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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday morning 5 January 1930

1 TIMOTHY 2 v 5 and 6

"For there is one God and one Mediator between
God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave
Himself a ransom for all to be testified
in due time"

This announcement is important beyond all words. "There is one God". We have to do with Him whether we will or no. He created us; our breath is in His hand; our circumstances are in His hand, and we shall stand one day before His Judgement Seat. This glorious Being, whose Name we often use without due reverence, takes notice of every thought, of every idle word, of every improper look, of every covetous feeling, of all improprieties, and sins, and this little congregation is under His immediate gaze. There is nothing hidden from His eye. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do". A little knowledge of this produces awe, and trembling at His majesty. 'Tis an awful word - "One God", unknowable to men except He reveals Himself, and I would, if enabled by the Lord, bring to your notice on this first Lord's Day of the New Year, a little concerning this great One. "One God". One God known by this Name - "I AM THAT I AM". Eternity is more than we can conceive; a Being who had no beginning, shall have no end, who has no parts; no component parts make up His Being. He is One, holy, holy, holy, and that expresses all that we call Divine perfections. Everything that we read in the Scripture concerning this great God you can put into that word thrice repeated - Holy - and Joshua told Israel that they could not serve the Lord for this reason - because He is holy. Not - first of all - because they did not wish to; not - first of all - because they had no religion; but because He is holy. The Lord give us an impression of this - "I AM THAT I AM". Moses did not want to go blindly and declare a Being whose Name he had no knowledge of, he went to Israel. When I come, he said, to the people, and say The Lord hath met with me, what shall I say? They will ask me what His Name is; What shall I say? Say - "I AM THAT I

AM"; say "I AM hath sent thee". O what a change a little knowledge of this would make in us. What a fear, wholesome, not slavish necessarily, wholesome fear would seize our minds, and the Holy Ghost is able to give such an impression. Eternity is God's I dwell in eternity, He said. Think of it. We are creatures of a day; our foundation is in the dust. God inhabits eternity, which means that He had no beginning; that He can have no end. O dear friends, there is One God, glorious in holiness, and to speak of Him needs - to speak of Him rightly needs - that live coal from off the altar to touch the lips. A solemn thing to speak of God. Do you believe it when you talk about Him; do you believe it when you talk about Him to one another, that you are naming a Being infinitely different from, infinitely higher than, yourselves? It is a good thing to be duly impressed with the knowledge, or sense, of this glorious One. The nations are as a drop of a bucket to Him, as the small dust of the balance. Altogether lighter than vanity are the nations of the world. And yet a poor creature of yesterday, whose foundation is in the dust, may have - yea, myriads of such creatures have had, and still have - right thoughts of this God; but many have wrong thoughts. It is written of many - "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself". And the Psalmist reports of some, that they said, The Lord seeth not. He does not see. Nay, they said, He does not hear; so therefore we are at liberty to live as we wish. O, but says God, I will deal with you and I will say - What have you to do to take My Name into your lips, to speak of My Covenant, and to tread My courts, for I am the Lord. "There is One God", and sinner, you will have to do with Him one day and He will have to do with you.

Think of His omniscience. What you think your most intimate friend may not know; He knows. The heart life of a man is that by which he will be judged more than anything that he may have done, because the heart life is the spring, the motive, the force behind all words, and all deeds, and this omniscient One knows. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do". Religion is known, profanity is known, faith is known, unbelief is known, gratitude is known, and ingratitude is known. Hardness of heart is known before His eye, as well as a soft, and contrite heart. Omniscience. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD." Ah sinner, you may hide your heart from

your friends, but you cannot hide it from the omniscient gaze of God, and did we really believe this more than we do, we should be afraid of thinking sometimes, and we should make a conscience of thinking, a conscience of speaking, a conscience of acting, for all things in you, and without you, all things belonging to you are naked and opened before His eye.

And think of His omnipresence, the immensity of God. "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD". The immensity of God - He can know no increase; He can never be less than He is. God's immensity is incapable of change. He can be neither more, nor less. And this omnipresence - Christ said, When you pray enter into your closet, and do not pray in the street to be heard of men - but whether in the street, or in your closet, there is this omnipresent God, and all things He gazes at, is present with. This One Being is omnipresent.

And think of His purity. Holy, Holy, Holy, is this God. Purity is His nature, purity beyond our conception. The holiest feelings and desires that may ever take possession of our hearts by the Holy Spirit's grace in us can never rise to this wondrous holiness, this eternal purity of Jehovah. Nothing stains it, nothing can touch it. He dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto. So glorious is this purity, this infinite purity, the heavens are not clean in His sight, and He chargeth His angels with folly, because comparatively there is nothing pure now outside Himself. Sin has marred everything and the only pure One is God Himself. Do you meditate on this dear Christian friends at times, the immense, the eternal purity of God? It has a voice respecting sinners; they may not, as such, enter into His presence. They may not, as such, take His Name on their lips. They may not, as such, even think of Him. O, the profanity of our nature. O the profaning of God's Name of which we are guilty. Pure. Every word is pure. Must not He, then - the source of words that come to His people in the Bible, and in their hearts - be infinitely pure?

Think of His justice, unstainable, pure justice; that when He consigns a man to perdition, pure justice is there. Rutherford has a beautiful word about this. He speaks of an innocent hell of

punishment, that is to say, punishment must be innocent when God inflicts it; strokes laid on men must be pure, just strokes, when God lays them on. The rod of the wicked is different, but the rod of God is a pure rod. He will do you no injustice, my friends; He cannot. One God, a just God, a just God. Abraham had some apprehension of this when he stood worshipping. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Can any stain come on God's justice? Happy the nation whose laws are good, and are justly administered, and that happiness has belonged to this nation, but O, what is that compared to this infinite justice, pure justice, unsullied, unstainable, infinite? If men - who talk about what God ought not to do, and what He ought to do; what would not be just in Him if He did it - if such men got one glimpse for a minute of this infinite purity of the justice of God, O how ashamed they would be to have uttered such horrible words and how afraid they would be that that justice might arrest them and deal with them for their unrighteousness. And how afraid the saints of God are sometimes in their consciences because of their impurities, and were it not for the righteousness of Christ brought to them, how could they think of approaching, and standing before, this God? Think of His purity and justice; think of it. If He dashed worlds to perdition, no stain would be on His justice. We cannot reckon sin properly until we come to see something of the Being of God, of the law of God. There is One omnipotent God; One omnipotent God, only one. "Is there a God beside Me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" said the Lord. And this God is Almighty. He said to Abraham - "I am the Almighty God, walk before Me and be thou perfect". O, sinner, this omnipotence, if it deal with you in nakedness, unclothed, unsheathed by the Redeemer, will be very terrible for you. I remember when a young man, now more than 60 years ago, this omnipotence and the justice of God together flashing into my conscience, dealt a blow to my worldliness, and to my vanity, and made me say that moment, Where that God is, I shall never be. I could wish that everyone here who has not had, in some measure, the feeling might have it, so great is this God. And then we fear - according to Scripture - "Fear Him who, after He hath killed the body, hath power to cast into hell" - fear Him. O, what sober people we should be if we had that fear in our spirit that the Lord Jesus speaks of - Fear God. Let man alone, he can do nothing to you; the devil can do nothing to hurt you, if this omnipotence in Jesus Christ covers you, and protects you. Nations against a saint could do no hurt.

Covered and protected and held up by omnipotence in Christ, what can harm a saint of the Most High? But, O, what can shield a man who is exposed to this omnipotence out of Christ? An awful day is coming, my brethren, when captains and kings, and great men of the earth, and all men out of Christ, shall say unto the rocks, and to the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that cometh and from the wrath of the Lamb, and any den, and any cave, they will be glad to find open into which they may run and hide themselves for fear of this Divine Majesty. "One God". Do you believe in Him? You may talk about Him; that is not the point. Do you believe in God? When did you come to believe in God? A little creature, less than an atom of dust, less than nothing, and yet important enough for God to notice, important enough for God to make a record of your life, your heart, your thoughts, your words. Ah, if this congregation, small as it is, could say, as one man - "I believe in God" - it would be a grand congregation, but it would be very sober, as I trust it is in good measure, a very sober congregation. Men believing in God do not meet together to talk about themselves, and to boast, and enter lightly into the house of worship. Nay, they know they have to do with God; that He instituted their worship, that He commanded their loyalty, that He told them to do honour to Him, saying, Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. That word enters into every part and particle of the gospel, and the Apostle here announces this great, this awful, this blessed fact - "There is One God". And let me say this, this God - who may, and who does indeed bear long with us, winks at many a thing in us, does not chasten harshly, does not bring us into account for every word that we speak that is not right - this God has appointed a day in which He will judge all by that Man whom He appointed, even Jesus Christ.

There is One God who is good. I would not leave this out. He is good, The Lord is good, good to give life, good to preserve life for a time. Good to maintain us as He does. Good in providence, giving us food to eat, and raiment to put on, and refreshing the earth with rain, and giving fruitful seasons. Everything declares God to be good, and a great thing it is to believe this. "I am the Lord", and He is a good God. Out of His goodness proceed good laws. Out of His goodness the Spirit was given to Israel in the wilderness. Out of His goodness, manna was rained down from heaven every day to sustain life

in the wilderness, and out of His goodness the rock was smitten, and waters gushed out, and followed Israel all the days of wandering in the wilderness. He is good, good to men, individuals, and to families, and to churches, and to communities, and to nations. He is good, and His goodness is proclaimed. Creation proclaims it, providence proclaims it, but some men think nothing of it; all comes by chance. According to the philosophy of the world, there is nothing but that which comes by chance.

There is another perfection I would name - "God only wise". Think of this - "God only wise". And perhaps you think that this has happened because so and so did something, and that that I expected was prevented because so and so prevented it. Second causes fill us in our thoughts at times, and keep us from thinking of the first cause. Who girded a man, not knowing God? "I girded thee though thou hast not known Me". Who ordered your steps? Who fixed your residence? Who guided you here, and there? Who sent trouble? Who sent comfort? Who sent deliverance? Who managed matters, so that things which looked as if they could only end in disaster, turned to good? "God only wise". O, brethren, our times are in His hand, all events are at His command. Should we, poor creatures who are crushed before the moth, should we resist the wisdom of God? One hymnwriter has written, and we sing it sometimes:

Wisdom and mercy guide my way;
Shall I resist them both
A poor blind creature of a day,
And crushed before the moth? (259)

"God only wise". A bad man does something, and if the something he does were left to its natural course, and result, what disaster there might be, but that wrong action God manages, and turns to the good of some saint, or saints. And the thing a man fears, a man of God, he takes to the Lord, and commits it to His hand. The Saviour committed Himself to the hand of His Father, and the saints are led by the Holy Spirit to commit their way unto the Lord, to trust also in Him. 'Tis good to believe that the tangled skein of our life, the difficulties, the perplexities, the things we are unable to manage, or even touch, that these are in the hands, all skilful, of "God only wise". And

some time, if it has not yet arrived, some time may come when you will look back, and say, That step which I took in ignorance as to any result was just the turning point in my whole life. God ordered it, managed it. He guided though I knew not that He was doing so. He guided. Watch His providence - you will see His wisdom - and do not forget that the non-observance of the operations of God is followed by punishment. "Because they regarded not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them." (Psalm 28 v 5). Ah if you watch God's providence, you will find the Scripture true - "All things work together for good to them that love God". They would not have done that if they were in the management of the saints, but they do that because they are under the guidance, and the control of "God only wise".

And one more word on this great subject, this God we have all sinned against. This holy, holy, holy Being we have all sinned against. There is no man exempt from that charge. Born in sin we were; shapen in iniquity we were, and from birth we have gone astray speaking lies. No man seeks after God. And this is God's own judgement, and verdict. He looked upon men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. (Psalm 14 v 2). Think of it, omniscience searching among men to see if He could find one man who feared God, and He said, There is none. They have all gone astray, they are out of the way. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm 14 v 3). What will this great, unchangeable God, do with worlds of sinners? What will He do with this congregation, with myself, with you? We have sinned against Him. Naturally, we do sin against Him. What will He do with us? Was the question ever pressed into your heart - What can I expect at the hand of this great, holy God, against whom I have sinned, and am sinning? Alone, in His glorious Trinity of Persons, alone, all He can do is to vindicate His honour, and condemn sinners; that is all. May you believe it, may I believe it. Now what has He done? Why, He has looked on men, sinners of mankind, and made choice of a bride for His Son. Elected men to eternal life, chosen some, out of the many - all of whom deserved nothing but wrath. He chose some to mercy and to life eternal. And how could this be done, for He is One, God is One, God is holy, God is just. His holiness, and His justice found, gloriously found, a ransom, found a Man who should be united to eternal Deity in the

Eternal Son, and has called Him in the text "One Mediator". This is what God has done. This awful God has done this tremendous thing. How lightly we speak of Christ, but what an awful thing it was that God did. In His love, and in His mercy, He chose the Man Christ Jesus, and the Eternal Son of God took into union with Himself the body which His Father prepared for Him, that, on that incarnate Deity, there should be imputed, and laid, all sins done by all the saints. "One Mediator". A Mediator is a person standing, and officiating between two parties who have a difference. The Mediator, the Lord Jesus, is between offended Majesty, and offending men, and His business as Mediator was to effect union between these two parties, to bring them together in amity, everlasting amity, to take all disability, all sin, all guilt, all pollution, all wickedness; take all away, and bring the sinner into, not only a capability of union, and approach to God, but bring him actually into that happy state. Happy the man whose God is the Lord Jesus Christ. Happy the sinner who, at times, can sing,

This awful God is mine

My Father, and my Friend (From 770)

"One God"

O, then, though I cannot enter into it now particularly, see this great thing, this Mediator, this wondrous Person. Elihu, in the case of Job, was in God's stead, as Job had wished. "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead". So he said to Job - "My terror shall not make thee afraid". You have wished for one to be between you and God, and I am raised up to stand in that position. And then he said, of this great God - He looketh upon men, and if there be any, after the search, if there be any, if there be one found, who shall say - "I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not" - see the confession, see the state of a man's mind - "then is He gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" "I have laid help upon One that is mighty". I have laid sin upon the sinless One. I have done that. I have laid stripes on Him, I have wounded Him, I have bruised Him, I have put Him to grief, and it pleased Me to do it for your sakes. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him". "One Mediator". Leave the Church of Rome, leave all the mediators that are created by wicked men; there

is just this One Mediator revealed in the Scriptures - the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you need Him? Do you feel to need Him? Dare you not approach to God without Him? Are you in that condition of mind that you tremble at the thought of God's holy eye looking directly on you instead of looking at you through another? O, if you need this Mediator in the sense in which the Lord Jesus said - "I came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" - then turn your eye to this Mediator between God and man. Here is the infinite One, angry, justly angry. He brings in His law, good law, just law, spiritual law, and He brings the sinner to this book of the law, and reads in this book unto the sinner's conscience, and says - "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them", and the sinner hears, and trembles. His very ears tingle as he listens to the awful indictment read to him. His whole life, and his thoughts, and his words, and his looks; everything, his desire, and his aims, all brought out, and the man sees them. O, how I have trembled, how I have trembled at this, this part of my experience. But when Jesus is revealed as the Scriptures reveal Him, and the Spirit brings to light this wondrous Person, the Lord Jesus; when that glorious gospel preached by Isaiah in the 53 chapter of his prophecy, is preached in the heart; when Jesus, anointed with the Spirit of God to preach good tidings to the meek; when He shows Himself, when the glorious gospel of Christ shines into a sinner's heart, then the sinner looks to the Mediator. No sin now is a bar, no guilt is a bar, no bad state that is felt, no ignorance is a bar, no devil in the man is a bar. Jesus says - "Come unto Me", the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. And then gladly does the sinner sing

Lo! glad I come; and thou, blest Lamb,
Shalt take me to thee as I am; (144)

He takes the sinner's badness, takes his sins, washes him clean, gives him a change of raiment, and now this sinner, and a holy God get together, and God walks with him, and God walks in him, and speaks comfortably to his heart, gives him his vineyards in the valley of Achor, makes him sing there. Where he expected death, and destruction, there he finds life, and prosperity, vineyards in the wilderness, and there he sings. He sings - "Bless the Lord, O my

soul, and all that is within me". There is One Mediator. O dear friends, if you know Him, you know what it is to have life, and if you know Him, then you will want the match to be made between your soul and Himself, and then you will be saying

Lord, make our union closer yet,
And let the marriage be complete (234)

May this great word come into your hearts, and into my heart - "There is One God". Banishment from Him throughout eternity must be the lot of all who are out of Christ. But living in His presence is the happy prospect of all who are brought to God through the Mediator, the Lord Jesus.

AMEN.