

Sermon preached by Mr. O. Paek at "Galeed" Chapel, Brighton,
Sunday, 20th November 1966.

Evening discourse.

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God".

Acts. 7 v 55 - 56.

Most of you are aware we tried to speak a little of this good word this morning. I believe it expresses what many of you long to see and feel and enjoy in your souls in some measure here. Yes, here from time to time and especially when you come to your dying moments, and then to see Him face to face. I feel myself, it is the only thing in religion that can really satisfy, to get here and there, as we walk through this wilderness, a glimpse of the Lord Jesus by faith. To see in Him the love of God the Father manifest, and to feel, at the same time as Christ is revealed in the heart, the hope of glory, that sweet fellowship and communion of the Holy Ghost as He takes of the things of the Lord Jesus and reveals them unto us.

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost". We dwelt at some measure on this point this morning and it is a very important point, for it is only by The Spirit that we can know the things of God, no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Therefore, Stephen being full of the Holy Ghost had that blessed, that wonderous revelation of the Lord Jesus. He saw the heavens opened.

By quite coincidence in the interval I picked up or noticed a little card in a hymnbook describing the happy death of a little child of only two years old. O how true that is "A child shall die a hundred years old". Just before he died he called out to his mother, 'Mummy, he said, I see Jesus', She said can you really?, yes, he said, I see Jesus'. What is it that brings us to the house of God from time to time, just mere formality, or for outward show? or do we come with this desire in our hearts, 'I would see Jesus'? One of our dear hymnwriters said -

"Whilst walking on the Gospel way
I would see Jesus every day
And see in all His grace,
See Him, my Prophet, Priest and King
And Him and all His praises sing,
Then see Him face to face".

So the child of God endures here. We read of Moses in the 11th Hebrews, "That he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible". It is a contradiction of terms viewed in the way a worldling would look at it, but not to faith. He endured. We are not to understand by that that Moses had such a revelation of God's glory every day of his life and all those weary 40 years in the wilderness, as he had on that wonderful occasion when the Lord revealed His glory as he was hidden in that cleft rock. You know that Moses felt he needed the Lord's presence to be with him and go with him in that trying journey from the land of Egypt to the promised land, and he prayed that God's presence might go with him, the Lord promised him it should, but that did not satisfy him, he prayed for one more blessing - and what was it? "Lord, I beseech Thee, show me thy glory". That will do, that will answer, that will strengthen me, to behold Thy glory. And you know how the Lord heard and answered that petition as he was sheltered in the rock, in the Rock of Ages, sheltered in Christ. He beheld God's glory in that declaration of His Holy name. The Lord passed by and declared His name, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious,

plenteous in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquities, transgressions sins, ~~by~~ who by no means can acquit the guilty, or as one old version I feel puts it better, by no means acquit the impenitent, we all are guilty, but by no means acquit the impenitent. And when Moses saw that he asked no more, he made haste and bowed his head and worshipped. What did he see? just what dear Stephen saw. O do you feel to need strengthening, then seek the Lord. The Psalmist in the 80th Psalm has a wonderful word concerning this, he says, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man Whom Thou hast made strong for Thyself." Ah, the Psalmist, by faith, looked forward, saw Christ exalted at the right hand of God. Do you see Him there sometimes? if you did not, how could you pray? How could you draw near to God? How dare you address that Holy Being Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and cannot look upon sin ~~but~~ without infinite hatred and abhorrence? But do you sometimes, if not to your full satisfaction, see the Lord Jesus as ^{He} is revealed in the Word, feel faith springing up in your heart? Ah, you will see him by faith, now exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and you venture near to God. Said one -

"That rich atoning blood
Which sprinkled round I see,
Provide for all who come to God
An all-prevailing plea".

"Being full of the Holy Ghost". We shall never see this, never know the Lord, never know God by faith in His love, in His grace, in His goodness, in His pity for poor wretched sinners but as the Holy Ghost Who knoweth all things, yea the deep things of God, is pleased to reveal them to us. Sometimes it fills my mind, I believe I can say honestly, with wonder and astonishment that that great God should have revealed to poor, wretched sinful, rebellious, lost mankind, so much of His eternal mind and purpose as He has revealed, in both the written and the incarnate word.

"And he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven". Is this where you are looking sinner? We said in our concluding remarks this morning, you may feel far from stedfast and often have to confess your unstedfastness, your weakness, and despite that and without excusing the treachery and departures of our heart from God, is there not, as we look back over the years, and some of us can look back we trust quite a few years now, has there not been that stedfast looking? Where else can we look but unto Christ? "Looking stedfastly into heaven, he saw the glory of God". O we can never look upon the glory of God but with terror apart from Christ. If Jesus were not there we could never look up. That glory would consume us, would be a terror to us as one of our dear hymnwriters says -

"'Til God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find,
The Holy just and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind".

But if Emmanuel's face appear
My hope, my joy begins,
Tis He forbids my slavish fear,
Tis He forgives my sins".

O what a difference when Emmanuel's face appears - and if indeed you know anything of the Lord Jesus, or we know anything of the Lord Jesus, we know that other experience when the Lord first showed us something of what we were as sinners before Him, the Terror of our poor mind; and how we feared that banishment from that Holy God must be our everlasting portion. But O when the Lord Jesus appears! It is the same glory, the same God. There is no diminutive of the holiness and majesty and justice and truth and glory of God in Christ, nay, rather it is magnified. A thought that has struck me several

times during this year as never before is how the Holy Spirit makes use of in the Scriptures, that term Magnified. We know that God in His glorious Trinity, His Person, is incapable of increase. Behold what He is, filling immensity, inhabiting eternity, and yet in His dear Son, in the Gospel of His grace, He is exceedingly magnified. It is the same as when we use a magnifying glass to look at an object. We do not materially increase the size of that object although it is enlarged to us, and that is just, as I understand it that word we find in the Scriptures, and some of us have to pray do we not concerning that grace, "O magnify that grace in me", feeling that it will indeed be magnified if such sinners as we are ever safely reach glory.

"He saw the glory of God", the holiness, the justice. We do not hear of a particular shape or form, but the glory of God. Just as Moses, you know, when speaking to the children of Israel of old and concerning their discovery of God on Siniah, he said, now remember, ye saw no shape nor image, but the glory of God. Glory that filled their minds with terror and made them say, 'O let not God so speak again to us', and you know even Moses said, 'I exceedingly fear and quake. But how wonderful it is when that same glory, that same God appears in the face of the Lord Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, it no longer distresses, no longer forbids a poor sinners approach, but attracts, draws, draws with the bonds of love and with the cords of a man, draws, and yet it is the same glory. To see in Christ the sinner's friend, and yes, magnified. Is this what you want? Is this the one thing some of you come from Lord's day after Lord's day and week after week, and as you look into the Word of God, in secret, as you fall on your knees in secret, O is it this, "Jesus reveal Thyself to me"?

You will not see another Jesus than that blessed Person that Stephen saw. You will not see a different glory, it will be the same glory as we said this morning, the same in nature though different in degree. O the blessed effects of this if one has ever known it! As we have just said of Moses, he made haste and bowed his head and worshipped. Have you, some of you when you have had a glimpse of the Lord Jesus and seen the glory of God in Him, the love of God, the truth, the justice of God and all those what the hymnwriter speaks of, but we must understand that in a right way, "Those jarring attributes of God". There is nothing that jars of the attributes of God as to God Himself, but in the manifestations of them to sinners; "How then can justice smile at mercy on her knees?" Well, Christ has made reconciliation. I used to look at that Scripture in one of the Epistles where we read of Christ having reconciled things in heaven and things in earth. I used to think I understood a little of those things in earth here, but not in heaven. Well, I believe it is what the dear hymnwriter said in the hymn referred to; He reconciles justice and mercy, righteousness and peace. Mercy and truth embrace each other in the salvation of poor lost sinners, the greatest, the highest glory of God is manifest - and O if it affords such pleasure, such delights to be caught away we trust as is our case occasionally from the things of time and sense, and have, as the hymnwriter says, "strong affections fixed on God's dear Son, what must it be to be in the enjoyment of that for ever and ever, to behold the glory of God.

"Looking up steadfastly into heaven, he saw the glory of God".

"Heaven is that holy, happy place,
Where sin no more defiles,
Where Christ unveils His blissful face
And looks, and loves and smiles".

Whereas a poor sinner at first under conviction of sins as we said of dear Philpot this morning, says, O I can never come there, yet when he sees the precious blood of Jesus, the glory of God revealed in redemption, in salvation in all its parts, then hope

springs up in his soul, a blessed who can tell it may be at first that will one day be ripened into a blessed hope and assurance. Those first 'who can tells' are very sweet. I well remember one of the first times that a 'who can tell' I believe rose in my poor heart. Having spent a part of the evening with my late dear parents and one or two others in the family who I felt sure would get to heaven, I looked at them and felt, "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee O people saved by the Lord ", but what will become of me ? but later on in that same evening we were looking at the hymn and singing it together a few of us, "I'll not despair, for who can tell ?" O that "who can tell" springs up and bouys the sinking soul against despair.

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus". Ah you will know Him when you see Him, there is no mistaking this glorious Person, and this is where I believe the child of God delights to see Him. It is good, yes and precious by faith to be led to look back first to His humble birth into this world, that poverty that He condescended to go to, look back to His obedient childhood and how He grew in grace and in stature and in favour with God and man. A mystery that we cannot comprehend, but faith believes it as recorded in Holy Scripture. Good to get a glimpse of Him in His poverty and weakness. O I remember once when away from home in the last war looking for lodgings, I believe I had a little glimpse of Christ, just a little, one cannot claim great things, but I had been looking for lodgings and every door was shut and I wondered what I should do and that word dropped into my heart, "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man had no where to lay His head". How little we think of Christ in His sufferings when we turn to our comfortable beds and homes and pillows at night, but within half an hour the Lord did make a way for me; but it is as we are brought into those things, and only so that we can know and understand anything of fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, and that is a good thing, O it sweetens pain to peace, it makes tribulation light, a light affliction, whilst faith looks forward wo that eternal weight that exceeds, "An eternal weight of glory" that is laid up in heaven for the suffering saints of God.

It is sweet to look back to Him in His temptations, solemn. I was speaking to one near and dear to me in the ties of nature only a week ago, who I believe is doing business in deep waters. Ah, he said, I was thinking of the Lord Jesus being led up to the pinnacle of the temple, I knew what was passing in his mind, and the enemy saying "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence, for it is written He shall give His angels charge over Thee to keep Thee in all Thy ways", Ah the devil knows Scripture, could he have found one Scripture from Genesis to Revelation that would suit his diabolical purpose more suitably than that ? But it is only in some measure as one is led that way.

It is a good thing to get a glimpse of Him in company with His disciples in Gethsamane, and in the Judgement Hall and at Golgotha, in His sufferings. O it is a precious thing to hear that voice so to speak echo from Calvary, "It is finished" and to feel a hope that our salvation was finished. It is a wonderful thing is that, but what I was coming to is this, and it is a good thing to see Him in the grave. His holy body could see no corruption: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption". We must all see corruption when we die, unless of course we live to see the end of time. But Christ could see no corruption. His body was holy, and that load of sin that had been laid upon Him just before He made an end of it, hence forth an end is put to sin and for believers is brought in everlasting righteousness

Good to see Him there. Good to see Him rise triumphant from the tomb. But this is what I was coming to, while it is good and profitable and blessed in some measure to walk with Him to continue with Him in His afflictions, in His temptations, in His sorrows, yet we do not want to see Him back there, it is the thought that He is

now in glory, now exalted. As the apostle in those wonderful opening words to the Hebrews said, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who, being the brightness of His glory". You will never see the glory of God apart from and outside of Christ, "And the express image of His Person", a perfect image, "When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they". Is this the Jesus you get a glimpse of here and there ?

Now I want as the Spirit may enable me to try and look at this - these glimpses, these revelations that the child of God gets of the Lord Jesus in two distinct ways. Now we said of Moses that he did not get a view of the Lord Jesus every day like he had when he was in the Mount. He had to go in the strength of that revelation, I believe, for many days. Same as Elijah. The Lord reveals Himself to His dear people and then hides Himself, but such has been that discovery of His glory to their souls they can never forget, never really lose sight of it. Faith centres in Christ, He is the object of true faith, and when once a child of God has had if but a distant glimpse of the Lord Jesus, perhaps leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, or in the Gospel, or more blessedly to descend into his own heart and see the Lord Jesus revealed there, the hope of glory, he will never lose its effects, and he will endure, endure as seeing Him Who is invisible.

Now the dear people of God do enjoy those special visits here and there, but I believe for the most part they are few and far between. One of the dear hymnwriters you know said,

"More often let Thy visits be,
Or let them longer last,
I can do nothing without Thee,
Make haste O God, make haste".

Now the hymnwriter you see, still saw Him by faith, but not in the immediate enjoyment of one of those blessed discoveries of His Person, of His work, of His great salvation, of His atonement, of His righteousness, of His grace, of His Godhead, of His sacred humanity; and I believe at various times the blessed Spirit is pleased to reveal Christ, sometimes He reveals Him in one particular way, and sometimes in another. Sometimes to know Him as the all and in all.

Well, you may be favoured some of you with a visit from the Lord - perhaps many years ago, and you have never forgotten it, but He has hidden Himself and now you go mourning without the Sun, but the difference is this, it is like one who has seen the Sun, the Sun burst through the clouds as the Son of Righteousness and felt His healing beams in the soul, rejoiced in Him the hope of glory, but then darkness veils those skies, clouds, mists, the fogs, the damps of unbelief obscure the glorious sight. Perhaps mountains hide Him from your face and you may pray at such times, "O that Thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down" and over these mountains of sin, mountains of guilt, cause them to flow down at thy presence. You may pray,

"Burst through the clouds O source of light,
Let joy succeed the weeping night".

Just as when you have once seen the natural sun and know it is in the heaven though concealed by clouds or mists or other objects that come between, yet we know it is there, so the child of God who has once had a glimpse, a revelation of Christ, he knows that Christ is there, however low and dark he may become, however tried he may be and tempted to fear that the Lord will be gracious no more, that He will hide Himself for ever, as the Psalmist did in one of the early Psalms, he said, "How long wilt Thou forget me O Lord, for ever ? How long shall I take counsel in my soul having sorrow in my heart daily ? How long shall the enemy be exalted over me ?", and you see not the Lord in that way

that you hope you saw Him, and you may be tempted, yes the enemy will tempt you that it was all a delusion, all fancy. But the proof of it will be that you will be kept looking, and looking stedfastly too, for Him to appear. Since I have been speaking like this my mind has gone back to one of my first visits to this Chapel. Mr. Popham preached from that word, it is in Job I believe, "But men see not that bright light which is in the cloud, for the wind passeth and covereth him". I remember little of what he said, but I have never forgotten the text. The Spirit clears the clouds and reveals the beauty of the Redeemer.

"...Saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God". O and do you not in all your petitions more or less, if not in actual words as you seek to approach unto God, say "Let Thy hand be upon the Son of Thy right hand". A real Man, a sympathetic Man, One Who has been tempted in all points like as we are, to an infinite degree beyond whatever we can know, He Who has suffered for the sake of poor sinners. ' O Lord God, the Father, look upon Thy beloved Son, look upon me in Him, I would seek to venture beneath His precious blood', and when you see Jesus there, at the right hand of God, you will say as He is revealed, that He has entered heaven with His own blood, it is wonderful, He is there exalted for poor needy sinners, there to appear in the presence of God, O how precious His intercession becomes !

I was trying to describe, though perhaps very feebly, the difference between those few blessed views that the child of God has of the Lord, when by faith the Lord Jesus is made so real, so near, so precious that he has taken and embraced Him in the arms of faith as the antidote of death, and whilst the power of that visit lasts there is not one doubt but what you will safely reach heaven - whilst the glory lasts you cannot doubt, you cannot despair, sins as black as they are are blotted out. Now there are those few views by faith and faith continuously, stedfastly looks, it knows that the Lord Jesus is in heaven, though a veil, though clouds come betwixt; thus we often go forward and backward as poor Job did and we cannot see Him on the right hand or on the left hand where He doth work. You see Job could not see Him then, but he knew this, he knew that the Lord could see him, he knew that no clouds, no barriers, hid his case from the Lord, "He knoweth the way that I take and when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold", so we shall not get those blessed revelations every day, but there is, notwithstanding this, a looking to the Lord, looking, as Peter beautifully describes it in his 1st chapter writing to those poor tempted tried pilgrims, he says, "If need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto the praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, Whom having not seen", that is with the natural eye, though faith sees Him in all His suitability and preciousness and truth and goodness and grace as He is revealed in the Scriptures, "Whom having not seen ye love, in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls"; now that is seeing Him by faith, and even in the midst of temptations, do you not cast a longing eye, a wistful eye? Where are your eyes,? Where do you look in your troubles, your afflictions, your trials? Where do you look? Where can you look but to the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God?

"And he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God". This is what he saw. You will remember this morning we spoke of the four simple divisions of this text, very simple, what Stephen did in that solemn moment, "He looked, being filled with the Holy Ghost, he looked up into heaven", simple but blessed, and it is the only place that poor sinners can look, what a mercy if we are looking there .! "Seeing therefore, we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, looking unto Jesus, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despised the shame and is now set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". He looked up to heaven, O the Holy Ghost always directs a poor sinner to the place where grace abounds, the

throne of grace, and what he saw; and then what he said, simple what he said, but blessed, do you covet anything greater? O how wonderful it would be if we had just such a glimpse of Him this night to be able to say, "Behold", O what a wonderful thing it is, it is a wonder, it will make you say behold, that the great God should ever be pleased to look upon poor sinners, to reveal Himself to sinners and we should worship, we should confess our sin, we could not get low enough before Him, we should be humbled in the dust, at His feet, yet while we sing as the hymnwriter says, our joys would rise immensely high -

"While Thy glory strikes my eyes
The humbler I shall lie".

O it is humbling and yet it is exceedingly blessed. "Behold". Ah what a wonder it is that this glorious God reveals Himself to sinners in such a way! "I see the heavens opened". The way to God. He saw that ladder I believe that Jacob saw, and as Christ said to Nathaniel, "Thou shalt see the Son of Man and the angels ascending and descending upon Him, see that way from earth to heaven. "I see the heavens opened", opened to poor needy sinners, repenting sinners, destitute sinners that feel their need of salvation, the poor and the needy. "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man". There is something so precious about this name of the Lord Jesus, He often used it to set forth His real humanity, precious humanity, O it is a great mystery, "Great is the mystery of godliness", reason will never comprehend it but God was manifest in the flesh, took our nature sin only excepted, that He might have somewhat to offer, that He could stand in the sinners place here on the earth, and then ever live to intercede for them in glory.

"I see the Son of ^Man standing on the right hand of God", yes, with His precious atoning blood, all the merits of His all availing sacrifice, that spotless righteousness that He bestows upon poor guilty sinners, see Him standing there to intercede, yes, and to send down gifts for poor men, sinful men upon the earth, "He ascended on high He has led captivity captive", for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Blessed sight! O that we may get if but a glimpse of what godly Stephen saw! yes, and see Him as the hymnwriter said, "Day by day", then we shall worship Him, then we shall repent, then we shall get the whole cluster, you know, if I may take just a moment or two more of your time, sometimes we look at particular graces, repentance, hope, love, faith, perseverance, humility, and we may pray for an increase of those graces, they are like single grapes so to speak in that cluster which the prophet said, "My soul desireth the first ripe fruit", he wanted the whole cluster and when you get a glimpse of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit, you get the whole cluster all at once, repentance will flow out of your heart, then to sink as nothing at the Lord's feet, praise, adoration, blessing will flow out of your heart, true worship, and there will be hope, yes, and I believe while that visit lasts, that sacred confidence that you will get to heaven and that it will be well at last. May the Lord bless His word and forgive anything one may have said amiss.

Amen.

(Transcribed verbatim and not edited for publication).