

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, phys-