Extracts from Various Books

These extracts have been created from various books as the text was thought to be important.
During Illness.

Mary Wilson was very ill with undiagnosed Lym Disease:

'On one particular afternoon, I was alone in my living room, lying on the sofa. I had reached a stage in my illness where I'd begun to dread the passage of time, as it brought new symptoms and more pain. I was frightened that I might die before the doctors had found out what was wrong with me, and felt overwhelmed by loneliness.

'I noticed some kind of movement in front of a side window, and held my breath as an image of my mother (who had died seven years earlier) began to take form before me. Spellbound, I watched as she moved slowly around the room, turning on the spot every few seconds to become transformed into an image of herself at an earlier age. Her movements were extremely agile, in spite of having suffered with arthritis during the latter part of her life. It looked as if she was conducting some kind of fairy dance around me, her feet barely touching the ground. She never looked towards me, but I had the experience of being bathed in wave after wave of her concern, together with her reassurance that she was there to protect me.

'Then I sensed she was inviting me to go with her, there and then, to another place. I was suddenly filled with the fear of death and leaving my three young children. I spoke out to her, saying that I wasn't coming, that I would be all right; that I needed to stay behind. At that point, the image gently evaporated, absorbed into the light coming in through the side window.

'I felt guilty about having sent her away. But, shortly after that, my symptoms began to subside.

'Since then, I have often felt her presence. For example, when using her sewing machine or baking the Christmas cake.

Last month, my daughter arrived back home for her birthday. She rushed to join me in the kitchen, excitedly describing how, when she put her key in the lock, the door had swung open on its own and an extraordinary warm presence had welcomed and enfolded her. She said that she immediately knew it was her grandmother.'
Mr. Sloan asked: “Who was that speaking?” and was very surprised when he was told it was King George V.

We were speaking amongst ourselves, saying what a good king the late King George had been, and what a good man our present King is and how well he worked for his country, when a voice from the other side said:

“That is quite right and as it should be. It would not do to sit and let others do the work for you. You want to do a little bit of service while in the world no matter what station the Great Spirit God may have placed you in. Each one should be willing to help those around in need of assistance and not allow it to fall on one shoulder only. Also, you must not allow anyone to impose on you too much; just see that they take their share of responsibility. It is a good lesson to each one of you to accept your share of responsibility and it helps to prepare you for the journey here, enabling you to take your proper place in the fuller life which awaits you. I am just one of the stragglers who has come through it, and I wish I had done my duty better in the earth life.”

Mrs. Lang asked if we knew him, and if he had spoken to us before.

He replied:

“I have never had the honour of being in your company, this beautiful company, before to-night. I have been in the vicinity of such a Meeting but have never spoken. To-night, however, the light was so bright and the conditions so favourable, that I took the responsibility of asking the door-keeper if I might come in. He told me I might do so but I was to watch his hand and, if I went beyond what I should say or do, he would signal to me.”

Miss Colquhoun remarked: “But you have not seen the signal yet, have you, friend?”

He replied:

“I do not require to see the signal; I would feel it. There are so many things on this side of life which you cannot understand yet. Of course you cannot, because I could not understand them myself when I first came over. It is a gradual unfoldment. While in earth life I used to wonder what kind of life this would be, and what clothes I would have on the spirit side of life. In fact, I used to wonder if there was a spirit side at all; I hoped for it but was not at all certain.

“The day I passed out of the body I felt very much alone. I knew I was out of the body and I felt afraid. I looked down at myself and found I was nude, and then a voice out of the haze said to me: ‘Come hither, my brother, and be not afraid.’ I approached
the light, and immediately I drew near to the light I was instantly clothed. I have progressed since then, and now I am able to return to the surroundings of earth life and be clothed in apparel like what I used to wear.

“The clothes change. I cannot tell you how, but, as we draw near the physical, the clothes change, there is no doubt about it. Perhaps I have not put it very clearly to you, but, when I draw near to the Earth Plane, I find myself standing in the surroundings where I used to stand, with similar garments to those I used to wear in earth life, and the robes I wear on the other side of life - the Summerland side - change, imperceptibly to me, when I cross the border through the mist. Of course, there are others who can come, more advanced than I am, and they always come in their spirit robes. I wish you could see them - they are very beautiful.”

Miss Duff asked: “Can you see us, friend?”, and he replied:

“I can see you all. I can see you just as you are sitting in that chair and apparelled, just as I had clothes in earth life. I see your hair has a beautiful curl and you have a nice complexion.”

Mr. Sloan said: “I am afraid you are a bit of a flatterer, friend,” but Miss Duff did not agree. “Oh, no, Mr. Sloan, I am sure he means no flattery; he is just trying to describe to us how we appear to him.”

The voice then said to Mr. Hart:

“I see you, my worthy friend. I am rather timorous of saying what I think of you. I hope you will not think I am flattering. You will understand, my brother, but your disposition, as I see it just now, is so full of that beautiful composition - that description of a boy in earth life who wants to help everybody. You seem to be moving among many people. I do not know how you are fixed in earth life, but you always find an excuse for everyone’s failings. You must be coming up against some who do not work just according to your liking, but you have an excuse for every wayfarer.”

Mrs. Bowes said: “What a beautiful description, and that is just like Mr. Hart.”

A new voice then said:

“Services rendered to each other. Just talk together for a little while, while we get the conditions right. And how is McConachie to-night, Mrs. Lang? I think Miss Colquhoun has a McConachie as well. What you call an impression or thought sometimes comes your way, Miss Colquhoun, and alters your decision. That is McConachie; he may not be a relative, but McConachie will be your stalwart friend; never serious, perhaps, but just to give you a spirit of hilarity to lift you out of the dumps. He will never do you any harm. I had a few myself in earth life, in fact they were a bit of a nuisance to me - the McConachies which I had with me and around me - but they were also a great help to me. I have been credited with much that McConachie actually did for me. God bless you all. I am James Barrie. It is not McConachie who is talking to you now. I am speaking from my soul’s self to you,
whatever man I may be.”

One of us said *The Little Minister*, and he replied: “I was very pleased with that.”

Miss Colquhoun then remarked: “All that you wrote was lovely,” and he replied:

“Not I, but my beautiful Inspirer who wrote through me. I was simply a human channel to convey those magnificent thoughts; inspirational thoughts through a human instrument, and I think sometimes they have done good to the world. If you cannot make the pathway trod in earth life brighter for those who follow, you have failed much in your duty. You have all something to give, and I am sure you will endeavour to give of your best that those who follow after may say: ‘She did it well,’ or ‘He did it well.’ Do so, my friends. Do so, my dearest friends. What a record to carry with you. God bless you.”

End of page 177.

Notes:

McConachie seems to be referring to Guides, Helpers, Inspirers on the Spirit side. James Barrie states that his books – I can only remember *The Water Babes* – came from Spirit.

In these four pages – from a 624 page book - there is mention of King George V. This is unusual as the majority of the ‘speakers’ are normal Scottish people as these meetings were held in Glasgow.

Arthur Findlay invited important members of the Clergy of Glasgow to come and listen to the ‘voices’ of the Sloan Circle. They would not come. This ‘indifference’ inspired Findlay to write his book *The Rock of Truth*.

The description of one man’s passing does not apply to all as every passing into the Realms of Light – if that is where you are going – is different for every person. All communicators describe their own experiences.

J.H.H – Jan 2019
A VOICE FROM THE HEIGHTS

I am obliged to use your words and modes of expression, but I must say at the beginning that they are wholly inadequate to convey spiritual truths. I long to help people who seem to be in the same mistaken conditions in which I once was, for man does not know himself.

We will consider together something of the truth of being, the most essential and the first of all things. You are not the outward and visible form; this is the feeblest and the most distant likeness of your real self. I will explain by illustration.

When an artist paints a picture, he does not put on canvas the reality; he gives you simply a copy of that which is within himself. The real picture is on the spiritual plane and exists there much more truly than on the canvas; the real picture remains for ever, the canvas does not. No poet can give you his true poem. He does his best to convey something of its beauty, something of its life, but even then it is far removed from his ideal. That, too, is on the plane of reality.

There is a vast amount of creative energy working in and through the material plane. Like the picture and the poem, this energy is invisible to you. We want you to distinguish between reality and shadow. The physical plane, or plane of the senses, is a shadow, a faint imitation of the spiritual and the only real. Your work is to show forth higher laws, to live and breathe entirely from the plane of spirit, to create anew from the very centre of all life, to make one the kingdom of earth and the kingdom of heaven. You are not to think of yourself and the universe now visible to you as real. It is this that constitutes the difference between us. We have entered into a larger consciousness of God, whereas you are content with the shadows of things. Just think how all your finest thought seems to vanish with the passing of great minds from your midst, yet this is not the case, as you will discover when you awake to the knowledge of a life that ever progresses from the unreal to the true. When this consciousness permeates the whole human race, you will be lifted to a higher plane, for growth is simply a larger consciousness.

Heaven is not a place, but a consciousness of God. God cannot be thought of as a personality, since God is all and in all. The Absolute is above and beyond the conception of finite mind, yet infinitely meek and lowly, filling all space. As you emerge into this all-pervading love, the true life becomes manifest and is always the answer to the deepest and highest aspirations of the soul. It is love fulfilling itself. Thank God for NOW. Learn first and thoroughly that you have been, and will be, for ever. Your present condition is an opportunity for spiritual advancement. Make the most and the best of your life NOW.

Taken from a little book called ‘Christ in You’ first published in 1910
I want to tell you, My dearest children, that this matter of Who You Are, and Who You Choose To Be, is of great importance. Not only because it sets the tone of your experience, but because it creates the nature of Mine.

All of your life you have been told that God created you. I come now to tell you this: You are creating God.

That is a massive rearrangement of your understanding, I know. And yet it is a necessary one if you are to go about the true work for which you came.

This is holy work We are up to, you and I. This is sacred ground We walk. This is The Path.

In every moment God expresses Himself in, as, and through you. You are always at choice as to how God will be created now, and She will never take that choice from you, nor will She punish you for making the "wrong" choice. Yet you are not without guidance in these matters, nor will you ever be. Built into you is an internal guidance system that shows you the way home. This is the voice that speaks to you always of your highest choice that places before you your grandest vision. All you need do is heed that voice, and not abandon the vision.

Throughout your history I have sent you teachers. During every day and time have My messengers brought you glad tidings of great joy.

Holy Scriptures have been written, and holy lives have been lived, that you might know of this eternal truth: You and I are One.

Now again I send you scriptures - you are holding one of them in your hands. Now again I send you messengers, seeking to bring you the Word of God.

Will you listen to these words? Will you hear these messengers? Will you become one of them?

That is the great question. That is the grand invitation. That is the glorious decision. The world awaits your announcement and you make that announcement with your life, lived.

The human race has no chance to lift itself from its own lowest thoughts until you lift yourself to your own highest ideas.

Those ideas, expressed through you, as you, create the template, set the stage and serve as a model for the next level of human experience.

You are the life and the way. The world will follow you. You are not at choice in this matter. It is the only matter in which you have no free choice. It is simply The Way It Is. Your world will follow your idea about yourself. Ever it has been, ever it will be. First comes your thought about yourself, then follows the outer world of physical manifestation.

What you think, you create. What you create, you become. What you become, you express. What you express, you experience. What you experience, you are. What you are, you think. The circle is complete.

The holy work in which you are engaged has really just begun, for now, at last, you understand what you are doing.

It is you who have caused yourself to know this, you who have caused yourself to care. And you do care now, more than ever before, about Who You Really Are. For now, at last, you see the whole picture. Who you are, I am. You are defining God.

I have sent you - a blessed part of Me - into physical form that I might know Myself experientially as all that I know Myself to be conceptually. Life exists as a tool for God to turn concept into experience. It exists for you to do the same. for you are god, doing this. I choose to re-create Myself anew in every single moment. I choose to experience the grandest version of the greatest vision ever I had about Who I Am. I have created you, so that you might re-create Me. This is Our holy work. This is Our greatest joy. This is Our very reason for being.

This is the most important book I have read for a long time. Buy it; read it; do it.
Thinking is hard. Making value judgments is difficult. It places you at pure creation, because there are so many times you'll have to say, “I don't know. I just don't know.” Yet still you'll have to decide. And so you'll have to choose. You'll have to make an arbitrary choice.

Such a choice - a decision coming from no previous personal knowledge - is called pure creation. And the individual is aware, deeply aware, that in the making of such decisions is the Self created.

Most of you are not interested in such important work. Most of you would rather leave that to others. And so most of you are not self-created, but creatures of habit; other-created creatures.

Then, when others have told you how you should feel, and it runs directly counter to how you do feel - you experience a deep inner conflict. Something deep inside you tells you that what others have told you is not Who You Are. Now where to go with that? What to do?

The first place you go is to your religionists - the people who put you there in the first place. You go to your priests and your rabbis and your ministers and your teachers, and they tell you to stop listening to your Self. The worst of them will try to scare you away from it; scare you away from what you intuitively know.

They'll tell you about the devil, about Satan, about demons and evil spirits and hell and damnation and every frightening thing they can think of to get you to see how what you were intuitively knowing and feeling was wrong, and how the only place you'll find any comfort is in their thought, their idea, their theology, their definitions of right and wrong, and their concept of Who You Are.

The seduction here is that all you have to do to get instant approval is to agree. Agree and you have instant approval. Some will even sing and shout and dance and wave their arms in hallelujah!

That's hard to resist. Such approval, such rejoicing that you have seen the light; that you've been saved!

Approvals and demonstrations seldom accompany inner decisions. Celebrations rarely surround choices to follow personal truth; in fact quite the contrary. Not only may others fail to celebrate, they may actually subject you to ridicule. What? You're thinking for yourself? You're deciding on your own? You're applying your own yardsticks, your own judgments, your own values? Who do you think you are, anyway?

And, indeed, that is precisely the question you are answering.

But the work must be done very much alone; very much without reward, without approval, perhaps without even any notice.

And so you ask a very good question. Why go on? Why even start off on such a path? What is to be gained from embarking on such a journey? Where is the incentive? What is the reason?

The reason is ridiculously simple.

THERE IS NOTHING ELSE TO DO.
Your ideas about right and wrong are just that - ideas. They are the thoughts which form the shape and create the substance of Who You Are. There would be only one reason to change any of these; only one purpose in making an alteration: if you are not happy with Who You Are.

Only you can know if you are happy. Only you can say of your life - "This is my creation (son), in which I am well pleased."

If your values serve you, hold to them. Argue for them. Fight to defend them.

Yet seek to fight in a way which harms no one. Harm is not a necessary ingredient in healing.

You say "hold to your values" at the same time you say our values are all wrong. Help me with this.

I have not said your values are wrong. But neither are they right. They are simply judgments. Assessments. Decisions. For the most part, they are decisions made not by you, but by someone else. Your parents, perhaps. Your religion. Your teachers, historians, politicians.

Very few of the value judgments you have incorporated into your truth are judgments you, yourself, have made based on your own experience. Yet experience is what you came here for - and out of your experience were you to create yourself. You have created yourself out of the experience of others.

If there were such a thing as sin, this would be it: to allow yourself to become what you are because of the experience of others. This is the "sin" you have committed. All of you. You do not await your own experience, you accept the experience of others as gospel (literally), and then, when you encounter the actual experience for the first time, you overlay what you think you already
know onto the encounter.

If you did not do this, you might have a wholly different experience - one that might render your original teacher or source wrong. In most cases, you don't want to make your parents, your schools, your religions, your traditions, your holy scriptures wrong - so you deny your own experience in favour of what you have been told to think.

Nowhere can this be more profoundly illustrated than in your treatment of human sexuality.

Everyone knows that the sexual experience can be the single most loving, most exciting, most powerful, most exhilarating, most renewing, most energizing, most affirming, most intimate, most uniting, most recreative physical experience of which humans are capable. Having discovered this experientially, you have chosen to accept instead the prior judgments, opinions, and ideas about sex promulgated by others - all of whom have a vested interest in how you think.

These opinions, judgments, and ideas have run directly contradictory to your own experience, yet because you are loathe to make your teachers wrong, you convince yourself it must be your experience that is wrong. The result is that you have betrayed your true truth about this subject - with devastating results.

You have done the same thing with money. Every time in your life that you have had lots and lots of money, you have felt great. You felt great receiving it, and you felt great spending it. There was nothing bad about it, nothing evil, nothing inherently "wrong." Yet you have so deeply ingrained within you the teachings of others on this subject that you have rejected your experience in favour of "truth."

Having adopted this "truth" as your own, you have formed thoughts around it - thoughts which are creative. You have thus created a personal reality around money which pushes it away from you - for why would you seek to attract that which is not good?
Amazingly, you have created this same contradiction around God. Everything your heart experiences about God tells you that God is good. Everything your teachers teach you about God tells you God is bad. Your heart tells you God is to be loved without fear. Your teachers tell you God is to be feared, for He is a vengeful God. You are to live in fear of God's wrath, they say. You are to tremble in His presence. Your whole life through you are to fear the judgment of the Lord. For the Lord is "just," you are told. And God knows, you will be in trouble when you confront the terrible justice of the Lord. You are, therefore, to be "obedient" to God's commands. Or else.

Above all, you are not to ask such logical questions as, "if God wanted strict obedience to His Laws, why did He create the possibility of those Laws being violated?" Ah, your teachers tell you - because God wanted you to have "free choice." Yet what kind of choice is free when to choose one thing over the other brings condemnation? How is "free will" free when it is not your will, but someone else's, which must be done? Those who teach you this would make a hypocrite of God.

You are told that God is forgiveness, and compassion - yet if you do not ask for this forgiveness in the "right way," if you do not "come to God" properly, your plea will not be heard, your cry will go unheeded. Even this would not be so bad if there were only one proper way, but there are as many "proper ways" being taught as there are teachers to teach them.

Most of you, therefore, spend the bulk of your adult life searching for the "right" way to worship, to obey, and to serve God. The irony of all this is that I do not want your worship, I do not need your obedience, and it is not necessary for you to serve Me.

These behaviors are the behaviors historically demanded of their subjects by monarchs - usually egomaniacal, insecure, tyrannical monarchs at that. They're not Godly demands in any sense - and it seems remarkable that the world hasn't by now concluded that the demands are counterfeit, having nothing to do with the needs or desires of Deity.
Deity has no needs. All That Is is exactly that: all that is. It therefore wants, or lacks, nothing - by definition.

If you choose to believe in a God who somehow needs something - and has such hurt feelings if He doesn't get it that He punishes those from whom He expected to receive it - then you choose to believe in a God much smaller than I. You truly are Children of a Lesser God.

No, my children, please let Me assure you again, through this writing, that I am without needs. I require nothing.

This does not mean I am without desires. Desires and needs are not the same thing (although many of you have made them so in your present lifetime).

Desire is the beginning of all creation. It is first thought. It is a grand feeling within the soul. It is God, choosing what next to create.

And what is God's desire?

I desire first to know and experience Myself, in all My glory - to know Who I Am. Before I invented you - and all the worlds of the universe - it was impossible for Me to do so.

Second, I desire that you shall know and experience Who You Really Are, through the power I have given you to create and experience yourself in whatever way you choose.

Third, I desire for the whole life process to be an experience of constant joy, continuous creation, never-ending expansion, and total fulfillment in each moment of now.

I have established a perfect system whereby these desires may be realised. They are being realised now - in this very moment. The only difference between you and Me is that I know this.

In the moment of your total knowing (which moment could come upon you at anytime), you, too, will feel as I do always: totally joyful, loving, accepting, blessing, and grateful.
Excuse me, but I have to interrupt you again here. What about the person who is sick, but has the faith that will move mountains - and so thinks, says, and believes he's going to get better. . .only to die six weeks later. How does that square with all this positive thinking, affirmative action stuff?

That's good. You're asking the tough questions. That's good. You're not simply taking My word for any of this. There is a place, on down the line, when you'll have to take My word for this - because eventually you'll find that we can discuss this thing forever, you and I—until there's nothing left to do but to “try it or deny it.” But we're not at that place yet. So let's keep the dialogue going; let's keep talking -

The person who has the “faith to move mountains,” and dies six weeks later, has moved mountains for six weeks. That may have been enough for him. He may have decided, on the last hour of the last day, “Okay, I've had enough. I'm ready to go on now to another adventure.” You may not have known of that decision, because he may not have told you. The truth is, he may have made that decision quite a bit earlier - days, weeks earlier - and not have told you; not have told anyone.

You have created a society in which it is very not okay to want to die - very not okay to be very okay with death. Because you don't want to die, you can't imagine anyone wanting to die - no matter what their circumstances or condition.

But there are many situations in which death is preferable to life - which I know you can imagine if you think about it for even a little bit. Yet, these truths don't occur to you - they are not that self-evident - when you are looking in the face someone else who is choosing to die. And the dying person knows this. She can feel the level of acceptance in the room regarding her decision.
Have you ever noticed how many people wait until the room is empty before they die? Some even have to tell their loved ones – “No, really, go. Get a bite to eat.” Or “Go, get some sleep. I'm fine. I'll see you in the morning.” And then, when the loyal guard leaves, so does the soul from the body of the guarded.

If they told their assembled relatives and friends, “I just want to die,” they would really hear it. “Oh, you don't mean that,” or “Now, don't talk that way,” or “Hang in there,” or “Please don't leave me.”

The entire medical profession is trained to keep people alive, rather than keeping people comfortable so that they can die with dignity.

You see, to a doctor or a nurse, death is failure. To a friend or relative, death is disaster. Only to the soul is death a relief - a release.

The greatest gift you can give the dying is to let them die in peace - not thinking that they must “hang on,” or continue to suffer, or worry about you at this most crucial passage in their life.

So this is very often what has happened in the case of the man who says he's going to live, believes he's going to live, even prays to live: that at the soul level, he has “changed his mind.” It is time now to drop the body to free the soul for other pursuits. When the soul makes this decision, nothing the body does can change it. Nothing the mind thinks can alter it. It is at the moment of death that we learn who, in the body-mind-soul triumvirate, is running things.

All your life you think you are your body. Some of the time you think you are your mind. It is at the time of your death that you find out Who You Really Are.
One communicator who came only once said through Ivy, “Hello, very nice to be with you. I am Nicholas. This is my first time and I have come to see how you operate. I was a bit of a fuddy-duddy on earth and didn’t believe in all this mumbo-jumbo, but now I am learning for myself the truth. I am deeply grateful and gratified that there is a life beyond the one who know on the earthly plane. It would be terrifying if we felt that this was the end, that we became as dust and disappeared, never more to rise and take our place in a higher form in a higher system of living and development. We must indeed be thankful if we can learn the truth while we are mortals on earth, for it is difficult for many people who have passed over to learn to develop, for they enter this long period of rest, darkness, and resuscitation, feeling there is nothing left for them, and they cannot reach out for they know not what they are reaching for. It is a long time* before loved ones can reach them. You are indeed blessed that you have learned the truth before passing over to this side. Good night”.

* Bear in mind that there is no ‘time’ in Spirit as we know it. Time has been referred to as the amount of progress an individual has made. There is a line in a hymn – ‘A thousand ages in Thy sight are but a moment gone. Another communicator stated ‘your life on earth seems very long but, to us, it is the mere twinkling of an eye.
Chan spoke: ‘You must study, observe and think if your spirituality is to have any worth. Consciousness is knowledge, and knowledge comes through mental effort. The intellect and reasoning powers cannot give you life, but they can open the doors for wisdom and life to enter. Spirituality divorced from wisdom becomes fanaticism. The spirit is a seed planted in the earth body, and it grows through the earth body. It unfolds with the help of the atmosphere, turns its flower towards the all-powerful sun, and sheds its fragrance on all who come within its reach.

‘The spirit of man needs both the mental and the physical for its development. But these two alone cannot bring you into the light of spiritual life. Spirituality is not just temporal living, nor is it just dreaming. It is not only for self-upliftment, nor for dwelling solely in the transcendental. All this is included, but it is something much more. It is something so great, so powerful, that the whole of life, both on the earth plane and here, is affected by it.

‘Experience is necessary for the progress of the spirit. It must act, it must achieve, it must attain. It cannot expand alone. It must endeavour to help those wounded in the struggle of life, to lift others with itself and strive for their upliftment as well as its own. This is the reason you must study. Your life is an experience in itself, and your experiences will push you along the road of life.’
What I want to tell you is what very few people understand: how it feels to go out of the body: what I personally have been doing ever since the realization of the fact came to me: and finally to acquaint you with the impressions I have gained in the new life here since.

Transition from the physical body to the ethereal body occupies only a matter of moments. There is no pain in the severance of the two, and so alike are they, that it is some while - probably in some cases, days - before this transition from one state to the other is noticed. In my case, it was noticed quickly, because I had been conscious of facing Death for many hours before actually passing.

As you can imagine yourself, when I found myself high and dry in another country (he had been flying a plane over water), I began to think. What had happened? Only one of two things could have happened. Either I had been rescued whilst unconscious and taken to a land I knew nothing of - or I had died.

It was the latter. If therefore the waking up in my case was attended with so little change registered in my mind, you will understand what an easy process passing from one life to another is.

Actually, I feel no different. Nothing angelic, nothing ethereal, nothing one would think of as being connected with Heaven or the Hereafter.

My actual experience is that I am as real in the life as I have been to you, and that all growth towards that great happiness and that great Heaven they talk of, must be a slower process than most people believe.

Milly (his wife's name), people will not agree that this is true, but it is my firm belief that I am right. The soul or ego is such a delicate structure, that no quick change can take place without shocking that soul and, for a moment, putting the whole thing into a disorganised state.

If you ask me where I am, what I am, and what I see, I have to tell you that in the first instance, I found myself in a grey, damp, and most disagreeable country that looked to me barren, almost like the wastes of Belgium I used to fly over. Imagine such a country, with here and there
groups of three or four badly grown, distorted trees visible under a grey fog, and I think you will get an idea as to what I awoke to.

You should know why I should want to get out of such a state - one in which many people dwell for years. . .

I cannot understand why humans say that after Death all is happiness, all joy, all rest, all cheerfulness, all brightness. Surely they should be brought to the realization that as they have lived on Earth, and worked, and done the right thing, so shall their reward be in the hereafter. For though here physical suffering is not, mental suffering is much more severe than it can ever be on earth.

People will say: Why? Because here you are more awake, more alert, more able to perceive things by virtue of possessing a much freer mind housed in a much finer body, which does not bind you as much.

Altogether, you are in a refining process, and not until you have passed through every scrap of refining process there is in every state of life here, are you permitted into the brighter state.

This brighter side exists, but at first you are only allowed to see it for moments. . .

I passed over holding no thought of the future, like the average young man of my age. And as on earth, I always wanted to get out of the mess as soon as possible on finding myself in it, so here did I determine to get out of the dreary, dreary country I found myself in when I first realised I had passed over. . .

The communicator died in an attempt to cross the Atlantic from East to West against head-winds and came down in a storm when the fuel ran out.

[page 140]

What do we do? [the words apparently coming from her husband began]. We do everything for which we are fitted. There are huge systems of education, huge laboratories and institutions that deal with all the conditions for which a man has fitted himself while on earth. Here our necessities are met by mental thought, and are organized and focussed.

The organized thought starts here, travels around the spiritual states, gathering strength as it does, and eventually finds its final capacity for work through its human receiver.

None of this destroys free will. Rather, it helps you who are still on the earth I have so latterly left, to realize your affinity with those who have
gone on, to realize their very great humanity and interest in you. Instead
of taking anything away from the beauty of the picture, does it not add to
it that your day of usefulness is only dawning when you come over here?

I have not found any evil here. I have found many people, I assure you,
who are ignorant of every law, but that does not constitute evil. I have
nothing to say about the man who in an atheist. So long as he truly
believes what he professes, he stands as great a chance as the man who is
bound up in his religion. Each one of us has an absolutely straight chance
of working out his own salvation.

There are hells and there are heavens just as we have been taught to
believe. There are weak people, dissolute people, vicious people, all
seeking to still take part in the life they once knew, rather than enter fully
into this new life. The man who takes a risk is the fellow you find in the
higher states here. Each of these states has to be reached by man's own
endeavour.

There are laboratories full of youth, full of life, all working for good, just
as there are others whose energies are mistaken ones. Really there are no
evil spirits. There are ignorant ones, interfering ones, malicious ones,
and blind ones - that is blind to their own faults - and these constitute
the so-called evil here, just as they are the pests of your life.

I work all the time mentally and in a sense physically, in the things that
interest me. One does work. I revel in it, because here in this state, I find
myself free, alert and decisive, my energies no longer curtailed or held
down by all the pains, ills and depressions.

What do we work at? We work mentally, and rejoice in so doing - except
at making money. Only now one desires to possess the gifts for the soul,
and the gift of knowledge, and the gift to enable one to see more clearly,
to understand and to realise the greatness of the Universe.

Do we eat and drink? That's another question many people often ask.
Certainly not in the way you sit down in your lavish restaurants. Such a
pity, because I liked doing it. This ethereal body, so like our earthly body,
has still some of the physical structure about it, and it is therefore not
perfected yet. It must retain something that is very akin to the physical
state. We take food in what would seem to you a compressed or
compounded form.
Do we use our senses in the same way? Yes, we do. After a while we begin to drop our earthly need for speech, and begin to use thought transference by sending and projecting out thoughts from mind to mind. Such a lot of nonsense is being told. I assure you this is all the truth. It may upset some people, for few have the courage to tell the truth of their experiences.

While the contents of this extract may be priceless this PDF file is without charge.
Choosing a time to go

Some hospice carers have told us that residents seem instinctively to know they are nearing the end of life. ‘It's almost like something has told them “You're nearly there, just calm down because something is going to happen”’, said one interviewee. ‘I think the people who are dying know right at the end that something is happening,’ said another nurse.

Towards the end, from being very agitated they may calm down and just lie there peacefully. Sometimes they will get a sudden burst of energy, so that they are able to talk to their family for the last time. You get times when people suddenly seem to perk up just before they die. They seem to get better - enough sometimes to say goodbye to relatives . . . It's really strange, it's like an extra energy that they've got just prior to them going right off. They become coherent . . . and then they seem to just go.

It certainly seems to be quite common for people to have some intimation of their own death, almost as though it is a decision they have made themselves. They may tell those close to them, quite matter-of-factly, that it's time for them to go, that they won't be there when their friend next comes to visit them. The following account describes Sylvia's experience with her friend, Gwen, who was dying of cancer. Although Gwen was in great pain and often got very depressed, she was afraid to die and never wanted to talk about death. For the last two weeks of Gwen's life, Sylvia and her husband visited her daily in her hospice.

*Although she was over 70, Gwen was still very vain about her hair, which was jet black. She would agonize if she saw a single silver strand, and the visit of the hairdresser every Tuesday was the highlight of her week. On the evening of Monday, 6th July 1992, we talked to her. She was in some pain, but quite alert. I asked her if she was going to see the hairdresser in the morning. When she said ‘No’, I thought perhaps she was in too much pain, but she explained that she had seen ‘some people’ who had promised to take her out on Tuesday. She did not know where they were going, but they had promised to come for her.*

*The nurse assured us that no one had been to visit, and Gwen was not going*
anywhere. She explained that Gwen was on quite powerful medication and it was not unusual to be confused. But she did not seem at all confused to us.

The next morning I rang the hospice, but the doctor advised me that Gwen needed to rest and would only fight the drugs if she had visitors; her family were coming later in the day. The following morning I rang again, already knowing what I was going to hear. Sure enough, Gwen had died peacefully on Tuesday evening, 7th July 1992.

It is clear that Gwen had the expectation that she was going to be collected and go ‘somewhere’. What is interesting is that this was not seen by her as in any way strange - even though she seemed not to know who ‘these people’ were. This we have seen repeatedly in other accounts - even when the dying do not seem to know who is going to pick them up; the strangers hold no threat and the dying are happy to go with them.

A nurse told us the following incident which happened when she was on night duty at a Manchester hospital. An elderly couple had been involved in a car accident. The man had been badly injured but the woman suffered mainly from shock and bruising.

I went for my break at midnight and on my return I was told the gentleman had died from his injuries but his wife was not to be told yet. I went to her bedside and asked if she would like a cup of tea. She excitedly told me that her husband had just been to see her and told her he would come back at 4 a.m. and they would go home together. I thought that she was still affected by shock. Her blood pressure suddenly began to fall about 3.30 a.m. and the Staff Nurse sent for the doctor.

She was still watching the door intently, waiting for her husband. The doctor saw she was deteriorating fast and did all he could to save her. She was smiling and watching for someone before she passed quickly into spirit. Death was noted at 4 a.m.
Start of chapter VI

In the hospital I became familiar with death. I saw some die who welcomed death gladly as the deliverer from pain, grief, weariness and care; as the opener of the door through which, released from all physical infirmities, their spirits would pass to a broader, freer sphere of existence where they would realise the deepest longing of their souls. Others I saw die who, overcome by physical weakness and mental weariness, seemed incapable of either hope or fear, and awaited death utterly indifferent as to what might follow.

I witnessed some deaths that were calm and peaceful and as good to look upon as the falling asleep of a babe. And some I saw in which physical agony persisted until the last gasp, and they were dreadful to see. Still more appalling were the deaths of those who, realizing that their end was near, were terror-stricken by the fear of what might befall them afterwards and fought for life, clung to it, begged and prayed that they might be allowed to live. Happily such scenes were rare. Most of those whom I saw die passed away in a state of torpor, incapable, seemingly, of feeling or expressing any emotion.

But I noticed that often, irrespective of the physical condition or frame of mind of the dying, just before the end came they would seem to recognise 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 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 unendurable, 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 he suddenly 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.

His brother and sister were at the bedside. The sister said to the brother: "He saw Marion, his favourite daughter. She came and took him where he will suffer no more", and she added fervently: "Thank God! He has found rest at last".

That at such moments as I have described the dying really see some spirit form - someone who has come from the other world to welcome them on their birth into the new life - I never doubted. And the time came when, as will be told later (in the book), it was revealed to me that this is what they really do see. It is 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 are those who have not yet undergone the change wrought by death.

Note:

The title 'The Ministry of Angels' put me off reading this book until I was having a clear out when I started to read it in order to decide what to do with it; give it away or keep it. Mrs. Snell has chosen to give the description of people she sees from the 'other side' as 'angels', no doubt going by the expressions they have and the way they behave. Others would call them 'spirit people', 'guides' (one who goes before) or 'helpers' (one who helps). The word 'Angels' to my way of thinking is 'romantic' and as I am not romantic, sensitive maybe, not too keen on the word 'Angels'. However, now I have started to read it, I can only highly recommend it as one, extremely gifted, person's experiences during her life as a nurse. Perhaps other nurses have these experiences but do not talk about them in case it goes against them in their work. (I am told that they do)

This extract is the start of Chapter 6 and had been selected by me as a reading for a Spiritualist Church Service. It should help anybody who has had somebody die in whatever circumstances as it clearly shows that each person passing over is met by somebody they know and love. I have read about people, who did not care much for people, being met by an animal that they had loved on the earth. My sister reports being met by somebody she did not know but who calmed her down; she thought the person may have been a 'professional greeter' for people who were agitated. My sister's main concern was the Christmas presents that she had bought and wanted her husband, who had never had anything to do with it, to get them to the right person. She was, and still is, very fastidious so I can understand her concern. Last I heard she was in a group helping people who did not know where they were.


“The following experience of the Rev. E. K. Elliott, Rector of Worthing, who was formerly in the navy, and who made the entry in his diary as quoted when he was cruising in the Atlantic out of reach of post or telegraph, will therefore be found of interest. The diary is still in his possession.

T. B.

Extract from diary written out in Atlantic, January 14th, 1847

“Dreamt last night I received a letter from my uncle, H. E., dated January 3rd, in which news of my dear brother's death was given. It greatly struck me.

“My brother had been ill in Switzerland, but the last news I received on leaving England was that he was better.

“The ‘January 3rd’ was very black, as if intended to catch my eye. “On my return to England I found, as I quite expected, a letter awaiting me saying my brother had died on the above date.

“E. K. ELLIOTT”

Worthing

The second case I quote is a much longer and more elaborate one, and we owe its receipt to Dr. Hodgson while in America.

There are many partially similar records of people becoming aware of an accident in which some near relative was injured or killed: and it is noteworthy that the emotion caused by injury seems as likely to convey such an impression as anything pertaining to death itself; but the point of the following narrative is that a complete stranger became impressed with facts which were happening at a distance, without the slightest personal interest in any one concerned—so that it seems to make in favour of a general clairvoyant faculty rather than for any spiritistic explanation. The prefix P. 224 is merely a classificatory reference number.

P. 224. Dream.

The following case has some resemblance to Mrs. Storie's experience, of which an account was published in Phantasmsof the Living, vol. i. p. 370, except that the person whose fate was represented in the dream was in the case here printed entirely unknown to the dreamer. The
“COURT HOUSE, ST. PAUL, MINN., February 10th, 1892

“I believe I have had a remarkable experience. About midnight on the 29th day of December, headsore and fatigued, I left my study where I had been poring over uninspiring law text, and, climbing to my chamber door, fell into bed for the night.

“Nothing unusual had transpired in my affairs that day, and yet, when I gave myself to rest, my brain buzzed on with a myriad fancies. I lay an hour, awake, and blinking like an over-fed owl. The weird intonation of an old kitchen clock fell upon my ears but faintly, as it donged the hour of two. The sound of the clock chime had hardly died when I became conscious [of] my position in a passenger coach on the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha railroad. I was journeying to Duluth, Minnesota, from St. Paul, in which latter place I had gone to sleep. I was aware that I had been on the train about four hours and that I was somewhere near the town of Shell Lake, Wis., distant from St. Paul about eighty miles. I had often been over the road, and as I peered through the coach window, I recognised, in the moonlit scene, features of country and habitation I had seen before. We were plunging on, almost heedlessly as it seemed, when I fancied I heard and was startled from my reverie by a piercing shriek, which was protracted into a piteous moaning and gasping, as if some human creature were suffering some hideous torture.

“Then I felt the train grind heavily to an awkward stop. There was a sudden commotion fore and aft. Train men with lanterns hurried through my car and joined employés near the engine. I could see the lights flash here and there, beside and beneath the cars; brakemen moved along the wheels in groups, the pipe voice of the conductor and the awe-stricken cry of the black porter infused a livening sense to a scene which I did not readily understand. Instinctively I concluded that an accident had happened, or perhaps that a break to the train had occasioned this sudden uprising of train men. A minute later I was out upon the road bed. The brusque and busy search and the disturbed manner of the attendants did not propitiate elaborate inquiry from a curious passenger, so I was appeased to be told, in very ugly snappish English, that if I had eyes I might see for myself that ‘some one got killed, I reckon.’ Everybody moved and acted in a spirit of stealth, and each, it appeared, expected a horrible ‘find.’

The trucks were being examined from the rear of the train forward. Blood splotches were discovered on nearly all the bearings under the entire train. When the gang reached one of the forward cars, all lights were cast upon a truck which was literally scrambled with what appeared to be brains—human brains, evidently, for among the clots were small tufts of human hair. This truck, particularly, must have ground over the bulk of a human body. Every fixture between the wheels was smeared with the crimson ooze of some crushed victim. But where was the body, or at least its members? The trucks were covered only with a pulp of mangled
remnants. The search for what appeared of the killed was extended 500 yards back of the train and all about the right-of-way with no more satisfactory result than to occasionally find a blood-stained tie.

“All hands boarded the train; many declaring that it was an unusual mishap on a railroad which left such uncertain trace of its victim. Again I felt the train thundering on through the burnt pine wastes of northern Minnesota. As I reclined there in my berth, I reflected upon the experience of the night, and often befuddled my sleepy head in an effort to understand how a train, pushing along at the rate of thirty miles an hour, could so grind and triturate a vital bulk, staining only trucks behind the engine, unless the killed at the fatal time were upon the truck or huddled closely by it. I concluded, therefore, that the being destroyed under the train had been concealed near the bespattered fixtures of the car. I had read of death to tramps stealing rides by hiding themselves under or between cars, and finally I dismissed meditation—assured that another unfortunate itinerant had been crushed out of existence. Horrible! I shuddered and awoke—relieved to comprehend it all a dream.

“Now the fact that the foregoing is an accurate statement of a dream experienced by me is not a matter for marvel. Taken alone, there is nothing remarkable in the time at which this vision blackened my sleep. The spell was upon me between two and three o’clock in the morning—of that I am certain. I am positive of the time, because, when I awoke, I heard the clock distinctly, as it struck three.

“On the morrow, I,—who usually forget an ordinary dream long before breakfast—recounted to the family the details of the night’s distraction. From my hearers there followed only the ordinary comments of how ghastly and how shocking the story was as told and how strange the nature of the accident—that no parts of the body had been found. The latter circumstance was, to me also, quite an unusual feature of railroad casualty.

“The evening following the night of the dream (December 30th), at 5 o’clock, I returned to my home, stepped into my study, and, as I am in the habit of doing, I glanced at a page of the St. Paul Dispatch, a daily evening newspaper. It had been casually folded by a previous reader, so that in picking it up flatly, the article which first fixed my attention read:—

“‘Fate of a tramp. Horrible death experienced by an unknown man on the Omaha Road. His remains scattered for miles along the track by the merciless wheels.

“‘Duluth, December 30.—Every truck on the incoming Omaha train from St. Paul this morning was splashed with blood. Train men did not know there had been an accident till they arrived here, but think some unfortunate man must have been stealing a ride between St. Paul and this city. Train men on a later train state that a man’s leg was found by them at Spooner, and that for two miles this side the tracks were scattered with pieces of flesh and bone. There is no possible means of identification.’
“Here was an evident verification of all that transpired in my mind between two and three o’clock on the previous night. I reflected, and the more I pondered the faster I became convinced that I had been in some mysterious form, spirit or element, witness of the tragedy reported in the columns of the press—that my vision was perfect as to general details, and the impression complete and exact to time, place, and circumstance. The next morning I scanned the pages of the *Pioneer Press* of December 31st, and read the following paragraph:—

‘Unknown man killed, Shell Lake, Wis. Special telegram, December 30th.—Fragments of the body of an unknown man were picked up on the railroad track to-day. Portions of the same body were also found on over 100 miles of the railroad. He is supposed to have been killed by the night train, but just where is not known.’

“With this came the conviction to me that, living and asleep, 100 miles from the place of the killing, I had been subjected to the phantom-sight of an actual occurrence on the Omaha railroad, as vivid and in truth as I have stated it above.

“I have not written this account because Mark Twain and other authors have published in current magazines their experiences in what is termed Mental Telepathy or Mental Telegraphy. On the contrary, having read a number of those articles, I have hesitated to utter, as authentic, what I now believe to be a material and striking evidence of the extent, the caprice, and the possibilities of this occult phenomenon.

“HARRY W. WALK”

In reply to Dr. Hodgson’s inquiries, Mr. Wack wrote:—

“ST. PAUL, February 20th, 1892

“MY DEAR SIR,—Replying to your valued favour of the 15th inst., I will say that you are right in understanding that my account of the dream submitted to your Society is a true narrative.

“I reaffirm every word of it, and give you my solemn assurance that, as I have stated, I informed the family and friends of the dream and its details, before I had the first suspicion that the public press ever had contained or ever would contain a report of such an actual occurrence.

“If desirable I will make affidavit as to the truth of the substance of the narrative in your hands.

“I enclose a few corroborative letters, the signatures to which I procured yesterday, February 19th. If these serve you, well and good.

“HARRY W. WACK”
The following were the corroborative letters enclosed:—

(1)  
"ST. PAUL, February 20th, 1892

"GENTLEMEN,—Referring to an account of a dream submitted to you by Mr. Harry Wack of this city which I have read, I beg leave to add the following facts corroborative of the narrative.

"After careful consideration of the article, I find that the story of the dream on December 29th-30th is in substance identical with that which was related by Mr. Wack at breakfast on the morning of December 30th, 1891. On that occasion Mr. Wack stated that he had been agitated the previous night by a dream of unusual features, and then, at the request of those present, he recited what now appears in his article, which I have just perused for the first time. On the evening of December 30th, 1891, when Mr. Wack discovered the newspaper item, he again mentioned the dream and called my attention to the newspaper item, and several of the family discussed the matter. On the morning of December 31st, another newspaper clipping bearing on the same matter was debated by the family.

"Aside from the unusual features and hideousness of the dream, there was nothing to startle us, until the newspaper accounts developed the affair in a mysterious sense. The first version of the dream was given in the morning of December 30th. The first newspaper dispatch appeared and was discovered in the evening of the same day. This I know of my own knowledge, being present on each occasion.

"MRS. MARGARET B. MACDONALD"

(2)  
"ST. PAUL, MINN., February 20th, 1892

"GENTLEMEN,—I have read the letter of Mrs. Macdonald, with whom I visited on December 29th, 30th, 31st, and days following, and with your permission I will say that I also was present at breakfast when Mr. Wack mentioned the dream, and at dinner (6 p.m.) when Mr. Wack called our attention to the newspaper item, which he then declared was a positive verification of the dream he experienced the night before. I have read the account of the dream, and I believe it to be precisely as I understood it from Mr. Wack's account given on the morning of December 30th, 1891.

"ROSE B. HAMILTON"
ST. PAUL, February 20th, 1892

GENTLEMEN,—Having read the foregoing letters of Mrs. Macdonald and Miss Rose B. Hamilton, and being familiar with the facts and incidents therein set forth, I would add my endorsement to them as being in strict accord with the truth.

Mr. Wack stated his dream as he has written of it in the article which I understand he has submitted to you, on the morning of December 30th, 1891. He came upon and drew our attention to the newspaper articles in the evening of December 30th, and on the morning of December 31st, 1891. It was these newspaper dispatches which made the dream interesting, and thereafter it was freely discussed.

“C. E. MCDONALD”

Mr. H. W. Smith, an Associate Member of the American Branch, writes to Dr. Hodgson in connection with the case:—

OFFICE OF SMITH & AUSTRIAN, COMMISSION MERCHANTS,

“290, E., 6TH STREET, PRODUCE EXCHANGE,

“ST. PAUL, MINN., April 14th, 1892

“MY DEAR SIR,—It has been impossible for me to accept Mr. Wack’s invitation to meet at his house the witnesses he cited in his communication to you. I have already written you of my preliminary interview with Mr. Wack, and it confirms in my own mind the high opinion which I previously held of him through our acquaintance, extending over a series of years. There is no reasonable doubt in my mind that the statement he makes is substantially correct, at least as respects any and all allegations of fact. Of course the application of these facts to an unknown force is a matter upon which I cannot speak.

“HERBERT W. SMITH”
...... understanding: Deeply understanding and applying the power of love, combined with the spiritual protection of good cheer, is just about the wisest thing we can do for ourselves. When we commit to cheerfulness and to life lived in the loving expectation of goodness, the world becomes a beautiful reflection of these qualities. Dedicating ourselves to being the expression of love and good cheer, in all we do, guarantees our lives will become the direct image of Heaven on Earth. Our love for one another, put into action moment by moment, and used for the highest good of all, is most assuredly our sacred path on Earth. Each of us has a unique mission to accomplish in life. That mission is predicated solely upon the gifts and talents we chose to master, for the benefit of humanity, in loyal service to Spirit. However, in all instances, no matter what the immediate or ultimate goal might be, love is the unwavering path leading to its spiritual fulfillment. Love is the power, ever present and forever willing, to perform the miraculous deeds and unexplainable happenings destined to occur along the path to our success.

Lao Tsu, the great Chinese theosophist and author of the Tao Te Ching, said over twenty-five hundred years ago, "The only way to do is to be Therefore, I believe that the only way to create love is to consciously be love. If there is to be peace on Earth, it must begin as a seed that first takes root within each of our hearts. We must become the dutiful spiritual emissaries of celestial harmony that we volunteered to be when we came here. All we need to do is acknowledge our essence as love and diligently use.......
Way of Life

In my line of work death is a way of life. When I first started in hospice care I was quite young and sensitive but after a while I started to feel more comfortable around the dying, and one of the reasons for my more relaxed approach was an experience I had the very first month I started work. I’d been involved in the care of a lady I will call Judith. She wasn’t an easy patient, always complaining, and a lot of the staff didn’t like spending much time with her. She never had any visitors, and, being young and earnest, I thought I could make a difference and sat with her as often as I could during visitor hours. She was having none of it and told me to leave her be. After a few days of this she realised that I wasn’t going anywhere, so she quietened down a bit. Sometimes the two of us would just sit in silence together. One afternoon as I was coming in to check on Judith, she grabbed my hand and told me that I didn’t need to sit with her anymore because they were with her now. I asked her what she meant and she said that her sisters and brothers - she came from a family of eight and all had passed except her - were taking good care of her. Then she touched my face and thanked me. It was the first sign of tenderness I had ever known from her. I just smiled and told her I would check in on her later that evening. A few hours later I came back to see Judith and she was quietly asleep, breathing deeply. I gave her room a little tidy-up but then I felt this sudden and strange stillness wash all over me. Hard to say, but everything went quiet - eerily quiet. I couldn’t even hear or feel my own heartbeat. Then I noticed that Judith was suddenly sitting up in her bed with her arms stretched towards the back wall. I wanted to go over to her but I couldn’t move. My feet were rooted to the spot. I saw this shaft of bright light fall over her bed. The light made her face glitter and she looked radiant. The light got brighter and brighter and at one point was so intense that I had to shield my eyes. When I looked again everything was back to normal and Judith was lying in her bed again. I went over to her and, from the silent, peaceful expression on her face I knew that she had gone.

This was not an isolated incident. About six months later something very similar happened when I was present at the death of a man I will call Jacob, only this time I saw swirling lights and heard the sound of flapping wings. I would say that on average I witnessed something magical like this about twice a year and the experience has become so familiar that I don’t even question it any more. Whenever it happens I know that one of the residents will die but it doesn’t fill me with dread. Quite the contrary - it makes me feel incredibly comforted and privileged. When I feel it will bring comfort to grieving loved ones I do try to tell them what I have seen happen at the point of death. Reactions vary. Some people are deeply moved, whereas others think I am one sandwich short of a picnic. It’s up to them what they think. I see myself as the messenger. I never asked to be able to see what I see, but it happens all the same.