved, because probably the information given would not be accepted.

I have mentioned some of the difficulties we encounter in communicating with you, but there are many more. If the discarnate spirit has died in total ignorance of the possibility of communion, he may remain so for many years. Again, he may be in a sphere of probation and not permitted to return, or he may return and, being unable to impress the loved one with his presence, he may be too discouraged to persevere. Or it may not be for the highest good of the one still on earth to continue to lean on the stronger kin that has passed on, and for the higher advancement of such a one, he or she must learn to depend entirely on Spiritual Help for guidance and consolation. And there are those among you, with certain unbalanced natures, to whom the opening of the door to the psychic world may be dangerous in the highest degree.

Finding a Good Medium

(*John Heslop, SABL.*) Many on this side who yearn to communicate some of these lofty truths to humanity cannot find a suitable channel through which to express themselves so they return to the higher spheres and what they would say is thus lost to the world. So we long greatly for the full development of those who, through purity of soul, are fitted to become the messengers of these Holy Ones.

Great spiritual truths can only be delivered through an absolutely pure channel. It is a far higher and rarer form of mediumship which can see the heavenly influences, the “Shining Ones,” surrounding you.

The Limitations of Language

(*Imperator, ST.*) Much that now seems good to you, you will throw aside with the body. Your state now colors your views. Much we are obliged to clothe in allegory, and to elucidate by borrowing your phraseology. So that you must not insist too strongly on literal meanings of words used by us to describe what exists only with us, which finds no counterpart in your world, and transcends your present knowledge, and which, therefore, can only be approximately described in language borrowed from earth. This is a necessary caution.

Stainton Moses: Yes. That would account for discrepancies in spirit communications in some cases.

Such differences arise in many cases from want of knowledge on the part of the spirits themselves; from their inability to get their ideas through the channel of communication: from imperfect conditions at the time of the communication, and from other causes. Doubtless, one cause is that curious and foolish questions bring foolish answers from spirits on the plane of the questioner.

Stainton Moses: But would not a high spirit endeavor to raise the questioner instead of “answering a fool according to his folly”?

Yes, were it possible; but the foolish frame of mind precludes too frequently such raising. Like attracts like, and the silly, curious inquirers who ask from no desire for information, but only to gratify a whim or an idle curiosity, or to entangle us in our talk, is answered, if at all, by a spirit like himself. Such is not the frame of mind in which to seek communion with us. A reverent, earnest mind gains for itself that information and instructions which it is capable of receiving. The self-conceited, flippant, ignorant, and curious receive only what they seek, and are sent away without reply, or with such as suits their query. Flee such. They are empty and foolish.

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) I am not of any particular name, age, or dramatic experience; yet I feel that all experience here is dramatic and wonderful beyond expression. Mary has tried repeatedly to give you some comprehensive idea of this life, but considers all descriptions thus far as failures so far as definite descriptions go, and she allows me to speak now, wondering if another influence may possibly give another viewpoint.

Life! What is it? Eternity! Why and how?

Could you put answers to these questions in words? We fail! Could you succeed? We are out in what is to you the Great Unknown. How shall we put that unknown into words? Time by human reckoning is no more! The present,

fair, joyous beyond description. The future, a happy anticipation!

Terms of feeling, you say? Yes, that is true. For the concrete, the occupations, the activities, we scarcely have language to describe. Remember, when you are asking of our occupations, that you are asking for descriptions of activities, of materials, of joys, unknown to earth.

Activities? Can you conceive of spirit movement faster than light? Materials? The use of substance which in your language is not material, but in ours more solid and enduring than the earth itself? So how can we bring our activities to your conception? Science on earth is peering into the unseen: into electron, atom, ether, energy; yet has scarcely learned the first letter of the alphabet, has scarcely touched the outer rim of our world.

Interfering Spirits

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) “Mary and Dee are here. We know someone interfered today, and that the watchers drove them away.”

‘How did they do it?’

“We have to use the power of the mind. But its sharp thrusts are sometimes almost equal to dagger points.”

‘Is that quite in the spirit of love?’

“You are told to resist evil, are you not?”

‘Yes, surely.’

“Well, when gentle means will not drive malicious forces away, we may use sterner ones, may we not?”

‘I suppose so. They wrote your names?’

“We know, and that is the way the watchers knew them as malicious.”

‘They must make you a lot of trouble?’

“Not at all. Our work is one of love, and a desire to be helpful to mortals, and that drives away any thought of trouble or weariness.”

Another spirit seized the pencil while we had turned away a moment. He was not criminal, just curious, and longing to try the experiment. The spirit world, you know, surrounds the earth, and spirits are ever wandering to and fro. We guard you from all evil ones, but this one seemed so anxious to try that we did not interfere for a moment. It is curious how, amidst all the variety, all the attractions, and all the beauty here, the human mind slips back to its first home, and wishes to hear from the blessed old earth from which it came.

Spirits Who Have Ascended

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) “We cannot find her. Our guides think she has gone to higher planes. I called messengers and they went straight to headquarters (did you know we had this help?), but could get no information, so they returned. It is generally useless to try to find one under such circumstances, as we do not ascend to higher planes freely from this one.”

‘Do you ever, under exceptional circumstances, find anyone when on a higher plane?’

“We try, but seldom succeed. Sometimes on rare occasions some one from such planes comes to us for a moment, or sends their influence, just as old-time philosophers or teachers may occasionally send their messages to us, although they themselves cannot come. We have explained to you that those from higher planes cannot easily exist in this denser atmosphere or condition.”

(*Winifred Combe Tenant, SBS.*) I can assure you now that human souls born into this world after death in many cases pass on to a different level where their appearance is of a kind not known to any human being in earth.

They are not merely moving at a different rate; they travel on a different scale. On that scale and changed key, they are cut off from earth. Only when these souls drop back into the scale and slower rhythm, and sequence near the physical, can they project or put on the likeness of themselves as they were on earth.

Working with the Medium's Mind

(*Unnamed spirit, SWSL.*) At another time, with a message partly written, a sentence was suddenly broken off and this followed:

“Will you stop thinking out our problem? We are trying to use your mind but it is not passive enough. It sidetracks our thought before we can impress it upon your brain. Just now, we wished one thing and you thought another, and the ideas antagonized each other.

“We wish you to be so spiritually minded that we can come to you at any time, but the conditions are often contradictory. Sometimes you are passive when not psychic, and sometimes psychic when not passive.”

‘Which is better then, psychic power or passivity?’

“We can come through passivity more easily than through the psychic condition alone. To give up one’s personality and let us take its place is true passivity, and sometimes that is lacking when the spirit is most desirous to receive.

“The unintentional coloring of the messages, the tendencies of individual thought, all have their part in changing, even ever so little, the messages sent from here. It is only through the most conscientious endeavor on both sides that truth can filter through.”

Conditions Prevailing at a Circle

(*Imperator, ST.*) There was much in what was said last night that was imperfectly said, and hurriedly, and that was not accurately preserved in the record which was taken at the time. It is of the [greatest] importance that, on a subject so momentous, we should speak with care, and that you should understand exactly what we wish to convey. We

therefore wish to state more clearly what was said imperfectly to the circle.

The conditions of control do not always enable us to be so precise in speech as we are studious when communicating thus with you. Perfect isolation commands conditions suitable for precision and accuracy.

Hardships that Mediums Endure

(*Imperator, ST.*) Stainton Moses: The intensity with which the above message was written out was something quite new to me. The hand traversed sheet after sheet of my book, tracing the most minute characters, always emphasizing the name of God with capitals, and paragraphing and keeping a margin, so that the writing struck the eye as a beautiful piece of calligraphy. The hand tingled, and the arm throbbed, and I was conscious of waves of force surging through me. When the message was done, I was prostrate with exhaustion, and suffered from a violent headache at the base of the brain.

[On the next day, I asked the cause, and the following message was given, but much more quietly]: “Your headache was the result of the intensity of the power, and the rapidity with which it was withdrawn from you. We could not write on such a subject without displaying eagerness: for it is one of most vital concern to those to whom we are sent.”

The Do's and Don't's of Spirit Communication

(*John Heslop, SABL.*) What is undesirable, and often dangerous, is the employment of spirits of low development to display antics at circles for amusement or to gratify idle curiosity. If these displays of psychic power are used for scientific tests, that is different and is valuable as proof of spirit return.

It is absolutely necessary that, in this age when the door of the unseen is opening to humanity as never before, they should understand the nature of the power that is being put into their hands. If thoughts of purity, love and holiness are sent forth, they will come back as messengers of light, with a halo from the unseen to bless and comfort mankind.

But beware of using these forces for amusement, for material good, or for the hurt of an enemy. Otherwise they will turn as a weapon of destruction into thine own heart. Never touch these subjects without reverence and prayer.

Encouraging the Medium

(*Unnamed spirit, SWSL.*) Give the truth to the world, let it be received where it will. Many will read the messages. Some will accept the truth, others will read through curiosity, a few will ridicule. Yet to all is the truth given, and to all remains the power of choice.

(*Philip Gilbert to his mother, PTW.*) What you do in earth day time is really so unimportant, emotionally – though you are doing work for the Old Man, but it will really be so

short a time and then you will be back at your place here, making things hum!

You are ill (I was running a temperature).

I warned you, didn't I? You must be very careful. For you have not yet done your work here – that is the important first. I know you would like to come into this plane, and it is a temptation not to fight against illness, but the Chief says: “No! she is to hold on – her work is not yet done.”

I am to tell you that what you did last night [offering psychic healing to another sick woman while ill herself] was a step on the path of understanding – this is how A.L. expressed it – of the laws of healing. The fact of being ill yourself need not stand in the way of pouring vitality on another, for that vitality comes from outside you. And it has helped to cure you too.

Few on Earth Interested in Hearing about the Spirit World

(*Spirit communicator “A.H.,” LHH.*) “Why don't you tell them [the truth about the magnificence of heaven]?”

‘You mean the public?’

‘Yes. Why not?’

‘They have been told many times, but they will not believe.’

‘No! Is that so? Well, I suppose they will have to be born again before they can know the reality of this life.’

‘It seems so. Most people do not seem to want to hear about it.’

‘Why can't earth people know what is here?’

‘You might answer that question. They will not seek that life, or try to know its conditions.’

‘If the world could know, if it could realize, all would be well and sin forever discarded.’

‘Mary and Dee are trying to spread the truth.’

‘Yes, they are. But the trouble is, they reach only those who are already good and kind.’

‘The others will not listen.’

Working as Spirit Guides

The Work of Spirit Guides

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) Every soul that has been, and is to be, born upon the earth-plane has allocated to him – or her – a spirit guide.

Spirit guides constitute one of the grandest orders in the whole organization and administration of the spirit world. They inhabit a realm of their own and they have lived for many centuries in the spirit world. They are drawn from every nationality that exists upon the earth-plane and they function regardless of nationality. A great many of them are drawn from eastern countries and from North American Indians too because it has always been the case that dwellers

in those regions of the earth world were, and are, already possessed of psychic gifts themselves and were therefore aware of the interrelationship of our two worlds.

The principal guide is chosen for each individual on the earth-plane in conformity with a fixed plan. Most guides are temperamentally similar to their charges in the latter's finer natures, but what is most important: the guides understand and are in sympathy with their charge's failings. Many of them, indeed, had the same failings when they were incarnate and among other useful services, they try to help their charges overcome these failings and weaknesses.

A great number of those who practice communication with the spirit world have already met their spirit guides and are in close touch with them. And fortunate, indeed, they are. The guides, too, are never happier than when they have established a direct link with those whose lives they are helping to direct. It would be safe to say that by far the greater number of spirit guides carry on their work all unknown to those whom they serve and their task is so much the heavier and more difficult. But there are still others whose lives upon earth render it practically impossible for their guides to approach within any reasonable distance of them. It naturally saddens [the guides] to see the mistakes and follies into which their charges are plunging themselves. Such souls, when they at last arrive in the spirit world, awake to a full realization of what they have missed during their earth lives. In such cases, the guide's work will not be entirely in vain for even in the worst souls, there comes an occasion, however transient, when the conscience speaks and it is usually the spirit guide who has implanted the better thought within the brain.

It must never for one instant be thought that the influence of the spirit guide [negates] or violates the possession or expression of free will. If, upon the earth-plane, you were to observe somebody about to take a false step into a stream of traffic upon the road, the fact that you put out your hand to stop him would in no way impinge upon his exercise of free will. A spirit guide will try to give advice when his advice can be got through to his charge; he will try to lead him in the right direction solely for his own good and it remains for his charge, in the exercise of his free will, to take that advice or reject it. If he does the latter, he can only blame himself if disaster or trouble overtakes him. At the same time, the spirit guides are not there to live a person's life for him. That he must do himself.

It has become a habit among a certain class of individuals of the earth-plane to ridicule the whole establishment of spirit guides. There will assuredly come a time when they will bitterly repent their folly and that day will be whereon they meet in the spirit world their own guide, who probably knows more about their lives than they do themselves! We in the spirit world can afford to pass by such ridicule as this because we know that the day will inevitable come when they will arrive in the spirit world and great is the remorse – and, in many instances, the self-pity – of those who have, in their supposed wisdom, made fools of themselves.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) The world little realizes how backward it is in acquiring spiritual knowledge. Nearly all would wander for a long time in darkness here were it not for the help that is given them. When you think of the multitudes coming all the time, and of the time it takes to influence many of them, you can get some idea of the multitudes of teachers and missionaries necessary here.

Chapter 19: Travel

Introduction

This short chapter paints a fascinating picture of spirits' ability to visit other planets in our solar system, and even other solar systems. Spirit life really seems to have no limitations.

Postmortem Visits to the Earth Plane

(*Philip Gilbert, PTW.*) Those people who have begun to advance, or who are helped, soon realize that, in order to escape from the illusion of their thought-images, they must learn to use their thought force for themselves and usually, they begin by exploring the surface of the earth.

I'm going on exploring – revisiting all the places in my life. That is the easiest thing to do.

I'm quite experienced now in moving round. I have been all over the earth-plane, in between doing other things.

I was having a spot of relaxation yesterday: I floated round all over the globe looking at the stories in the stones of all the old Temples and buildings.

[Philip to his mother:] Last night ... you came to me, and we went to many countries. I like to take you round the places I used to know, but, it seems, you often came to me in your sleep – when I was at sea and that is how you were able to write the little bits of information about me that you picked up in sleep.

Last night, you and I went on a very long journey – we managed to pick up our Egyptian lives. It is not easy to do this even when discarnate and we did not get them very clearly – only a blur of images. Then we returned to what we think of as the present and I took you round some of my old haunts in Alex., Smyrna, and so on, and we made a united effort to impress some sense into the fuddled head of a young M.N. Officer – a chap of very fine inner self – who had been fooling round too much. We rescued him. He was blind drunk and wandering the streets looking for trouble. Two thugs were round the corner, but we made him veer away and emerge to sanity, and then we poured thoughts into his mind. I almost managed to materialize to him as his etheric body was still opened by the alcohol and, so, helpless against the incursion of discarnate entities. In our case, we were benevolent so he was lucky and learned a lesson.

So you see, when I want to move round, I perform an act of mental switching on of the current – mind you, it becomes as automatic as walking on earth – and whoosh! – I'm off! Gosh, what a grand sensation. Speed in perfection! You know nothing of it on earth. The way man craves for speed is really an urge from his sub-conscious spirit which knows what real speed can be!

Yesterday, with my thoughts turned on speed, as they were after talking to you, two other fellows and myself tried

a bit out. We whooshed round the earth, from Australia to Hong Kong and from Hong Kong to London in no time – literally – no time!

Many Spirits Cannot See the Earth Plane Clearly

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) [Mary] was also asked if they could see the material things of earth sufficiently to make traveling about the earth's surface a pleasure.

“It is not easy. Some seem to have the ability to see their intimate friends and their surroundings, especially when they first arrive here. It is a special gift if they are able to continue. In a few cases, the gift has continued, and so a few spirits can see the material things of earth quite well. We ourselves see very little of it, not enough to get any pleasure traveling about its surface. It is a gift that can be cultivated with some. But here again, very few do so, because the attractions here are so much greater that there is little incentive.”

Travel to Other Worlds

Julia Ames Travels through Space

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) We went through space at a great speed. I did not feel the speed so much while in motion as when we stayed and discovered how fast and how far we had come. When we stayed, it was not in this world at all. We had left your planet and were now speeding through space. I was hardly conscious of movement. We went as we think. Only the things we saw at first disappeared and there was nothing to check or time our flight. We were together, my guide and I. We went to a place at a great distance from your earth. The distance I cannot measure. Nor do we take account of distance when you have only to think to be anywhere. The stars and the worlds, which you see gleaming twinkling at night, are to us all as familiar as the village-home is to the villager. We can go where we please and we do please very often.

The journey which my guide took me [on] was a long one, how long I did not know. He led; I only willed to follow him. The motion was not flying. It was thought-transference of yourself. When I look back, I see that it was made slower and simpler to give me the sense of distance. Now the movement is instantaneous, but then at first it was gradual. From walking, we seemed to glide into the air without effort. The world simply sank away from us as when

you are in a balloon; then it slid away behind and we went through the air or through space in ether without landmarks. He went a little before me. I was at first a little frightened. But he was with me and there was besides such an exhilarating sense of liberty and power. You don't know what a prison the body is until you leave it. I exulted, I was so well, so free, so happy.

What oppresses, if we may use the word, always and everywhere is the illimitableness of the universe. Up and down, we see it unfolding always and ever. When we make the most effort to exhaust the subject, the more inexhaustible it appears.

John Heslop Visits Other Worlds

(John Heslop, FMABL.) Let me try ... to tell you something more of our life here. We often go in bands to other worlds and spheres to learn of the lives being lived there, and they are very interesting experiences.

We float away on the sea of ether as you do on the waters of the ocean, and, as we gain more control, we can so manipulate the spirit-body that it helps us to navigate these ether seas and then, when needed, instantly assume our normal form. In happy companies, we start forth to see other lands and may I emphasize the word "happy," for, oh, the joy and happiness here, where nothing jars, where not one impure act or thought can enter in, and where each spends his life in service for others!

After our air voyage, we alight on some star or planet and hover over the homes and villages of the inhabitants. If they are people of high development, they instantly see and receive us joyfully, refreshing us after our journey with fruits and essences. Then they take us up to the churches or temples, and should our leader be one of the higher spirits, they beg him to teach them. ... Then these spirit-people show us their homes, which differ greatly according to their nature and advancement, but are always full of beauty and interest.

Sometimes our guides take us to states of low development, so that we may help, by suggestions and impressions, the peoples who see us not, just as we walk unseen on your earth. The animal and vegetable life on these lower spheres has not the beauty of your world, but all forms of life are so knit up in one.

(John Heslop to his wife, SABL.) Your earth is but a speck, being amongst the smallest of unfolded worlds.

Periodically we visit one or the other of the stars or planets under the care of a spirit-astronomer. There are worlds in existence nearer to your earth than Mars, but invisible to you because of celestial transparency. ...

I want to tell you about the stars. In our colleges and schools here, the fundamental laws of all sciences are taught and I have been studying the birth and development of stars and planets. They are cast forth, as tiny atoms, from the womb of the suns. A collection of such stars comprises what

you call the Milky Way. Immediately they begin to revolve in space and attract to themselves from the atmosphere the substances they need.

I will try and tell you a little about a star quite beyond the power of any telescope to perceive, called Leden. It is difficult for you to picture the inhabitants, who float rather than walk, and who are not nourished by material food, but by indrawn breaths of the ether. You would not consider them beautiful, but they have an ethereal appearance as they float about in their atmosphere. Their earth possesses no solidity like yours, but emits luminous colors and they have neither cold nor heat as you experience them. They are, however, an advanced world in that disease does not touch them and they have neither sin nor pain.

Recently, after a great deal of development, I entered the atmosphere of the planet Mars, but found it very difficult to reach the surface. At last, I succeeded by the help of one of the Higher Spirits. Its atmosphere is so charged with electricity that it had a very curious effect upon me, quite different from what I have experienced when visiting other planets.

The scenery in some parts is wild and grand, but chiefly barren. The rocks in many places appear all tumbled about, forming fantastic shapes. There are many volcanoes, with vast craters, vomiting forth flames into the heavy, lowering atmosphere. I saw little water on Mars and one misses the streams and lakes and the green verdure they create.

The inhabitants are in form more like those of your earth, but the strenuous life they lead and the lack of beauty around them cause many of them to be misshapen and grotesque. Still, we met and conversed with some fine specimens of mankind, full of intellectual power, and possessing great purity of life and heart.

They are as interested in your world as you are in theirs. After great development on their part, with practices much resembling those of the Yogi, they have been enabled to mix with the earth inhabitants. They do this constantly after they have passed to higher forms of life by a process much like your death. Your earth is easy for spirits to enter and seems very green and beautiful after Mars.

No star [sic] is easier of access than Venus, the lovely queen of your world's planetary system. It is full of light, color, warmth, and brilliancy. The inhabitants are tall and graceful in form and wear long flowing hair and raiment of every hue. They are full of wisdom and spirituality and their bodies are of a finer substance than that of mortals.(1)

(1) Presumably a non-physical plane of Venus.

No sin or disease defiles them, no sorrow nor death mar their beautiful countenances. As the older inhabitants advance in years, they become further etherealized and pass gradually into spirit states. Intercourse with spirits is natural to them and they tell us of the ideal lives they lead. They live in communities where the good of one is shared by all and the law of all their government is love.

For food, they rely on fruits and vegetables, for to kill even the smallest creature would be accounted as murder in their eyes. Birds with lovely plumage, gorgeous moths, and butterflies are to be seen everywhere and animals of graceful form roam unmolested the hills and vales of the planet. Here there are no reptiles nor pests, nature's scavengers. Through ... mental and spiritual purification, the grosser elements of the people fell away from them and they became pure.

Venus is a world that has passed its first resurrection. The inhabitants at one time devoured animal food with the same relish as mankind does now and they had similar sins and vices. Let me try to explain how this change came about. The atmosphere of Venus is differently composed from that of the earth; it is more refined in quality and is highly charged with an ethereal element. This "etherization" has been effected by legions of spirit bands who have built into the atmosphere ethereal abodes.

Thus they set up harmonious conditions with higher and purer spheres. This process is in existence in your world at the present time and, as the air around you is thus purified, a flesh diet will also become impossible to you. As civilization proceeds, with a corresponding spiritual progress, your world, like Venus, will become transformed and the millennium will have begun.

Travel to Different Regions of the Summerlands

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Every nation on earth has some position and location in the spirit world. People like to be among their own kind and there's no reason why they should not be.

Then, as to the country itself, nations prefer their own type of country however delightful that of others' may be. Here they can find it.

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) In this plane are to be found replicas of earth with all its races and countries and by exercising the wonderful power of desire, one can travel and explore at will.

I want now to explain how the various nationalities find their homes here. As might be expected, there are replicas of each country here and men go to their appropriate national home, following naturally the law of affinity. You will find these replicas on each plane so that the vertical grading of society exists throughout. Thus each plane has inhabitants representing each nation, and inter-visitation on the same plane is easy and natural to us. Relations between national groups are friendly and a good deal of traveling and exchange of nationals goes on. The stupid barriers of language do not divide us to the same extent, since where words fail, other ways of understanding are open to us and so no serious misunderstanding can arise. There appears to be less mingling of races on the lower planes where there does not seem to be the same desire to cross national boundaries. Among us, and still more so on higher planes, national distinctions become blurred and will finally be lost.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) When you consider the enormous variety of national temperament and characteristics distributed throughout the earth-plane, it is not surprising that the people of each nation should wish to gravitate to those of their own kind in the spirit world, just as much as they wish to do when upon the earth-plane. Individual choice, of course, is free and open to every soul; he may live in whatsoever part of his own realm that he pleases. There are no fixed territorial frontiers here to separate the nations. They make their own invisible frontiers of temperament and customs, but the members of all the nations of the earth are at liberty to intermingle in the spirit world, and to enjoy unrestricted and happy social intercourse. The language question presents no difficulty because we are not obliged to speak aloud. We can transmit our thoughts to each other with the full assurance that that they will be received by the person whom we are mentally addressing. Thus language constitutes no barrier.

Each of the national subdivisions of the spirit world bears the characteristics of its earthly counterpart. That is but natural. My own home is situated in surroundings that are familiar to me and are a counterpart of my earthly home in general appearance. These surroundings are not an exact replica of the earthly surroundings by which I mean that my spirit home is located in the type of countryside with which I and my friends are very familiar.

This dividing of nations extends only to certain number of realms. Beyond that, nationality, as such, ceases to be. There, we retain only our outward and visible distinctions, such as the color of our skin, whether it be yellow, white or black. We shall cease to be nationally conscious such as when we are when upon the earth-plane and during our sojourn in the realms of less degree. Our homes will no longer have a definite national appearance and will partake more of pure spirit.

No Difficulty in Visiting "Other Countries"

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) There is no difficulty in getting to other countries in these realms, or, to be more exact, to those parts where folk from other earth lands have their dwellings.

You were thinking of frontiers mostly, weren't you? There *are* no frontiers. You may come and go as you please, and, what's more, you'll be as welcome there as the inhabitants of those parts are welcome here. In fact, if you wander along, you would hardly perceive you were "there," except for some slight difference in the landscape perhaps and in the dwelling-houses.

There is only one kind of barrier you'll come across in this world and that is the barrier between one realm and another, and that's invisible, or practically so – an increase or diminution of the light, as the case may be. If there were not that, certain unpleasant, extremely unpleasant, elements

would be tempted to overrun the regions next above them. And perhaps some of *us* would be tempted to develop ideas above our station, as the phrase used to be. It is a natural law that works in this way and like all such laws, it works without any breakdown, fuss or trouble.

T.E. Lawrence Visits "Arabia"

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) I went to the coast, a coast corresponding in its features to the rugged cliffs of England and there I took ship. Yes, there are ships here just as there are houses and towns. Voyages are easier; no mischance can occur and the direction is assured by the purpose and desire of the voyagers. Our journey has not been a lengthy business of calling at port after port, so we have soon reached our destination and I find myself in a country which is the counterpart of Egypt. There are significant differences. Instead of the loafers and beggars and the dirt and smells of the East as I remember it, here is a clean and smiling land but one which appears to have a very small population. I have seen no familiar face but all those I meet are friendly and happy souls. The slums and filth of the old towns have gone but so have most of the people. This is a dream city and I have left it and am out in the clear air of the desert again. Traveling on foot is no hardship; fatigue is never felt and desire impels one swiftly and surely onward.

The desert has all the more than its remembered beauty but none of its terrors. It is not possible to get lost, and hunger and thirst can no longer prove one's undoing since one can go on indefinitely without food or drink. I am reveling in the clean, bare land and savoring again the desert air with its piercing purity. Lovely to be free also from dependence upon a surly camel, a train of followers and all the tiresome paraphernalia necessary in the old days to keep one alive.

Monsignor Benson Learns to "Transport" Himself

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU) Then the question came to our minds: should we walk, or should we employ a faster method? We both [Benson and Ruth] felt that we should like to try exactly what the power of thought can do, but as before, in other circumstances, we were both devoid of any knowledge of how to put these forces into action. Edwin told us that once we had performed this very simple process of thinking, we should have no difficulty whatever in the future. In the first place, it was necessary to have confidence, and in the second, our concentration of thought must not be a half-hearted affair. To borrow an earthly allusion, we 'wish ourselves' there, wherever it may be, and *there* we shall find ourselves! For the first few occasions, it may be required to make something of a conscious effort; afterwards we can move ourselves whithersoever we wish—one might almost say, without thinking! ... We just think that we wish to be in a certain place, and we are there.

Being severely practical, Ruth mentioned to Edwin that as we wished, all three of us, to be together, then must we not all wish to be at the same place, and must we not have some very definite locality in mind upon which to fasten our thoughts? He replied that there were several factors to be borne in mind in this particular instance. One factor was that it was our initial essay in thought locomotion, and that he would, more or less, 'take charge' of us. We should automatically remain in close contact with each other, since we had voiced the wish and intention of doing so. These two facts together were sufficient to afford us a safe and sure arrival in company at our desired destination! When we became quite proficient in these methods we should have no difficulty in this connection. ...

Edwin then suggested that it would give us some pleasant amusement if we were to try an experiment for ourselves. He assured us that we could not, in any circumstances, come to any harm whatever. He proposed that Ruth and I should project ourselves to a small clump of trees lying about a quarter of a mile away—as measured by the earth. We all three sat on the grass, and we gazed at our objective. He suggested that if we felt at all nervous that we might hold each other's hands! Ruth and I were to go alone, while he would remain on the grass. We were just to think that we wished to be beside yonder trees. We looked at one another with a great deal of merriment, both of us wondering what would happen next, and neither of us taking the initiative. We were pondering thus, when Edwin said: 'Off you go!' His remark must have supplied the requisite stimulus, for I took Ruth's hand, and the next thing we knew we found ourselves standing beneath the trees!

We looked at one another, if not in amazement, then in something that was very much like it. Casting our eyes whence we had just come, we saw Edwin waving his hand to us. Then a strange thing happened. We both beheld immediately before our faces what seemed to be a flash of light. It was not blinding, nor did it startle us in any way. It simply caught our attention just as the earthly sun would do when coming from behind a cloud. It illumined the small space before our eyes as we stood there. We remained quite still, full of expectancy for what might transpire. Then clearly, beyond any vestige of doubt, we heard – whether with the ear or with the mind, I could not then say – the voice of Edwin asking us if we had enjoyed our brief journey, and to go back to him in exactly the same way as we had left him.

We repeated the procedure, and there we were, once more, seated one each side of my old friend, who was laughing joyously at our wonderment.

Chapter 20: Religion in the Spirit World

Introduction

This chapter eviscerates organized religion and orthodoxy, saying not only are they useless, but they are downright harmful in prejudicing the minds of those who cross over, and those on the Other Side have to go to great lengths to reverse and prepare people for life on the soul plane.

Much Orthodoxy and Falsity is Discarded

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Orthodox religion upon earth has much, very much to answer for. It forges many spiritual fetters which bind up the minds of countless souls upon earth so that when they come here, we in the spirit world have to find means to strike off the irons that shackle them so to release them to that freedom of spirit which is the natural, right, and proper mode of living in these lands.

Religious beliefs, both orthodox and unorthodox, exert a most powerful hold upon the minds of human beings. ... A great many people hold that a firm belief in a book of ancient chronicles, without even remotely understanding a tithe of its contents, is full sufficient to assure of a safe journey to 'the next world' and the certainty of a residence in some salubrious spot among the 'elect.'

Some people hold that a staunch belief in the merits of another will achieve the same results. Whatever form these beliefs take, they are most of them of the crudest description and, upon arrival in the spirit world, the ardent upholders of the childish creeds discover their true worth – which is precisely *nothing*.

Now, it is exactly according to the mental and intellectual make-up of an individual when he arrives in the spirit as to how long it will take him to shake off the erroneous beliefs and mistaken ideas which he has accumulated during his life on earth. The person with an 'open mind,' provided that mind is not too 'open' and therefore too easily swayed in one direction after another without perceiving the truth, such a person will the more quickly see what his new life involves in the matter of altered outlook. If he is ready to throw off the old life at once and take up the new life with equal celerity, then so much the better and happier will that person be.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) When I contemplated a future state of existence, I thought – and that vaguely – of what the Church had taught me on the subject, which was infinitesimally small and most incorrect. I did not realize the closeness of the two worlds – ours and yours – although I had ample demonstrations of it. What occult experiences I had were brought about, so I thought, by some extension of natural laws and they were rather to be considered incidental than of regular occurrence, given to the few rather than to the many.

To have followed my own inclinations [and accepted my clairvoyant experiences of the spirit world] would have entailed a complete upheaval in my life, a renunciation of orthodoxy and most probably a great material sacrifice, since I had established a second reputation as a writer. What I had already written would then have become worthless in the eyes of my readers, and I should have been regarded as a heretic or a madman. The greatest opportunity of my earthly life I thus let pass. How great was that opportunity and how great were my loss and regret, I knew when I had passed into this world whose inhabitants I had already seen so many times and on so many different occasions. The truth was within my grasp, and I let it fall. I adhered to the Church. Its teachings had obtained too great a hold upon me. I saw thousands believing as I did, and I took courage from that, as I could not think that they could all be wrong. I tried to separate my religious life from my psychic experiences, and to treat them as having no connection with one another. It was difficult, but I managed to steer a course that gave me the least mental disturbance and so I continued to the end, when at last I stood upon the threshold of that world of which I had already had a glimpse.

It is in the conceit and self-importance of man that he should think that beauty is expressly created for his pleasure while on earth. Incarnate man thinks he has the monopoly of beauty. When he becomes discarnate, he eventually wakes up to the fact that he has never really seen how great beauty can be, and he becomes silent and humble, perhaps for the first time in his life! It is a salutary lesson, the awakening in spirit, believe me, my dear friend – with many a shock to accompany it.

[The spirit rest homes] are a standing monument of shame to the earth world, that they should be obliged to exist at all. Passings may be sudden and violent – that is inevitable at present – but it is to the eternal shame of the earth world that so many souls should arrive here in woeful ignorance of what lies before them.

Edwin told us that a very large majority of people are no sooner arrived in spirit than a burning enthusiasm overtakes them as the spirit world reveals itself to them in the new life, and they immediately want to rush back to the earth and tell the world about it.

Religious contentions and controversies are at the bottom of all the ignorance and lack of knowledge, that so many

people bring with them into the spirit world, and, if the minds of such people are stubborn and they are unable really to think for themselves, then do they remain shackled to their narrow religious views, thinking it to be all the truth, until a day of spiritual awakening dawns for them. Then they will see that their slavish adherence to their creeds is holding them back. It is to be so much lamented that for everyone who leaves, forever, these misguided congregations, another will come to fill his place – until the time comes when the whole earth knows the truth of the world of spirit. Of course, they do no harm as they are, here, beyond retarding their own spiritual progression. Once they realize what they are doing to themselves, and take the first step forward, their joy knows no bounds. They will realize the ‘time’ they have apparently wasted.

When Edwin, Ruth and I were on earth, we were asked to believe that God, the Father of the Universe, punishes – actually punishes – people by condemning them to burn in the flames of hell for all eternity. Could there ever be any grosser travesty of the God that orthodoxy professes to worship? The churches – of whatever denomination – have built up a monstrous conception of the Eternal Father of Heaven. They have made of Him, on the one hand, a mountain of corruption by shallow lip service, by spending large sums of money to erect churches and chapels to His ‘glory,’ by pretending a groveling contrition for having ‘offended Him,’ by professing to fear Him – fear Him who is all love! And on the other hand, we have the picture of a God who, without the slightest compunction, casts poor human souls into an eternity of the worst of all sufferings – burning by fires that are unquenchable.

We are taught glibly to beg for God’s mercy. The church’s God is being of extraordinary moods. He must be continually placated. It is by no means certain that, having begged for mercy, we shall get it. He must be feared – because He can bring down His vengeance upon us at any moment; we do not know when He will strike. He is vengeful and unforgiving. He has commanded such triviality as are embodied in church doctrines and dogmas that at once expose not a great mind, but a small one. He has made the doorway to ‘salvation’ so narrow that few, very few souls will ever be able to pass through it. He has built up on the earth-plane a vast organization known as ‘the Church,’ which shall be the sole depository of spiritual truth – an organization that knows practically nothing of the state of life in the world of spirit, yet dares to lay down the law to incarnate souls, and dares to say what is in the mind of the Great Father of the Universe, and dares to discredit His Name by assigning to Him attributes that He could not possibly possess.

What do such silly, petty minds know of the Great and Almighty Father of love? Mark that! – of love. Then think again of all the horrors I have enumerated. And think once more. Contemplate this: a heaven of all that is beautiful, a

heaven of more beauty than the mind of man incarnate can comprehend; a heaven of which one tiny fragment I have tried to describe to you, where all is peace and goodwill and love among fellow mortals. All these things are built up by the inhabitants of these realms and we are upheld by the Father of Heaven in His love for all mankind.

When a soul at length perceives the futility of his particular religious beliefs, he quickly disassociates himself from them and in full freedom and complete truth – which has no creeds or ecclesiastical commandments – he offers up his thoughts ... just as they flow from his mind, free and unaffected, stripped of all jargon, simple and heartfelt.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) You may drop all the church creeds, for church creeds have been in the way of pure religion. *To serve, to help others, to think kindly and act generously and wisely* – these are the earth part of your service. The rest will come to you as you move toward the light of our perfect spiritual life.

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) I want now to try to deal with a subject of some difficulty. It may seem to certain people that, having made sure of survival and a state of blessedness partly corresponding to the usual idea of heaven, the need for a religious belief and practice would either cease or be very much modified. It is true that we survive but as human beings still, not as angels, and until we become angelic spirits, the need for a religious background to life is for most people as strong as ever. The naïve expectation that after death, one comes straight into the presence of one’s Maker leaves out of account the immaturity and helplessness of the human spirit, and if such a confrontation were possible, one wonders whether any created thing would survive the encounter.

My own view of the situation is a limited one, and I can only record what I know from my own experience since I came here, experiences which do not extend beyond the knowledge and outlook of the early planes. I have mentioned the variety of types found here; their bond of harmony is not in any uniformity of temperament or outlook but in their having reached a particular stage of development. In consequence of this, they are at home in the special atmosphere of this plane. Granted this diversity of attitude, one will expect that religious views will vary just as much as on earth; so they do, and there is provision here for every typical attitude. Even the agnostic can maintain his position because the Transcendent is still the Transcendent, and the Absolute is still the Great Unknowable.

Habitual religious attitudes are, of course, modified by our actual experiences. The process of purgation through which we pass leaves the soul more free from its straitjacket and more impelled to follow a path which will lead finally to union with the Godhead. Dogmatic teaching about heaven and hell is fortunately corrected by the known facts; freedom from the cramping doctrines of eternal punishment, original sin and predestination is a wonderful release for those

who have lived out their lives under such man-made shadows. For the more philosophic, I suppose the great discovery is that the whole scheme of things is built on eternal justice, and that any philosophy based on materialism is untenable. It has to be seen as childish and willful ignorance, which cannot be maintained here.

As I have said before, among thoughtful people at the university [here], much study is given to the progress of the human spirit, its ascent of the planes, and its probable return to earth when purification is complete.

But there is a vast multitude of good, well-meaning people here who are quite content to leave such problems to their pastors and teachers, and for them some kind of church life is helpful and even necessary.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) I could see volumes of orthodox teachings, creeds, and doctrines melting away because they are of no account, because they are not true, and because they have no application whatever to the eternal world of spirit and to the great Creator and Upholder of it. I could see clearly now what I had seen but hazily before – that orthodoxy is manmade, but that the universe is God-given.

Creeds, therefore, do not form any part of the world of spirit, but because people take with them all their characteristics into the spirit world, the fervid adherents to any particular religious body will continue to practice their religion in the spirit world until such time as their minds become spiritually enlightened. We have here, so my friend [Edwin] informed me – I have since seen them for myself – whole communities still exercising their old earthly religion. The bigotry and prejudices are all there, religiously speaking. They do no harm, except to themselves, since such matters are confined to themselves. There is no such thing as making converts here!

I have enlarged on this subject somewhat to try to show you that we are not living in a state of fervid religious emotion for all eternity. We are human, though so many people still on the earth-plane would have us be otherwise!

He [a colleague of Benson] was what was known as a 'Prince of the Church' [in his earth life]. ... What he found most mentally disturbing was the invalidity of the doctrines which he had perforce upheld. So many of them were tumbling in ruins about him. But again, he found friends to guide him ... Discard the old, and accept the new. He had ... made every endeavor to do so, and he had been completely successful. He swept his mind clear of all that had not foundation in truth.

To entertain such suppositions about this life [that we live perpetually in a condition of high ecstasy praising God] is to suggest that, by the very fact of our coming into the spirit world to live, we are at once in the presence of God, or that at least we are within the realm wherein God dwells.... Such ideas as these are, of course, pure nonsense since God is no nearer to us in the spirit world than He is to us in the earth world.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) In brief: we are not living in a religious institution or a religious world as a whole, but in a sane, sensible world, of incomparable beauty, where we can work and play, as we wish, and laugh to our heart's content and where, moreover – and this is vitally important – *where we can be ourselves*, and not be as others on earth would mistakenly have us to be.

The Fate of Those Who Do Not Follow the Church's Teachings

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) [Ruth's] transition had been a placid one and she had consequently awakened, after a very brief sleep, calmly and gently. As with Edwin, she had then found herself in a delightful house, small, neat and compact, and all her own. An old friend was beside her, ready to help in the inevitable perplexities that accompany so many awakenings in the spirit world. ...

[Ruth] had never, she said, been an active church-goer, not because she despised the church, but because her own view on the 'hereafter' did not agree with what her own church taught. She saw too much of faith required, and too little of fact being given, and altogether, she had encountered so much of the troubles and afflictions of others in her daily life that the vague but rather terrifying picture of the world to come, the dreadful 'Judgment Day' that was so constantly held before her in the church's teaching, she instinctively felt to be wrong. The emphasis laid so strongly upon the word 'sinner' with the almost wholesale condemnation of everyone as such, she also felt to be wrong. She was not foolish enough, she declared, to believe that we are all saints, but, at the same time, we are not all sinners. Of the many people she knew, she could recall none who could ever be so branded and condemned in the religious sense. Where, then, were all these people going after they had 'died'? ...

Ruth never for an instant considered her 'immortal soul' to be in 'peril.' Indeed, she went happily along, living her life according to the dictates of her gentle nature, helping others in her daily life and bringing a little sunshine into the drab lives of others. And she was firmly convinced that when her time came to leave the earth-plane, she would take with her into the new life the affection of her many friends.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) We are here [on this plane] ... because, by virtue of man's spiritual heritage, it is our right to be here, and *not* because of what we believed on earth or through the merits of any particular Church to which we belonged.

Churches Continue to Exist

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) To gather the people to the church was perfectly simple, [Edwin] said. Whoever is in charge has only to send out his thoughts to his congregation, and those that wish to come forth will assemble! There

was no need for bell-ringing. The emission of thought is far more thorough and exact! ... Where does the ministering clergyman obtain his indication of the approach of service-time? ... The clergyman who is acting as pastor to this strange flock would feel, by his duties on earth, the approach of the usual 'day' and 'time' when the services were held. It would be, in this respect, instinctive. It would, moreover, grow stronger with practice, until this mental perception would assume absolute regularity, as it is considered on the earth-plane. With this firmly established, the congregation have but to await the call from their minister.

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) In these realms, one will find churches of most of the denominations with which you are familiar. My own former religion is fully represented and what is known as the Established Church also. But there are others besides, each with its own buildings. I have been into many of them. They all possess a calm, restful atmosphere in which it is very pleasant to spend a few thoughtful moments. When there is stained-glass in the windows, beautiful effects are created by the external light as it pours in from all quarters, while the rays meet and blend into colorful rainbow shafts.

Some of the churches are exact replicas of buildings that are in existence now upon earth. Others are what the earth would call restorations of once famous abbey churches, and so forth, that have fallen into ruins on earth. Here they have risen in all their architectural glory to grace the countryside with their presence.

The church buildings vary in size from what would be considered a small chapel to great cathedral churches, all of them erected and upheld by their devoted congregations.

How such things come to exist in the spirit world may cause you some wonder, since one would have thought there was no place for further religious differences and creedal distinctions. Most people do so think, but there remains a large residue who are still firmly wedded to their old earthly religious persuasion. Religious beliefs can take a very secure hold upon the minds of some persons. When they arrive in these realms, they are fully convinced that their particular beliefs are alone responsible for their being where they are, which they regard as 'heaven,' their just reward for their true faith. The fact that they led good lives in the service of others on earth, they would sweep aside as of very little account in the great reckoning which has taken place. It is their faith, and their faith alone, they aver, which has brought them to these realms of heaven.

They cannot be made to see that their great faith has availed them nothing; that they are where they are, not because of their faith, not in spite of it, but utterly regardless of it, and that it is their life of service to their neighbor, just that and that alone, which has brought its reward. The faith persists, sometimes elaborated with ritual and ceremonial, sometimes left plain and unadorned, simple and rather crude.

And while it so persists, their spiritual progression and evolution are at a standstill. They remain where they are in an enjoyment of their creation.

The laws that allow of their religious practices are strict and must be obeyed. Adherents to each form of religion must confine their practices solely to themselves. There must be no endeavoring to convert others to their beliefs. Their outlook, as you can imagine, is foreshortened. They can, and do, enjoy their 'heaven,' home-made though it might be, until one day, spiritual enlightenment will come to them.

Then they will emerge from their restricted, circumscribed life into the greater world that has been round about them all the time, had they but realized it. They will leave their useless creeds and dogmas behind them and march forward upon the road of spiritual progression and evolution. They will then regard their churches as beautiful structures put to an entirely wrong use. They now see that, as they regularly stepped out of their churches at the conclusion of a service, they stepped into a world of truth, of truth which was not resident within the church's four walls.

(Harry Dodd, LO.) People who don't like change find it somewhat bewildering at first and so avoid experiencing much that they could enjoy. "The small cage habit" applies even here; probably the most obvious "cages" are those created by narrow sectarian beliefs.

That is where the artist has the pull over the conventional religionist – there are no barriers to be overcome. The negative approach, the perpetual "thou shalt not," is very hampering.

Spirit Temples

(Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.) That domed building ... is where we meet upon the more formal occasions to welcome the great personages from the higher realms. It is not precisely a temple, though one might call it that for want of a better name. Nor is it specifically a place of worship, as it would be regarded on earth. We hold no services there. When we forgather there to meet these great visitants, the whole assembly is never very long. Their visits are brief as a rule, though naturally we are seated comfortably a little while before they arrive and remain a little while after their departure. But brief as the whole proceedings are, all that is necessary is accomplished within that short space. No time is wasted on "non-essentials" or upon useless formularies! The bright beam you see descending upon the dome is permanently there. ... It is a strong light, have no doubt about it, and considering the source whence it comes, that's not surprising. It comes from the greatest Source of all ... yet the light is not blinding, is it?

Spirit Worship

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) Prayer on this side is altogether different from the wordings and ascriptions of praise of earthly communicants. We do not pray regularly. We do not have Sunday services in which are laws and regulations for drawing near to the Divine. We are filled at times with recognition of the Great and Good and Loving Power above and beyond us. Our praise is more a spontaneous expression of love and joy that we are cared for by the Supreme Being, and we never doubt this or grow indifferent to it. ...

How very far away we are from the ordered service, with its written hymns and prayer, or formulas for addressing the Most High. Love, spontaneous and ever-present love, and joy in that love, is our worship.

(*Unnamed Spirit Watcher, LHH.*) ‘Mary gave us a very interesting message once concerning prayer. Can you also tell us something of your religious services?’

We have no church service, no creed, no rules, except the service of kindness and love. Our prayer is the spontaneous expression of joy and gratitude. But we constantly recognize an All-Wise, All-Loving, All-Pervasive Power, whom mortals call God. We recognize and serve this Power by trying to conform our lives and actions to this Protecting Love. If this Power so cares for us, why should we not use our own lesser powers for those whom we can help? We feel sure that this is the only acceptable worship of the Most High. ...

Cultivate the personal qualities of patience, gentleness and helpfulness, and you will be cultivating your own spirit life.

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) We have our communal worship here, but it is purged of every trace of meaningless creeds, of doctrines and dogmas. We worship the Great and Eternal Father in truth, absolute truth. We are of one mind, and one mind only. And no one is called upon to believe blindly – or to profess to do so – something which is utterly incomprehensible to any mind.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) We do not worship, as the earth [plane] understands the term. We pour out our eternal thanks for the happiness that is ours, a happiness that is itself magnified by the thought and the knowledge that still greater happiness lies ahead of us all. We are consumed with the deepest and truest affection for the Great Being who so lavishly bestows so many good things upon us.

In the true temples of the spirit world, something very different from what you call ‘communal worship’ takes place.

In the center of the city in these realms, there is a great temple, a magnificent structure. It forms the very hub of the city from which everything radiates in every direction. It is a huge edifice, capable of seating thousands of us without any crowding or other unpleasant conditions. It is encompassed by the most beautiful gardens and as soon as one

comes within the precincts, one feels the most astonishing flow of power that emanates not from the great wealth of flowers, but from the building itself. This outpouring of force never diminishes.

Now this is a temple of thanksgiving, not of worship as the earth understands it and professes it. We do not congregate here to offer up so-called ‘sacrifices’; nor do we perform elaborate ritual and ceremonial. Indeed, we do not perform either the one or the other at any time. We are not wearied by long and mostly unintelligible readings from ancient writers of a date so remote that they have no application to our present purposes and needs. We do not recite gloomy extracts from psalms which the majority of people do not understand. We do not sing hymns with whose sentiment we are either entirely out of tune or disbelieve in altogether. And, lastly, we are not treated to the recitation of long, wordy, fulsome prayers that mostly breathe blatant flattery in their every sentence and propound the most abstract theological doctrines as to the meaning of which one is utterly at fault. We perform none of these useless exercises. Instead, we meet here on special occasions, not by rule, not by habit, not because it is a duty, not because it is the ‘right thing to do’; we meet here not because God ‘demands’ corporate worship as His right, not because some spurious authority proclaims that we must do so – or take the consequences.

We meet because, on the special occasions to which I have just referred, most illustrious beings from the higher realms come to visit us in this temple, beings who are close to the Great Source of all life and light. They bring with them some of the transcendental fragrance of those higher states of existence and we are permitted to bask, as it were, in the radiance of the power and light they bring. Such power and light are partly of themselves and partly from their exalted realm, but chiefly from the Great Source of all.

The principal visitant on these occasions gathers together our heart-felt thanks for all that is given to us, for all that we possess, and he transmits them to the Giver.

Such a ‘service’ is simple and unpretentious, and above all things, it is short. Most of these gatherings last not much longer than fifteen minutes or so of earthly time. But into that brief space of time is concentrated an act of inspiring beauty such as the longest, most elaborate, and most spectacular church ceremonial upon earth could never achieve in hours of pontifical pageantry with little or nothing underlying it.

We can please ourselves whether we shall be present or not, and we are not thought any the worse for being absent. Sometimes many of us *are* absent upon important work at the time of these visits, but we enjoy the benefit of them on another occasion and, in the meantime, our thoughts go out to the visitants. But it is the same in this as in all things here. Once you have experienced some of the delights of these realms, you never wish to forgo such experiences, if it can possibly be helped.

(*Unnamed Chinese philosopher, LHH.*) We do not [have] religion as it exists on earth; creed and form are things of no value to us. But we do have at all times a feeling of reverence for, and frequently a desire to worship, the Great Creator. We see so plainly here the moving Power behind all; we see so clearly that the design is planned to make man the culminating figure in the great scheme of things; and we realize so thoroughly the joy and beauty that accompanies man's progress; that we feel we must give thanks for the wondrous things that pertain to it all.

We do not have churches and congregations; we do not have ministers who pray and preach dogma and doctrine; but we do have great leaders who give much of their time [to] explaining and counseling concerning the progress of the human soul toward its ultimate goal. This goal we do not know. But we do perceive that it leads us, more and more, closer and closer, to the Infinite Power that spreads like a protecting cloak over the entire universe.

We feel many times that we do not deserve all the blessings that are poured out upon us; we feel so keenly the graciousness of the Great Spirit in allowing us to partake of all the joy and beauty, that we are filled with thankfulness – sometimes almost overpowering us and compelling a prayer of gratitude for it all.

Spirit Views on Funeral Rites

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) Our friends who are in communication with us and who have knowledge of the facts of life in the spirit world have given to the physical body *its* proper position in relation to *their* life on earth and their life *after* in the spirit world. They know that their physical body is a vehicle for their spirit body while upon earth. When the time comes for them to leave the earth world, and with it their earthly body, the latter is treated as something that is forever done with. It has become utterly useless to them. It has been cast off – and our friends are never sorry to cast it off! What then becomes of it, they are not the least bit concerned. They have no reverence for it. But so many people enshroud this cast-off body with a holy solemnity to which it is not entitled. The 'dead,' it would be asserted, should have a proper respect paid to them; the 'dead' body should be similarly respected.

It would be the best thing upon the earth if cemeteries, graveyards, and all the visible and outward appurtenances of burial were entirely abolished. Large numbers of people would then be forced to relinquish what is a thoroughly bad practice from every point of view. It is unhealthy for mundane as well as spiritual reasons, and can be the uncon-

scious means of bringing distress to the newly-departed individual.

Let us put the matter in another light. Who is there upon earth who has any deep respect and reverence for some old, useless, worn-out, shabby garment? It is finished and done with. Away with it, and let us see no more of it. In the spirit world, we have a new garment, fresh and lovely; it fits us perfectly, and it seems to our eyes faultless in form, color, and mode. It suits us now as no other garment possibly could. We have fashioned it ourselves from imperishable material, and by comparison with it, our earthly garment was dull, drab, and dreary in color, coarse in texture, ill-fitting, perhaps, in places, and although it served its purpose among surroundings that comported with it, we have now something infinitely better. In some such words would we describe our spirit attitude to the physical body that is 'dead.'

What we in the spirit world, who are actively associated with newly-arrived people, would like to see is the complete abolition of all attendance at burial grounds and similar places of all relatives and friends, leaving the physical body to be disposed of in a hygienic manner by those who are properly constituted to do so, and entirely unattended by anyone else. If it is felt that a religious service is right and becoming, by all means let there be one, but wholly purged of all erroneous doctrines and beliefs concerning the after life. No gloomy dwelling upon inappropriate themes from the minds of writers of hundreds of years ago.

We need divine assistance in our work, just as you do upon earth, and often are our powers taxed to their utmost when we come to aid those who are making their advent into spirit lands as permanent residents. Long recitations from the psalms, however beautiful may be their theme, are perfectly useless to us and to the newcomer we are helping. They produce no effect whatever upon the endeavors we are making.

A short prayer, efficiently directed, asking for help, will bring an instantaneous answer. That response will be invisible to you on earth, but to us here, it means a downpouring of light and power that we most need for the case in hand. Pray that the soul may soon receive the light of understanding of the new situation in which he finds himself, if he is entirely ignorant of spirit truths, and that he may be happy and contented in the life upon which he has just embarked.

We have found by experience that, where prayers are offered such as I have suggested in bare outline to you, we are enabled to carry on our work in the easiest, most effective, and most straightforward fashion.

Chapter 21: Reincarnation and the Purpose of Life

Introduction

This chapter reveals that reincarnation is a *choice* and that soul fragments who incarnate do not necessarily need to reincarnate. We learn that early in a soul's cycle of lifetimes, one soul fragment (portion of the soul actually incarnating) may undertake multiple lifetimes but once that fragment glimpses spiritual truths, it rarely takes another incarnation.

We also learn the importance of Earth lives in "setting the stage" for the afterlife.

Reincarnation

Spiritual Perspective of Reincarnation

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) I begin to feel that my present dilemma [with regard to his awareness of mistakes made in his earth life] is only to be resolved rightly in light of the legacies of my past lives. Reincarnation assures me, in relation to the first two of my difficulties, that I shall meet again those who have been injured by my deeds in a future, which will itself contain modifications due to my interference with the pattern, so that in two ways, I shall again come to grips with my own evil and be given another chance to wrestle with it. The third result, the inescapable marks of my own deeds I bear in my own body, I am mercifully given time and opportunity here to cleanse and clear.

The outcome of [my] searching ... is a conviction of the importance of the theory of re-incarnation.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) Not more than a fractional part [of us] is dipped into matter for purposes of education and of tempering. If you could imagine a wheel with many spokes and each spoke capable of being detached and heated to white heat and hammered on an anvil until it was fit to take its place in the perfect wheel, you can form some idea of reincarnation. There is not any total plunge into matter again, or ever. The Ego always has its vital principle on this side. The hub of the wheel is here, but the spoke is incarnate.

I have no spoke undergoing refurbishing [at the present time].

As for you, your spoke, now incarnated, has been incarnate before, many times.

We are fashioned, shall I say, spoke by spoke, until we can all be fitted into the perfect round. Sometimes it is given to the spoke to remember. A spoke may be reincarnated again and again. Sometimes it is never again passed through the gateway of birth. But all in the end will come right.

Sometimes the spokes are rejoined to the hub for a season, sometimes there is more than one spoke incarnate at the same time. The problem of existence is infinitely more complex than you or I thought. But this is sure. The personality, in its ultimate, is one and indivisible. But in process of perfecting, it develops along many lines, takes many shapes, and, while each spoke has its own personality, all

these personalities will be co-ordinated with their various memories and experiences into the one great personality of which they are all part.

(*John Heslop, SABL.*) With regard to reincarnation, it is a large and complicated subject. I can only tell you, in this, as in all things, what I have myself experienced or heard from higher spirits, and believe to be true. And so I think it is incorrect to state that *all* must come back to a material life on earth. When anyone has entered into any spiritual knowledge during the mortal life, they are never reincarnated, except by their own special desire.

If they are undeveloped and animal in their earth life, they frequently return there in spirit form, as earth-bound spirits. Often they receive, through the teaching of mortals, their first desire for a better life. It is not necessary to pass repeatedly through the earth life in order to progress. I will not say no one has ever re-incarnated, but I have never yet met anyone who has. ... Personally, I cannot accept reincarnation.

Pondering the Last Lifetime

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) The history of man on the earth has not been long enough for any of us to have made many appearances during historical times, although the immense ages during which man was climbing from an unconscious level to a conscious state of being must have seen continual rebirths at very short intervals. Suppose a man to have got to his eighth [lifetime]; he will come back to earth for [lifetime #8] and this life will be modified by all the previous ones.... He will thus have seven re-capitulations to work through before he embarks on the contemporary lifetime and the lifework proper of lifetime [#8]. He will have the combined tendencies of these seven previous lives as an enrichment of his present personality; he will have a strongly reinforced personality, perhaps one with many twisted and difficult problems awaiting the opportunities of a new life for their solution, perhaps a matured and enriched personality if his problems have been attacked with courage in a previous lifetime. Whatever he has made of the challenges of each lifetime will remain to him as strength or weakness in facing the tasks of the present one. It is certain that the challenges he has failed to meet and overcome will present

themselves again in Life [#8] in a modern form, and if again he fails, the pattern will go on unaltered so that they will meet and challenge him again in the succeeding life. What we must take into account is the progressive complication of the life-pattern, its enrichment and added subtlety and above all, the mercy which never allows failure to be final and irrevocable. Karmic debts are only cancelled as we gain the grace and strength to cancel them ourselves, but the opportunity to do so comes to us in this inevitable repetition.

Now, how does all this help me with my special problems? It corrects my sense of proportion and puts the events of one lifetime into their place as parts of a sequence in which they have only a long-term significance. What that is, I shall only understand fully when I can see the whole, and for this comprehensive vision I am not yet fitted. But it does more for me than that; I am made to know that there will come a time when I shall be given another opportunity to deal with my problems, to pay my debts and I hope, to avoid incurring a further weight of guilt. So to understanding succeeds hope. Then Mitchell [his spirit teacher] tells me that when the sequence of the past unrolls for me, there will be much good in it as well as error and failure and that, by then, I shall be able to balance these things with an equal fortitude, without elation over the one or despair over the other. Already, my thinking over my particular mistakes in the light of the long record of the past and seeing myself standing here as it were midway between that past and a future stretching ahead into the light of other ages, I am conscious of relief, of the peace of acceptance, and of the sloughing off of the intolerable burden of my earthly persona and the legend I fostered and lived by.

In all these thoughts about rebirth, one is reassured by the extraordinary rightness of the provisions it makes for the growth of the essential being. I find it hard not to credit a clearly divine plan of which we here get a glimpse. True, natural processes in their promotion of growth are always a marvel of adaptation of means to ends; as one studies them on earth it is easy to put the cart before the horse and say that the growth and adaptation come about only by the mechanical operation of the stresses and strains provided by the environment, but here we have additional evidence and can see beyond that argument because for us the element of strain in the environment is relaxed and yet the evidence for a planned development is stronger.

Rebirth and the Bodily Form

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) There is another aspect of rebirth which I have only just come to understand. We come here after death in a form very like that of earth, and [that form] perpetuates the faults and failures of our earth bodies. A cripple, for instance, will come here with a defective body and although the defect will be modified he will remain recognizably the same person, neither beautifully angelic if he has been puny and ugly nor an athlete if he has been an

ailing invalid. Bodily conditions matter less and less, of course, as development of the spirit goes on, but the same essential form is kept throughout because, in a subtle way, bodily form does condition emotional and spiritual form.

You might think, therefore, that those who happen to be born in a handsome and virile body have an undue advantage; up to a point, this is true although many such are handicapped by the vanity engendered by their lovely appearance and are by no means so good to look at in their astral forms. But the framework of beauty is there and, when the faults that mar the being are corrected, it shines out again in surpassing loveliness. But whatever form one started with, in the ascent of the planes, the appearance, good or bad, is gradually superseded and finally form is lost in light; but this is to speak of the very end of a long journey and on the way, the disabilities of a poor form may still have to be borne.

Rebirth provides us all with a fresh start, with a body differently conceived and developed and the connection between what has been made of the previous life and this new form is likely to be a closely causative one. The poor cripple who has courageously surmounted his disability and transmuted it into spiritual strength and beauty may now be clothed with a body of beauty and strength; the handsome man may well find himself inhabiting a poorer form if his spiritual being has been impoverished by vanity and selfishness. In his next embodiment, he may have to learn the lessons of weakness and ugliness. But in any case, each of us will escape from the prison of our present form and begin a new cycle with ... different physical equipment.

Change of Gender

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) It is thought here, and I think so too, that a change of sex is probably made at intervals. After all, men and women are the two sides of creation and experience of one sex only would leave a sadly one-sided and impoverished being. We need to know by experience how the other side of creation lives and to add the strengths and skills of woman to man, or man to woman. When the proper time comes, the change is made, and this is not merely a matter of theory. Those who can testify to their past lives are witnesses to this change and I have come across several instances of it. ... The reversal of sex can sometimes be a powerful agent in altering the pattern of a life and giving a man the chance to break a sinister sequence of events which, without this change, may again prove too strong for him.

The Purpose of Life

The Divine Plan

(*F.W.H. Myers, RTI.*) There is also what I might call the ladder of consciousness. The rungs of the ladder represent the various lives from the alleged beginning to the final achievement; though it is not for me to say that there is any

finality. When I use the term “final,” I merely desire to indicate the limits of my vision.

Now the soul or ego is the actual self or surface awareness on each rung of the ladder; the spirit is the light from above. It illumines every rung of the ladder, embraces the whole. The soul, then, is merely the part, the gatherer of experience, the representative of the mystery behind all life.

(Unnamed spirit control, LHH.) Life advances slowly. No great changes come in a moment. Even death is found not to be the wonderful transition that many expect. Growth, always growth, is the law of life everywhere. We will have mysteries to solve in due time, but they will not be put before us until we can have the knowledge and wisdom that will enable us to master them.

The Truth, the Answer to the Mystery of Life

(Spirit Control, LHH.) The mystery of life there as well as here is almost beyond understanding. But the more we study it, the clearer and more beautiful it grows. Do not be disheartened if you do not comprehend it in entirety. No one of us has arrived at that point yet.

‘Can you tell us what life is?’

We know nothing at all about it, except that it is. Life stands out and away from all argument as an ever-present truth, always manifesting its own truth. What we believe is that life is the gift of God, the one perfect gift among many perfect gifts which we may enjoy without even understanding.

You are asking questions not even we who are here can answer. Perhaps farther on in our eternal life and activity we may know; but now, creation, infinity, eternity, from everlasting to everlasting: why? by whom? how?—these are questions which have remained without answer for unknown ages. Be content to wonder, to live, to enjoy, to serve. Let the higher knowledge remain to lure you on to higher efficiency and greater wisdom.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) We live the life, but do not solve its mystery. There is a Power beyond, a great, kind Power. Of this we are sure, more sure than ever in mortal life. We know that for us to be true, pure, unselfish, loving and helpful leads us toward that Power. I am speaking now of what we on this lower plane perceive. Do not think for an instant that knowledge is limited to this lower plane. Life and knowledge are progressive. We cannot begin here above what we had prepared ourselves for in our mortal lives. But the blessed law of progress is ours, always stimulating to new endeavor and new happiness.

Take the blessings, yes, even the trials that come, knowing that all are in the way of education and progress. Can you not see already some of the beneficent effects of trial, disappointment and loss?’

‘The wicked ones have trials and sorrows also, but it seems to do them no good?’

“Perhaps not as you see it. But sinners have to go through the fires of criminality, sin and sorrow sometimes before purification or advancement comes. Cause and effect. Cause and effect. That is progress—or that is the way to progress. No effort is lost.”

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) “Please try to think back to the beginning of life, from the earliest form of life up to man. Has not the progress always been upward? Then try to believe that the same upward trend, the same possibility for developing fine and still finer personalities still exists. Upward, ever upward, is the line of evolution.”

‘Where will it end?’

“We do not know the end. Infinity is still hidden from us. We are not developed enough to even conceive what lies before us.

(Imperator, ST.) [Man] is the recipient of guidance from spirits who have trod the path before him, and who are commissioned to guide him, if he will avail himself of their guidance. He has within him a standard of right which will direct him to the truth, if he will allow himself to be guided to keep it and protect it from injury.

If he refuses these helps, he falls into transgression and deterioration. He is thrown back and finds misery in place of joy. His sins punish themselves. Of his duties, he knows by the instinct of his spirit, as well as by the teaching of his guardians. The performance of those duties brings progress and happiness. The spirit grows and gains newer and fuller views of that which makes for perfect, satisfying joy and peace.

Special Importance of Earth Life

(T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.) There is ... a reason for stressing the importance of the earth experience. It seems that in the cycle of growth [earth life] is the formative stage when alone any real growth in essence takes place. When the earth life is over and one comes here, the Law of Affinity takes one into congenial conditions and the general alleviation of circumstances removes all outer sources of conflict. There is no more struggle for existence. Our work here is a kind of mopping-up operation. We can, in fact we must, graduate from regions where our faults and temper and our sense of guilt are tolerated to those where we have to clear ourselves of these stains of earth.

(Unnamed spirit teacher, LHH.) We have some different viewpoints here from those we held on earth. It is not so serious an outlook to consider the waste of effort, the waste of life, that one meets there on all sides. Here, we know better the meaning that lies behind it all, and realize that it is a small matter as compared with the wonderful scheme that lies behind all effort, all evolution. We know that, no matter what ills life there may have to undergo, it is but a ‘growing pain’ in the complete history of that life. When all is known, it will be seen that the evils of the earth life are for one

purpose only, to train humans in the way to understand right from wrong, and to educate them to choose the right. In the process of evolution, many fall by the wayside, many strive and fail, many endeavors are frustrated. But the lesson remains, and the individual has grown to a slight extent. Life may be lost, time may be wasted, apparently, but the end has been achieved in some fashion.

I am speaking of the effort as a whole. There are cases where evolution has failed in some individuals, and the result is downward instead, because of some perverse trait that turned the effort in the wrong direction. But this is far less than is generally believed. All failures, so-called, are not failures. Many prove to be the greatest successes; for an impress has been made on the soul that will last through eternity. Sorrow is there, to be sure, but sorrow is often a blessing in disguise. When man can learn that it is the *effort* that counts most, he will think less of the failures and more of the personal benefit that has been achieved. For every one who fails to gain this education, there are thousands who find that their character has been strengthened, their lives made to have more meaning, their happiness, their final happiness, much enhanced. We know that the man who goes through life without effort, who has every want supplied, is apt to be the greatest loser. He has obtained no wealth that he can bring with him to this world.

If all could realize that *effort* is the building material out of which character is constructed, there would be more personalities who would stand out as conspicuous examples of attainment. In the past generation, you placed all emphasis on the so-called successes; the failures were not considered. How could you have overlooked this important part? For, if anything, failure makes a greater impression on the character than any success. When man learns the full truth of this, there will be less disappointment over the ones who fall short of their ambitions.

It might seem that such a view takes away all incentive to succeed; but while material success counts for so much in that life, there is little danger of that. And if the time comes when material achievement has less value, there will have come also the knowledge that success should be the goal for honor's sake, if nothing more.

This thought should help the down-hearted; it should spur the successful one still more. There is so much sadness there over things that to us seem unimportant. Happiness *could* be the lot of many who are now feeling the loss of some venture, some labor, some great effort. It is all education, and 'education maketh the full man.'

The World is Governed by Natural Laws

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) It must ever be borne in mind that the spirit lands are founded upon law and order. But the law is never oppressive nor the order irksome, because the same law and order have helped to provide all the countless beauties and wonders of this heavenly realm.

Harmony is a fundamental law here. There can be no [conflict]. I do not suggest that we are in a state of perfection. We should be in an immensely higher realm if we were, but we are in perfection in so far as this realm is concerned.

No soul is forced into an unwilling task here [i.e., in the Summerlands], nor into surroundings that he considers uncongenial.

In the spirit world, nothing is wasted nor expended uselessly. We never have forced upon us something that we do not want, whether it be music or art, entertainment or learning. We are free agents, in every sense of the term, within the confines of our own realm.

We never reproach. The reproaching comes from within each soul itself.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) There is a law of gravity here in the spirit world, but we are not subservient to it. All else is, but we human beings are not so. Or to put it another way, our minds can and do at all times rise above it. That again is second nature to us.

Nothing is Ever Lost

(*Spirit teacher "Elder Brother," LW.*) Nothing that was earned and accepted by the soul during the process of incarnation can ever be lost, even though in a further period of earth life, the personality (or earth consciousness) used by that soul is unaware of this advancement. For the soul, memory remains stable; and a gift or an aptitude earned or a grace received becomes an integral part of the soul.

The Law of Cause and Effect or Karma

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) "Whatsoever a man soweth," [Edwin] said, "that shall he reap." Those few words describe exactly the great eternal process by which all that you see actually here before you is brought about. All the trees, the flowers, the woods, the houses that are also the happy homes of happy people – everything is the visible result of 'whatsoever a man soweth.' This land, wherein you and I are now living, is the land of the great harvest, the seeds of which were planted upon the earth-plane. All who live here have won for themselves the precise abode they have passed to by their deeds upon the earth.

In the spirit world, the law of cause and effect applies equally to all people, regardless of their former earthly status. This law is no new thing. It has always been in existence and so every famous name that is to be found within the chronicles of nations comes strictly within the jurisdiction of this law. The soul who passes his earthly life in obscurity, known only to one or two people, is subject to the same law just as much as the soul whose name is a household word among nations.

[The subject of the lower regions] is not a pleasant [one], but I have been advised that the facts should be given, not with the intention of frightening people – that is not the

spirit world's methods or aims – but to show that such places exist solely by virtue of an inexorable law, the Law of Cause and Effect, the spiritual reaping that succeeds the earthly sowing; to show that to escape moral justice upon the earth-plane is to find strict and unrelenting justice in the spirit world.

(Spirit Control, LHH.) The one truth we are all trying to send is the influence the mortal life has on its immortal existence. We wish the earth people to know that there is no hell except that which the mind has created within itself. We wish them to know that the condition of the wicked here is one of unhappiness and misery; and that only they themselves can release them from the mental torture of their own creating, only a complete abandonment of sin and selfishness can open the doors to heavenly happiness.

Do you imagine that an earthly life of selfishness and sin can suddenly change into a life of purity and love? Let us assure you that no such change can occur, but must be worked out patiently and slowly by the sinner himself. And it may be years, or lifetimes, or even centuries, before the awakened one can replace sin and selfishness with loving service for others.

Make this clear if you can, and help mortals to awake to the truth that selfishness is the foundation of all sin, and must be overcome before one can enter into the joy of heavenly life.

(W.T. Stead, Bl.) You on earth have mental desires and ambitions of various kinds, for money, success in business, pleasure, power, knowledge, etc.; but always these desires are limited, cramped, often made impossible owing to your physical condition. Here, when the mental desire is good, the field is unlimited. Any mental desire for truth, knowledge, be it what it may, can be gratified in a most astonishing manner in *this* world. Be it good or bad, it will bring its results, and if the desire is bad, it will grow in power and must be paid for; if good, it will grow in power also, and will bring strength and happiness with it.

Progress Means Service

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) Q. 'How can we serve there where all are so happy and all are so good?'

Not all are happy; not all are good. Have you not seen or known of the selfish ones, the low-lived ones, the ignorant ones? Do not think that the mere fact of slipping out of the body entitles one to high thought, spiritual happiness, and the multitude of joys which are here. Mortals are fashioning their future lives right now. The diversity here is great. But kindness of thought and purpose, and a persistent belief in this life, will carry one far toward the happiness that awaits them here. I never had any idea of following my father's career there [her father was a minister], but if I could go back now, I surely would be an exhorter, a ... I don't

know how to put it. But it would be such a passion for saving souls from all that is sinful, that life itself, it would seem to me, must be spent there in such service.

We believe the life of the spirit must be service first, joy afterward. But no! That is not quite right, because service is always joy. The two move on together. And if the sad old world could learn the lesson of unselfish, unseeking service – I mean unseeking of any return – it would create a heaven on earth. There are saints over there, but their quiet self-sacrifice and loving service are scarcely noticed. The ruling passion for power, the ruling desire for riches to win this power, is almost universal. And the quiet saint-like souls who go on their way unobserved will grow more and more heavenly in character, and will become the nobility here.

Q. 'Is there difference in caste?'

'No, only one nobility, and only one entrance into its circles – only that of loving, kindly, unselfish service.'

(Unnamed spirit, LHH.) I am wishing to tell those on earth, who are struggling to learn what is the meaning of life, that it is the way one looks at it that determines its value. If one thinks of it as a time of sensuous enjoyment, one makes his life a thing of little worth, for such things have no value in the spirit world. If one looks at life as something to be endured and to be gotten through with as soon as possible, he will form a character that has nothing to rest on here. He will have to create new foundations before he can advance. If one there believes that life consists in praying and preaching, that spirit is apt to want to pray and preach here; and in this world there are no churches or congregations that will respond as they did there, and the spirit has to learn that there are other things to acquire before the true life can be enjoyed. *When a soul on earth can realize that there are others there who need assistance, who will be the better for aid and sympathy, and can learn to feel that this aid and sympathy can be given by himself, he is in the way to create the life that will mean the most to him when his mortal life is over.*

Try for the best, always. And we believe the best is to acquire knowledge along spiritual lines. Live spiritually, think kindly, watch for opportunity to serve. There are so many who need help over there, and we here must work through human thought. Therefore we seek those who are ready to help us.

'In what way can we help?'

First of all, in our judgment, is the understanding of this life. Not in the old ecstatic, symbolic way, but in the way of acquiring knowledge of the limitless opportunities for the human soul. We were not taught on earth that once past the gateway of death there was either opportunity or necessity for growth. Neither had we learned that service for others was one of the heavenly joys. Nor did we dream that through such service, evil souls could be transformed into pure-hearted and wise-minded helpers!

Chapter 22: Spirit Teachings

Introduction

This chapter is a mixture of sound advice to us from those on the Other Side, including fixing our warped view of life over there, which stultifies us once we cross over. Emperor waxes prolifically on our medieval justice system, which breeds new criminals rather than redeeming the lawless, and on man's propensity for nations to war on other nations. Very sobering material! And scary! This material was important a century ago; it's doubly so today!

We Were All Mistaken on Earth

(Unnamed spirit, SWSL.) We were all mistaken on earth, ministers and laymen alike. Lawyers are not just; merchants not honest; business men forget their honor while grasping greater gains; ministers allow creeds to outweigh service. Why do clergymen emphasize creed instead of service? Why do they mourn over death, instead of telling of the wonderful opportunities beyond? Why do judges punish crime instead of educating the criminal? Why does the world spend its care and thought on the fleeting shadows of earth life, rather than study the conditions of the heavenly one which is to last forever?

Earth's Primary Predicaments

(Julia Ames, AD.) The difference between your side and this side is chiefly in this – there is more love here, as there is more sunshine in summer than in winter. If there were but more love in your world, it would be even as ours; for to you also would be given the Vision of God.

The worst of your world is the want of love. If there were love where there is hatred or indifference, earth would become Heaven.

If you did but possess your Soul and exercise its powers, death or separation in this world would cease to exist for you, and the miseries which haunt the human race would disappear.

For the whole of the evils that afflict society arise from the lack of seeing things from the standpoint of the Soul. If you lived for the Soul, cared for what made the Soul a more living reality, and less for the meat and drink and paraphernalia of the body, the whole world would be transfigured.

It is the things which are eternal and the things invisible which alone are of value. And my object is to urge you to concentrate life in the body on the objects that will last after you reach this side and not on those which cease to profit after death.

(John Heslop, SABL.) You know by your own experience that, when the trial has come, you have always received the needed strength.

Oh, that people would realize the vast importance of directing their minds so that they form a channel through which this glorious power can flow! Surely they cannot

understand what they are doing when they clog their faculties with earthly pursuits and pleasures so that no gleam of Divine grace can penetrate.

(Unnamed spirit, SWSL.) The hope of the world in this time of trouble is in spiritualizing all forms of activity. Love and service, service and love. These must be the watchwords if the world is to come into lasting peace. We are trying to influence a world that is going astray and might cause undreamed-of suffering. We are trying to overcome the thought of materialists and to bring a spiritual outlook into the earthly life. We need the help of all on earth who can think in spiritual terms.

The great battle to be fought now is between the spiritual and the material, between idealism and carnalism. I have received instructions from the higher powers to call all who will to help. You can help by giving the world our thought, and I am asking that you help, because the battle will be long and the victory far away.

Earth's View of the Spirit World

We Care Not a Fig for Your Views of Us

(Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.) If the truth be told, we care not a fig for what the earth people may think of what we do or do not, and we are certainly not going to take orders from such inferior minds, or, indeed, from any kind of mind on earth!

(Monsignor Benson, HH.) It is [mistaken] to imply that certain regions of the spirit world have been constructed upon earthly lines; that the earth has been taken as a model and the spirit realms built upon that model and that they therefore constitute something of a replica of the earth. Exactly the opposite is the truth. The earth bears a limited or modified resemblance to these realms, which is a different matter altogether. Spirit lands, in the realms of light, are a thousand times more beautiful than any part of the earth it is possible to mention.

(Monsignor Benson, LIWU.) At times, we may feel saddened – and at times we are amused – by those who, still upon the earth, ridicule and pour scorn and contempt upon our descriptions of the spirit lands. What do these poor minds

know? Nothing! And what would these same minds substitute for the realities of the spirit world? They do not know. They would take away from us our beautiful countryside, our flowers and trees, our rivers and lakes, our houses, our friends, our work, and our pleasures and recreations. For what? What conception can these dull minds have of a world of spirit? ... They would turn us into wraiths, without substance, without intelligence, and merely surviving in some dim, shadowy, vaporous state, dissevered from everything that is human. In my perfect health and abounding vitality, and living among all the beauties of this world of strict reality – a mere hint of which I have only so far given you – I am forcibly impressed by the magnitude of ignorance shown by particular minds upon earth.

Earth's Ignorance of the Spirit World

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) There are many people in the earth world who earnestly believe that we in spirit live in a continual state of perfervid religious emotion, that every concomitant of spirit life, every form and degree of personal activity, every atom of which the great world of spirit is composed, must have some pious, devotional signification.

There are still many, many souls on earth who solemnly uphold it as an article of 'faith' that paradise, as they call it, will be one long interminable round of singing 'psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles.' Nothing could be more fantastic. The spirit world is a world of activity, not indolence; a world of usefulness, not uselessness. Nothing in the spirit world is useless; there is a sound reason and purpose for everything. Neither the reason nor the purpose may be plain to everyone at first, but that does not alter the truth of the matter.

We do not inhabit a land that bears all the outward marks of an Eternal Sunday! Indeed, Sunday has no place, no existence even, in the great scheme of the spirit world. We have no need to be forcibly reminded of the Great Father of the Universe, by setting aside one day to Him, and forgetting Him for the rest of the week. With us, it is eternal day, and our minds are fully and perpetually conscious of Him, so that we can see His hand and His mind in everything that surrounds us.

This is no land of eternal rest. There is rest in abundance for those who need it. But when the rest has restored them to full vigor and health, the urge to perform some sensible, useful task rises up within them, and opportunities abound.

The churches, of whatever denomination, suffer from abysmal ignorance. Throughout the ages, right down to the present time, they have gone their own blind, ignorant way, disseminating fantastic teachings in place of the truth, and paving the way, through the universal ignorance begotten of such false teachings, for the forces of evil to operate.

A minister of the church performs the services and offices prescribed by his particular sect and he stifles all inspiration

by holding to creeds and dogmas that are utterly false. ... If he were interrogated in the matter, he would reply that he believed in inspiration – in a vague, remote way. In the long run, he would find it much less trouble to borrow the religious thoughts of some other incarnate person and rely upon his own cleverness for any original thought. But to suggest that the spirit world has any influence upon the earth world other than evil would be totally against his principles.

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) Some of us, as you know, are in pretty close touch with events and affairs on ... earth ... and some of us can see which way they are drifting. Can you imagine, then, how the great beings in the highest realms must regard the situation, when supreme wisdom is to be had for the asking, if only incarnate man were not so blind?

The spirit world is right and the earth world is wrong in so many things.

When you are on earth, this whole spirit world is regarded as the "life after death," the "next world," and is treated solely from the religious standpoint, except by a comparatively *select* few. I call them *select* because those few possess the truth – not all the truth, naturally, but sufficient for absolute comfort. The religions of the earth have assumed rights over this life to which they are not entitled. The passing from earth to the spirit world is not a religious affair whatever. It's a purely natural process and one that cannot be avoided. Living a good life on earth is not a religious matter. Why should it be?

What a mournful, miserable business it all is, when you come to think about it. Here is this magnificent world we're living in and yet on earth, it has been shrouded and obscured with a multitude of extraordinary beliefs, conditions, limitations, misconceptions, and I don't know what else besides. The one cannot be reconciled with the other. Like oil and water, they do not mix. Unlike those two substances, there is nothing with which to emulsify them, so to speak. ...

The whole thing can be summed up in this way....: the earthly religions know nothing about this world at all, about the life we live. They do not seem to be able to conjure up in their minds any sort of vision or image of what it might conceivably be. But they are certain of what it cannot be – upon what authority no one knows – that it cannot be anything like *this* at all.

[Some] believe that to know, or even to try to know, anything about the "after-life" is against Holy Writ. So there is another "dead-end." ... [Many] people read [the Bible] piously – perhaps too piously – and fail to perceive that it is crammed, literally crammed, with psychic lore of every kind. They will swallow whole accounts of it, but because these phenomena still happen, *now*, they will have nothing to do with them. If it was right in those far-off days – and it was – then it must be right now – which it is. Officially, of course, there is silence.

You can see, Roger, what difficulties are in the way when it comes to official acknowledgment of the true manner of life in the spirit world. That is why the truth is in the hands of unofficial folk.

It's not so very surprising that hundreds of people, when they arrive here and find out the truth, go about like a "mighty wind" and want to go back to earth to shout the truth at last to the folk they've left behind them.

The chief trouble with the Churches is that they cannot make the truth about this world fit in with their theology. They don't realize that they are going about things the wrong way: they must make their theology fit the truth, and that means a wholesale clearance of everything that does not accord with it. At present, they prefer the shadow to the substance; they prefer creeds and doctrines and dogmas. They are not realists – far from it.

What is the conclusion? There's only one: that something is wrong somewhere with all the theology. The theology doesn't fit the facts.

Spirit's Influence

The Type of Person Whom Spirit Can and Cannot Influence

(*Spirit control "Doctor," ST.*) There is nothing so utterly fatal to spirit influence as self-seeking, self-pleasing, boastfulness, arrogance, or pride. The intelligence must be subordinated, or we cannot work upon it. If it be dogmatic, we cannot use it. If it be arrogant and selfish, we cannot come near it. Self-abnegation has been the virtue which has graced the wise and holy men of all time. The seers who bore of old the flag on which was inscribed for their generation the message of progressive truth were men who thought little of themselves and much of their work. They who spoke to the Jews, whose messages you have in your sacred records, were men of self-denying purity and singleness of life.

They who since have purged the world from error, and have shed on it the beams of truth, have been one and all men of self-denial and earnest devotion to a work which they knew to be that for which they were set apart. Socrates and Plato, ... the pioneers of truth, the heralds of progress, all have been unselfish souls – souls who knew naught of self-seeking, of proud aggrandizement, of boastful arrogance. To them, earnestness and singleness of purpose, devotion to their appointed work, forgetfulness of self and its interests, were given in a high degree. Without that, they could not have effected what they did. Selfishness would have eaten out the heart of their success. Humility, sincerity, and earnestness bore them on. This is the character we seek.

Loving and earnest, self-denying and receptive to truth ... and with forgetfulness of earthly aims. Rare it is, rare as it is beautiful. Seek, friend, the mind of the philosopher, calm, reliant, truthful, and earnest! Seek the spirit of the philanthropist, loving, tolerant, ready to help, quick to give the

needed aid. ... For such a character, work, high, holy, noble, is possible. Such we guard and watch with jealous care. ...

Stanton Moses: Yes, surely. But very few such are to be found.

Few, few: and none save in the germ. There is the capability on which we work with thankfulness. We seek not for perfection: we do but desire sincerity and earnest desire for improvement: a mind free and receptive; a spirit pure and good. Wait in patience. Impatience is a dire fault. Avoid over-carefulness and anxiety as to causes which are beyond your control. Leave that to us. In patience and seclusion, ponder what we say.

(*Prudens, ST.*) The busy world is ever averse from the things of spirit life. Men become absorbed in the material, that which they can see, and grasp, and hoard up, and they forget that there is a future and spirit life. They become so earthly that they are impervious to our influence; so material that we cannot come near them; so full of earthly interests that there is no room for that which shall endure when they have passed away. More than this, the constant preoccupation leaves no time for contemplation, and the spirit is wasted for lack of sustenance. The spiritual state is weak: the body is worn and weary with weight of work and anxious care, and the spirit is well-nigh inaccessible. The whole air, moreover, is heavy with conflicting passions, with heart-burnings, and jealousies, and contentions, and all that is inimical to us.

Round the busy city, with its myriad haunts and vice, its detestable allurements, its votaries of folly and sin, hover the legions of the opposing spirits, who watch for opportunity to lure the wavering to their ruin. They urge on many to their grief hereafter, and cause us many sorrows and much anxious care.

The life of contemplation is that which most suits communion with us. It is not indeed to supersede the life of action, but may be in some sort combined with it. It is most readily practiced where distracting cares come not in, and where excessive toil weakens not the bodily powers. But the desire must be inherent in the soul; and where that is, neither distracting cares nor worldly allurements avail to prevent the recognition of a spirit world, and of communion with it. The heart must be prepared. But it is easier for us to make our presence felt when the surroundings are pure and peaceful.

Inspiration Flows from the Spirit World to Earth

(*Lord Dowding, MM.*) I confidently believe that, as the years roll on, the veil between the two worlds will become thinner and thinner, and communication will become more and more a matter of course; but I think that the planning and execution of the campaign should be left to those on the other side, assisted by their specially-gifted adjutants in this life.

(*Philip Gilbert, PTS.*) It is ... wrong to discount inspiration from our world. We over here do interfere, as you know, or inspire, though not so much as the more sentimental Spiritualists would like to believe.

(*Former teacher of psychology, SWSL.*) I tried to analyze the mind processes when on earth, and found that, when I could attain the most absolute silence of the brain, the most absolute passivity, I received a gleam of thought from here. I did not recognize the source then, but called it the action of the subconscious intelligence. But now I know that into that silence of the brain, thoughts and words were impressed from here.

Cultivate, then, this habit of silence. Spend some portion of each day in as perfect passivity as you can attain; and wait for the inner vision, the heavenly direction, which will surely follow, if you educate your mind to receive, instead of giving out its own thought.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) The inspiration that came to man to cover himself and his family with a roof of however rude a description came from the spirit world. You may say: nothing of the sort; it is no more than a natural instinct of self-preservation, to protect one's self from the rigors of wind and storm, of cold and heat. If you feel that you must adhere to your contention, then so be it. I cannot provide proof of my assertion yet. You must wait until you come to spirit lands yourself and I shall be pleased to show you where you can ascertain the truth for yourself. In the meantime, I will adhere to my contention and I will venture further to assert that the whole range of architectural design throughout the ages has been inspired and influenced, promoted and encouraged by great minds resident in the spirit world.

Inspiration is not a matter of physical brain cells self-functioning in such a manner as to produce a clever or brilliant idea in the mind of a person. Inspiration can come from any quarter of the spirit world, from the highest realms, from the lowest realms, and from the grey lands as well. It remains with the incarnate as to which quarter of the spirit world he will lend an ear. If to the highest, there will come only that which is good; if to the lowest, only that which is evil and bad. In the former, among many other good things, you will have all the beauties of art and music, but they will be beauties and not hideous distortions masquerading under the cloak of pure art; you will have scientific discoveries for the benefit of mankind, as well as schemes for his well-being. You will have great works of dramatic and literary genius that will live through the years and never show signs of wear. From the dark realms, you will have wars and strife, unrest and discontent; you will have literature that is a disgrace to so-called civilization, and music, even, that is an abomination of impure sounds, such sounds as would never exist for an instant of time in these realms.

The spirit world is not a copy of the earth. The spirit world was in being aeons of time before the earth came into

existence. Does man think that he has formed and fashioned all that is man-made upon earth entirely of his own man genius? Then man is woefully mistaken.

Without the spirit world, the earth and mankind – who is barely living as judged by the greater life of the spirit world – would soon get into inconceivable difficulties. The beauties of the earth are but a foretaste of the beauties of the spirit world and the life that lies before all mankind. We do not copy you who are on earth – we have no need to do so. We give you glimpses of the spirit world so that you may have some slight acquaintance with the spirit world before you come to take up your residence here.

(*John Heslop, SABL.*) Nearly all forms of beautiful thought which are expressed, either in the writing of prose or poetry, or in painting, sculpture, or music, have been inspired by some spirit-artist, or musician, in waves of thought to a receptive mind on the earth plane. Probably many so inspired have no idea that the thoughts are not entirely their known and would resent a suggestion of invisible help. But they are helped, nevertheless, by those on this side, and sometimes one will admit that the words came he knew not how. And thus are produced the masterpieces of a man's life.

It is the divine essence of knowledge and beauty, filtering down to the inhabitants of earth in such measures as they are capable of receiving it. When the inspiration comes, it depends entirely on the mentality of the one who receives it what form it will take. It may express itself in music, painting, or verse, but in all cases the inspiration comes through silent waves of thought, flowing over the soul of man. The more receptive and spiritually-developed the nature, the finer the result of the inspiring spirit.

I have read much fine verse that has not yet come down to you.

Mortals Must Sift Out Spirit Truth from Untruth

(*Unnamed spirit, SWSL.*) You tell us that the world does not believe the messages from here because of the false teaching that comes to earth from those pretending to be heavenly guides. It is true that many undeveloped and mischievous ones on this plane are sending false and foolish teaching to whoever will receive it there. Yet, does the world abandon religion because of its grievous errors? Do teachers stop teaching because ignorant ones put forward wrong ideas? Do honest men give up their honest business because dishonest ones are busy in graft or robbery? Do physicians stop healing the sick because of the unlearned pretenders in their profession?

Good and evil have gone on together since the world began, and it is still a conflict even on this plane. It is for the wise ones of earth to recognize the truth in the teaching from here, and to discard that which is not true. Learn to discriminate. Learn to discover the spirit beneath the words, and judge of its sincerity by its spiritual value.

Spirit Fallibility and Individuality

Spirits Are Not Infallible

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) We are not made infallible because we put off our bodies. We see many things you do not. But we are making progress through darkness into light, through ignorance into knowledge. And hence it is that while we may, and I hope often will, say what will help you and enable you to guide your way better, we never arrogate to ourselves the right to dictate. We are only too glad to impress you with our thought. But it is not Divine wisdom – only the thought of your friends who, being disencumbered of their earthly bodies, have the open vision, and dwell in the land of Love and Light.

(*Monsignor Benson, HH.*) [On the matter of how spilled fruit juice evaporates and returns to its source:] That is the explanation I was given and that is what we all know to occur in any other circumstances of a similar nature. If you ask me *how* it happens, then, perforce, I will say honestly that I do not know. Lest my ignorance should appear too great that I should ever set myself to inform others, let me hasten to add that there is no one in these realms who could provide an explanation upon this point. There is no esoteric secret about it that such information should be withheld from us. It is just that our spiritual evolution has not proceeded sufficiently far for us to understand if we were told. What we cannot yet understand ourselves, it is impossible for us to expound for your understanding.

We must take things as they are in this instance at least.

(*John Heslop to his wife, SABL.*) I am only in a higher stage of development here, and need to progress every day toward the Source of all light, just as you do. I have greater powers, fuller opportunity than you have, and freedom from all earth's sufferings and limitations. But I am just your John, knowing my own imperfections a great deal better in this pure and holy atmosphere than I ever did on earth. Indeed, I am a babe in all things here, where all beauty and perfection are blended, and where the wisdom of all the ages is concentrated.

Now about the book you are reading, I see it is perplexing you because the account of the intermediate life given by the spirit author differs in so many points from what I have told you. The reason is simply this. We are all at our different points of progress here, and our spiritual vision is entirely a matter of development. ...

You must never look upon what comes from spirits on this side as *final* utterances of truth, *for they are not*. We can only tell you what has been our own personal experience and what we have learnt from Higher Intelligences.

Spirits Agree and Disagree with Each Other

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) We have our different personalities here as we did there, and we do not all look at things in the same way here, any more than we did there. If you can receive the ideas of many from here, it will aid you in forming a more correct understanding. If you only have one person's messages, you only get their viewpoint and their way of expressing it. I have been here many years as earth time goes, and I have myself seen fit to change my ideas about some things more than once, as I obtained a fuller understanding of them.

We know that there are certain fundamental truths, just as you know there are certain fundamental laws. But in the various things which surround these truths, there are matters which we can interpret according to the impressions they make upon us. We might use as an example the attitude that most of us take here in regard to the union of the two sexes. When I first came over, I was thoroughly convinced that there was no marriage in heaven, and for a long time, I could not see that there was anything to indicate it. I saw men and women associating freely and independently, and although I saw apparent friendships of more than usual intensity, I did not think of them as inseparable. If I had been communicating with earth at that time, I would have conscientiously said that there was no mating here that was lasting. But now I know that the two sexes are drawn together here sometimes by indissoluble ties. ...

I might also tell of the first ideas I had regarding the way children grow and reach maturity. I saw children occasionally, and I saw teachers instructing them at times. But I did not understand that they grew up here just as they do there, only more rapidly. I thought they always remained children; and I associated some of them with the ideas I had on earth of 'cherubs.' It was really quite an astonishment when I did learn the truth. I could hardly believe it, so firmly fixed were my first ideas.

In matters of a more abstract nature, I see I am even now not in entire agreement with many fine advanced spirits. We have minds to reason with, and when certain facts are given us, we use them according to our own personality, just as two carpenters will build different houses out of the same materials.

I could give you many examples. In caring for the newcomers, I have different views from many. But I have succeeded and they have succeeded, so who is right?

You may think that I am something of a freak, perhaps, but I can assure you that I am not unique. We find much pleasure here in the fact that we do have different personalities and different ideas. It makes life more enjoyable in every way. If we all thought alike, we should necessarily all be alike, and most of us think we prefer variety.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) You will find that the spirits who will communicate to their friends through the Bureau (1) will

make very different statements. They will differ indefinitely according to their different temperaments and the manner of soul they are.

(1) Julia has suggested to Stead that he start a psychic bureau through which the aggrieved can make contact with their "lost" friends and relatives and be assured that death is not the end of life or contact.

They will make statements which will differ so much as to confuse those who think that the infinite multitude of individual experiences can all find a single expression. There will be any number of creeds based upon after-death experiences, which vary according to the character of the individual. The man finds this world very much what he has made of it. We all make what we live in. And as every one makes a different future life for himself, they will all give you different versions of the life they lead. You will find a little uniformity here, as on your side. But, nevertheless, you will find that the Bureau, and all who would use it, will agree upon certain things. They would differ endlessly about the laws, the theories, and the possibilities, but they would agree about the Facts of Being.

You will not find from us on this side any authoritative declaration as to any religion that will be recognized as true by all spirits communicating. They are of all stages and phases, and the religion of some will be absolutely unthinkable by others.

But this you will find. There will be no spirit of any stage of development who returns to communicate through your Bureau, but will affirm that there is no breach or break in the continuity of individual existence. They will all tell you that death is a transition rather than a transformation and that, although the transition is very important, it in no way destroys the life of the soul. All will tell you that. All will testify to the fact that they went on living a conscious existence, that was marked off by no gulf from the life they led there. There is, no doubt, a change. But it is of circumstance rather than of character. The memory appears to be quickened rather than dulled. The mind sees more clearly.

The phantasmagoria of matter disappears, and the masks and masquerading that conceal the truth dissolve away – that is important and that is universal. There is not one spirit who returns, who will assert that the matter in which you are immersed is a vapor, a mere phantasm of the mind, which vanishes away and is not. Spirit alone is, whether in the body or out of the body. And the soul lives, lives on. These two things – continuity of conscious identity and the hollowness of matter – they will all tell you are known to them, are universal facts which they will attest one and all. Where we are, there can be no mistake on these points.

Views of the Truth

Philosophy in Spirit

(Spirit Control, LHH.) When you come to this side, you will learn that philosophy is a greater study here than on

earth; it is treated as a more comprehensive subject. We include all that you would class under ethics and religion. In fact, we make it include all the studies of life as they pertain to the advance of the soul. It is not a subject for debate or controversy; just one of inquiry. It has drawn many of the great minds of earth into its study, as they have learned its value on this side. We have, as a consequence, many who are looked up to as great leaders in philosophical thought, and we hope in time to give you some of their conclusions.

There is so much that is not understood. Life, human and spiritual, is so complex that it takes long to even understand it, to separate the good from the evil. Volumes could be written upon life and thought, upon unconscious motives, subconscious evils, but it would take more of a philosopher than I ever expect to be to explain and classify.

(Lord Dowding, MM.) Try to enlarge your horizons so that you may see this world and its happenings in their true perspective: see that what you do and try to do is most tremendously important and that what *happens* to you doesn't matter at all.

Look forward to death as something infinitely to be desired when your life's work is done; and do not mourn or pity those who die before you, but think of them as fortunate. If you loved them here, keep on loving them and hold them in your heart till you meet them again.

Social Issues

Treatment of Criminals

(Imperator, ST.) You are blind and ignorant in your dealings with those who have offended against your laws and the regulations, moral and restrictive, by which you govern intercourse amongst yourselves. You find a low and debased intelligence offending against morality, or against constituted law. Straightaway, you take the readiest means of aggravating his capacity for mischief. Instead of separating such one from evil influence, removing him from association with sin, and isolating him under the educating influence of true purity and spirituality, where the more refined intelligences may gradually operate and counteract the baleful power of evil and evil manifestations, you place him in the midst of evil associations, in company with offenders like himself, where the very atmosphere is heavy with evil, where hordes of the undeveloped and unprogressed spirits congregate, and where, both from human associates and spirit influence, the whole tendency is evil. Vain and short-sighted and ignorant folly!

Into your dens of criminals, we cannot enter. The missionary spirits pause and find their mission vain. The good angels weep to find an associated band of evil – human and spiritual – massed against them by man's ignorance and folly. What wonder that you have gathered from such experience the conviction that a tendency to open crime is seldom

cured, seeing that you yourselves are the plainest accomplices of the spirits who gloat over the fall of the offender.

How many an erring soul – erring through ignorance, as frequently as through choice – has come forth from your jails hardened and attended by evil guides you know not, and can never know! But were you to pursue an enlightened plan with your offenders, you would find a perceptible gain, and confer blessing incalculable on the misguided and vicious. You should teach your criminals; you should punish them, as they will be punished here, by showing them how they hurt themselves by their sin, and how they retard their future progress. You should place them where advanced and earnest spirits among you may lead them to unlearn their sin, and to drink in wisdom: where the Bands of the Blessed may aid their efforts, and the spirits of the higher spheres may shed on them their benign and elevating influence.

But you horde together your dangerous spirits. You shut them up, and confine them as those who are beyond hope. You punish them vindictively, cruelly, foolishly; and the man who has been the victim of your ignorant treatment pursues his course foolish, suicidal sin, until in the end, you add to the list of your foolish deeds this last and worst of all, that you cut him off, debased, degraded, sensual, ignorant, mad with rage and hate, thirsting for vengeance on his fellows: you remove from him the great bar on his passions, and send him into spirit-life to work out without hindrance the devilish suggestions of his inflamed passions.

Blind! Blind! You know not what you do. You are your own worst enemies, the truest friends of those who fight against God, and us, and you. Ignorant no less than blind! For you spend vast trouble to aid your foes. You cut from a spirit its bodily life. You punish vengefully the erring. You falsely arrogate to yourselves the right law divine to shed human blood. You err, and know not that the spirits you so hurt shall, in their turn, avenge themselves upon you. You have yet to learn the earliest principles of that Divine tenderness and pity which labors ever through us to rescue the debased spirit, to raise it from the depths of sin and passion, and to elevate it to purity and progress in goodness. You know naught of God when you do such deeds.

You have framed for yourselves a God whose acts accord with your own instincts. You have fabled that He sits on high, careless of His creatures, and jealous only of His own power and honor. You have fabricated a monster who delights to harm, and kill, and torture: a God who rejoices in inflicting punishment bitter, unending, unmitigable. You have imagined such a God, and have put into His mouth words which He never knew, and laws which His loving heart would disown. God – good, loving, tender, pitiful – delighting in punishing with cruel hand His ignorantly erring sons! ...

Yes, friend, your jails and your legalized murder, the whole tenor of your dealings with criminals, are based on error and ignorance. Your wars and your wholesale mur-

ders are even more fearful. You settle your differences with your neighbors, who should be your friends, by arraying against each other masses of spirits – we see not the body; we care only for the spirit temporarily clothed with those human atoms – and those spirits you excite to full pitch of rage and fury, and so you launch them, rudely severed from their earth-bodies, into spirit life. You inflame their passions, and give them full vent.

Vengeful, debased, cruel, earth-bound spirits throng around your earth-sphere, and incite the debased who are still in the body to deeds of cruelty and lust and sin. And this for the satisfying of ambition, for a passing fancy, for an idle princely whim, for lack of something else to occupy a king.

Ah! friend, you have much, very much to learn; and you will learn it by the sad and bitter experience of undoing here-after that which you have now done. You must learn the golden lesson, that Pity and Love are truer wisdom than vengeance and vindictive punishment; that were the Great God to deal with us as you deal with your fellows, and as you have falsely fabled that He will, you would be justly sent to your own imagined hell.

You must know of God, and of us, and of yourselves, ere you can progress and do our work instead of our adversaries. Friend, when others seek from you as to the usefulness of our message, and the benefit which it can confer, tell them that it will lead them to know of Intelligences whose whole life is one of love and mercy and pity and helpful aid to man, combined with adoration of the Supreme. Tell them that it will lead man to see his own folly, to unlearn his fancied theories, to learn how to cultivate his intelligence that it may progress, to use his opportunities that they may profit him, to serve his fellow-men, so that when they and he meet in the hereafter, they may not be able to reproach him that he has been, so far as he could, a clog and an injury to them.

Tell them that such is our glorious mission; and if they sneer, as the ignorant will, and boast of their fancied knowledge, turn to the progressive souls who will receive the teaching of wisdom. Speak to them the message of Divine truth that shall regenerate and elevate the world. And for the blind ones, pray that when their eyes are opened, they may not despair at the sight which they shall see.

Treatment of the Mentally-Insane

(*Imperator, ST.*) Much there is in social knowledge and in the conduct of state affairs that you must unlearn, much that is to be added to your knowledge.

For instance, you legislate for the masses, but you deal only with the offender. Your legislation must be punitive, but it should be remedial too. Those whom you think insane you shut up fast, lest they should injure others. A few years ago, you tortured them, and filled your madhouses

with many whose only crime it was to differ from the foolish notions of their fellows, or to be – as many were, and are, whom you have thought mad – recipients of undeveloped spirit influence. This you will one day know to your sorrow – that to leave the beaten track is not always evidence of a wandering mind; and to be the vehicle of spirit-teaching is not proof of a mind unhinged.

Treatment of Mediums

(*Imperator, ST.*) From many, the power of proclaiming their mission has been taken away, and it has been falsely said that we have filled the asylums, and driven our mediums to madness, because blind ignorant men have chosen to attribute insanity to all who have ventured to proclaim their connection with us and our teaching. They have decided, forsooth, that to be in communion with the world of spirit is evidence of madness; therefore, all who claim to be are mad, and consequently must be shut up within the madhouse. And because by lying statements, they have succeeded in affixing the stigma, and in incarcerating the medium, they further charge on us the sin they have invented of driving our mediums to madness. Were it not ignorance, it would be blasphemy.

We have brought naught but blessing to our friends. We are, to them, the bearers of Divine Truth. If man has chosen to attract, by his evil mind and evil life, congenial spirits who aggravate his wickedness, on his head be the sin. They have but tended the crop which he has already sown. He was mad already; mad in neglect of his own spirit and body; mad in that he has driven far from him the holy influences. But we deal not with such. Far more mad indeed are those besotted drunkards whom you deem not mad.

Astral Clutter

(*Sir Oliver Lodge, SOLR.*) The astral plane was a good deal cleaner [in my day] than it is at present. ... [That is so for] several reasons. First of all, the general public is less restrained and more emotional than in my time. There is more emphasis on expressing feelings, especially uncomfortable ones. All of this happens on the astral plane. And, as you know, physical people contribute to the quality of the astral every bit as much as those who have passed on. So the emotionalism in the world today has become a serious problem.

Another contributing factor is the tremendous growth of public interest in psychic phenomena and magical practices. ... As a result, some groups actually lust for psychic experiences, without regard for their type of quality. This psychic lust energizes all kinds of low-quality astral phenomena.

[These are] not as disturbing as another of your modern phenomena – the growth of mass communications such as television, radio, movies, and the like. There are many good qualities in all of these media, but the public seems to be attracted most strongly to the elements that are shock-

ing, morbid, titillating, and disgusting. ... The typical public reaction to these forms of entertainment – and sometimes even to what is presented as news – has been perhaps the greatest contributing factor to astral clutter.

People are almost automatically reflecting into the astral the ugliness around them. This can be seen, for example, in the recent fascination with disaster movies. As people watch these films, their emotional reactions become mirrors of the shocking and destructive themes and images in the movies themselves. As these reactions accumulate, they become virtually a tidal wave of disaster on the astral plane. ... And your mass media has made awareness of tragic and shocking events, whether real or fictional, much more accessible to the general public than in my day.

When you have millions of people feeding themselves on modern jazz and rock and roll, which are more violence and lust set to sound than they are genuine music, the astral problem that results influences not only the perceptions of psychics, but the feelings of ordinary people as well.

The Usefulness of Humor

(*Mark Twain, MTR.*) A sense of humor is one of the best resources we have to help us live with our problems and burdens and even lighten the load a little. ... The person who can see life humorously develops a healthier perspective about life. He starts to see that the problems he faces are really problems the whole of humanity is facing – and often with amusing results. This lets him laugh at his own problems and keep them in balance.

Good humor is contagious It's supposed to infect you with merriment and a sense of delight which lifts you up, shakes you out of your rut, pulls you out of your dark mood.

Sober, grim individuals tend to repel people of good sense, rather than attract them.

A healthy interplay between the inner being and the personality is extremely important, if we are going to honor our basic inspiration and the work we are doing. Now, this connection tends to close down when the personality becomes excessively serious and grim. Those aren't the wavelengths on which the inner being operates. But the connection becomes more detached about his work.

Humor breeds detachment. In fact, for the average person – who does not have the ability to look at life from the perspective of the inner being – humor is just about the only way to achieve any degree of detachment. And even though the divine connection may not be there, the detachment achieved as a result of being able to laugh at one's mistakes, embarrassments, and troubles is very important. It is healthy for the personality.

Humor stirs up the good elements already in the personality and lets us entertain the possibility that perhaps the world is a funnier place than we had thought. Perhaps life is

more beautiful than we had imagined. Perhaps our difficulties are not quite so grim and our future not as bleak as we had feared.

I suppose that in people with a rich potential for expressing goodwill or joy, a state of good humor helps them make the connection. It certainly does have a healing potential which is not given enough credit.

The sense of humor we are talking about here does not have to include the ability to tell jokes and be funny. It is the ability to appreciate good humor and the funny quirks of life. When we speak of humorless, grim people, we are talking about those people who cannot laugh at life and expect everyone else to be as serious as they are. Many people who couldn't tell a joke to save their lives nonetheless have an excellent sense of humor.

The motive of good humor is to stimulate a bit of delight, to use a word of yours that I like very much – to delight the people in the audience or the people reading the book. The motive of the vicious use of humor is to darken the atmosphere with put-downs and destructive comments.

It's the meanest, crabbiest people in the world – the people who are really out to exploit others, to take all they can and give nothing in return – who are usually completely lacking in a sense of humor. They are amused by nothing and don't like jokes being played on them. They certainly cannot stand it when someone else makes fun of them or anything they do.

Well, God gave us a sense of humor to protect us from these grumpy, crabby people. And the most laughable thing of all ought to be the popular belief that the devil is happy and God is depressed! That's utterly absurd. It's just the other way around.

Let me share a little secret I learned a long time ago. If you go at problems with a pious and uncompromisingly serious attitude, you will generally not receive very much support from others. People don't want their noses rubbed in their problems: if you take that attitude, they will just refuse to consider the problem at all. They will ignore it – and they'll ignore you. But if you approach problems humorously, satirically, you can often be quite successful in educating people to the real dimensions of the problem. Political satire, in particular, can be extremely effective in this regard because it gives us a way to look at the policies and acts of government which are especially oppressive and absurd, without becoming depressed.

A sense of humor can also be the cutting edge of your kindness. The funny thing about most people's problems is that they are extremely obvious to everyone but the person who has them. It's very easy to see everyone else's problems, but when it come to your own, you live with them all the time and it's difficult to see what they are. It's like the skin on the back of your hand; it's been there all your life. So you accept it without further thought.

(*Will Rogers, MTR.*) While humor on the physical plane is used to approximate the joy of the inner planes, it in no way comes close to what we can experience up here.

Historical Insights and Political Issues

Problems in Times Past

(*Imperator, ST.*) Obstacles! You know not what [obstacles] are compared with what we have had to endure in times past. Had you lived on earth in the later days of Rome's imperial sway, when everything spiritual had fled in horror from a realm steeped in debauchery, sensuality, and all that is base and bad, you would have known then what the banded powers of darkness can effect. The coldness was the coldness of despair: the darkness was the gloom of the sepulcher. The body, the body was all: and the guardians fled in dismay from a scene on which they could not gaze, and whose pangs they could not alleviate. Faithlessness there was indeed, and worse. The world scorned us and our efforts, laughed at all virtue, derided the Supreme, mocked at immortality, and lived but to eat and drink and wallow in the mire – the degraded, down-stricken animals they had made themselves. Ah, yes! Say not that evil is invincible when the power of God and of His Spirits has prevailed to cleanse even such a sink as that.

Predictions of a Great Awakening to Spirit

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) The time is coming, and coming fast, when there will be a reconstruction of the religion of the churches. Creeds will largely go, and love and service take their place.

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) We are a band of workers and wish to add our knowledge. We wait not only in hope, but in certainty; for we go far and near and see all sides of the work among many people and many nationalities. There is a slow dawning of a great day. It is coming, coming surely; and we can watch it from afar.

(*Julia Ames, AD.*) What they tell me on all sides, and especially my dear guides, is that the time is come when there is to be a great spiritual awakening among the nations and that the agency which is to bring this about is the sudden and conclusive demonstration, in every individual case which seeks for it, of the reality of the spirit, of the permanence of the soul, and the immanence of the Divine.

(*John Heslop to his wife, SABL.*) Angelic beings assist at the birth and development of these new worlds. They build up the conditions necessary for the ultimate production of life, though this process may take millions of years. At first, the lowest forms only are produced. Gradually they rise in capacity till the world is ready for the highest intelligences.

It was so in your world and the angels are still working, as they have been since its inception. Recently they have

begun a further and higher work. As a race, you will rise, till in very truth, it will become for you a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

(Unnamed spirit, SWSL.) Do you understand how different life would be there if all would try to give as well as to receive; if all would learn to serve unselfishly the world in which they live, and learn the higher happiness of spiritual thought and life? The coming of the new age is not for one or for two to bring in, but rather the mighty influence from here moving through the spiritually discerning ones there.

Warnings to Nations: Wars

(Philip Gilbert to his mother in 1946, PTS.) There is still great trouble ahead for humanity.

We have been to a big conference! ... This conference was not an "astral" affair, it was the real thing – a conference of the leaders and their helpers.

A vast shining building was created specially for the purpose and you and I got there early and stood in the emptiness, seeing the alabaster glistening of the walls which arrived, by just appearing. As we looked, forms, shining with exquisite colored auras, materialized and seemed to sit. Soon the hall was a shimmer of varied light.

Presently, on a raised dais, a form appeared – a tall old man whose golden aura was so wide and vast that it seemed to encircle us all, in a rich glow of pure gold. From his outstretched hands came rays of this pulsating light, as he addressed us. He did not speak in sound exactly, yet words were conveyed to us in a series of vivid image pictures, blending into our united auras, which seemed to spear-point themselves into a vast receiving station.

We saw mankind in stages of the future. We saw more blood and tears and grief, but the black red glare of cruelty less pronounced, melting into the glow of universal harmony.

We saw a final cataclysm, but concentrated and centered in one lost spot of woe and out of this stench of corruption sprang a lily whose beauty can never be described in words at your command.

(Imperator, ST.) Wars are but the product of your lust for gain, your ambition, your angry, proud, vengeful passions. And what is the product? God's fair works destroyed and trampled under foot: the lovely and peaceful results of man's industry destroyed: the holy ties of home and kindred severed: thousands of families plunged into distress: rivers of blood shed wantonly: souls unnumbered rent from their earth-body to rush unprepared, uneducated, unpurified into the life of spirit. Bad, all bad! ... Evil sprung from earth, and resulting in misery. Till you know better than this, your race will progress but slowly; but you are perpetually sowing seeds which produces a crop of obstacles to our work.

Much there is in social knowledge and in the conduct of State affairs that you must unlearn: much that is to be added to your knowledge.

Private Dowding's Guide on the Future (in 1917)

(Messenger, TSR) WTP: Do you really see brighter times ahead for the human race?

Messenger: My son, you need have no fear. Your world is now plunged in grief and chaos. The hour is dark, the outlook strangely gloomy. We can see the light behind the thunder-clouds. Improvement in world conditions is already taking place despite the war. Few kings will be left in Europe or, for that matter, anywhere. Russia will lead her people toward peace and joyful emancipation. The illumination of a New Day will be reflected in the soul of the Slavonic race and will become apparent everywhere. In time to come, the dawn will break over Germany and the Northern peoples, sweeping before it the cruel darkness of ignorance and despotism.

Tribulation will be great; revolutions must be expected, but nothing can withstand the light. Vast changes lie ahead. Were I to tell you of these miracles, you would not credit them. We see regeneration in Persia, transformation in India; uprisings in the Far East and new discoveries; revolutionary events in the New World, North and South; but the light will grow.

France rises again, purified, uplifted, and becomes the inspirer of the world in arts and sciences. Ireland comes into her own at last and becomes the cradle for great men and women. England joins hands with many nations in raising the standard of unity and fellowship among the peoples of the world. She will be called upon to make immense sacrifice, East and West, but she grows to a new greatness through her acts of renunciation.

Democratic republics will rule the world with free and peaceful intercourse between the nations. Peace does not yet come into her own, but the floodgates of God's love have been opened, and the divine power is for all nations. Fear not the breaking down of barriers everywhere. Make the paths straight! ...

WTP: This is all very wonderful. How will this new spiritual radiance make itself manifest?

Messenger: You are already witnessing its leavening power. The world is not in such darkness as it was even five years ago, and this despite the warring of the nations.

The light dawns within individuals first and then the radiance spreads. Outwardly, its influence will show itself in many great reforms. In time, the very air will become purer. Climates will improve; disasters caused by earthquakes, sea and air, will slowly diminish; but there will be cataclysms first. Conflicts between religions will cease; the bitterness of sect will die away.

Women will hold equal rights with men. Great women, inspirers of the race, will rise up in East and West. Diseases – physical, mental, political, social – will gradually disappear. Rise up and proclaim the dawn of the New Day!

Chapter 23: Famous People

Introduction

I recently edited a book dictated by Princess Diana through a psychic medium, and she stressed “There are no princesses in heaven.” The trappings of rank and status count for nothing on the Other Side and if other people were deferential in dealing with a deceased king or president, it would impact the energy in undesirable ways. On the Other Side, everyone is a spirit rather than an ex-famous person, although there is often an initial reverent welcome home, as in the case of Sir Winston Churchill, as you will read.

To underscore this point, we end this book with a brief look at some famous names in history, and where they are now on the soul plane.

Earth Identity Recognized

(*Monsignor Benson, LIWU.*) In living in these realms, one is inevitably bound, sooner or later, to encounter some person whose name is known to all upon the earth-plane. But these famous folk have no attachment to the earth world. They have left it behind them, and many of those who have passed to here hundreds of earthly years ago are glad to have no occasion to recall their earthly lives. Such numbers of them suffered a violent transition that they are happy to consider their present only and leave their past sealed up in their memory.

A Spirit from Ancient Asia

(*Unnamed spirit, LHH.*) “You wish to know who I am. I lived long ago in an age far more engulfed in wickedness than the present one; and I shuddered at what I saw, felt, and could not alter, and kept silent, knowing that words meant death.”

‘You must have lived in the Greek or Roman times?’

“Before that even, when there was no light, no spiritual light on earth.”

‘In Babylon?’

“No, before that. When you read in history of ancient times, traditions, sacrifices to strange gods, human sacrifices, and no one to tell us of a higher or better way, you read of the time when I lived, when I was a part of the great earthborn multitude. Only that deep down in my subconscious self there was an instinctive feeling that there was something better, something purer and brighter and higher than the life that was lived.”

‘Can you tell us where this was?’

“Over in Asia. But even the names are changed now. It was a land that knew not the true God, a land in which worship was ever cruelty. I came over because of cruelty, for I myself was a sacrifice to the gods!

Joan of Arc

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) We had been reading aloud from an account of the life of Joan of Arc written from a psychic

viewpoint. Afterwards comments were made through the pencil as follows:—

“We were listening to the reading. We know much of her here. She has advanced to much higher spheres, but her history and accounts of her life here on this plane are in our libraries and are much read. She had a wonderful character to begin with. Then she was influenced by strong spirits here who were working for the nation they still loved. It was during a time when fighting was considered the noblest profession; and the world was in such condition that armies were needed to control the people. We do not think any leader could receive such power now to lead armies. But we do think that leaders for a great movement towards guiding the world into righteous thought could and would be influenced from here, and might even be led as Joan was led.”

Oliver Cromwell Contemporary

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) “[The communicator from Cromwell’s time in England] held the idea that only his way would take one into the realms of bliss in the future life, and he vigorously opposed any other belief.”

‘Was not that Cromwell’s idea?’

“Yes, and he was many years in learning the truth here. But being a man of greater intelligence and reason, he did learn the truth sooner than the other one. But after all, he only saw there the same justice and injustice that the other man saw.”

William Shakespeare

(*William Shakespeare, SR.*) Yes, I did [reincarnate], as a matter of fact, and within the twentieth century. I was not going to tell you the name, but I was a man who was very lucky and came from the English stage to Hollywood. I was fortunate enough to be responsible for the acquisition and training of superior actors in Hollywood. I made several movies and I died some time ago. I was very happy to have the honor to do that piece of work. ... And I also managed to write some scenarios that I thought were quite good. ... So you see, I’m still involved in modern theater in some ways.

Q: Were you someone before you were William Shakespeare?

Shakespeare: Oh, many, many, many, many, many, many, someones. ... Shakespeare and the most recent one were the only noted lives. In the lifetime immediately before William Shakespeare, I was an apprentice to an Italian alchemist, who was also noted in history. I learned to read and write in Italian, which was not at all common.

Q: Did you find this preparation helpful in your career as a dramatist?

Shakespeare: Oh, yes. The material in my plays that you would call “occult content” was very much dependent upon a kind of memory I had of having done it before.

I might say here that perhaps I influenced Bacon a few times, too. But I didn’t write any of his material – any more than he wrote mine.

Emanuel Swedenborg

(*Spirit Control, LHH.*) Mary was asked if they knew of Swedenborg on that side. She replied:—

“His influence is strong here. He long ago ascended to higher planes of thought and speech, but he is looked upon as a great scholar and a pure and strong influence. Mary thinks he has his greatest influence among the intellectually spiritual. You know, I hardly belong to that circle, but I can still admire and learn.”

We spoke of the doctrine that Swedenborg had formulated. “Mary says we here have a far simpler doctrine, as you know. Principally, kindness to all, and service wherever possible. But we realize that many need the stimulus of a more involved creed or doctrine, and Swedenborg can certainly supply this need.”

William James

(*William James, LHH.*) I wish to tell something of my life here. I have written through several mediums there, but have not said much about my present advancement. We have so many things to interest us here that we forget sometimes that the earth people may like to know of ourselves as well as of our surroundings.

When I first arrived, my strongest desire was to try to demonstrate to the friends I left behind the fact that I still lived. In this, I fear, I was not very successful. As time passed and the attractions of this life began to manifest themselves to me, I was drawn away from my efforts to communicate with earth. I found many avenues of advancement, and all were so promising I had some difficulty for a time in making my choice. I have, however, finally chosen the lines in which I was most interested on earth. We have so many opportunities for study that were not open to us there, that any subject is found to be much larger than we thought it to be there. So I have found plenty to do in following the different trends in which these studies lead. ...

I have continued to study psychology, but only as an aid to understand some of the earlier phases of this life. Psychology here is not so important. But the study of philosophy, ethics and religion broadens out here, and comprises the larger portion of those studies which concern our future. We are always interested in trying to find some conclusions which we can apply to earth problems. The earth people need counsel in many ways, we think, and if such counsel can come from here with some authority, it may have influence.

Frederic W.H. Myers

(*F.W.H. Myers, BHP.*) I have adventured some thirty-five years ago upon a post-mortem existence. Yet ... I have not attained to the Fifth Plane [beyond the Mental Plane].

(*F.W.H. Myers, RTI.*) The discarnate being who has conveyed this message [himself] has remained in touch with the earth and has followed, step by step, since his death at the beginning of the century, the progress of science, the Great War, which has been continued in the economic war. He has, through communion with the inner mind of his friends who still exist in physical bodies, perceived the change in man’s spiritual outlook, perceived his urgent need for some cogent assurance of a spiritual world. Because a man dies, it does not follow that he loses touch with the earth, with that state of Penia – poverty – from which he rose into the delights of the plane named Illusion, from which he penetrated into the world of Eidos – pure form – to the human soul the Heaven World [beyond the Mental Plane], the ultimate goal. For while on earth the human soul has, in rare moments, perceived that world but has not passed beyond it even when in the loftiest mystic trance.

Mark Twain

(*Mark Twain, MTR.*) I want to begin by making it clear to people who will read this book that I have no intention of sounding in this interview like vintage Mark Twain. I gave up imitating myself when I died. I’ve moved on to better things now. Anyway, that fellow who used to do a one-man show about me—

Japikse: Hal Holbrook, I think.

He does me much better than I ever was able to. (Laughter.) So I’ll just leave the stage to him.

Leichtman: That’s fine with us.

What I’m saying is that I won’t have the razor-sharp wit some people might expect. I’ve been told that the tongue here can get rather sluggish, in fact.

Leichtman: Well, I do hope you’ll be sharp enough at least to cut butter.

I ought to be able to spread something around at any rate. (Laughter.)

William Thomas Stead (*Titanic victim*)

(*Philemon, MM.*) Q: Do you often see [W.T.] Stead?

A: I see Stead seldom. But when we meet, it is a soul feast. He has grown into an awe-inspiring, majestic spirit. He has shed the earthly trammels in a most strange and unusual degree. Stead shed them even on earth and outlived much that some of us still carry with us through many stages of the new life. I look up to him with reverence and he loves me and helps me with my work. But he is more universal than I am.

Helen Salter

(*Helen Salter, LO.*) You may or may not believe me, but I have met the group of Cambridge scholars for whom we worked so hard, also our old colleagues, Gerald Balfour, Pid, Mrs. Sidgwick, even her brother Arthur and Sir Oliver [Lodge]. (1)

(1) "A notable group of early researchers was based upon the University of Cambridge. The group consisted of: Mrs. Coombe Tennant, a J.P. and the first woman delegate from Britain to the League of Nations; Mrs. Helen Salter; Mrs. Holland who lived mostly in India and sent her messages from there. These three women were sensitives, or mediums.

The Cambridge scholars were: philosopher, Professor Henry Sidgwick; classical scholar, Professor A.W. Verrall; Mrs. Verrall, classical lecturer at Newnham; Frederic Myers; Professor Butcher; Mrs. Nora Sidgwick, the first principal of Newnham College; Gerald Balfour, and Arthur Balfour, an ex-Prime Minister."

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Franz Joseph Haydn

(*Monsignor Benson, MALIWU.*) "Call our friend Peter Ilyich, Roger, and look for surprises." ...

We were shown into a spacious apartment that was both sitting-room and work-room. Close to a wide window there was a large table upon which were disposed many sheets of music-manuscript, some of which had already been written upon, while a further quantity of unused paper was ready waiting, and it was evidence that actual work was in progress.

Along one wall was a commodious couch upon which an old friend of ours was seated and who rose upon our entrance. He was presented to Roger as Franz Joseph and then resumed his seat. ...

"[Our friend] Roger does not suspect ... who you are.... I'm sure he doesn't know who Franz is either."

"Well, you know, my dear, we *have* changed a little since we came here." ...

"It amuses us greatly when we hear the announcement made on earth before a broadcast performance, that "this is the last work composed by so-and-so." *The last work*. Naturally, one knows what is meant, but it sounds so funny to us, especially when one glances at those shelves [full of music manuscripts]. ...

"That is why they put up statues and monuments to us, my dear friend, said Franz Joseph. "They think we are fin-

ished and done for; not a note left in us. And now they are perfectly certain they know what was in our minds when we wrote any piece, large or small. If any of us had given the plain reason: to keep off starvation, they wouldn't have approved of that. Not nearly mystic enough. Ah, well. *This is the life.*" ...

"Here is [music] you must know, Roger," I said, taking one of the scores from the shelf. ... I hummed an air known the world over, much to the amusement of Peter.

"Good gracious," cried Roger, "that's from—."

"From the book Monsignor is holding," said Peter.

I passed the volume to Roger, who looked from the music to Peter, then turned to the first page where he read the title and composer's name, and appeared rather breathless.

Franz, from his seat on the couch, watched what was going forward. "So, Roger," said he, "you have discovered his awful secret at last. Does he, do you think, come up to expectation? Or did you expect someone far handsomer - like myself, for instance?"

As we walked through the woods, Robert expressed his delight and amazement that it should be so simple a matter to be able to talk and joke with a man whose name is a household word in the realm of music, in both worlds.

Lawrence of Arabia

(*T.E. Lawrence, PMJ.*) [A fellow soul recognizes T.E. Lawrence:] Unfortunately [my companion] recognized me but my dismay was so obvious that he agreed to keep his counsel. I wanted time to find out more about this life and about myself and my new make-up before I had to take up the burden of being myself again. I had to learn how to control and use a powerful machine that was strange to me and might easily get out of hand. So I begged to be left alone for a while.

Will Rogers

(*Will Rogers, MTR.*) Rogers: Now, before we get started asking questions, there's something I want to say. There will be people who will read this book who knew me or saw my pictures and some are likely to say, "That can't be Will Rogers because he didn't talk that way. He was much more this way or that way." And I would like to convey to those people that such things are not important. While I may not be able to sound like Will Rogers, because I am talking through the personality of this medium and not my own personality, I can certainly express my ideas and convey the spirit of what I tried to do. Still am doing, actually. We have a club up here and we all get together and make up new jokes. Of course, there's never a lack of material. All you have to do is look around you.

If you have the talent, it bursts right out of you. You really have no choice.

Sir Winston Churchill: A Hero's Welcome

(*Gordon Burdick, TR.*) I was greatly surprised when, on the evening of January 19, 1965, ... I was given the following information from Gordon [Burdick], five days before Sir Winston's passing:

"You know that Winston Churchill is expected over here. I want to tell you that very great preparations are being made to receive him. He is being welcomed by members of his own family, but also by many famous men who have preceded him, amongst them former Prime Ministers of England, and I should say that he will get a great reception; that will be a much greater wonder to him when he comes than anything else.

"There are many here who remember him and many who have watched his great career, and even helped him in the past. Those who have been with him in a spiritual sense will be amongst those to give him help and guidance in this new adventure of life."

I heard no more until I received the following bulletin:

"I am here to give you more news. We are all waiting to hear when Churchill will be ready to be welcomed by the great assembly gathering to give him greeting that has been accorded to few new arrivals in this world. He is at present resting quietly in the place prepared for him, but I think it won't be long before he will be ready to come and be received by those awaiting him.

"He had reached a great age and his illness had been brief and free from great suffering so that the shedding of his physical form will be a very happy event for him. I have no doubt that he will very soon be active again, playing an important part in the work of helping the plane of earth, which needs all the help that can be given it from this side.

"You will, in a sense, be feeling the loss of a grand old warrior. We will be gaining a young, great and vigorous helper in the work to be done. So your loss is our gain in this world. Every new arrival of such stature is given a new start in life and welcomed with joy." ...

[February 2:] Gordon wrote: "Churchill has been given a tremendous welcome. I was there to see it. He had been resting in a very quiet and lovely place set apart for him. When he was feeling quite restored, he was told that he was to be given a reception, not only by old friends and comrades in his earth life, but by some other men he had never met but who like himself belonged to history.

"He was quite delighted at the prospect and was then led to the place where these famous people of the past were waiting for him. He was then taken to a kind of dais where he was told to seat himself under a canopy. Then, one by one, former Prime Ministers of England and great soldiers and sailors who had helped to save Britain in the past, were brought to be introduced to him and to tell him of their interest and pride in his achievements.

"It was his day. I think he was astonished. He was also deeply moved to find himself so honored and by those who

had lived on earth long before him. I was glad to be there to witness this great welcome for him. You and all of us owed so much to his courage and splendid leadership in the last terrible war.

"We are glad to have him here, no longer an old man, but looking much as he did in 1940. He will in time grow younger still. When he has had a period of further rest, that is a time of adjustment to the new conditions of life in this world, he will probably be asked to join the company of those who are given the job of helping those still on earth and governing the different nations."

I wrote, "He said that he was going to spend his first million years in your world painting."

"He can still do that, but I think he may want to help England in the future as he has done in the past, and the world, too."

"Anything more to tell me?"

"Yes, I think that this was a quite unusual occasion. Not many people get such a wonderful reception, but he had been very much guided and helped from this side. He was one of the chosen."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that, from time to time, certain people are chosen for a special purpose or mission, to give themselves to a great task in which the world can be helped forward or saved from catastrophe. That was Churchill's mission and he fulfilled it perfectly. So he is now welcomed home with a great 'Well done.'"

[February 11:] The next and last communication relating to Winston Churchill came:

"When he was on the dais where the many famous men of other generations were brought to meet him, he looked very happy and was full of high spirits. He was at first a bit overcome by the wonder of it all and the greetings he received. You would have been thrilled to see the people there whom we associated only with history. One is apt to forget they are real characters who are still living and working. That is one of the most exciting things in this world, where those of the past mingle with those of the present."

It appears, however, that I was not the only person to receive information of this kind at the time of Sir Winston's passing. Many months later, I learned that a similar report had been received at that time by Major Tudor Pole [psychic medium], who seems also to be in close touch with the unseen world. Because it corroborates the account which I had received from Gordon of the reception accorded to Sir Winston, I feel it is important to include it here:

"Churchill was met by a vast assembly, including many servicemen and a number of famous ones who had preceded him. He was conducted to a lovely home, prepared for him long since, which contains a fine library and every facility for painting. He was aroused from his sleep, which followed his initial arrival, especially to hear the sound of the trumpets at St. Paul's Cathedral. He looked quite youthful and content, and then lapsed back into sleep."

Epilogue

So this is the end of the line ... for this book at least. I hope you've enjoyed these classic gems from the Other Side that had become buried by time and now lie exposed again, maybe a century later, to light our way through life.

If you had already accepted the reality of the soul plane and just wanted to know the details, this book will have met your needs admirably, with its wealth of information.

If you were unsure about the afterlife, hopefully this book has convinced you that you will cross over without skipping a beat, so you can look forward to a long and fruitful existence on the Other Side. Meanwhile, you can live out your earth life free of fear about what comes next.

If you were holding the view of the afterlife taught by orthodox religion, I hope this book has expanded your vision. No eternity of hymns and psalms, but a wonderful, full existence of fun and service to others, with joy and bliss as your daily companions.

By the way, if you did buy into the Christian view of heaven and hell before reading this book, you were in the majority in the U.S. A June 2008 report released by the Pew Forum on Religion and Life says almost 75% of the 36,000 people polled believe in heaven as "a place where good people go to be eternally rewarded." And almost 60% believe in hell "as a place where people go who have lived bad lives and die without repenting, and are eternally punished."

Well, at least they got the heaven part right, but not the "eternal punishment" thing. As we've seen, there's a *lot* more to it than that.

And finally, if you were sure that death is oblivion, maybe this book has changed your mind, or maybe it hasn't. But I've played my part by bringing this information to you, so now you just wait and see if you're right. However, I feel safe in closing by saying, "Bye for now. I'll see you on the Other Side."

