He Knows.

I know not what shall befall me,
God hang a mist o'er my eyes,
And each step in my onward path
He makes new scenes to rise,
And every joy He sends to me
Comes as a sweet surprise.

I see not a step before me
As I tread on Another year,
But the past is still in God's keeping,
The future His mercy shall clear,
And what looks dark in the distance
May brighten as I draw near.

For perhaps the dreaded future
Has less bitter than I think;
The Lord may sweeten the waters
Before I stoop to drink;
Or, if Marah must be Marah,
He will stand beside its brink.

It may be He has, waiting
For the coming of my feet,
Some gift of such rare value,
Some joy so strangely sweet,
That my lips shall only tremble
With the thanks they cannot speak.

O, restful, blissful ignorance!
'Tis blessed not to know:
It keeps me s ill in those arms
Which will not let me go,
And hushes my soul to rest
In the bosom that loves me so!

So I go on—not knowing:
I would not if I might,
Rather walking with God in the dark
Than going alone in the light;
Rather walking with Him by faith
Than walking alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from trials
Which the future may disclose,
Yet I never had a sorrow
But what the dear Lord chose;
So I send the coming tears back
With the whispered word, "He knows!"

Mary G. Brainard.

COMING OF AGE.

A NEW SERMON BY PASTOR C. H. SPURGEON.

"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."—GALATIANS 4:3-6.

Let us consider by the light of our text the special effect produced upon the Church of God by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in human flesh.

It was a wonderful step from being under the law as a schoolmaster, to come from under its rod and rule into the freedom and powdee of a full-grown heir; but such was the change for believers of the old time, and in consequence there was a wonderful difference between the highest under the Old Testament and the lowest under the New. Of them that are born of woman there was not born a greater than John the Baptist, and yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he. John the Baptist may be compared to a youth of nineteen, still an infant in law, still under his guardian, still unable to touch his estate; but the least believer in Jesus has passed his minority, and is "no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

I. I invite you to consider the joyful mission of the Son of God. The Lord of heaven has come to earth; God has taken upon Himself human nature. Hallelujah! This great transaction was accomplished at the right time: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman." The reservoir of time had to be filled by the inflowing of age after age, and when it was full to the brim the Son of God appeared. Why the world should have remained in darkness for four thousand years, why it should have taken that length of time for the Church to attain her full age, we cannot tell; but this we are told, that Jesus was sent forth when the fulness of time was come. There are no loose threads in the providence of God, no stitches are dropped, no events are left to chance. The great clock of the universe keeps good time and the whole machinery of providence moves with unerring punctuality. It was to be expected that the greatest of all events should be most accurately and wisely timed, and so it was. God willed it to be when and where it was, and that will is to us the ultimate reason.

If we might suggest any reasons which can be appreciated by ourselves, we should view the date in reference to the Church itself as to the time of her coming of age. There is a measure of reason in appointing the age of twenty-one as the period of a man's majority, for he is then mature, and full grown. Now, if we were wise enough, we should see that the Church of God could not have endured Gospel light earlier than the day of Christ's coming; neither would it have been well to keep her in gloom beyond that time. There was a fitness about the date which we cannot fully understand, because we have not the means of forming so decided an estimate of the life of a church as of the life of a man. God alone knows the times and seasons for a church, and no doubt to Him the four thousand years of the old dispensation made up a fit period for the Church to abide at school, and bear the yoke in her youth.

Observe, concerning the first advent, that the Lord was moving in it toward man. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." We moved not toward the Lord, but the Lord toward us. I do not find that the world in repentance sought after its Maker. No; but the offended God Himself in infinite compassion broke the silence, and came forth to bless His enemies. See how spontaneous is the grace of God. All good things begin with Him.

Mark the divine interposition—"God sent forth His Son." I hope it may not seem wearisome to you if I dwell upon that word "sent"—"God sent forth His Son." I take great pleasure in that expression, for it seals the whole work of Jesus. Everything that Christ did was done by commission and authority of His Father. The great Lord, when He was born at Bethlehem, and assumed our nature, did it under divine authorization; and when He came and scattered gifts with both His hands among the sons of men He was the messenger and ambassador of God. He was the Plenipotentiary of the Court of Heaven. The Son doeth nothing of Himself, but the Father worketh with Him and in Him. O soul when thou dost lean on Christ thou dost rely upon no amateur. Saviour, no uncommissioned Redeemer; but upon One who is sent of the Most High, and therefore is authorized in everything that He does.

Now run your eye to the next word: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son." Observe the divine person who was sent. God sent not an angel, nor any exalted creature, but "His Son." How there can be a Son of God we know not. The eternal filiation of the Son must forever remain one of those mysteries into which we must not pry. He existed before He was born into the world; for God "sent" His Son. He was already in being or He could not have been "sent." And while He is one with the Father, yet He must be distinct from the Father, and have a personality separate from that of the Father, otherwise it could not be said that God sent His Son. Oh, the dignity of this, and consequently, oh, the efficiency of it! He that has come to save us is no weak creature like ourselves; He that has taken upon Himself our nature is no being of limited strength, such as an angel or a seraph might have been; but He is the Son of the Highest. Glory be to His blessed name! Let us dwell on this with delight. Press on, still keeping to the very words of the text for they are very sweet: God sent His Son in real humanity—"made of a woman." The Revised Version properly hath it, "born of a woman." Perhaps you may get nearer to it if you say, "Made to be born of a woman," for both ideas are present, the factum and the natum, the being made and the being born. Christ was really and truly of the substance of His mother, as certainly as any other infant that is born into the world is so. God did not creature the human nature of Christ apart, and then transmit it into mortal existence by some special means; but His Son was made and born of a woman. He is, therefore, of our race, a man like ourselves, and not man of another stock. You are to make no mistake about it; he is not only of humanity, but of your humanity; for that which is born of a woman is brother to us, be it born when it may. Yet there is an omission, I doubt not intentional, to show how holy was that human nature, for He is born of a woman, not of a man. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin, and "that holy thing" was born of her without the original sin which pertains to our race by natural descent. Here is a pure humanity though a true humanity; a true humanity though free from sin.

No sooner was He born of a woman than He came under the law; this voluntarily and yet necessarily. He willed to be a man, and being a man He accepted the position, and stood in the place of man as subject to the law of the race. When they took Him and circumcised Him according to the law, it was publicly declared that He was under the law. During the rest of His life you will observe how reverently He observed the commands of God. Even to the ceremonial law as it was given by Moses He had scrupulous regard. He despised the traditions and superstitions of men, but for the rule of the dispensation He had a high respect. His advent in human form commenced the era of spiritual maturity and freedom.

II. I ask you now, therefore, in the second place, to contemplate the joyous result which has come of our Lord's incarnation.

Methinks, one day with Christ was worth a half century with Moses. When Jesus came, believers began to hear of the Father and His love, of His abounding grace and the kingdom which He had prepared for them. Blessed were they who in their day shared the privilege of the old economy, for it was wonderful light as compared with heathen darkness; yet, for all that, compared with the noontide that Christ brought, it was mere candle-light. The ceremonial law held a man in stern bondage; you must not eat this, and you must not go there, and you must not wear this, and you must not gather that. Everywhere you were under restraint, and walked between hedges of thorn.

It was quiet right that it should be so, for it is good for a man that, while he is yet a youth, he should bear the joke, and learn obedience; yet it must have been irksome. When Jesus came what a joyful difference was made. It seemed like a dream of joy, too glad to be true. Peter could not at first believe in it, and needed a vision to make him sure that it was even so. Prohibition upon mere ceremonial points, and commands upon carnal matters are now abolished, and great is our liberty; we shall be foolish indeed if we suffer ourselves to be again entangled with the yoke of bondage. Our minority was ended when the Lord, who had aforetime spoken to us by His prophets, at last sent His Son to lead us up to the highest firm of spiritual manhood.

Christ came, we are told next, to redeem those who were under the law; that is to say, the birth of Jesus, and His coming under the law, and His fulfilling the law, have set all believers free from it as a yoke of bondage. None of us wish to be free from the law as a rule of life; we wish that we could keep every precept of the law, without a single omission or transgression. Our earnest desire is for perfect holiness; but we do not look in that direction for our justification before God. Some seem to fancy that baptism and the Lord's Supper have taken the place of circumcision and the Passover, and that while Jews were saved by one form of ceremonial we are to be saved by another. Let us never give place to this idea; no, not for an hour. As to the moral law, which is the standard of equity for all time, it is no way of salvation for us. Once we were under it, and strove to keep it in order to earn the divine favor; but we have now no such motive. Then we strove to do the Lord's will that He might love us, and that we might be rewarded for what we did; but we have no design of purchasing that favor now, since we freely and securely enjoy it on a very different ground.

"What!" saith one; "then do you not seek to do good works?" Indeed we do. By God's grace we desire to abound in works of holiness, and the more we can serve our God the happier we are. Ye that are in bondage, and feel the force of legal motives, ye cannot understand how we should serve our Father who is in heaven with all our heart and all our soul, not for what we get by it, but because He has loved us and saved us, irrespective of our works. We are redeemed from the law in its operation upon our mind; it breeds no fear within us now. I have heard children of God say sometimes, "Well, but don't you think if we fall into sin we shall cease to be in God's love, and so shall perish?" This is to cast a slur upon the unchangeable love of God I see that you make a mistake and think a child is a servant. Now, it will smile back and say, "My Father." Chasten me, and as I weep I will cry, "My Father!" This shall make everything work good to me, be it never so hard to bear. If thou art my Father all is well to all eternity.

Now, dear children of God, if any of you are in bondage under the law, why do you remain so? Let the redeemed go free. Are you fond of wearing chains? Are you like Chinese women that delight to wear little shoes which crush their feet? Do you delight in slavery? Do you wish to be captives? You are not under the law, but under grace; will you allow your unbelief to put you under the law? You are not a slave. Why tremble like a slave? You are a child; you are a son; you are an heir; live up to your privileges. Oh, ye banished seed, be glad! You are adopted into the household of God; then be not as a stranger. I hear Ishmael laughing at you; let him laugh. Tell your Father of him, and He will soon say, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son." Free grace is not to be mocked by human merit; neither are we to be made sad by the forebodings of the legal spirit. Our soul rejoices, and, like Isaac, is filled with holy laughter; for the Lord Jesus has done great things for us whereof we are glad. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

—Rev. Dr. Cuyler, in last week's New York Evangelist, says: "A few days ago I went over to make a brotherly talk to the Baptist pastors of New York city and vicinity, at their weekly gathering in Murray Street. An ablebodied crowd of laborers in the vineyard they looked like, and they put a warm hand into their hand-grips. As I looked over the company, I recalled pleasantly my intercourse with my Baptist neighbors during my New York pastorate. Dr. Armitage was then serving his apprenticeship to ministerial fame in the Norfolk street church. Dear old Dr Magoon was discoursing in the Oliver street pulpit in that original style which is just like nothing 'in the earth, or in the waters under the earth.' Over the old mother-church in Broome street hung the brilliant star of young Kingman Nott—soon alas! to be quenched beneath the waves. The drowning of Mr. Nott (at Amboy) and the tragic death of Dudley A. Tyng came quite near together. To our Baptist brethren God has allotted two peculiar honors. They have produced the book which, next to God's own book, has had more readers than any in the English tongue. They have produced the preacher who has reached more hearers than any man since the days of the Apostles. It goes without saying that the book was Bunyan's 'Pilgrim,' and the preacher is Charles H. Spurgeon. They may also boast of having in their ranks a sermon-maker who is not surpassed to-day in Great Britian—the Rev. Alexander Maclaren of Manchester. In spiritual insight and beauty of illustration, he seems to me even superior to Canon Liddon. The Canon is literally a 'great gun,' but he does not hit the evangelical truth quite as squarely or with such impact as the Manchester 'master of ordnance.'"

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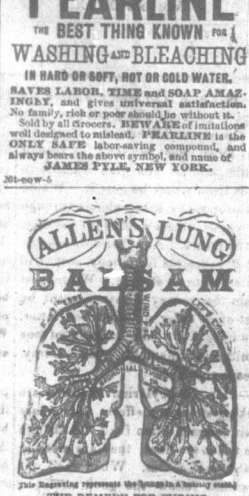

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