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Poetry.

"IN DUE SEASON."

BY MRS. ELLEN E. CHASE.

The harvest fields lie bleak and brown
Beneath the winter snow;
There is no breath of violet,
No fragrance of the rose;
Of birds or brooks no roundelay—
O weary day!

Yet somewhere, in her sweet content,
Spring waits God's loving call,
And sets her buds, unquestioning,
Since He is over all:
Beneath the snows that fall to-day
Sleep blooms of May.

O patient souls, storm-beat and driven
And robbed by wintry blast,
Who hold, through all God's chastening,
His promises so fast—
Or soon or late His love shall bring
Eternal Spring!

—Christain Union.

THE CARPENTER.

O Lord, at Joseph's humble bench
Thy hands did handle saw and plane;
Thy hammer nails did drive and clench,
Avoiding knot and humoring grain.

That Thou didst seem, Thou wast indeed;
In sport Thy tools Thou didst not use;
Nor, helping hind's or fisher's need,
The laborer's hire, too nice, refuse.

Lord, might I be but as a saw,
A plane, a chisel, in Thy hand!
No, Lord! I take it back in awe—
Such prayer for me is far too grand.

I pray, O Master, let me lie
As on Thy bench the favored wood;
Thy saw, Thy plane, Thy chisel ply,
And work me into something good.

No, no: ambition, holy, high,
Urges for more than both to pray:
Come in, O gracious force, I cry—
O workman, share my shed of clay.

Then I, at bench or desk or oar,
With last or needle, net or pen,
As Thon in Nazareth of yore,
Shall do the Father's will again.

—George Mac Donald.

Religious.

STATE OF MEN AFTER DEATH.

BY REV. ALVAH HOVEY, D. D.

Hades.

If it were consistent with the plan of these studies I would gladly speak more at length of the state of believers in Paradise, for there are many interesting questions which have not been considered, though partial answers to them may be discovered in the Word of God; but the principal features of that state have been noticed, namely, separation from the body, freedom from sin, being present with Christ, blessed fellowship with the spirit of the just, and such knowledge of earthly events as the Lord of Life is pleased to give them. This should be enough to make every Christian expect the next stage of his being with a feeling like that of Paul, who had a strong desire, looking simply at his own benefit, to depart and be with Christ, because for him it would be "much more than better."

But how will it be with unbelievers after death? In what condition will they be found, when the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it? In reply to these questions several passages of the New Testament may be quoted. One of them is the so-called parable of the rich man and Lazarus, a passage of transcendent interest to every inquirer after truth in respect to the intermediate state. With the change of a single word in the common version we may read as follows: "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Here the word Hades is applied to the abode of the ungodly after death. And nowhere in the New Testament are the souls of believers said to be in this place after leaving the body. Though the name

itself signifies, literally, the unseen, and, so far as its radical meaning is concerned, could be used of the world of spirits, without regard to their character, it seems to have been employed in the time of Christ to denote either death or the grave, on the one hand, or the abode of the lost after death, on the other. Nor is the fact that the rich man could see and address Abraham inconsistent with this statement; for Abraham was nevertheless "afar off," a "great gulf" lying between the parties; and besides, the whole scene was laid in the world of spirits, where moral spaces may separate as widely as local, and where the possibilities of intercourse may not be confined within the narrow limits established for this life. It may therefore be said, on the strength of this passage, that previous to the final day the impenitent dead suffer in Hades; for, according to the words of Christ, the rich man had brothers still living on earth, and therefore "the end" and "resurrection" had not yet come; besides, he was able to converse with Abraham, though from a great distance, and was therefore conscious; and finally he was "in torment," and complained of being "tormented in this flame." Nor is the testimony of Jesus at all weakened by supposing His words to be a parable.

For, in the first place, the parables of Christ never violate the order and course of nature—never introduce foreign elements into any domain of existence. In other words, both the characters and the events of every parable uttered by Christ—unless this be an exception—will be found natural, that is to say, consistent with the actual conditions of being from which the imagery of the parable is drawn. If, then, we call our Saviour's account of the rich man and Lazarus a parable, and consent to interpret it according to the uniform analogy of His teaching, in other instances by parables, we have this lesson from Him, to wit: that God will treat certain parties, not here named, as He treats the prosperous unbeliever and the afflicted believer, when removed from the present world, that the normal conditions of bad and good men, after physical death, are used to shadow forth the relations of two classes of men to the kingdom of Christ an earth. Hence it matters not, so far as its bearing upon the state of the departed is concerned, whether the passage in question be interpreted as a narrative or a parable; for in either case its picture of their condition must be honored as one which accords with substantial truth.

In the next place, all the parables of Christ, unless the one before us is an exception, employ well-known characters, customs, or events to illustrate spiritual things. In determining their application to things of another sphere, difficulty may sometimes be met, but in themselves all is simple, coherent, intelligible. What can be more natural and self-consistent than the various particulars mentioned in the parables of the Sower, The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Lost Son, The Leaven, The Talents, The Pharisee and Publican? Or what could have been more perfectly known and familiar to His hearers? Into which of these parables does He introduce characters or events needing a word of explanation? If, then, the account of Dives and Lazarus be a parable, we must either hold that Christ here deviated most strangely from His otherwise uniform and really perfect method of teaching by parables, or else that the conscious misery of the wicked after death was a truth well-known to the Pharisees. To call the passage a parable is indeed to make Christ assume the doctrine of conscious existence immediately after death, both for the evil and the good, as a doctrine at once true and familiar to His hearers. And so in fact it was, as Josephus distinctly avers.

And in the last place, the parables of Christ are always, unless this be an exception, constructed of such elements—be they characters or events—as not only suggest, but also commend the

lessons contained in them. They are so fit, appropriate and natural in their own sphere as to justify in some degree certain parallel events in a different sphere. Thus Christ gave the truths pertaining to His kingdom the benefit and support of analogy, of a similar process in some other part of the Divine administration. Now looking at the matter from this point of view, and calling the words of Christ concerning the rich man and Lazarus a parable, it is plain that the doctrine of the conscious misery of the wicked after death was not then felt to be unreasonable or impossible. For otherwise without any conceivable necessity, Christ has put His own doctrine under a disadvantage, has clothed it in a suspicious garb fitted to secure its rejection. If the infliction of conscious misery upon the impenitent dead be so utterly unworthy of God as we are sometimes assured, then must we say that the blessed Saviour wove His solemn and ominous parable out of events which do not so much slight, as fearfully misrepresent the Divine government. To suppose that He has gone beyond this life for the chief lines of His picture, has made that picture untrue to the actual condition of things in that region beyond, and has thereby laid His own doctrine, whatever it may be, under a positive disadvantage, is surely too extravagant and improbable an assumption for any thoughtful Christian.

Whether, then, our Saviour's account of the rich man and Lazarus be a parable or not, it affords decisive evidence of the misery of the lost in Hades. Indeed, I am unable to conceive of more conclusive evidence. But the only really tenable exposition of the Saviour's discourse is the obvious one, that He presents in brief the history of two supposed persons as samples of the way in which all who are like them will be treated—the prosperous unbeliever of this life sinking into misery at its close, and the afflicted believer passing at once from death into blessedness. Thus interpreted the lesson is indeed a tremendous one; but as an honest man I cannot possibly give it any other interpretation. Nor can I believe that the merciful Redeemer purposely exaggerated the difference between the state of the lost and the state of the saved after death. How unutterably criminal, then, is sin! And what madness is in the hearts of those who will not repent! In these days of apology for evil-doing the language of Christ seems fearfully bold and plain, but something in the secret places of the soul responds to its truth, and warns the sinner at times to flee from the wrath to come.—W. & R.

ENGLISH BAPTIST ANNIVERSARIES.

The late English mail has brought us reports of the Anniversary meetings of the Baptist Societies in England. There appears to have been a delightful state of harmonious activity which affords great encouragement for future progress in christian work. The speeches at several of these meetings were of a superior order, and appear to have been received with much enthusiasm. At the Annual Meeting of the British and Irish Home Mission Society in the course of a speech by Rev. J. G. Oncken, of Hamburg, he described the state of things on the continent in 1847, and went on to say:—

The year prior to the great revolution throughout the continent, there were seven fine young men in the prime of their days, who had been all converted at Hamburg, and being well-established in the truth they said, "Now we cannot stay here any longer; we must go home and tell the untold tale in Austria and Hungary." They were despatched in the old apostolic style, and wherever they rested on the Lord's-day they edified themselves in the Scriptures, and shewed forth the Lord's death in communion. And as

they went along they spread the everlasting gospel. They reached Vienna soon after the revolution broke out. From brethren in America and Scotland the necessary supplies were received, and nearly 50,000 copies of the New Testament, and several hundred thousand good evangelical tracts were distributed. He (Mr. Oncken) sent a missionary there and finally went himself and hired a part of an old monastery where the converts assembled, and where a brother missionary regularly proclaimed the Word of the Lord. This continued for six months, and then a political reaction took place, and on one Easter Sunday morning a number of policemen pounced upon the little church, and men, women, and children were all cast into prison. But the Lord had already sent His angel to the imperial city, and through the intercession of a lady of high rank the prisoners were set at liberty. After the political reaction of 1848 a missionary (now in the eastern part of Prussia) was cited to appear at the police-court. He was told that he must make haste to get out of the city. He was utterly surprised, and he went to an official in a high position. This gentleman said, "Take a seat, sir," and then went to a book-shelf and brought a large folio bound in pig-skin, and read "Wherever an Anabaptist is found he is to be quartered"—pulled to pieces in four—and then thrust into the fire." "How should you like this process," said he. The missionary said, "I would rather be excused, sir." To which the gentleman replied, "Well, if you would rather be excused, put up your bundle and make haste and get out of the Imperial city, for this is the law now." The doors were therefore at that time completely closed against them; but they were now happily open, and there was now in that city a nice little church of baptised believers—(applause)—and a stream of life going forth in every direction. The whole of Catholic Germany was now open before them. They could travel and preach through the length and breadth of the land, and the time was come for the Church in this country to put its silver and gold upon God's altar, and "come to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The greatest honour which God has destined for this nation was that it should be held in His right hand as a brilliant star from which light, life, and blessedness were to emanate to the whole universe.

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon next addressed the meeting. He said,—I do not think our friends at present feel that gratitude to me which they ought to do, because they are not aware of the great favour which I have conferred upon them. I was put down to speak just now, and I thought I should have a good innings of speaking. But then I recollected that the most fitting way of spending an evening like this was to let those speak who could tell of what God had done by them. Therefore I earnestly requested my friend Mr. Oncken to take my place and occupy all the time he possibly could, and I would simply come in with a word at the end. I believe I have done good service, and I should have been glad if Mr. Oncken had availed himself of the opportunity of keeping on to any time of the night; for that is the best and main object of a meeting like this, to hear of what has been done, or else to talk together of what will be done, and so stir each other up. I believe that great speeches, though exceedingly nice, are a great waste of time on these occasions. What we want is to know what God is doing, and also to know what he expects us to do. Now last night I had the privilege of addressing a most enthusiastic meeting at Exeter Hall—I think I never saw a more enthusiastic meeting—of the United Methodist Free Churches; and I moved a resolution which they gave me of so singular a character that I cannot help beginning my speech with it now. It ran like this—"That seeing that there are so many calls upon our mission committee,

and so many of them have to be declined on account of the lack of suitable men, this resolution pledges the meeting to pray that the whole connexion may be baptized." I stopped there, and I observed by degrees that our friends saw the meaning—(laughter)—and then I went on to say—"may be baptized with the Holy Spirit, that many men might come forward and say, 'Here am I! Send me!'" I told them I very much liked the resolution so far as they let me go, and could earnestly pray it, but that when it concluded with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I felt more earnest in joining in it. I could offer the prayer that all the Church of Christ might be baptised even in a literal sense, because I think it is a great step in advance if God should open our eyes to see in that matter. (Applause.) But if we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, that shall be a higher good, and may God send it to all the churches, and send it to us too. Beloved friends, though we have a British and Irish Baptist Home Mission here, should not every church be a home mission? Is not every church, when it is rightly constituted, just that? Mr. Oncken's idea is the right one. We have got a vast mass of dead membership. I should be afraid almost to know how large a dead membership we have, and yet I would shake off the timidity and desire to know it that we might be alarmed with it, and cry to the Lord to quicken these members, that they might begin to work for Christ. The very best of our churches have a residuum of members who are an impediment instead of giving help; and it is just there—where there is no service rendered to the Lord—that there is a nest for dissatisfaction and all manner of evil. Quarrels of churches don't begin—at least, I don't think they do—with working people, with those that are serving God; and the mischief, which has been chronic in some parts of our denomination, may be traceable, I think, to the number of persons who are associated with us that are not engaged in the service of the Lord; and if that were a rule for which there should be no exception (except sheer inability to serve) that every member must be doing something for Christ, it would usher in a new era and purge us of very much of evil, and though it might diminish our nominal strength, it would be quite sure to give us greater strength in the long-run. Have we ever put it down as a rule that all members should try to teach the Gospel in some form? Every young man ought to say, "Have I any justifiable reason why I should be exempted from preaching the Gospel?" I should like to see it put so—not, "Have I a reason for not entering the ministry," but "Have I a reason for not preaching?" We ought to have a far larger staff of preachers who, though engaged in the ordinary business of life, should make it their main business to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. No man has any right to any ability, however small or great, which is not laid upon the altar of Christ. We belong wholly to the Saviour, if we belong to the Saviour at all. He never will accept part of us for an offering. It is a whole burnt offering (little enough then, and only our reasonable service at the most) which is required. But for a man to say, "Up to this point I give myself to Christ, and no further," is contrary even to the sacred rite in which we put on Christ, for was he not buried with Christ in baptism, no part of his body being excepted? Therefore no part, or portion, or faculty, or substance or gift, is to be unconsecrated to the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust our dear friends in London and in the larger towns, and in the smaller towns too, will endeavour to maintain in good vigour the Lay Preachers' Association. We must encourage more to preach. I believe there are a great many men who do very much service by preaching whom you and I would not like to hear, but whom God will bless, nevertheless. God may do more by the weak among us than by the strong, and