



MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. HULL, AT
MATFIELD GREEN, ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 24TH, 1895.

7/6/96
"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace."—EPHESIANS ii. 11-14.

THIS is a very remarkable and precious chapter, a portion of the Word of God which, I trust, is very dear to some of you, for I can say the Lord has made it very dear to me. There is much in it to humble us before the Lord, and there is much in it that calls for special thankfulness for what He has done for us. There is also much to encourage us, as we think upon the work of the Blessed Spirit in the heart: what God has wrought, the change that has taken place, the gracious work begun and carried on—these are points it deals with; the quickening and calling of those who are "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works," as the fruits of His grace within them.

Now, the great matter, my dear friends, is, How do I stand with regard to these things? I hope some of you feel it is the one important point. Are we interested in these good things, spoken of as belonging to the Lord's people—such as are made manifest as His people? Are there any in this place who desire to be in such a position, as regards spiritual things? or are you destitute of the spirit of grace, and the marks of it here given? We are either within or without. If we are within, we have

been brought within; and if we are without, we are where our sin has put us. Everything is included in this, "Am I His, or am I not?" This question may well cause us anxiety to have the matter set right, to have the Lord's own testimony that we are among that number of whom He says, "They shall be My people."

If you notice the words of the text, there are two tenses given. The *time past* is the past tense. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in *time past* Gentiles in the flesh." In *time past*—it does not say how long, but in *time past*. And then, in the thirteenth verse, we have the present tense, "But *now* in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." There is *time past* and *time present*. Can you make a comparison here? Oh, how many times I have been able to make a comparison, when I could see and feel the difference between *time past* and *time present*! And it may be the same with some of you this morning; you may have the same blessed experience, and can compare *time present* with *time past*. Paul, speaking to the Corinthians, and describing the natural state of man, says, "And such were some of you." In *time past* such "were some of you: but"—there is the turning point—"ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Bless God for that evidence, for that good hope in your soul; bless God for any marks of grace, for any proof that these things are true of us.

In this chapter Paul says, "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." You who *were* dead, *you* hath He quickened. If you are a quickened one, it is God who has quickened you, dear friend, and you will live eternally; for He has given you eternal life, even you who *were* dead in trespasses and sins.

"Wherein ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Slaves to sin, Satan, the world, and their own lust. But perhaps some one may say, "I am not so bad as that, I am nothing like that." Indeed! I suppose, then, you are a refined person, a very refined sinner; not like that publican. So the Pharisee said, "Not even as this publican." He was out of the secret, was ignorant of himself; but the publican knew it, felt it, and owned it. Rest assured that every man, woman, and child destitute of the love of God, will live for themselves, follow the desires of their

own heart, and seek the gratification of their own lusts in whatever way they choose to follow.

"If more refined amusements please,
As knowledge, arts, or learning."

It is the same snare, the heart is gone aside. This is the same way that Satan tempted our first parents, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." He held out the bait, and his bait was taken; just so his bait is now taken by his dupes. He knows how to spread his temptations to lead men astray; he knows their different dispositions, and he lays one bait for one, and another bait for another.

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Now he draws the line nearer home, "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past." *All*—himself among the rest. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)." Here then is delineated what they were, and what they became; how God found them, and what He did for them. Can you come in here? Can you stand beside this test? If you can make the comparison, it is a great mercy. Blessed are all they that can, if in ever such a small way. One good man, in the days of old, said to those who reviled Christ, who had done great things for him, "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not; *one thing I know*, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." They could not take the given sight from the man, he knew he had been blind, and now he could see; they could not talk him out of that. If God has made darkness light, if He has ever discovered the darkness, given you a view of yourself, made you to tremble at the Word of the Lord, this is the beginning of light, the beginning of wisdom; and it will lead to growing "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Now, I like to remember past mercies, to muse on days gone by; but this musing causes me sometimes to veil my face with shame before God. Not many hours ago I said to the Lord, "What a wretch I have been!" I felt it, my dear friends. Oh, the mercy of being out of hell! Oh, what a mercy to be found seeking after Jesus Christ! Seeking to His precious blood;

seeking to know Him; seeking to win Christ, and be found in Him. These desires, in all that are born of God, come from above, and the possessor of them is a heaven-born soul. What a mercy, then, to have one good desire! What a mercy to feel love in the heart! "Remember," says Paul, "that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh." In darkness, in ignorance, in death, having nothing of a godly or heavenly nature, but "in the flesh, called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands." The Pharisees, and Jews in general, viewed themselves as better than others. They were the seed of Abraham; they were circumcised; but the Gentiles were without the pale of the National Church. So those sacerdotalists who belong to the national religion in this day draw a line between themselves and others; they say they have what they call the mark and seal of Baptism and Confirmation, but we have it not; they say they have Apostolic Succession, but we have it not. Ah! but blessed be God, we who believe belong to Christ, and having Him as our salvation, we do not care for their seal of Baptism and Confirmation, nor do we envy them their so-called Apostolical Succession. The Apostle says, "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him." Ah! that is the better part, to have Christ as the alone foundation of our faith. Yes, it is better to have the truth as it is in Jesus than a deception, any day, for that is a portion which shall not be taken away from us.

What a mercy that He bore with me and had compassion upon me. How often have I blessed Him that He did not leave me to go on with the rest. He dried up all my natural religion, and showed me that my righteousness was nothing better than filthy rags; then He took me by the hand and taught me the right way. And now when I think of these things my soul is humbled within me, and I say—

"Why me, why me, O blessed God?
Why such a wretch as me?"

I might have now been where they are, "but God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us."

"That at that time ye were without Christ." Outside Christ. You may have heard of Him, you may have read of Him, you may have associated with His people, yet you were outside His Gospel, and outside fellowship with Christ.

Dear friends, I call to mind that time past, when I was outside, and if I had remained where I desired to be, I should have been among the despisers of His truth still. Oh, unquickened one, you may get hard under the sound of the Gospel, like many do, who have grown grey under it, but have never, never known repentance, never undergone a divine change—unto such the Gospel is a savour of death unto death. There is no death in the Gospel, no savour of death about the Gospel itself; the Gospel is life and immortality. How then is it the savour of death? In the perversion of it. When you hear a man wrap himself up in the Word of God, talk about the security of the Church, the certainty of its salvation, how Christ completed the work, and that not one of the chosen shall be left behind, and yet he himself is outside of it all, that man is making leviathan scales of the Word and truth of God, and hiding himself behind them. I know this snare of the devil; it is an awful state. If God had given me up to that state, I should have been in a very different position from what I am now. There are people that talk like this who make the Gospel a savour of death unto death to themselves. They do not fear God's displeasure or dread His judgment, but they encourage themselves in their evil ways under that very Gospel, and they become more hardened in their sins. If anything shows the awful nature of the fall, and the ruin it brought in, this awful course surely does.

My dear friends, if you know what it is to have a tender conscience, a mourning over sin, and bending the knee in supplication at a throne of grace, your hard heart will be a burden to you, you will mourn over it, and cry, "Leave not my soul destitute." Many times I have breathed that prayer, and I know that every such an one will prize the repentance wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, for it makes a hard heart soft.

"Without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." Not among the chosen people, but Gentiles. "And strangers from the covenants of promise." Not of the seed of Abraham, therefore those covenants did not reach to them.

"Having no hope." No real hope, no spiritual hope. Oh, what a solemn state! *No hope!* The seeds of death within, living to die, and to pass from time into a boundless eternity. No hope. Oh think, careless sinner, of those words—*No hope.* You may soon be upon your dying bed, and lie there convinced in your own heart that you have no hope. What a bed it will be!—a bed of terror.

"And without God in the world." No God to call upon,

no God to turn to, no prayer-hearing God near you; no hope of heaven. Oh, to be without God—to live without God—to have to bear all the trials, anxieties, persecutions, afflictions, worries, and distresses we are subject to in this present world, and to be *without God.* What a sad life to live, and what a sad death to die. The Lord help us to think of these realities, dear friends, before they come to pass; death will come, eternity is coming on, and we are hastening to meet it. "Having no hope, and without God in the world." Can you read this as being your case in the past tense? "Such were some of you."

"But now" (the present tense) "in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace." Here is the great and blessed change. We read sometimes of crossing the Line; it is considered a great thing for persons on board ship to cross the Line for the first time in their life. Was it not so when you and I were brought across the line from death to life? Dear friends, I think special notice should be taken of it. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh." Just think where you were, and what you were. Where was your pleasure and delight? What were the things you followed? Where should you have been if you had not been stopped?

"But thus the eternal counsel ran,
'Almighty love, arrest that man.'"

You remember when you were arrested, when the Lord laid His hand upon you, made you to tremble before Him, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." A change took place. "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood"—none to take pity or compassion—"I said unto thee, Live," Live! "Now, when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love." That time of being cast out into the open field to die, with no helper, was the time of love with a covenant God. At that time of distress, when you were an outcast, love welled up in His heart; He not only looked upon thee, but pitied thee, washed thee from thy filth, clothed thee with the best robe, and made thee perfect through His comeliness which He put upon thee. All this being done, we can say, "Yes, I remember that day." Can I forget it? I do not wish to: I would remember it before the Lord, and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul,

and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." What a catalogue! and will you now say you have nothing to be thankful for? "Well," you say, "I call it all in question sometimes; I am ready to give it up, to cast it away." The Apostle says, "Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

"But now in Christ Jesus." Not *without*, but *in* Christ Jesus. The Apostle says, "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him." Mr. Hart says—

"He that believeth Christ the Lord,
Who shed for man His blood,
By giving credence to His Word,
Exalts the truth of God.
So far he's right, but let him know,
Farther than this he yet must go.

"He that believes on Jesus Christ
Has a much better faith."

Then he goes a step farther—

"But he that *into* Christ believes,
What a rich faith has he!"

"He that into Christ believes." When Moses wanted a view of the Lord, the Lord said there was one way in which He could accede to his desire. God has a way to appear in which He can be seen by His favoured ones. Gideon found that, Manoah and his wife, Joshua, and Jacob, all found that. The Lord said to Moses, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: and I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts." I will give you a sight of what you could not otherwise behold. A man of God is in the right place under the Lord's hand. What a mercy to feel you have a place in the heart of Christ, to be able to come to His cleft side by precious faith; to feel the hole made by the spear in Jesus' side was made for you, that the blood might flow out for you, that there might be a door of entrance made for your faith to enter in. "But He that into Christ believes."

"Who loved me, and gave Himself for Me." That is better than being without; to be brought to His dear feet. When troubles, afflictions, and crosses overburden you, oh, then to think of Him in the garden in His agony, grovelling there—

"How light, while supported by grace,
Are all the afflictions I see,
To those the dear Lord of my peace,
My Jesus, has suffered for me!"

Oh, the grief of His blessed heart there! Oh, the trouble He was in! And to think that all this grief and trouble was for you, that by His agony and suffering you might have fellowship with Him! "In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off"—did not know Him, did not love Him, did not want to, but now—"are made nigh by the blood of Christ." He is the one Mediator, to stand between the offended and the offender, to stretch out His hands to each, to reconcile, to make peace, and to bring together. Mark, He stands there in our nature. He took our nature up to the Father, and in our nature He draws near on our behalf. "Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto Me? saith the Lord." The Anointed One, who shed His blood to atone for all His people's sins, to blot out transgression; whereby the poor trembling sinner is enabled to approach unto a holy God, since Jesus, the Son of God, clothed with humanity, stands between as Emmanuel, God with us. "Made nigh." Oh the blessed atonement, which takes all their iniquities out of the way! Christ made an end of sin, and His precious blood "cleanseth us from all sin"; and that is our peace, "For He is our peace." "And this Man shall be the peace." No peace with God out of Christ: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

I remember the time when I had a twofold view of God. A view of Him in the law as a consuming fire. Who could approach such a God? No wonder the ungodly want to get as far away from Him, as they can; I do not wonder at it. And I have beheld God in His dear and well-beloved Son, as my God, my Covenant God, as my Father. Oh, what a difference! And I have had a twofold view of Christ. I have beheld His majesty as John did, when he fell at His feet as dead. Ah! and I have beheld Him, as John did, "a Lamb as it had been slain."

“My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.”

Oh, what a difference, to see Him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and to see Him as the Lamb once slain, one and the same Person. “He is our peace,” by whom we draw nigh unto God. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” He had to take the first step. Oh, what a mercy to know “that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Well then, if the trespasses are not imputed unto them, they must have been imputed unto Christ, and then His righteousness imputed unto us; and if all Christ has done is imputed to us, then we are not “without” Christ now, but within. Also it is “Christ in you the hope of glory.” We in Him, and He in us. “And they two shall be one flesh.” Bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. “For He is our peace.” What a blessed peace is this!

“But since my Saviour stands between,
In garments dyed in blood,
’Tis He, instead of me, is seen;
When I approach to God.”

Oh, bless the Lord, my soul, for such a peace as this, which can never be taken away, which can never be broken; it is “peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. v. 1).
May He add His blessing, and He shall have the glory.

