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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 9 June 1929

1 TIMOTHY 2 v 5/6

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

If we really believe that there is one God, that faith will very deeply humble us; it will bring a weight on our spirits; it will make eternity a very great matter; it will make being right with God a great matter with us, and I would, in bringing this first word of the text before you, as enabled speak about it as a fundamental, as the middle and as the end of everything that is good. Whatever religion we may profess, if God be not the beginning and the ending of it, it will avail us nothing and if we do not believe in Him, that is, do not believe that He is, we cannot pray. Say prayers, we may, but we cannot pray. This, the Holy Ghost teaches in the Hebrews where He says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is". Think of it, "must believe that He is". It is so ordinary to talk about God; we have been brought up to hear His Name; we have been hearing it all our days. Was there ever a moment when He was real, when there was a majesty, a weight, a reality to us of this great God. There is something inexpressible in the belief that God is. One God who only hath immortality. The eternal God who only hath immortality and who has brought life and light to His people by Jesus Christ. One God; eternal, immortal, omnipresent, omniscient, holy, just, good. What a solemn thing that we here, whether we know it or not, live and move and have our being in Him; that our ways are before Him; that our hearts are naked and opened to His eye; that our actions are weighed, not as we weigh them, not as our neighbours weigh them; weighed by Him in their motives. That thought, that truth, has sometimes shaken me and made me tremble, for things that my friends, that I myself, may have thought good, they have been prompted by motives that are abominable in the sight of God. There is one God, eternal, immortal,

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invisible. It is said of Him that in the beginning He made the heavens and the earth. He made them by His eternal Son. He formed them by His Spirit who moved upon the face of the waters. He is the maker of heaven and earth and all that therein is. The sea and all deep places, and everything that moves God made; this one God; one God in the unity of His essence. And He made us; we live in Him as the Creator; we move in Him as the God of providence; we have our being in Him without its sin. If this truth were laid on our hearts by the Spirit, how differently we should live; what a difference it would make to our spirits; what a weight we should feel. There is one God. Listen, my friends, one God who says "Can any hide in secret places from Me? Do not I fill heaven and earth?" There is just God who will not do iniquity. Think of it. One just God who will not do iniquity, whose ways are right; holy and just He is, and He weighs the path of the just. And there is one God who has appointed a day in which He will judge, by the Man Christ Jesus, all men. We stand before Him now in the nakedness of our being. We stand before Him now in all the actions of our hearts, as well as in all the steps of our lives and He has appointed a day when all that we have done; idle words that we have uttered; wrong thoughts that we have cherished; and every evil thing, will be brought to light against us if we are not cleansed from evil and sin by the blood of Christ. There is one God; the Lawgiver. He gave to Adam two books, so to speak. The first was the book of creation on which God had written indelibly the invisible things of Himself, even His eternal power and Godhead. Adam opened his eyes, when he was made by God, and saw a world, so to speak, and that world had stamped upon it the invisible things of God, even His eternal power and Godhead. And the other book that God gave to Adam was the law. He put him into the garden of Eden; He gave him liberty to eat of every tree but one. That one must have been pointed out to Adam else how could he have known what to avoid? And O what a writing that was and what a sanction that writing had. Of every tree in the garden thou mayest eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou mayest not eat. In the day when thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die. And we have the same books; we have not the same pure eyes, the same pure mind that unfallen Adam had, but we have the same books, and no man can look on creation work as God's wonderful work, and be innocent if he denies God's invisible things as revealed in creation work. If you never see God in creation you

will never believe - you have not believed thus far - in that one God. And we have the book of the law. It is written and God has given it to us. It is written in our hearts as Gentiles. Gentiles have the work and show the work of the law, that is, the nature and the commandments of the law, written in their hearts. And this one God looks on us in this building, what we are thinking about, what we are wishing, what we are believing and what we are disbelieving, what we are loving and what we are hating. The things we are avoiding, the things we are pursuing. We ourselves, and these our belongings and doings are before Him. Can we bear the thought? I am of the opinion that if God were to make this truth a vital, powerful truth in us, as we are here, we should want to get to our rooms and fall before Him and indeed now, as here, we should in our spirits fall before Him. It is so common a thing to talk about Him, but we talk without feeling for the most part. O the wickedness of fallen nature. How solemnly true that word is of some: "God is not in all their thoughts", and of others "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself". I do not want, in my right mind, to be indifferent to this great Being, this glorious Being who dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto and yet who does make Himself known. We speak of revelation. God is a self-revealer of Himself. He has disclosed and opened out and set before us in creation and in His Word something of His Being, and a great mercy it is to feel it. We talk a great deal about religion. I do, you may do, but how little do we understand and fully believe and realise of this wondrous God, this eternal, invisible God. And though it may seem a superfluity for me to speak thus, yet I would be the means, if God would so order it and bless me, of bringing before you and setting on your minds this tremendous truth, this tremendous truth. So it has appeared, and I think I can say, so it does appear to me this morning. "There is one God". There be gods many and there be lords many in the minds of men, but, says Paul, we all have knowledge, we all know this, that an idol is nothing. The only One who is something is this one God. And I think I am not wrong in saying to you, even the most gracious of you who know the most of Him and get the most sweet intimacy with Him, a realisation that He is would very much shrivel you up. It would not take away anything that you have got from Him, but O it would make you so little. That is, at least, how I feel. It makes a creature so little when he believes that there is one God. But we are fallen; we are men in sin. We were born in sin;

we have lived in sin and sin lives in us. It is a natural thing for us to sin, quite an ordinary thing for us to sin. And when this is believed, that believing in one God, the one God, does it not make it a very serious thing to be living, to be men? for we have to do with this God, and this God will have to do with us. No escape; it is inescapable. He will bring into judgment every man and every thought of every man and every word of every man and every sin of every man and the depravity of the heart of every man. What a solemn thing. "Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?" Who can approach this holy Being? Who is he that engaged his heart to approach unto Me? This is very solemn. I remember the day when I became acquainted with this truth. It is a very solemn thing to be living with sin in your nature and with sin which has marked and marred your whole life. Very, very heavy it is. We are sinners, and no man who is in sin, living and dying in sin, can stand before this holy law of God. And some may be saying, then we are wrong altogether. That is true by nature; absolutely wrong. It is true by nature. And there is this to be remarked - our case is this - we are legally wrong. And a man who is legally wrong has no power to put himself right. It is not a question of will; it is a question of law in the first instance; that there is a law over us that binds us, that will search us, that will arraign us, that will indite us, that will prove us to be guilty people. That there is such a law that binds us, the Scriptures abundantly prove. Is not that solemn? Do you believe it, that you are legally wrong? Not only wrong in your feelings, but legally wrong; that God's law says you are wrong; that God's law pronounces an awful word on you: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them". You cannot escape, I cannot escape, it by anything that is possible to us. I say again, it is not a question of will, though that to be dealt with is a solemn thing, and will prove us to be wrong, but it is a question, in the first instance, of law. God made us, God put us under the law, and no man under the law has power to deliver himself from the law. And if this law comes, if it comes to our conscience, if it pronounces in our conscience that awful sentence: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, all commandments, all precepts, written therein - he is a cursed man - now then, between God and us what a barrier there is; O what a barrier. Not only sin in our feelings which we may strive to get rid of, but sin in and under the law, and that is the

barrier, and everyone feels it to whom God speaks. Now here shines the kindness of God, our Saviour, that, in His eternal love, He gave His only begotten Son to be the Mediator, a go-between, the Man Christ Jesus, to stand absolutely as a Mediator, a Substitute, in the place of His people. And here, sinner, here is wonderful ground for you to stand on in all your convictions and despondency and fear and terror; that God, who knew you eternally, as seeing that you would be one of His fallen creatures, and also as you desire to be one of His own people, He sets before you in holy Scripture - and may the Spirit set it before you as a truth suitable to you - He sets before you a Man, God-Man, to be the Mediator. A Mediator is a person in between other persons who have a quarrel. God has a quarrel with us. He has; He has an awful, a true quarrel with us. He made us upright and we have made ourselves abominable. He gave us a good law and power to obey it and we turned away from Him and preferred creature, even self, before the Creator. We were beguiled, in our father Adam, by the devil who said "Ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil". We know good and evil; we do know good and evil. This is God's quarrel with us. We have turned the back to Him and not the face. You have done it; I have done it. We are always, in some way and form, more or less doing it, turning the back to Him. Trouble comes, and the face is turned to the trouble and not to God. Affliction befalls us, and the eye is turned to the affliction and not to Him who sends it. The back is turned to God. Yea, we treat Him as if He were not, so wicked are we. This is His quarrel that we turn away, have turned away from Him, and we do it. Are you convinced of that?

And secondly, we have a quarrel against Him, utterly groundless, but we have it, we think, against Him. We limit Him; we say what He ought to be and what He ought not to be; what He ought to do and what is not possible for Him to do. It is a groundless, wicked thing, but it is a quarrel that our nature has. How justly, O how justly, He might have said of all of us, this quarrel on My part, which is just, shall continue through eternity. He might have said it; He would have been just if He had said it. Do you believe it? A sound conviction of that in some measure is needful in order that a sinner may answer to that Scripture: "The Son of Man came to save that which was lost". If you go on quarrelling with God, He will prove to you one day that He is just in His quarrel against you and that you

never had any ground of quarrel with Him, never any ground. No reason will ever be found why a sinful man should not go to hell, and yet there is set out here "and one Mediator". Let the Papists have their innumerable mediators, God give us to believe in this one Mediator. Ah, sinner, if you see your sin, if you feel your sin, how welcome to you will be this sound when the Spirit of God causes it to be heard by you, by faith; one Mediator. And the Apostle tells us who this Mediator is, the Man Christ Jesus, and I think there is a singular beauty in this description of the Mediator. The Mediator is God. In the unity of the divine essence He belongs to the first part of the text - one God - but in the blessed personalities of God, we have three Persons, and the second Person, the eternal Son was designated by His Father, and was eternally willing to come according to the will and designation of His Father, to be a Man; to be made a Man. There is a singular beauty to me in Hart's word:

His royal state aside He laid
Came down to earth, a Man was made
To make poor men the sons of God
And pay the debt His brethren owed

O the love of Christ, the greatness of Christ, the stooping of Christ, the willingness of Christ, the love of Christ and the suitableness of Christ in this case, the Man, Christ Jesus. He must be a Man to redeem men. He must be made under their law to redeem them from that law. So there is a beauty in this, God's beauty. How great is His beauty in this, His Mediatorial office, standing now between God and men; when to men - guilty in their consciences, wicked in their hearts, depraved in their nature, and coming with some conviction of that before God, trembling at His majesty and at His holiness - there is manifested to such a person the Mediator, one like to himself in nature, without sin. Job wanted a Mediator; a Mediator to lay His hand on both the sinner and the God against whom the sinner had sinned.

The Mediator -let us, as enabled, for a moment look at the suitableness of the Mediator. The suitableness of the Mediator lies, in the first place, in His Person - God. So He can deal in the matter of mediating with God on equal terms. May the Holy Ghost put that

into your hearts, into my heart. The Mediator is God, and therefore He stands on the same ground, He is equal with God. Nothing that the nature of God requires, but what this glorious Mediator can render. O what a wonder, what grace, what love, what mercy, the Lord has here exhibited, in giving One equal with Himself in the divine essence and Being, and, wonder of wonders, this glorious God, the eternal Son of God, undertook to assume and take up our nature; took on Himself our nature: "The children being partakers of flesh and blood He likewise took part of the same". Now I will consider this. I wish I could state it better, but the Lord can put unction into a simple statement. The suitability of the Mediator lies just here, in His Person. A sight of Him will draw you through the very hell of sin in your consciences; will draw you through all your distractions and fears; will draw you through all your sense of unfitness and unworthiness to this great God. The freeness of His love, the greatness of His grace will be so attractive to you as that you will not be able to keep away from Him with all that you have got that is bad, and all that you feel of unfitness and unworthiness to approach this great God whose majesty terrifies you perhaps at times and whose heart searching word sinks you greatly. You will go to Him because there is a Mediator, a Man, the God-Man, Jesus Christ. May the Lord open this mystery to you. Sinner, you will live in this; you will live thus, when you get near to Him.

His suitability lies also in what He did; in His obedience. And the Holy Ghost appears to put all that Christ did in His obedience, in His death, where He tells us in the Philippians, that the Lord Jesus was obedient unto death. The obedient death of Christ is the life of the church; how suitable. He, the Redeemer, took away sin, put it away, made an end of it, by the sacrifice of Himself. Ah, poor sinner, you are looking at your sins, and no wonder when you feel them rising, swelling, moving, and often controlling you. I say, you are looking at your sins but then, a sight of the Redeemer, while it won't make your sins less, neither will it lessen your sense of your sins, it will say this: "Look to Jesus kind as strong". It will say "Pore not on thyself too long, lest it sink thee lower". It will say, there is a remedy, a wondrous remedy in Him. Go to Him. It will say, there is a physician and there is balm. Go to Him. God is in Him, grace is in Him, life is in Him, love is in Him, acceptance of sinners

is by Him. Access to God is by and in Him. One Mediator. You have not a word to say about yourselves of excuse have you? You have not a word of excuse to utter before God have you? As long as a sinner in some way excuses himself, so long he is kept from the Mediator. Excuse yourself on your weakness, excuse yourself by your ignorance, excuse yourself because you are continually feeling wrong, and those excuses won't stand before God, but they will greatly hurt you. Faith says I will venture; I do not know that He will welcome me, but I will venture; I will go with what I have, with what I am, with what I feel; live or die, sink or swim, accepted or rejected, I will go. That is the language of faith and faith will make you a waiting sinner.

One Mediator; blessed Mediator. He was a Mediator on the cross, dear friends. The activity of Christ did not cease when He was nailed and bound to the cross. It reached its highest then. Then He was an Offerer; then He was a Priest; then He approached God; then He gave a sacrifice, even Himself. Then, then He put away sin. Some speak as if Christ died of a broken heart, as if He died under a cloud, as if He died under the weight of God's curse. That is not true, that is not true. If He had died under the weight of God's curse, He would have continued under it. All sinners who so die will live through eternity in that case. But Jesus finished all before He gave up the ghost. Knowing that all things were now accomplished, He said "I thirst". And then, as if to show that His very frame was not exhausted, with a loud voice He said "It is finished" and bowed His head and dismissed His spirit. His death was His own act; His death was the great act of obedience; His death was voluntary. If He had died, as some seem to think, under the weight and burden of the curse, it would not have been a voluntary death. But He died a voluntary death; He offered Himself without spot to God. This was the climax, this was the finish, this was the putting away of sin. The Mediator was on the cross a Mediator, and so, as the Apostle Paul preaches, so may we feel, there is a new and living way opened whereby the vilest sinner out of hell who lives to feel his need may approach a holy God. A new and living way into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

And now that Christ is in heaven, He is the Mediator; He is our forerunner there; there He stands. His presence is an intercession; His presence is a victory and a declaration of victory over sin and

the devil. His presence, as it were, says to His Father "I will that the men that Thou gavest Me be with Me where I am". And His presence says to all on earth, to whom He is manifested, Come to Me; I am the Mediator. Bring your troubles; first your sins, then your troubles, then your temptations, then your difficulties, bring them all to Me.

There is one Mediator, hence the attraction of God, the attraction of God. Did you ever feel attracted to Him? I know when you feel sin in you there is, as you reflect on the greatness and the glory and the holiness of God, a kind of repulsion, a feeling that in this case and condition you ought not to go, but God does not teach that in the Scriptures, nor does the Holy Spirit teach it in the hearts of sinners. No, He says in their hearts, it is a free gospel, a free gospel. The Mediator came in love, the Mediator stood in love, the Mediator wrought in love, died in love, rose in love, as in power and justice, and now He is in heaven. O my friends, what a God we have.

In closing I have one more word to say, that this glorious one God, this suitable, beautiful, wondrous Mediator, are in eternal union in their Persons with another Person, even the Holy Ghost, and, as the Father gave His Son, so the Holy Ghost reveals that Son and brings that Mediator nigh, yea, forms Him in the heart the hope of glory. So may He deal with you and with me. I close with this, this great text, very very inadequately dealt with by me. "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time."

AMEN.