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—THE—

Weekly Discourse;

CONTAINING

SPIRITUAL SERMONS

BY THE GUIDES OF

Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond.



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THE NEW YEAR
OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH;
ITS PROMISE TO THE WORLD.

DELIVERED AT CHICAGO, SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 1888.

INVOCATION.

God of the universe; Thou Who art the future, present and past, to whom there is nothing old and nothing new, yet Who hast from the creation formed the ancient splendor of spheres, fashioned the suns in these places, and placed angels beside the gateways of life to herald the dawn of the new mornings; Thou who hast given unto man time, and change, and seasons for his benefit on earth, but hast summoned him, also, with the voice of the spirit, unto that innermost altar where there is neither time, nor change, nor seasons, but only the light of love forever, only the blessedness of Thy truth. O God, may these, Thy children, on the very threshold of the new year of time, perceive how all things past, being dead, having filled their uses, have sunk into oblivion; but that which is imperishable, the living thought, the living love, the abiding truth, the fervent spirit of all charity, that which forever strengthens and uplifts man from the darkness unto the light, this is forever new; all glorious. In the morning of promise may Thy children look forward to the fuller day. Even as the brightness of this glorious day makes the earth to glisten as with the jewels of the heavenly kingdom, so when sorrow, and striving, and bitterness have ceased may the bright sunshine of Thy love illumine the human heart with immortal treasures, with the glittering jewels of truth, and love, and purity divine. May every heart begin a new life, may the dead past bury

its dead; and from the living shrine of that new kingdom, whose dawn is already here, may each one with quickened purpose, and divine vows turn unto the Spirit of all truth, and love, and dedicate their lives anew to that which is highest and best within the soul forever. Amen.

DISCOURSE.

We are here: "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."—Luke iv, 19.

We are here to announce the new and acceptable year of Love: the new and wonderful Year of Fulfillment.

When there is preparation for the dawn, ere yet the light has appeared, there seems a hush upon the earth, a deeper shadow than in the night; presently the lines appear, grey and tremulous, along the eastern horizon, and faint glimmerings, until at last the rays shoot upward, and there is long waiting,—such waiting as the mourner feels when beside the body of one best beloved they wait for the daylight to come, or as a mother in anxious watchfulness feels when she broods above her babe, wondering what light will dawn upon the fair face, whether it shall be the light of the earthly morning or the light of eternity; such longing as one feels in a dreary waste who has been overtaken by the night and sought refuge beside a sheltering rock, or in a clump or thicket and has heard the roaring of wild beasts, and has not known which way led toward a refuge; such longing as the mariner feels when, tempest tossed, with storm-clouds above, he may not behold that guiding star that usually lights him on his course, with aching and anxious heart he waits for the dawn to see whether his barque has drifted; or such as one feels immured in a dungeon cell, whom the hand of king or tyrant had shut out from the light, yet he knows that possibly the day dawn may set him free, when a faint streak of light comes trembling in through a narrow crevice in his cell indicating to him that the day may be dawning: such tremblings hath the earth felt in anticipation of the new dawn; such have been the watchers, such the anxious longings.—When suddenly as the day is about appear the note of a solitary bird is heard in the thicket, then another and another follow, until at last the whole air is vocal, every thing that has animate life gives forth one shout of gladness: it is day.

When a new year of time approaches, men, after the manner of their kind, and those who are vigilant, in some sort clothe it with a sentiment of new life: there is acclaim, and firing of cannons, and loud rejoicing; as though one year of time could differ from another year of time. The calendar is relentless; it indicates the earth's position, the days are the same whether it be one year or another; but through some sentiment with which man is clothed, at the changing of the calendar, the beginning of a new year of secular affairs, there is something to indicate, also, another beginning; new vows are made to sobriety, chastity, virtue, and purity; new pledges are given; hearts that have been alienated turn again toward each other; with the new year may be new beginnings of friendship, or of love, all scores are wiped out. There was a time under especial privileges when between the old and the new year, if one could stand on a sacred place or

altar. all indebtedness was forgiven. The wisest sovereigns have pardoned their criminals to make new beginnings on the new day of the year, to try again for that which is highest and best. In some sort there is a sentiment in the world that all old scores and indebtedness should in some measure be wiped out, wiped out with resolutions, wiped out with better promises, perhaps. But alas, new years and new years have come on earth, and after the fashion of men they have yielded little, save the same turmoil and care, the same sorrow which will not be lifted, the same poverty which will not depart, the same hunger which will gnaw away at the body, the same desolation which will cause famine and fainting spiritually; but the deeper longings of earth are realities. That which man thinks ought to be true, in the highest sense is true; that which the heart aspires to, is, in the highest sense a prophecy and a fulfillment: and every longing, even though imperfectly expressed in time and sense, must be a portion of the spiritual possessions, so that it be free from selfishness, free from worldliness.

In this manner the sounds that usher in the New year of Spiritual Truth, could you but hear them, would drown the clanging of earthly bells, and the blowing of earthly whistles, and the sounding of earthly weapons, and all the acclaim which you hear along the streets; these would seem but as a whisper compared to the mighty sound of the advent of the New Year of Spiritual Truth.

The first faint whisperings of the loved one's voice: the sounds that reach the outer ear proclaiming the knowledge of the spiritual life, messages from the dearly loved ones who had cast aside the habiliments of the earth, and arrayed in spiritual light were waiting to give their messages; then greater joys and the sounding of gladness in more human hearts, the casting aside of sorrow, the death knell no longer sounding, but the joy bells within the spirit.

You have each experienced this; if from the night time of grief and sorrow, from the great dead winter of despair, you have been summoned by the first faint sound of the knowledge of immortal life; the possibility of it; the knowledge that your loved ones live, that all the tears were dried in the one great flame of conscious being, and of love and memory hereafter. Ye have mourned and your tears have been wiped away; ye have stood by the tombs and sepulchers and have heard above them the voices of your loved ones, and in the quiet hours of communion have felt and known the voice and consciousness of their sacred communion. You who have perceived the trembling lines of light along the sky understand its import and are aware of its promise to the world.

This sacred message has not been a mere term of selfishness, but a promise to all the world: that your joy might also be the joy of mankind, that that which to you is a living voice might become a living voice unto others; that that which to you is testimony of life immortal is given unto every child of earth, if he or she will receive it; and that the day which is here is a day of gladness and peace, and love, and truth, and kindness, if the world will only open the eyes of the spirit to see. Alas for the blind! Yet those who do see can teach the blind to read, for the golden letters of immortal life are raised letters, with another sense than sight they may be perceived; you may assist them to know the day of gladness. There are those who are deaf to this voice, but you who do hear can declare it unto them, can make them see it in your countenances, in your lives; and

make them understand its presence; that the voice that is in the world is a living voice, that the day which is here is not the night, that the spring time which is here is no winter of desolation, and that the new year is always a new year of gladness to those who turn unto the light of the spirit.

Know that it is the outward day, and hour, for a new beginning; bury your dead; your dead hopes that were not worth the living if they are dead; and if they are not dead let them by some rare transmutation become a portion of the life that is to be fulfilled in you by its realization unto mankind. The dead love, for love that can die is not worth saving, if it be love it is immortal, outliving the tomb, the change of death, and all material things, then let it live; but if the shadow which you think love has perished, let it sink into the dust and be a portion of the great death that is around. Let your dead die. If you have mourned over friends who have been caught up into the light of the upper air, let that mourning cease, for no one can mourn when joy is upon them: there is no place in all the kingdom of life for that which men call death; let your dead die, but the living be a portion of your daily thought, walking by your side, participating in your actions and deeds, and so make your lives free from stain that they may walk by your side though the shadow of earthliness is between you and them.

As the trumpet sounds when the morning is fully here; as over sea and land the glad acclaim is heard of the new year, let the sounding trumpet of the Archangel of the new life be heard if you have not heard it. Louder than the roar of cannon in battle when hate wages war with hate; louder than the clanging of bells when earthly kings are enthroned or when they are dead; louder than the sound which urges men on to battle; louder than that voice in all the world which summons men unto the shrine of outward devotion, is the sound within the soul of this Angel. The summoning Angel hath been heard, for whatever was insufficient in each life has been put to the test; you have struggled with it; between conscience and duty; between the voice of truth and the voice of error; between Mammon and God; you have each had your battle of some sort and one or the other has won the victory.

The summoning trumpet call of the new year of spiritual truth on earth is here to declare the day, not the promise of it, but the fulfillment of it. Are you ready for its light? Are you ready for the one that appeareth, who summons you unto the highest and best? Are you clothed in the armor of the New Light, is it invulnerable to earthly blame or praise, does this spiritual glory enfold you like a shield and armament of strength? Are you crowned with the helmet of the New Life? Do you declare your light unto all who may wish to know it? Is it set on a hill, or is it placed in the shadow or under the bushel? Do you shine out from your tower, or is your lamp down in the cellar of darkness where Mammon is worshiped, where worldliness bids it turn aside? Do you start, and blush, and turn pale because of the light of the angel world? If so you are not ready. But if with the clear, calm light of truthful eyes you can gaze into the face of mankind and say: I know that life is life eternal, I know that truth is truth eternal, I know that love is love eternal; that there are no dead, save those whom men call the living, then you are ready.

We say: if when falsehood assails you can speak the truth calmly and without feeling yet so that it shall bear its impress upon human life; if when assailed by sorrow, the tears may flow it is true, but the rainbow hues of love and joy shall illumine them from above; if when striving is all around you can be calm, and in the midst of this strife so bear yourself that your light and power shall shine upon others; if in the midst of the greatest worldliness you can cling to that truth which is divinest and best, showing mankind that this is more than all other treasures, that you wear it upon your heart, that you bear it in your lives, that it is your daily and hourly attestation, then you are ready for the New light. If you can say to kings enthroned, to tyrants in their places, I believe in freedom, justice, and the all-conquering power of truth; if you can say to those who combine to serve Mammon, I believe in humanity; if you can lay upon the altar of daily life such words and actions as shall teach mankind the way of brotherly love, to turn aside from the pursuit of selfishness to aid his fellow man, if there is one who falls by the wayside to aid him to rise instead of trampling him beneath his feet, if even he who has been your enemy, or whom you thought was your enemy, shall be found in sorrow, you turn to aid him assisting him to rise, then you are ready. And if as the summoning voice comes forth unto the world, in such quiet ways as daily life appoints, this truth shall be so uppermost in your lives that in every moment of thought, in every word that is spoken, in every deed that is performed, you shall honor it, wear it as your crown and as your shield, then indeed you are ready.

There are those who are not ready: the summoning Angel finds them in the high places of earth, they wait there in their exalted tombs and sepulchres which are named thrones and kingdoms, until such sound as shall bid them come forth. The shock which dethrones tyrants sets slaves free: and the earthquake's yawning mouth that swallows up cities and kingdoms, gives new verdure to the living forests, new life to imprisoned germs. Down from the mountain sides will sweep the springtime torrents when the flood sets them free and the ice-bound fetters are broken, but the birds' will carrol in the branches of the trees; from this great avalanche the streams and freshets of life that give nourishment to the world upspring. The summoning power is not responsible for the shadow and darkness, but such as are ready and have the light are summoned to come forth.

On the highest altar, up there on the height where men may see it, if they will, plant ye the standard of your truth: make its banner, white as the whiteness of God's love, make its flaming words those of immortality, and unto that shrine bid all the nations of the earth to come that are outcast, downtrodden, despised, desolate, and condemned of man: bid kings come if they will, for the burdens of a crown are heavy to bear, uneasy is he who has the weight of a kingdom and its tyrannies upon him; bid rulers to come if they will, for such light is there in immortal whiteness that even the shadows in which they move, the bloodstained pathways by which they have attained that height must be in some way touched and tinted by it; bid those whose hands are stained with crime to come if they will, for there is such whiteness in truth, such absolute strength in love that even bloodstains can be wiped away, the hatred that is in human hearts can be melted

into love; bid those to come who are in the shadow of despair, who, trembling beneath the iron heel of Mammon, find no respite for their sorrow, no refuge from their grief, who in the great drove of human want and pain desolate the earth with their cries, not knowing the light that is above, bid them know that the earth is theirs so that they shall find the way to its possession, but bid them know that its possession shall not come either through passion or violence, but by such light and truth as shall set men free, such knowledge as shall release them from the thralldom of error, such loving kindness as shall melt away every barrier between them and their fellow men; bid those to come who mourn because of death, tell them that there is so much greater death in earthly life that those who have cast aside the garment of clay are a thousand times alive, and that death has no resting place save in the human mind and heart, where it builds its charnal houses and places its sentinels of fear; bid them listen to the voices that are in the upper air and know that the life that is valuable in time is eternal; bid all to come who are weary, let them lay their burdens before this shrine, let them be comforted by the Angel that is there. Come with your vows, those that are breathed unto your own souls, vows for conquest over self; no need to make vows for conquering worlds, let the victory be over selfishness and the conquest is complete; come with new resolves, new aspirations, new powers, let the hands fulfill what the spirit vows, and behold the New Life is here.

In unexpected places, in times and seasons not before looked for, the New spiritual light will break forth; among the exalted; among the canonized; among the unsanctified; among the worldly; among the righteous; kings will feel its presence; the lowliest will hear its voice: there will be a great uprising of the spiritual wave upon the earth. It is like the tidal wave that has been the accumulation of many tides of many months, until, in the fullness of its time, that shall be fulfilled which has been promised unto many; that shall be fulfilled which has not been promised but which has been foreseen. The fulfillment among nations will be what they have sown: it will be a year of harvest for the nations who have sown in strife and blood; but among those who have sought for peace. who have sown in love and truth, it will be a harvest of peace and love; those who have sown in the spirit will reap of the harvest of the spirit, the golden sheaves will hang fair and bright for them, and purple clusters upon many vines. Those unto whom the promise of the spirit has come in the household will find the added light of an over-brooding presence, more near the voice that speaketh unto them, and more manifest the power of the spirit; for it is the year of fulfillment, the glad and gracious new year of the Lord. And thus, if nations must reap what they have sown. it is only that from the ashes of their desolation and the cause of Mammon perishing, the New Life shall find room in the world.

All hail to the dawn of the New Year! All hail to the voice of the summoning Angel who hath arraigned you before the shrine; hath given you the word of promise; all hail to its fulfillment in your lives, in silence it may be wrought but no life can work so silently for good that the highest angel does not see and understand, and there in the presence of that whiteness, your soul finds whatever offering you place upon the altar of the spirit, upon the shrine of the soul. In this New Year of gracious Love all fulfillment is recorded as among the treasures of the skies.

"THE STRUGGLE FOR TRUTH." "THE NEW BORN YEAR."

"THE OLD YEAR OF ERROR, THE NEW OF TRUTH."

[IMPROMPTU POEM: THE THREE SUBJECTS BEING SUGGESTED BY THE AUDIENCE.]

There's always struggle at a birth,—
 It is only death that is quite dead—
 When the new blossoms upspring from earth
 There is struggle and striving instead,
 They burst through the bonds of dull clay
 'Mid conflict with darkness alway.

Old years and old things become dead:
 Not imbued with the spirit of life
 They cumber the ground where you tread;
 To remove them is conflict and strife.

"Don't disturb the old things, the dead,"
 Say the dead ones that would slumber on;
 But we make room for new life instead;
 So it is needful that work be done;
 We'd remove the debris from the soil,
 The things that e'en earth would despoil.

"Don't disturb the old errors," they say,
 "It makes strife and turmoil on earth;"
 If errors are determined to stay,
 Let them stay: new germs that have birth
 Will burst forth despite the old wrong,
 The young growth always becomes most strong.

We have seen the dead leaves on the boughs
 Even after the winter time was gone,
 But when spring came, with awakened vows,
 How long were the dead leaves left alone?
 Bursting forth from the might of the tree
 The young leaves crowded off the old;
 The new things of the life to be
 Must crowd out the dead things untold:

The husks, shadows, and darkness of earth
 Must give way for the light that is here;
 'Tis a struggle always to have birth,
 But worth while when the life is once here.
 Yes let the old errors be dead;
 No darkness or gloom is too deep;
 Shut them out of your lives; instead
 Let in the new birth, its glory keep.

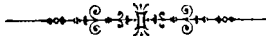
Struggle: every young life that grows,
 Does not grow without struggle and pain;
 No light on the mountain tops e'er glows
 But if ye would find it again
 Ye must climb up unto the height
 By weariness, shadow and night.

Struggle; but strive not, for all strife
 Is born of error and of night;
 But struggle is renewal of life,
 Is conquest and victory; the height
 Over self where all struggle must be
 Till the light of the new growth is attained;
 And the new year of truth sets man free
 After all that their errors have pained.

Yes as from chaos the orb'd sun
 By struggle and law came into birth.
 And as from the soul the song begun,
 Of glory and power hath its birth.
 So struggle upward through the gloom;
 Through the error of earth's night arise;
 Cast off the shadows of the tomb
 And know the New Year of the skies.

BENEDICTION.

Blessings from the new life, and from the new resolves, the new hopes, the new promises, the new fulfillment of the Year of Truth divine. Amen.



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