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BY MRS. NELLIE J. T. BRIGHAM, BEFORE THE
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NEW YORK, SUNDAY MORNING,
JUNE 20, 1879.

Reported specially for Mind and Matter.

PRAYER.

O, thou spirit of infinite wisdom and purity! weary and despondent as we may be through the disturbing conditions of the earthly life, or disheartened sometimes so we may be striving for seeds of thought where the soil can receive them, we come to Thee for rest, for light, for peace; and we understand and know that we do not and cannot come in vain. When in the smallness of life in the narrow confines of the present; in the small circle of to-day, we become weary or disheartened; or if our lives become disheartened because of what we do not understand, then it is, O Spirit Divine! that prayer brings the Sabbath of the soul; the time of peace, of rest, of meditation, of aspiration. If we are lost in the great forest of life we can climb to some treetop, or hilltop where the trees have been cut away, and then from our height looking out and perceiving our position, can know in what direction to go. So it is, O Father, that prayer is the treetop, the hilltop, the grand lookout mountain of the soul, where we can stand and remember that we are not alone, and that there we appreciate the fact that in all nature the law of Thy goodness and Thy harmonious is at work, and that no human being, however stumbling, blind, or wrong he may be, can ever break the great links of the chain of harmony, or can ever introduce into this world a discord which Thou shalt not sometime melt into harmony. Father, we thank Thee for this knowledge of Thy mercy; for Thy goodness. For we know that in the brief periods of this earthly life Thou dost lead us out of the shadows into the great and golden light that is beyond; and that the raindrops fall into the sea, so Thy thought drops into our nature; Thy wisdom coming not in storm, but drop by drop, as the gentle showers come; and so our souls are refreshed and bleated. We thank Thee that wisdom is not poured out all at one time; and we thank Thee that inspiration is not all poured out upon any one at one time, but that it is poured out from day to day, from year to year, from age to age, as the world can receive, and man can understand it. O, Father, we thank Thee that in this world Thy work is not given to any single one to perform, but that it is divided and that there is something for everyone to do; that no one is so weak, or small, or insignificant, that he has not his work to perform; O Spirit of Infinite Love, we thank Thee that every nation has its work to do, and though it may not be understood to-day, yet, in the light of the coming morning it shall all be made plain. O, Thou who art the music of all the world, teach those who seem to be silent; those whose voices are heavy with their burdens of mourning; to lift themselves into a higher, and more divine melody of usefulness. Now, in this world become free by the truth; teach Thy children to throw aside idleness and to find something to do, however insignificant it may seem, and to do their work with all their might. Oh, Wisdom, give us a clear perception. Oh, Love, give us a pure, persistent, patience, that through the truth divide and conquer. Now, in this world we shall become refreshed and free indeed. Be Thou our inspiration, our Father, our God, and may we, in remembering Thee, find peace and strength for our journey.

DECLINES TO STATE HER "CONTROLLING INFLUENCE."

After the singing by the choir and congregation of the hymn beginning, "Shall we know each other there?" Mrs. Brigham read aloud the themes for discussion which had been handed in from the audience. The first was, "What is the controlling influence that answers the questions to-day?" The methods of mediums and spirits offer, they say, according to the mind of the person acting. Now, in this world of years, it seems that men have been prone to hero worship; they have dwelt in the realm of material things. Just as the olden days when the people had no conception of Deity, they worshipped objects in nature, and these objects were the personation of their God, they not being able to go beyond the average human being, and when they had a great intellect boded more fully, then came the teachings of the old mythology, and men believed in spiritual influences. Later on, these mythological deities passed up as if they would seem, away from human belief and adoration, and now we find them recorded in the stars. Then came the idea of a God; but still, we were not beyond the human realm, and so their God was like a human being, only a little stronger and larger, and possessing anger, jealousy, revenge, suspicion—quite like the average human being. Then came the great idea of God changed a little. But to-day there are few who can go beyond the narrow thought of personality, whose minds can expand until their perception of the Deity touches the realm of Nature and the infinite unlimited spirit, they might say the infinite personality. So you can see the gradual growth of the religious ideas of the world, and you can see how the mind is attached to Deity. If a reformer comes to teach some principle, the people worship him and forget the principle. The world has been outgrown that to-day. There are more people who do not know what Christianity means and yet they would be shocked if we did not say that we believe in the Divinity. So great is their love for these external, that if they are not beyond it. In Spiritualism you find those who cling to the external—more to the principle which comes through it. The dark cloud has taken on its hues of glory and the veil seems to be falling, simply because they have not learned to feel beyond the surface. A name is only a sound. The great poet and medium, who was a medium of the spirit, said, "What is in a name?" We answer, it is a sound—it is a certain influence which works psychologically, oftentimes, until if you can bring the right name, you can sound it aloud, and the people will not open their eyes or ears to hear it, so filled are they with the name. In seeking to control the medium, we simply give an impression of the name, and never touching its merit, not having undue influence, because some great name is used, and not taking into account of which name is more insignificant name may be attached to it. Think how little you know of people here on earth. Sometimes those who pass for the insignificant are really the most important persons in the world. That show no promise of unfoldment—natures that make no mark in your memory—when they pass beyond, blossom into something so pure, so bright, so beautiful that, if it were not for you, you would find it difficult to believe it possible. And there are some persons that you may think are very great; and so we say to you, let it stand upon its own merit; judge of it according to your best understanding; reject it if it is not right; accept it if it seems right. We feel, however, that we hope, that it may stimulate you to reach a greater wisdom than we could find possible or hope to reach. It is not,

friends, that we would hold the position of acknowledged leaders in this matter, but only helpers. For more blessed is the rain that falls upon the flowers and gives them nourishment, than the rain drops have no special name, are not counted so very great, but it is to be that than to be a leader in the world whose greatest influence rests in the magic of sound.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRITUALISM OPPOSED TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

"Is capital punishment in accordance with the philosophy of Spiritualism? Allowing us to expand the philosophy of Spiritualism, as we understand it, capital punishment is not in accordance with the philosophy of Spiritualism. [Murmurs of approval by the audience.] When a person takes the life of his fellow-man, he shows himself unwelcome to be in society. If dying would blot out that nature, then we would decide differently. But one thing Spiritualism proves,—that the soul of a human being, you only change his conditions. Or, if the act of dying would make a sinner a saint, then we would believe in the execution of the murderer. We are told that murderers, before passing out of this world, experience a change of heart—are born again. We believe that in the majority of these cases, where the officiating clergyman has prayed over the poor doomed man, where he has made a confession, either public or private, and a profession of his religious feeling and belief, and has been forgiven, yet he cannot quite believe that he is a sinner, or that he is a murderer. We are called, believe that they will find more murderers in the spirit, than that other people, and yet, according to the law of the spirit, he is a murderer. So they say, a murderer may take the life of an innocent person, and yet if that innocent person has not experienced a change of heart, has not been born again, and has not been forgiven, then the man dies he does not go to heaven. There is one thing more, they say, before anyone can enter heaven, he must be pure. Some friends, however, believe that he is separated from all evil influences, and he is regenerated and born again; and when he dies, according to these religious teachings, he goes to heaven. But Spiritualism teaches that the old idea of heaven and hell are true. The mortal man whose life the murderer took will look up to him, lost to all eternity. Now, where is the justice of such a thing as that? And yet that is what has been preached. But Spiritualism teaches you this: When a person goes out of this world, he leaves behind him a trail of suffering. Morally, intellectually, and spiritually, he is just the same. Now many are sent from your world into the spirit world, and they are sent there for a purpose. Some are sent there to be a blessing to others, and some are sent there to be a warning to others. Here is a brother of ours, we could not get along with him, take him and see what you can make out of him. Is this right, best, when there is room enough in this world for all? And yet that is when you do not need to crowd each other—when you make a cage strong enough to hold men, but cannot make a prison strong enough to hold men or women. And they have put on them a mark of justice. When pardons can be obtained; when men can ride in the parlor, or on the popular stage, which are not earned by noble deeds, then, indeed, you can see that life around you is full of evil. When you ask, "What is the purpose of capital punishment?" What would we suggest? We must remember, friends, that society cannot afford to neglect any part of itself. We must not neglect the poor, the ignorant, the night, wandering through the streets, and again have the temptation to repeat his evil deeds. No. But let men make prisons, and make laws so strong that when the crime has been committed, the criminal comes not out again. Oh, humanity! Spiritualism is yet the sunlight of the heart; it is the rising sun, and its light is the light of the world; it is the light with golden light; yes, it winds its way down through the mountain gorges; its light is for every thing and every one; but most of all, it is the light of the heart. So you would see that our prison places as hospitals for those who are physically afflicted, where they can be aided to that which is better, and helped to a spiritual condition. Just as the olden days when the people had no conception of Deity, they worshipped objects in nature, and these objects were the personation of their God, they not being able to go beyond the average human being, and when they had a great intellect boded more fully, then came the teachings of the old mythology, and men believed in spiritual influences. Later on, these mythological deities passed up as if they would seem, away from human belief and adoration, and now we find them recorded in the stars. Then came the idea of a God; but still, we were not beyond the human realm, and so their God was like a human being, only a little stronger and larger, and possessing anger, jealousy, revenge, suspicion—quite like the average human being. Then came the great idea of God changed a little. 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Letter from Lyman C. Howe.

BINGHAMTON, N. Y., July 1, 1879.

BROTHER ROBERTS: I have received some copies of MIND AND MATTER. They may have come regularly for the past four months, but I was not here during April and May, and found four or five only awaiting my return. I was interested in the paper, and saw it, but only saw the first two papers. You send the paper to me regularly, please send it to Fredonia, Chautauque County, N. Y., where I live. I am only here half the time. I take a vacation now, and return here the first of October. I am to serve at a two days' meeting at Cuba, N. Y., July 15th and 16th. Also have been engaged to serve at the camp-meeting at Cassadaga, Chautauque Co., N. Y., eight miles from my home, commencing August 1st and closing the 15th. You insert what terms? They have authorized me to confer with the press, and assist in getting it noticed, but I have no official connection with the movement. This camp-meeting bids fair to rival the famous resorts in New England, and there is no more delightful locality in the State. This is the first year since these meetings have been held. The speakers already engaged are Mrs. E. L. Watson, of Titusville, Pa., whose name is a living link to the cause; Mrs. Amelia Colby, of St. Louis, a powerful and able speaker; J. Taylor, of Lawton Station, Erie Co., N. Y., a living type of our holy religion; Judge McCormick, of Franklin, Pa., an able and worthy man; and Lyman C. Howe, of Fredonia, N. Y. The camp grounds are located on the line of the Dunkirk and Allegheny Valley Railroad, ten miles south of Dunkirk, N. Y., and about thirty miles north from Titusville, Penna. I find many good things in MIND AND MATTER. It is a very interesting and useful paper. My creed is eclectic and accepts all truth wherever found. I endeavor to avoid all partisan bias, to criticize freely but kindly, and never to judge and condemn upon a single evidence or party bias. I desire to help the good by hindering the bad, and covering it with the light of truth and love. I am especially pleased with your candid expressions on the nature of the present movement. I cannot agree with your idea that "the object of that statute is most proper for the reason: 'That the law is originated with religious bigotry who could not understand the law solely in the interest of tyrannical theology; and obtained authority for one of the most hardened and cruel legislatures who gloated on the sufferings of his victims, to act as detective and decoy, to lure innocent men and women into the snare, and then to punish them with the sword of the law, and then devour them in law and feast and fatten upon the spoils.' "The object of that statute" is not to suppress obscenity, but rather to protect the public morals. We are not to suppress the immorality of priests and holy books from the exposure they were getting at the hands of these heretics that this law was made; and in that interest is

it executed. Our liberties are in jeopardy. The machinations of these religious fanatics are fast culminating in the accursed inquisition. I have no apology for vulgarity. All honor to the noble and pure who seek to protect the young from evil influences. But they are not Anthony Comstock, nor any of the croaking cravens who foster crime, by legal sanction, and barter with prostitutes to feast upon their shape and fatten upon their work. Purity is not protected by revengeful assaults upon the moral rights of all free thinkers who dare to express their convictions, by the use of moneyed combinations and judicial favoritism to suppress discussion and force upon helpless humanity the Songs of Solomon, the libidinous examples of Noah and David, and the obscene literature of depraved theology.

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