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Lalson

Sermon Preached at Galeed Chapel Brighton by Mr J.K. Popham on  
Sunday morning, 27th March 1921

*Text: 1 Peter. 1 verse 21*

*Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and  
gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God*

There are two ways of believing in God, and there are three means, by which these two ways of believing are brought into being and furthered. The first way of believing in God is believing in Him as the Creator, of heaven and earth, and all that is therein. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1 verse 1. And the Apostle Paul declares in the Hebrews 11 verse 2. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Again in Romans 1 verse 20. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, ....so that they are without excuse:" if we do not believe Him.

To view the heavens and the earth, which He made, and all the beautiful order of things, which He created, is a means of believing in God. And it is a beautiful religion, this natural religion. It is beautiful, it brings the human mind into a proper subjection. It brings the heart to worship, it brings the understanding to submit unto Him who has done all things well, in creation work. It is good for men to do so, to believe in God; but it is a religion for innocent people. It was a religion for Adam before he fell, a religion that suits a mind unwarped by sin, a conscience undefiled by rebellion, and affections unchilled by sin. It is a beautiful religion, one can think of Adam approaching his maker and admiring his eternal power and Godhead in all things that he saw, made by his Creator.

I wish that you who fear God with the Spirit, with the spirit of grace, may daily have that belief in God that will make you afraid of sinning. That will make you afraid of Him, that will cause you to bend the knee, with natural adoration of your maker "For in him we live, and move, and have our being:" Acts 17 verse 28. It is due to Him, that you should so worship Him. Young people remember, and may we who are older remember, what we naturally owe to our maker. "It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves;" Psalm 100 verse 3. Perish for ever the awful theory, and heresy of evolution, that will make the account of Moses in Genesis of Creation a myth.

It is a fearful thing to deny the Almighty, in His great work of Creation. O you young people "Remember now thy Creator in the days of your youth," Ecclesiastes 12 verse 1. Remember to whom you owe your being, remember that if you deny Him, you cannot rob Him of His right to judge you. Remember that God will bring you into judgement for all your vain thoughts against Him. This so good and beautiful believing has another means, whereby it may act and live before God, namely providence. The providence of God has often, in the history of the world, been conspicuous, as to make the subjects of the working of providence acknowledge God. And it would be good, if we here had wisdom, to make this observation to ourselves. "The lot is cast into the lap." Proverbs 16 verse 33. Your project, this design, that attempt or the other. One thing fails, and another fails, and that opens, which you had no thought of. Who is the author of these things, this working, in whose hand is the cup full of mixture ? From whom comes permission ? It does not come from the east, neither from the west. God setteth up one and putteth down another. Who gives power to get wealth ? Who has made poor, and rich, high and low ? Who prospers one man, and who continually holds back another from success "The lot is cast into the lap."

Hear let me again speak to you, and you young men and women, there is a God over you, over your steps, your plans, your endeavours. He can give your endeavours success, or He can blow on them. Believe in God, believe in that God, in whose hand is a cup full of mixture, the dregs of which the wicked shall drink. Believe in Him from whom cometh permission. "He setteth up one, and putteth down another." Striking have been the providences of God. When Moses was objecting because he felt unfit to go, and be the deliverer of Israel, God said to him "Who made man's mouth ?" Exodus 4 verse 11. But because Moses continued his objection, then the Lord said "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And behold he cometh forth to meet thee.....And he shall be thy spokesman" Exodus 4 verses 14 & 16. Who moved Aaron to go and search for his brother Moses, he had not done it for 40 years ? The hand of God was in it. A mad prophet would go his own way, notwithstanding God. What did the Lord do ? He made the dumb ass rebuke the madness of the prophet. ( Numbers 22 verses 28 - 34. There is a God. "The lot is cast into the lap." You perhaps did dispossess, "but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Proverbs 16 verse 33. This believing is beautiful, it leads men into right courses. It may have led some of you young people, even to kneel down and ask God to do you good in providence. It may have led you to pray, that He would bless this and that movement. Go on that way. Acknowledge Him in all your ways.

It is good, it leads to morality, it strengthens moral feelings, it is a kind of buttress to a person's character. To acknowledge God is a good and proper thing, never forget God. Remember Him in your ways, remember Him who can open, and keep all men from shutting, and who can shut, so that no man can open. But this believing may be, and if alone is terribly short.

There is a second believing, and another way of believing, and means of believing. We have this in the text "Who" that is these believers in Jesus Christ, these who rejoiced in Him, who had been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, these believe in God by Jesus Christ. This is another way of believing, another faith, a blessed faith, it is called the faith of God's operation. Being immediately begotten in the heart by the Holy Ghost, in an unseen God, yet a God seen in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Natural faith in the Creator may be born of a sight of the wisdom, and the power, and good design, and kindness of the Creator. His invisible things, may be so apparent to a person who has nothing in his heart but enmity against God, as to make him believe naturally in God. He may say I cannot be an infidel when these things come of themselves.

But this better faith, this faith of God's operation exists independently of the view that one may have of Creation's work. Natural faith exists in the heart as a marred work of the Eternal Spirit. True faith sees God not as others see Him, in creation, in providence, but in the Lord Jesus who by Him manifested in time, but fore-ordained before the foundation of the world by Him, as the representative of God, the declarer of God's name, the Saviour of the lost "by Him" did these Christian strangers believe in God. This is a beautiful faith, it is called the faith of God's elect, being peculiar to them. It is called precious faith, precious not only in respect of its origin, but in respect of its object, Jesus Christ, on whom it lives and acts and moves. It is a beautiful faith, it lives in spite of opposition. It has the opposition of carnal, fallen reason, and the opposition of Satan. If Satan could assail the faith of a pure man, how will he assail this faith, his object is that it be marred, with its object, the Lord Jesus. For its ultimate end is Christ - God and Salvation. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." 1 Peter 1 verse 9. This leads me therefore first of all to speak of the immediate object, who is also the Mediator, by whom we believe in God.

The object is Christ, He is there as the representative of God the Father, who verily fore-ordained Him before the foundation of the world. To come into the world, as the Apostle John, in his first epistle (chapter 4 verse 9) says "In this was manifest the love of God toward us, because

that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." John also says in his Gospel (chapter 1 verse 14). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." There is then the very person of Jesus Christ to be spoken about. One's lips are not worthy to name that name, yet may the Lord help one to name that name with reverence and affection. Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, Incarnate Jesus Christ. With all the love and mercy, pity and goodness of God's might in its fullness. Jesus Christ sent into this world by His Father. Love sent Him, love brought Him, wisdom devised Him as to the constitution of His person. Wisdom filled Him and fills Him, Love fills Him, grace fills Him, pity fills Him, and good intention to men fills Him, Jesus Christ. Names were given to Him by prediction, Emmanuel, a name given to Him by prediction long before He came into the world. Jesus Christ, Who being the brightness of His, (Father's) glory, and the express image of His person," Hebrews 1 verse 3.

This is He by whom sinners believe in God. Of necessity if you are to believe in God, you must know Him, who is the object, the Mediator. You must believe in Him, through whom you are going to God. Believing is the fruit of hearing for "faith cometh by hearing," Romans 10 verse 17. It is the fruit of seeing "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee". John 9 verse 37. If you have heard in your heart God's word, you have believed what He said to you. This is the great point, men do not grow into believers, they are created believers, they did not grow into this religion, they are brought to it, and it is brought to them. They are run into it, as molten metal is run into a mould that, that may take its shape. It is good to have this religion, this blessed faith.

When Ahimaaz went to David without any message, and was asked what he had to say, and what had taken place, he said, he did not know, he saw a multitude and he heard something, but nothing distinct. (2 Samuel 18 verse 29) And if you have never had any distinct view of God, never heard Him speak to you at all, that is just what you can say. If you can say nothing at all, you do not know. You do not know why you believe, and you do not know what you believe, and there is no end to our faith, no object. But if through some hearing, and some view of Christ you are enabled to say "I believe in God the Father and in Jesus Christ" you can say a very great thing, a very wonderful thing. It is thus to be a believer, and I would draw your attention to another thing respecting Christ. Not only did He go as a representative of His Father, and as "the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person," but also,

He came as the Lamb of God, which means He came to suffer, to die, and He did suffer, and He died. Yes:

He took the dying traitor's place  
And suffered in his stead; (Gadsby's - 95 verse 3)

He became the Lamb of God in eternity, in the purposes of God "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." 1 Peter 1 verse 20. When John saw Him on Jordan's bank, he got such a view of, who Christ was, what His mission was, what he had come to do and suffer, that he immediately preached Him. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1 verse 29. And that view of Him expounds the scripture, expounds it, in its blessed statements of the Lord Jesus in His temptations, in His weakness, in His sufferings, in the garden of Gethsemane, in His dumbness in the judgement hall.

When His reputation was taken away from Him, and His matchless, vicarious, efficacious sufferings on the cross, when He was crucified. It is a great thing to see Christ, if you see yourselves to be sinners, in the light of the Holy Ghost. You will find it is a great sight, when you get it, the sight of Christ crucified, Christ dying, and dying, drawing sinners unto Himself. Christ lifted up on the gospel pole, that bitten sinners may look to Him and live. Christ accepted sin, by pouring out His soul unto death; Christ the object of the divine curse, though also the object of divine love, as the head of His church and people. Christ loved of His Father, yet smitten by His Father, sent to die, commanded to die, yet loved because He did it. "Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down My life." John 10 verse 17. Such a view of Christ will attract a soul, does attract, and does forbid despair, and does raise hope, sweet hope. "Who by Him" thus revealed, yea believe in God.

Now my beloved friends, look at this question, look it strait in the face. I do not ask if you believe in the Creator. If you do it is a great thing, I do not ask if you believe in the providence of God, in God ordering the affairs of the whole world. If you do, that is a good faith. I ask this, as in God's sight. Do you believe in God through Jesus Christ? Is God in Christ the object of your faith? Do you see that though your guilt were a million times, if one may speak without exaggerated expressions, a million times more than it is, that invaluable blood of Christ could cleanse all and present you spotless, and without blame before God in love, could if your heart was a stone, melt it? Could if you were now in the very gates, and in your feelings, in the very belly of hell, bring you out, and carry you to heaven?

It is a great thing to be a believer in Jesus Christ, and to see God in Him, believe in God in Him, hold to God in Him, pray to God in Him, love God in Him, wait on God in Him, look for God to come to you in Him. "Who by Him" as the means, and as the Mediator, and as the perfect "image of God," as the "Brightness of His Glory."

"Believe in God," and yet I would be a little particular here, for true belief in God has certain perfections, and beauties and loveliness of God in view. And if you believe in God by Jesus Christ, you believe in a God of love. In this as I have before quoted from John's Epistle chapter 4 verse 9. "In this was manifested the love of God manifested toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." O that love of God expressed in the gospel of John 3 verse 16. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That love of which Jude speaks in verse 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God," Love running in the channel which God Himself digged, not the channel that we would dig, no, but His own. The parent would dig the channel for love to run into all his children's hearts, but God has dug His own channel. And chosen His own people before the foundation of the world. In Him who was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.

Why my friends, this love is a bottomless sea, a shoreless ocean, to all the saints. It is wonderful and they are brought to venture wholly upon it. As they see it in Christ, flowing in that glorious way of the atonement, the eternal Word of God. Love will cover all things, with you. The love of God, it will be your convoy, your protection, your provision. It will be the care of God for you, it will be the tenderness of God to you, the compassions of God for you, the fullness of God to supply you, and the faithfulness of God to stand by you, and bring you through all to praise Him at last. The love of God is a free love, and a great love. He commends the greatness of it, in this "That, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5 verse 8.

Now if you have got faith created in you by the Holy Ghost, and you get given to you a sight of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you will see love, infinite love, electing love, dying love, faithful love, omnipotent love, love that comes to a loathsome sinner. And spreads its skirt over that sinner, and speaks kindly and omnipotently to that sinner, saying live. Nothing to give the Creator delight, or to merit esteem, and yet it came, because He would, just for that reason. "Who by Him" by the Lord Jesus Christ, naming, declaring His Father, praising His Father.

*pitying  
love*

"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;" John 14 verse 9. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." John 14 verse 1. You will believe on Him if you have saving faith, and through Him reach the Father. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father". Ephesians 2 verse 18. Well, do you know this great point in saving religion, the love of God. O but what an anxious time, that often is, with some of the Lord's people, as to whether He loves them. Why, you may be feeling at times, that were you possessor of all the gold in the world, you would gladly part with it, if the parting with it, would bring your heart a feeling of assurance, that God loved you. He must say it, He must tell you, He must say "I have loved thee with an everlasting love:" Jeremiah 31 verse 3. I have set my love upon thee eternally, I gave, as an outflowing of My love, My beloved Son for you. I sent Him, in love, to die for you, I sent My Spirit, in love, to quicken you.

You want the Lord to say it. He and He only is able to give satisfaction on that point. You may bear evidences of God's love to you, and other people may look on thee, and say, "O what a good God that poor sinner has", you may have such fear of God, such desire for Him, such confession of sin, such leaving of the world, such a godly walk and conversation, as that godly people, can look on you and say "there is a child of God" and all the while you may be saying "I am nothing but a poor empty, hard hearted, ignorant, distant unburdened sinner", yes and ten thousand saints, if there voices could be put into one voice, and could that one voice say to you, your evidences are a most conclusive proof, indubitable to us, that you are a child of God. You would not be satisfied, you would want the Lord's voice, the still small voice, the whisper and witness of the Spirit. "The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Romans 8 verse 16. Loved of God.

Well it is a great thing, to see the love of God, in the very person and work of Christ, and to feel it shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. And again if you believe in God through Jesus Christ, you believe in the name that God gave to Himself, when speaking to Moses, in a case that needed the name, a case that the name you follow, this namely "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, (slow to anger), and abundant in mercy and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sin," Exodus 34 verse 6 & 7. Does not that meet a bad case ? and you go aside at times to confess all, and mourn over all you have, iniquity transgression and sin, and wonder, again and again, if one so wicked as you can be forgiven. But the Lord declares His name in your heart by Jesus Christ.

Then you will perceive the wonders of His love. "Who by Him do believe in God that raised Him from the dead." Jesus raised from the dead, Jesus opening a fountain for sin and uncleanness. Jesus entering heaven with His own blood, there to intercede, will declare what God can do. "My name is in Him" Exodus 23 verse 21. He that hath seen Me, the Redeemer, hath seen the Father, the forgiver of all transgressions, iniquity and sin. It is a great thing when faith is led to fix here, a great thing indeed when the atonement is brought to faith's view, and faith fixes here, fixes on the merit of Christ, nothing else. "O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." Psalm 25 verse 11.

Believing friends, do you believe this. Has God the Holy Ghost made you believers in this, that all the mountains of your guilt and sin can be removed by the blood of Christ. That everything that makes you a creature worthy of destruction, is taken away, and every thing that can make you a person worthy to sit down with the Lord at the marriage supper is given you by Jesus Christ, and God in Him ? A full gospel I made manifest here. God forgives sin for Christ's sake, and people taught by God, are led to pray for this. "Forgive us our trespasses". Pardon mine iniquity, and says John "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous:" 1 John 2 verse 1. And if any man sin "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 2 verse 7. And here God becomes a delight to the soul. Then will I go unto God. "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy:" Psalm 43 verse 4. And that is understood experimentally, by everyone who is brought in this way to believe in God by Jesus Christ. "That your faith and hope might be in God" 1 Peter 1 verse 21. The righteousness which is of God by faith.

When Israel saw that his righteousness was short, he was looking at it, it was, so to speak, an object. What did he do ? He went about to establish his own righteousness. When Gentiles, having no righteousness at all, were brought to righteousness, what was that righteousness ? "The righteousness which is of God by faith." Philippians 3 verse 9. Faith was fixed there, hope was settled there, and that is the case with every believer in God. "That your faith and hope might be in God" That it might be settled there. May the Lord make us real believers. May faith fix in Him, as He is in Christ revealing Himself.

Amen.