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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham at Galeed Chapel
Brighton on Wednesday evening 20 January,
1926.

Exodus 3 verse 14

And God said unto Moses "I am, that I am" and He said
"Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am
hath sent me unto you."

The foundation, cause, and reason and end of all worship is the Being of God. If there be no God there be no worship and as there is but one Trinity, there can be only one Eternal Being. "There is no God beside Me" is Jehovah's declaration, "I know not any" And all the many gods that have been in the world and are in the world are but the vile progeny of sin, and came after the fall. In Eden, undefiled, to Adam holy, there was but one God who planted the garden of Eden, set Adam there and commanded him to obey, There is no other foundation for worship. It is therefore unspeakably important to know whether we know this God, for if we do not know Him, we have no worship in us. There is no worship exercised by us. Religious we may be, worshippers we cannot be. It was a solemn circumstance to Moses and one would believe he never could forget it (it might sometimes be out of his mind under the pressure of trouble but he could never forget) that wonderful day, that blessed, terrible, sight that he got when he looked on the burning bush and was prevented approaching it by the voice of Him that spoke to him from the midst of that burning bush - "Moses, Moses" and O what a voice, and if we belong to God, in some way and manner and measure He will call us and speak to us, and we shall know Him, and as Moses was commanded to take off his shoes from off his feet, for the place whereon he then stood was holy ground, because God was there, so we in our measure and manner shall be sure to take off our shoes from off our feet and worship God whenever He reveals Himself to us. There may be, and I do not doubt there is, much in our prayers, in our thoughts of God, in our religion that does not spring from this blessed revelation of God in us and a fire will be put to that one day and it is constantly more or less put to it when the Holy Spirit teaches us, to consume it. But the true

thought, the spiritual prostration, the soul's petitioning, its humble approach to God, by the Holy Ghost, that is worship, and that being given to Him who is the only proper object of it, is acceptable.

Moses was a sinful man, but he was an elected man. We are sinful men but if we be chosen of God to salvation, our sinfulness will not prevent Him from speaking to us in condescension and in love. He is God. He deals as God, speaks as God, loves as God, teaches as God, and manifests His glory so that what He said to Moses, to Aaron by Moses, becomes a truth in everyone to whom the same thing is made known "I will be sanctified in all them that draw nigh unto Me and it were well for us again and again to see this - whether we know this Being. "I am that I am" is said by those who know the original language to mean Eternity past, present and to come, as the word is used for convenience, but it expresses the eternal Being of God. The eternity of His Being, without cause, without change, without increase, without decrease, the living God. It is interpreted to mean "I will be what I will be", relating to His future manifestations of Himself to His people, and this struck an awe into the soul of Moses, so when the Lord said "I will send you", who am I, said he, and there is no glimpse that any sinner gets of the living God that does not strike some awe into his soul and makes him sensible of his vileness and nothingness. The more we know of God, the less we are in ourselves, and the viler. In true worship, which is centred in God himself, is adoration. In true worship, is self abhorrence because we are sinners. In true worship there is a fixing of the eye of faith on Him who reveals Himself and in respect of these particulars in which He reveals Himself, to see there is but one God, And in Deuteronomy, when Moses is giving the law to Israel for a second time, he says "Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord." This expresses the essence, the essence of God. Men never see the form of God. Said Moses to Israel "You see no form, no similitude, but faith sees and God impresses on the soul, a sense and apprehension of the majesty and the glory of this Eternal One - the Most High God. What worms are we, atoms, less than nothing, lighter than vanity in the presence of this glorious God. You may have felt sometimes that you are surrounded, Deity is around you, omnipresent, and that will put a solemnity on your spirit. You may feel sometimes that He is above you and

everywhere - Whither shall I go from Thy presence, whither shall I flee from Thy Spirit. If I ascend up into heaven; if I descend into hell; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth; if I say surely the darkness shall cover me, everywhere, there to the soul's apprehension is God. O my beloved friends, we should be very sober people if we lived in the sense of the majesty of God about us. I should be a very different man from what I am often, if this sense of God were upon my soul. It enters into everything. It interferes with everything. If this does not interfere with your sin you know nothing about it, if it does not go with you to business. Sometimes in your feelings you are a poor light creature. If it does not go with you in your closet when you seek the face of God, then you have no worship. If it does not come to you in trouble, trouble is no good to you. O we have to do with a great God, and a great God has to do with us and very solemn it is. I thought for a minute or two once today that Deity was just around me and for the moment I was very sober. Who can stand before God? No surprise is felt by you when you see God, that Ezekiel, that John, both fell down as dead men and their comeliness was turned into corruption within them. You do not wonder at Abraham falling on his face when God spoke to him and drew near to him. May this then be, not only a truth in our judgment, but an experience in our souls, that the foundation and cause and reason and end of worship is the majesty of heaven. As I said, there is no worship if there is no God, and if we do worship Him there is a cause for that and that cause is the operation of the Spirit and if we do worship there is a reason for that and that reason is the Person and blood of Christ. And if we do worship, the end of that worship is the glory of God in our salvation and if you get these four things into your souls, you will be sober minded with regard to worship and with regard to eternity, and what a solemn thought it is that if we are christians indeed, we are to live with this great God for ever; we are to be in His holy presence for ever and ever, and that will put you to it sometimes like this. Am I fit for His presence? And then the Holy Ghost will point out to you where all fitness is, even in the Person and merits of the Saviour and that will put strength into your faith and tell you how to go to this great God "Having

therefore brethren boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" and in this way the terror of the Lord does not make a sinner afraid. "My terror" said Elihu, as a type of the Lord, "My terror shall not make thee afraid" and if you see Jesus Christ Almighty God in your nature that will not terrify you, it will be a welcome sight. "O blessed sight, O lovely form, to sinful souls like me", and what a wonder it is that ever God should consider a sinner and draw near to him and reveal himself to him and become the object of that sinner's faith and worship and love. Well dear friends, if I said no more than this, and if you can receive what I have said, then you may say that puts before us what true religion is. It is not of the flesh, though men in the flesh possess it, but it is in the Holy Ghost. It does not consist in good ideas as men would speak, but in revelation of God. It does not consist in creature holiness, but in living faith drawn into exercise upon Him who is both its author and its end. It does not consist in joys for which you can give no account. If you are filled with joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Ghost, you will be able to say why you do so. God is the beginner and the end of joy in His people, the beginning and the end, and true religion does not consist in troubles, though all people who have real religion have troubles also, but their religion consists in God coming to them in their troubles, and their faith drawn into exercise on Him in their troubles. This God is the beginning and the end, the first and the last in the vital religion which His people possess. God is known to His people, not as an abstract idea, but coming down to their cases as suitable to their cases, as regarding their cases, taking their cases up and speaking to their cases, which is very wonderful. O the greatness of God and the only way we can measure His greatness as far as I understand it is this, faith seeing Him, whose throne is even making the earth His footstool and coming down to a sinner's soul. What a stoop it is, what a stoop, that God should come down to a sinner and He has made that stoop to some of us. He has stooped so low as to come to me and to you and of all the wonders that we shall ever admire, it will be the stoop that God made to come down to sinners. "I am the Almighty" said God to Abraham, "Walk before Me" He came down to him. Walk before Me as I reveal Myself, walk before Me as I have spoken to you, before Me as I have taught you,

before Me as I am now speaking to you" That is the rise, that is the movement, that is the end, of walking before God. And this "I am that I am", the eternal Most High God, said to Moses, "Go to the children of Israel" and the first thing that to my mind grows out of this immediate revelation of God of Himself to Moses is this - that "I am that I am" is faithful. He did not forget His covenant. The Israelites had been 430 years oppressed in Egypt, at least after the king knew not Joseph, then began the oppression of that people, and now that the iniquity of the Amorites was full, God's time was full. He waited for that, as He told Abraham, "You must long sojourn in Egypt because the iniquity of the Amorites is not full." God did not take them away until their iniquity was full according to His measure of it. And now that the time had come, His shining faithfulness was opened and revealed. "I have come down to deliver them" He had made a covenant with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, and He did not forget it. I will never forget you, He said. This is my memorial for ever that I made a covenant with your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and now I have come to begin to fulfil it in opening a way. He was fulfilling it all these hundreds of years, in keeping them alive, and in causing them to multiply and prosper. All the long time that these people were in captivity, the promise was not without effect. They grew and multiplied and this was God's dealing with them there. Faith grows, and wherever His people are, it is sure to grow. Trouble, affliction, temptation, will have that effect; through the sanctifying of the Spirit, that faith will grow. Israel grew, and yet Israel was very ignorant, but that had no effect on God when the time came to make them know Him. "Go", said He to Moses, tell the people that "I am" hath met with me, and hath sent me to you, the afflicted. But Moses said, they wont believe me. And God gave him a token and signs and told him to go and show them to Israel and they will believe you and they did. They believed the Lord and Moses His servant. We are very ignorant till God teaches us. We can know nothing but as God teaches us. What a truth it is, very humbling. We think, we read, we hear, we talk, we sing, but we are very ignorant. Till God teaches us we know nothing, and we know nothing more than He does teach us. But God is faithful. He is not put out nor turned aside

by the ignorance of people. O what a mercy for me, what a mercy for you, that is. Think of it my friends. You say how ignorant you are. You will never be anything but ignorant if the Lord does not teach you. But, if He comes and reveals Himself you will begin to know Him and knowing Him, whatever the measure may be, you will begin to worship Him. A faithful God does not respect a poor, ignorant, foolish, unfaithful sinner. It respects God Himself, but it has an effect on that sinner because it brings him salvation. O God is great. God is good. God is wonderful. Look at this then - the faithfulness of God. "It is my memorial" He said, and then when that memorial comes to you, it is a memorial in you and then as He remembers the Covenant He will cause you to remember it and to say to Him Remember Thy holy covenant. He came to fulfil it. He began to fulfil it. He took steps to make it good; the oath which He swore, He began to fulfil; the covenant He made, He began to open to these people, to bring them out. He gave them tokens through Moses. Do we get tokens? One of the Psalmist's petitions was "Show me a token for good" What would you call a token for good? Says a poor child of God, "I would call it a token for good if I got a sight of the Man above on the throne with a rainbow about Him. That is the token. A word dropped on your heart is a token. A sweet sense of sinfulness bringing you into the dust before God. A moving of your affections after and on Christ, that is good, but the token which was given to Noah and is given to every child of God is this "I do set My bow in the cloud" You might say, after I have had a few minutes with a word, I do not know if the Lord gave it me. You might say, after the feeling of softness has gone, I do not know if the Holy Ghost wrought it in me. You may say after some times in prayer when you were helped, I do not know that I prayed in the Holy Ghost. But, when you get a sight of the bow, that Man of whom Ezekiel so beautifully writes in the first chapter of his book, when he said "I saw upon the throne a man and a rainbow as in the day of rain" (so suitable is the expression - as in the day of rain), the bow that says though it is raining, though it is raining now in torrents, as if the windows of heaven were opened, there is the bow that says "God will no more drown the earth" So when you get the sight, though afterwards you may question it, you may say again and again, I did see that bow, and that bow is a declaration of

God's faithfulness. You may say sometimes when you get a good thing, a good word, a good hearing, I will stick to this, but it may leave you. The Psalmist said "Thou madest my mountain to stand strong, and I said I shall never be moved, but when God moved away from him then he was weak, as weak as any other man. You may be a giant one minute in faith and say I shall never forget this, never be moved from this, but if God moves away from you, you will not be able to hold it as you would like to. But He is faithful. "Faithful is He who has called you, who also will do it." And here let me remark thus, that time, such an important factor in our experience, is not important to God. We think and we say "Where is the promise of His coming?" We get some interpretation into our minds of the time and of the manner sometimes. God has promised me, surely He is going to do it, and we begin to look for it. Time is a great factor in our experience, but let me repeat it, it is not with God, and that declaration of the Apostle Peter is very wonderful at this point. He speaks it, not to the people who are ignorant of God altogether. He says "Beloved" They were taught of God, the people of God, but he says "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." People were saying, where is the promise of His coming for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were. You say, "things are just as they were before God spoke to me as I thought. I have been looking for Him and my faith has stretched itself out for Him, but He has not come and He is not working, and I cannot see how this is to be fulfilled." Ah, if we measure God by ourselves, we are sure to make mistakes. When we reckon as men, we are sure to make an error with respect to God. Think of that word I have just mentioned out of Peter "Beloved be not ignorant of this one thing" Do not put your measurement to God. One day with Him is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. So, if you wait ten years, twenty years, thirty years and even forty years and more for the fulfilment of a promise, it does not affect God. He never told you when He would do it did He? What mistakes I have made here. Many years ago He told me a thing and I began to look for it immediately, but He did not tell me He would do it at once. You must wait His time. He wont be hurried. We say it is time for Thee to work Lord. We say, let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work,

but he wont do it for us. He has fixed a time, a set time to favour Zion, a set time to fulfil a promise, a set time to bring a sinner out of Egypt. This faithfulness may I be enabled to preach to you and you to receive it. This faithfulness is beyond time, above time, beyond our faith sometimes, beyond all that we reckon, every conception we may have of God. This faithfulness is above them all and it will affect us more or less daily and we shall come to this in the end - "God only wise". Wise in fixing the time, wise in timing a deliverance because He is faithful. Faithful is He that hath called you. O sinner, the time God has fixed is good, it is the best, and this fixing of time by the Lord changes the times and seasons of men. It will change your ideas, it will change your seasons, it will change your thoughts and you will come to know that God is wise and inflexibly wise. "I am hath sent you" Now has come the time. All the years Israel was in Egypt the promise was good. Paul in the Galatians tells us that though Israel was 430 years in Egypt it did not make the promise of none effect. It could not, because God had made the promise. Man had nothing to do with it except to receive the fulfilment of it. God had made it; so now the time has come. Pharaoh's heart, Pharaoh's mind, Pharaoh's advisers, Pharaoh's magicians, none of them can hinder this because "I am" has come down to deliver Israel. O sinner, all the imaginations that are in your heart and all the devils that may roar against you and all the times which you may think are against you, none of them can have any effect here. "I am" has come to deliver thee. He rends the heavens and comes down and the mountains flow down before Him. You say, it will be too late if it does not come soon. You do not know anything about it; your judgment is foolish. It cannot be too late when God comes. "He tarries oft till men are faint, and comes at evening late". But that it not too late, no, no, there is no too late with Him. "All kind and all wise, Thy season is best" We have proved it some of us. As far as we have gone, we have proved it. God is faithful my brethren. "I am" means I am unchangeable. There is no change in God. We are always changing and dying. "I die daily" says Paul, and every death is a change and every change is death. You change from one thing to another, that is you die to one thing and live to

another, moment by moment, but, I am the Lord, I change not. And this faithful God is very pitiful. James says so. "Ye have heard of the patience of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy, and what showed that, the end of Job, the end of the Lord. As James spoke, "Ye have seen the end of the Lord" that is, seen the end of that dispensation. When the 450 foolish, ignorant, and wicked prophets of Baal prayed to him, Baal had no pity on them. How could he, he did not exist except as a piece of wood. "Oh Baal hear us" And that went on all day. But when you cry to the living God, though you may not get an answer immediately, you will get some sense of being accepted, some feeling that He has not turned a deaf ear to you. When you said "Bow down Thy ear and hear me O Lord" He has not turned a deaf ear to you. He is faithful and while you are calling He will answer you sometimes. We never pray in vain when we pray in the Holy Ghost, and this faithfulness reaches quite to the end of every dispensation, every time fixed by the Lord. Delays may seem to you He is not attending to you but the time will come when you must say I did not know what He was doing but I know now. "What I do" says Jesus Christ, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter". "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart, wait I say on the Lord" And then there is this in the matter, just to hang about faithfulness for a few minutes. There is this in the matter, that God shows Himself able to do what He has promised to do, and yet every time He hardened Pharaoh's heart, it would seem to be like another death blow to their fainting hopes. Every time Pharaoh refused to let them go, it would seem to say God is not attending to you and you may feel just like that. You get a temptation, you get a sight of your weakness, you get a feeling of your infirmity and inability to do anything yourself, and then your own heart says God is not attending to you, and you fall into Jacob's error. Jacob committed a great error when he said "My way is hid from the Lord and my judgment is passed over from my God." It was a great mistake, injuring God's character in his mind, and weakening his own faith, but said the Lord to him "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, have not I spoken to you, and am I not that God

who stretched out the heavens and set out the sun, moon and stars in them and all these stars keep their courses and not one faileth and if a star cannot fail, can a saint fail, can a poor sinner in this chapel, hanging about God, fail, and can God fail to bless and save that sinner? "I am that I am" and I will be what I will be. I will be God. I will be faithful. I will be Jehovah to you, and I will make myself known and My power. Hast thou not known poor sinner, did you never see Him? You say, yes, I think I did. Did you never hear Him? Yes I think I heard Him. I thought I heard Him say "Come unto Me and I wont cast you out." "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that God, the Lord, the everlasting God, fainteth not, neither is weary." He is not weary of doing good. He is not weary of combatting the enemy. He is not weary of overthrowing Satan. He is n ot weary of anything respecting His poor people. Alas that we have wearied Him sometimes with our sins, but He is not weary. "I am" will meet every case, because "I am" is unchangeable, immutable, immutably the same. So having undertaken in the Covenant, He wont fail the sinner; He cannot. That is a beautiful scripture that Paul has to Titus. O I feel, I feel, I have loved it at times. "God that cannot lie" The sinner can, yes the sinner can lie against his right sometimes, but God cannot lie. Circumstances may seem to lie, they never really do, but they may seem to do, and your heart may fail you many a time, and Satan, the liar and murderer from the beginning, he comes and hurts and wounds and distracts and distresses and weakens but this will come over all, meet all, answer all, "God that cannot lie" So dear friends this great, this only foundation of worship, this only foundation of hope, may we be enabled to believe. Believe in His faithfulness. But further, I might say, just for a moment, this God is a God of love. This God, whose face cannot be seen by a creature, and that creature live, as He said to Moses "No man shall see my face and live", this God, subsisting in three persons, the Eternal Father, the Eternal Son and the Eternal Spirit, has manifested Himself to men, and you have it in the scripture, great scripture in the beginning of the Hebrews - "God who, at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these days spoken unto us

by His Son." O what a condescension, spoken to us by His Son. God incarnate, that is - God incarnate, God coming down to men - the tabernacle of God, of "I am that I am" is with men and He will dwell with them. O what a wonder. The tabernacle of God is with men, men in Galilee, some here. O may we never cease to bless Him, the fairest of all heaven, the best of all gifts, the greatest gift possible; to the Everlasting God, the dearest of all, Jesus Christ, dwells with men. He in His human nature, dwells with men on earth. The human nature of Christ is what Paul calls in the Hebrews the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man and in that tabernacle He will dwell with you and does, who know Him, and He will never leave the dwellingplace, never leave you. He may suspend and take from you the sense of His presence. You may lose a great deal in that way, but He will never finally go. Ah, says a poor convinced sinner, that belongs to good people. It does and God does good to those that are good, but who are good people? Who are good people? The dying thief, and the publican and the harlot, there you have good people, people whom God saves and blesses and teaches and helps and sanctifies. These are good people. The wicked people are pharisees, who have nothing to ask from God, but only to boast and prattle before Him about what they have done. They are not good people. They may say and do say "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we" but He is never with them. It is a vain boast. He is never with them. But when a sinner says I am not fit for His presence, I am not worthy to think of Him, not worthy to pray to Him. I am not fit to look on Him except to condemn me, who yet says, and cannot avoid saying, for the Holy Ghost helps him, "O Lord when wilt thou come unto me", that sinner gets Him, that sinner is blessed, that sinner is going to heaven, notwithstanding all the opposition of Satan and of sin, that sinner is going to heaven, and that sinner is here. I believe some of us are going to heaven. May the Lord help us to believe it, for ourselves, tell it us in our souls, assure us that sin shall not prevail, guilt shall not sink us, Satan shall not overcome us, ignorance shall not turn us aside to destroy us, because I AM has condescended to tabernacle with

men and make His mercy known, condescended to come from the throne and fly on wings of love and pity to the cross, there to pour out His soul unto death, that the guiltiest on earth might live. "O yield not then" as Hart says "yield not then to unbelief, courage soul", I AM shall not terrify you when you come a poor, broken down, guilty, worthless sinner in your own judgment. He says I wont cast such men out. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." May God help us to regard the only foundation we have for worship, the only ground we have for hope, the only object we have for love.