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# THE PATHWAY OF ANGELS.

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A LECTURE

BY

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DELIVERED THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF

MRS. CORA L. V. RICHMOND,

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## TO THE READER.

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THIS discourse, including poem (and all similar ones), was delivered impromptu, without notes, or previous preparation of any kind on the part of the speaker, or medium, whose name is attached thereto. The medium is the instrument or atmosphere of communication for disembodied intelligences acting on the brain and inspiring the thoughts therein expressed.

## THE PATHWAY OF ANGELS.

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INVOCATION.

OH, thou omnipotent, infinite Soul, thou divine Parent, thou Light and Life ineffable, we turn to thee as to an infinite splendor, as to the sublime centre of the spiritual firmament, as to the circumference of the universe. Thou infinite, all-wise, beneficent Being, whom men call God, and whose manifold ways and divine interpretations are myriad, thou art named in every name of the flower; thou art named in every name of the blades of grass and creeping things; thou art named in the wing of bird and in the song thereof; thou art named in the weeping forest, and in the wondrous power of winds and rains; thou art named in the mountain and in the ocean, the desert vast and the broadened plain; the valleys proclaim thee, and the sparkling streams are filled with life and light because of thee; the stars marching up the firmament keep time to the great beating of thy heart and proclaim the voice of thy presence, and suns and systems move on forever responsive to thy breath and fraught with thy life. The infinite purpose of thy being is manifest everywhere; men and spirits and angels bend and bow before its sublime mandate; life and death are but as breath in thy sight, all things fleeting and changeful, save alone the spirit that abides forever; the kingdoms of the earth and all time are but as toys compared to thy firmament and thy kingdom, and all that man aspires to is but the beginning, the infancy of that eternity which is with thee. Oh, thou that hast caused the firmament of the stars to be in their places; thou who abidest in every living thing and art in the breath of human life; whose thought and inspiration, poured upon the world, make man the palpable instrument of thy voice, fill the soul from the fountains of ineffable glory

and transfigure the dust to sublime and lofty thought — be thou present among us; let thy life and light shine in human thought and deed; let the ways and works of the world be transformed to those of spiritual beauty; and let man learn the pathway to the heavenly kingdom by treading that of duty and of godliness and of righteousness and of loving-kindness below. So shall thy ways become the ways of men, and so shall thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

#### THE LECTURE.

Along the starry pathway which this night is visible to the inhabitants of earth, — the stellar walk that makes beautiful the suggestion of angelic life, — multitudes of stars grouped in constellations and ranged in solar systems like yours are found. Thousands and millions of years before the earth was fashioned, before the solar system had being, of which your earth forms a portion, that pathway was complete, those constellations were moving in their courses, and the systems and planets performing their revolutions round mighty centres of external light and life.

Man, the offspring of the dust and the spirit, abiding in human form upon the earthly planet, vainly imagines what kind of life may abide there; what those turning and belted worlds may contain; what wonders of earth and air and sky and angelic realm may abide in those vast constellations; whether the depths are filled with *nebulae* of worlds yet unformed, or whether the soul-life in those and in still more remote systems pulsates with higher manhood; whether the angelic powers are more abundant; whether life yields a greater fruitage of intelligence, so feeble is man on earth, so mighty is the universe above and around him, so vast the eternity into which he is plunged, so majestic the laws that control and govern the whole — man set in the centre of a mighty universe filled with life, pulsating with planets and systems, some afar off, others more near, all suggesting life, without the capacity to know whereof that life may exist or where it may be found.

With glimmerings of light from within, man, not born of the dust but of the immortal part; with gropings through scientific pathways and external observations of the senses —

man perceives but dimly the thought that lies in the innermost of the heavenly kingdoms. To him the outward temple of clay, to him the surroundings of time and sense, to him the syllables of scientific knowledge which form but the infant prattlings of his mind compared to the thought of truth that abides in the angelic soul—all of these surround him, and still he is in the dark. What though he knows whereof the groupings of atoms are composed? These are but terms—the postponing of the final solution of life until the better moment. What though he contemplates and measures the distances between planets and systems? These are but mathematical figures, the results of his outward brain, while all is void twixt him and those worlds, and the worlds themselves are voiceless, lifeless, without meaning! What though he portray with perfect accuracy and wonderful skill the evolution of planets and the unfolding of generic life upon the earth? Beyond that his thought does not reach; his scientific knowledge may not cope with the spiritual kingdom; he is still in the dark; and against the utter, bare, void and barrenness of material life he finds himself precipitated, unless the light from within, the celestial glory of inspiration and the promise of his soul, has told him of better things.

No age has been left voiceless; the spirit of prophecy and of inspiration have existed for them. The Word of God in the mouth of his prophets and those who have been inspired has lived in every age, speaks in every human heart, and may be audible to every human understanding. That Word properly interpreted not only gives knowledge of man's material and spiritual life on earth, but knowledge of all those wonderful laws that lie veiled from materialism, and that science can never expect to probe, and that human philosophy can never hope to fathom; only by the immeasurable power of spirit, only by the faculties of the soul, only by that perception which links man with the Infinite, can these heights be scaled and this space be bridged by the consciousness of thought and knowledge.

As an archway of light is fashioned of the rays that fall upon the clouds arising from earth, so an archway of spiritual splendor is formed of those thoughts that are broken to your understanding from the spiritual realm, falling on the external world so that they are visible to your vision. This

is the bow of promise, and the literal rainbow in the heavens (which was but the symbol)—but the spiritual archway fashioned of the reflection of spiritual light, and forming its glory in the clouds of earth, the clouds of sorrow, pain, experiences that bring consciousness of spiritual life and existence here. Through the long vista of past time, through the numberless ages that it has taken to form the world, to fit it for the habitation of man and to make man understand somewhat of the external relations to external life, these glimmerings of spiritual life and truth have been made known, but veiled in the ancient prophecies. Modern interpretation refuses to recognize them, and upon the crown which Christ wore, traced in glorious letters, modern infidelity casts the blemish of its doubt and stain, while the lustre of spiritual life gleams brightly from beyond.

When, without aid of astronomy, you still contemplate the vastness of the material universe, has the thought ever suggested itself to your mind that each of those numberless worlds, each of those millions of systems, presents also a spiritual sun, and that the external is but the visible expression of which the spiritual is life and light and existence? and that each one of those numberless systems filling the firmament above and around may be peopled by sentient beings, having desires, aspirations, immortalities like yours, and all endowed with some attributes that relate them to the worlds in which they move, and the firmament beyond, and the spiritual kingdom that is the innermost of all? Has it ever occurred to you that this earth, in itself, like a bird of passage, or like some barge that drives the spirit for a time into some new harbor, is but a resting-place, and that the soul itself, immortal in its flight as in its heritage, endowed with knowledge and with power and with purpose, must explore every world, must understand the relations of every star, must be linked with planets innumerable, that all forms and shades of life and experience may be pictured and fashioned into thought, and make up a portion of its immortal being? Has it also never occurred that the spiritual states surrounding each planet move, govern, act upon and guide the destinies of those planets, and that the spiritual and celestial kingdoms above and around them breathe through their attributes, waken thoughts of life, experiments of being, pulsations of existence, mathematical and

mechanical rules and powers, until the planets themselves are redeemed and perfected by the very outgrowth of these souls?

Has it never occurred to you that the noxious things upon earth, the creeping things, the venomous things, those that are unwieldy and unseemly, are but the typical representations of the conditions of mind and thought here; and that when there shall be no more envies nor strivings, no more wars nor discord, no more slanders nor venomous stings, there will be no need of serpents, no need of poisonous insects, no need of poisonous plants?—that the outward is but the typical representation of the inward? and that the spirit of all life flowing through matter represents the mental state of man in connection with matter, and of spirit moving upon man, until finally he works out his redemption through these means? And has it not also occurred to you that through the glimpses of spiritual life that you have obtained, these pathways and experiences, numberless in their nature, must continue from world to world and star to star, and that spiritual life does not abide simply in *esse*, within itself, as an essence and as a life, but that spirit continues to exercise its power and its thought upon matter, until, through all those changes of existence, every possible phase of expression is given to the dust, and the atom is transformed and transfigured into every variety of shade, because man is eternal? And has it not also occurred that in those thoughts and lives that shall be multiplied innumerable, the angelic states also increase in power and glory, until every planet, having its own angelic state, represents a degree higher and higher? All are but as a starry pathway to the Infinite Soul,—the source of being; that as a spiral stairway ascends and revolves, as suns and systems move round their centres, but also move through space round other and more distant centres, so all souls are interblent and interlinked by those wondrous cords of life that upon one planet and another unite, bind and link them together, until they become as those wonderful beings for whom there is no name upon earth, and no language to portray.

It is a mistake which most minds make—the feebleness of the earthly contemplation causes this—that life on earth is measured by, say the three score years and ten; and spirit-life is measured by a few hundred or thousand years. Be-

yond this the thought of eternity has not dared to grasp; and the mind of the average human being can no more contemplate the unending nature of eternity, than a child can contemplate the distance between the earth and sun, or between the sun and the remotest planet that you perceive with your material senses. But when the magnitude of this problem is unfolded to the spirit, when the consciousness of it takes even an approximate possession of the mind, then how small and vain become the daily cares and usages of life, save that they but serve the purposes of the spirit in one portion of its immortal existence.

You are traveling an endless journey; you pause a moment by the wayside for refreshment, or to perform a needful act: that pausing has nothing to do in the performance of your journey; the ultimate is in view. But in the wayside of human life, where you are pausing, laboring for a time, one would think that this was the beginning and the end, and likewise the journey—that all hopes and aspirations were centered here, and that the immortal pilgrimage was to be left out of the question, or only considered as secondary to that which lies veiled in the material senses.

When the awakening of the spirit comes; when the celestial light finally beams upon your eye; when there is a dawning of the fact that angelic existence constitutes the eternal pilgrimage of the soul, and that the terrestrial, spiritual nature, and that which links man to earth by his terrestrial appetite, is but the transient and the fleeting, and that this transient and fleeting existence is but as you would take on an armor to descend into the sea, or take on the raiment of a climate to protect you from the atmosphere—that thus do you take on the outward habitation that you may the more enter into, become a part of, and form an experience upon, the earth—how great then will life become! how majestic its final purpose! how vast the wonders that infold it! how beautiful its solemn import!

The diver in the ocean's depths lives there only for the treasure that he shall find; while from the atmosphere above, through the tube that communicates, he is encouraged and sustained to gather the treasure for which he has descended. So man, in the outward life immured, wears around himself the armor that shall protect him from the external forces, the organic body, formed of the same elements with which



he has to contend, and therefore a protection; while from the upper air all of the breath, all of the encouragement, all of the vitalizing life, must come to him while he is searching here for the one treasure of knowledge, for the one treasure of truth, for the one treasure of human experience that shall be a portion of his immortal kingdom.

Beautiful as this contemplation is in connection with earth, varied as its suggestions are, how vast does the multitude of thoughts become when viewed in connection with the infinite life, the eternal being! World upon world, star upon star, the approaching light of which is yet unknown to you and unperceived, standing now upon the outermost brink of life, bordering now upon blindness and lack of consciousness, as man is, how shall he enter step by step into that vast and wonderful arena of existence of which the worlds themselves are but the substance, and planets are but the external structure? of which systems are but portions of the outward fabric, while the life itself is intricately interwoven in sublime archways, in pillars, in wonderful and gleaming figures of spiritual life? Not light of planets nor the sun's rays nor beaming of myriads of moons shall deck his pathway; not the glory of the earth and stars, nor the splendor of the firmament, lighted by these sublime centres,—but the life that glows from within, the luminous power of the soul itself, piercing the dust and making all the clay of all the worlds glorious by its presence; not the sublime mechanism that fades away and crumbles in the ashes of temple and pyramid, but the wonderful structure of thought that each outward experience brings, that each planet reveals to the soul, that each new life of angelic existence unfolds to the thought of man; an eternity of experience, an eternity of knowledge, angels made angels thousands of times, and the thought of that knowledge unfolding more and more before the vision.

You look upon the angel-life to-day as a far-off dream, as an inheritance doubtful, as a speculation, perchance, and the spirits of the terrestrial grade grasp feebly at the contemplation of the wonders here portrayed; but by long series of tribulations, by experiences without number, they pass up and beyond and through the outward atmosphere into the clear light of the celestial kingdom, bearing with them only the lesson which their experience gives, and only such

memories as will clothe the thought and the spirit forever in the divine garment of love.

The angels abide forever in perfect love; but there is no outward tie, there is no bond of any of the outward worlds; none of the outward states enter into the contemplation of those sublime thoughts which form their knowledge, for the ties of earth are broken, and all has become but as portions of the external experience. But whatsoever soul on any planet or in any state of life — whatsoever thought has linked them with any other soul, shall abide forever, growing brighter and brighter as time fades and eternity becomes more and more apparent, as the revolution of the spirit takes the place of the external, as the soul is transformed from the dust and becomes immortal. In the sublime vision of the Apocalypse, John would have worshiped the angel who revealed him the wonders of the new kingdom; he had not dreamed of the Infinite God, more radiant than their brightness; he had not known of the Infinite Being, more white than the whiteness of their raiment. Yet these were but of his brethren, the prophets, who forbade him to worship them, but said, "Worship God." As the angels in that vision were only representing the higher states of spiritual life, so these would grow dull and dim beside those angels not having converse with earth who abide in far diviner and more celestial habitations, and whose life is utterly devoid of all that sensation gives, or all that the outward nature can portray.

Why do I speak to you of these things? Why do I bring these visions before your minds, if you cannot understand them, you may ask? Because even a glimmering of the light beyond illumines the dungeon in which the prisoner is confined, and the glimpse of this glory which I portray, and the thought that leads to it, illumines the narrow vault of mind in which the spirit is immured on earth; and just so much of its brightness as shall penetrate through that outward clay, will add to the radiance and splendor of the earthly sphere in which you move, will make the world more beautiful, will make more flowers blossom in the spring-time, and cause the earth itself to be more glad. Why do I tell you of these things? Because even an effort at their contemplation will uplift the spirit from the petty turmoil and the groveling care of dull life, from the tread-

mill of external existence, and the contemplation of those divine treasures that belong to the spirit only; because it will make the burden of life more easy to be borne; make knowledge more easy of attainment; will lead you to understand fully that which is important; to select from life's experiences that which is valuable; to cast aside that which is burdensome and a trammel to the spirit; and to choose that which shall lead most directly to a thorough knowledge of the purpose for which man is here on earth.

If I tell you that science is not valuable to the attainment of these things, it is not because I would have you neglect science; but it is because I would have you use it only as the stepping-stone for higher things. If I tell you that material life itself is not eternal, nor that this fabric which you inhabit to-day shall abide forever, it is not that you may neglect it, but that while you remain in it you shall make the most of your opportunities for knowledge which it will give you of the things that are enduring, for the use that you can employ it in, in making possible a contemplation of these loftier spiritual things. If I speak to you of the nature of the human understanding as being valueless to the contemplation of spiritual things, it is because I would have you cultivate the spiritual understanding, and use the external for outward purposes only, while the spiritual shall pervade and permeate for works and words of the spiritual. If I tell you that the earthly life is not even as a second of time compared to eternity, it is not that you shall neglect that second of passing time, but that you shall employ it for the very best purpose and highest end; that as you would gather the dewdrop on the flower before the sun's rays absorb it, or as, in the fleeting moment of prayer or love, you would grasp a treasure ere it evades you, so I would have you gather from each moment its own fruitage for eternity, its own treasure for the immortal kingdom, its own essential spirit of life and light and loveliness.

The days and hours of earthly existence go by; they weave themselves into years; and man, in idle dreaming or useless contention, mourns because they pass away so soon, while every hour is freighted with an eternal promise, and every moment is filled to overflowing with the golden drop of eternal life that falls like beaded dew upon the flower of human life. You will not grasp nor gather, because you

say it is only a drop of dew; but of such is the nectar composed that finally illumines the spirit and awakens it to immortal consciousness; of such is the life composed that finally, strung together, makes up the golden chain of existence; of such passing moments and hours, and the fullness of spiritual life which they may bring, is that eternity fashioned of which I am speaking; and the archangel might pause to behold one perfect moment of human life, when the soul forgets the outward self and is only conscious of eternity for truth's own sake.

I have seen by the very gateway of human life, an angel pause and hover on attendant thought, and seen that angel's face grow luminous and glorious with the contemplation of a scene on earth. Was it of a crowned king? Was it of the splendor of a material pageant? Was it of the glory and transport of wealth, ambition, warfare? Was it an outward adornment that men can bring? Was it tribute to intellectual greatness and power? Was it outward beauty? None of these. It was that upon the earth the Angel of Love had touched some human heart to self-forgetfulness, and for the time being there was only rapture between earth and heaven. It was that some brow of saint, or some lofty, heroic soul had been sunk to self-forgetfulness in redress of human wrong, had touched the breath of angels with their tongue, growing eloquent not for themselves but for mankind. It was when martyred souls, unconscious of flame and fire, have breathed out their prayers of forgiveness to humanity, while the brow was leaning against the hand of God and touched by angel pinions. It was when, forgetting the outward bond of flesh and the tie of maternal affection, some earthly parent had yielded up the treasure of life to the immortal kingdom without a murmur save, "Thy will be done." It was as when on Calvary, Christ, forgetful of himself and compassionate only for those who had done this great injustice, could show twixt them and God the divine spirit of forgiveness, and ask that it be not remembered against them.

These are the moments, these the golden hours that fill life's chalice and form the stars in the firmament of earthly time. I gather no names from all the ranks of history that shall shine with such splendor; I gather no storied treasures from tomes and volumes of human lore; I gather no

inspiration of this kind from that power which ambition has given, nor from the pathway of human kings; but from exalted souls made eloquent by consciousness of love, from that purpose which illumines and uplifts, I see many stars that have risen above the night of time, grown glorious in their light and passed to the constellations of eternity.

Even thus would I have your days and moments numbered; even thus would I have your aspirations filled, until life's chalice shall not be void and vacant as now, or filled with bitter ashes and the burnt tokens of regrets—filled with memories that have faded, and passing hopes that were fleeting as an outward vision—but filled with life-giving dews and sacred memories and lofty hopes, each one an eternity, each one enjoyed in a moment of time.

Oh, sublime abnegation! oh, wonderful lesson of the Christ-man, descending to tell man not to save himself, but to cease to love himself in loving others; lofty vision of angel-life that bursts the bonds of the outward flesh, tears asunder the selfishness, the pride, the ambition, that humbles the king upon his throne, and exalts the peasant by the wayside, in the contemplation of unselfish faith and hope and love!

Of such glimpses is the immortal heritage composed, and of such I would have you add day by day and hour by hour to these sublime and lofty thoughts.

The pathway of angels is not fashioned by those things that men most worship and adore; is not won as the pathway to fame is, by outward conquest, or the pathway to intellectual power, by triumphs over terms and technicalities of earth; is not won in any visible way of outward warfare when man takes on the armor and goes forth to fight a given foe,—but is won by those gentle and silent droppings, the wearing and the tearing of daily life, the perpetual grinding of the mills of the gods that grind away the dust and leave the angel clear and pure. As the lapidary from the rough stone hews the sparkling gem; as out of toil and pain and agony of summer growth comes forth the burnished lily and the blooming rose; as from struggling ages the fruit-tree yields its heritage to the world, and the purple vine crowns the hills because of the throes of pain which the earth has endured,—so is man outwrought, so is the angel born, so is the daily life the test of the state within; and man does not

leap from imperfection in human life to the crown of angelhood in one moment, nor by a single breath or grade. That faith which makes angels, is the faith also that crowns life with perfect deeds; that faith which fits you for the pathway of the stars and makes the stellar walk but seem as a flowery gateway to the eternal kingdom, is not the pathway of single victory over belief, but of the daily and hourly thought—the conquest over the thought of self, the conquest over any wish for self, the conquest over the daily and hourly walk, the desire, the ambition, the appetite, the passion—all, all vanquished, and the spirit awakened triumphant and freed because of this; triumphant, yet filled with humility, free, but unconscious in that as is the lily in its whiteness, or of the rose in its fragrance, or the star in its shining glory.

Oh, these are the things that, flashing from the abode of angel-life, make human thought possible in harmony with heaven, and make the attributes of man such as shall yield him the immortal kingdom! Into the burning chalice of your lives, into the daily hours of existence, you pour your offerings; how much of these shall be saved? How many drops of heavenly dew are distilled therein? How many gems worth the saving when the crucial fires shall be applied? Does the end seem bitterness, the fruitage dust, and the result barren? Then let the life be fruitful, and the spirit more in accord. Do you measure at the end of the day the thoughts and deeds and feelings and aspirations for time or for eternity? Do you sum up the year for existence on earth or in the heavenly state? And when the summing up is made, and when the treasures are counted, so much for the earth, which is dust, and nothing for the spirit, which is forever, how shall life's urn seem barren, and the chalice of the spirit, how void and drear! But if thus much of human life has been won; if thus much of human affection has been gained; if thus much of the immortal spirit has won victory over any single thought or wish that was of self or of the external merely—then that is a day to be treasured, and in the coming time you shall not be voiceless nor without refreshment.

But, oh! as the soul passes on, as triumph after triumph is gained, it is not of the victory, but of the spirit that accompanies it, of the light that it possesses, of the very joy and blessedness of doing and being that which is highest and best—this is the crown and this the glory; and I see those

angels in that pathway who have come up through great tribulation, who have crowns of light upon their foreheads, who have their raiment washed white, who are made clean. And I see multitudes and multitudes whom no man can number; and these are those souls who, speaking from that light, could reveal to you that not by any given day nor hour of prayer, nor any set time of fasting, nor any voice of human praise, but by all the conquest, the patience, the struggling, the prayer, by the daily and hourly reaching after the immortal life, has this been won; and in that light and in that pathway the air grows luminous, and the voice of the spirit grows hushed; there is a silence that is audible, and soul speaks to soul with the divine affection of the spirit, and the breathing is as the light of God, and his life poured in through every vein; and the raiment is as their thought, white and pure, and they are unconscious of their brightness, standing arrayed in such glory that they are unaware of its existence, and are only seeking for new knowledge and greater goodness and loftier power.

Oh, sublime life! oh, pathway of angelic beings! oh, glorious light, to be attained and traversed! Let these souls have a glimpse of that divine and perfect kingdom; also strive that every day shall bring them nearer and nearer to that kingdom!

A human spirit dower'd with human breath,  
Repined when mortal anguish came, and death,  
And said: "Of all the bright and glorious things  
That life-blood warm, is best that conqu'ring brings  
Us back again into the heavenly day.  
I would stand free from all this cumb'ring clay,  
And be as one of those, even as the sun,  
Arrayed in splendor and with shining light,  
Stand close beside the meek and lowly one,  
Around my form the raiment pure and white."

Another patient toiler by the way,  
Said: "But at first I would learn how to pray;  
I would learn how to bear my lot below  
With patient heart; I would not dare to go  
And stand beside the shining ones above,  
Unless, in some humility, I prove

That I can bear my pathway here, nor shrink  
From pain and sorrow, though the very brink  
Of death and 'wild'ring destiny be nigh."  
And death came, and unto their home on high  
Each spirit sped; the one who longed to wear  
The shining raiment and the crown of gold,  
But to whom earthly sorrow and the mold  
Of outward form had been here hard to bear,  
No crown possessed, nor was the raiment fair;  
"Little by little are the meshes wove,"  
The angel said, "that make the light above."

The one who bowed most patiently to pain,  
Who did not seek that higher life to gain,  
But only sought humility and peace,  
Found, when death came bringing the soul's release.  
That the full wonder of the starlit skies  
Was opened to the pleading, prayerful eyes;  
And even then, in deep humility,  
The spirit said, "Oh, let me ever be  
But one of those who minister to pain;  
Then shall this whiteness bring me joy again."

And so at last the links of love are wrought;  
And so at last the angel way is fraught,  
Not with ambition for the angel light,  
But for the LOVE that makes the spirit white.