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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday morning 28 February 1926

PSALM 48 v 14

"For this God is our God for ever and ever; He
will be our Guide even unto death".

If we are at a point, such a point as this; if we can say humbly, with a measure of confidence, "This God is our God", we shall never be able sufficiently to thank Him for such a mercy. There be that are called gods, as there be lords many and gods many, and we have no more knowledge, no more discrimination, than the veriest heathen with respect to the true and living God, as we are fallen people. How many of you really believe that, I do not know; I am sure some do. If then, with this our darkness and ignorance, it has pleased God to come and give us eternal life, and the light of life, so that we can say to Him, in some measure of confidence: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", what a favour. O think of it dear friends, why are we not bowing down this morning to a bit of bread? Why have not we an image or picture in our pockets or on our walls, and call on some Baal to hear us? And why is the enmity of our mind against the living God not reigning? And why does Jesus Christ possess attractions for us, so that we can go to Him and say to Him: "To whom shall we go?" and protest to Him that He is fairer than the children of men. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?" To the Athenians Paul said: "Ye are too superstitious", for as I passed by there was an altar with this inscription on it "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD". And to the woman of Samaria the Lord Jesus said: "Ye know not what ye worship. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews". And 450 men, from morning to evening, cried out, "O Baal, hear us; O Baal, hear us." Are we better than they? Have we more knowledge than they had by nature? No! We have proved, says Paul to the Romans, both Jew and Gentile are all estranged; from the womb have gone astray, speaking lies; walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. O, dear people who know the living God, let us unite

and sing praises to Him, sing praises to Him, sing praises with understanding, understanding our own utter ruin and understanding a little of that word: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God, and that God has manifested Himself in Him and to us in Him. These Psalms, these three Psalms, are very wonderful; they are a beautiful whole, and the one object of faith and of praise, is God, and what is in Him, has come forth from Him; even the building of the Church. And He has set His King on His holy hill of Zion and said "Worship Him all ye people". And all this is in the promise to Abraham - "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed", and out of that grows this word in this Psalm concerning the mountain of God's holiness, the joy of the whole earth; all the earth, at different times, in different parts, and to different people, the Church of God has been and is and will be the joy, for God shines from here. "Out of Zion the perfection of beauty hath God shined". Shined in His Being, shined in His Trinity, shined in the covenant of works, and now uttered the curse of it. Shined in the covenant of grace, shined in the Person of Emmanuel, the very Son of God incarnate, and shined in the gift of the Spirit, and the work of the Spirit, and shines in every believer who is born again and has the faith of the operation of God. Shines in every answer to prayer, in every victory of grace, in the subjection of sin, in the sanctification of trouble, in the guidance of the ignorant, and in the support of the weak. In all these things, in Zion, God shines. There is a reality in this religion, a blessed reality, and we can say this of it: "Be this religion mine". This God of grace, of love immense; this God of truth, who makes His Own city a city of truth; this God of forgivenesses, multiplying forgivenesses; this God who guides the foolish; this God who fills the hungry with good things; who shows His servants a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal. When we feel a little of this then we can enter into the word - "Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises." O He is worthy. What cold hearts we have, what dumb tongues we have, what ungrateful spirits we have. At what a distance do we walk from Him and how unlike Him we are. Do not you feel sad sometimes that you are what you are? That a person on whom the Name of Christ is named should be so un-Christ-like. That he in whom the Spirit of Christ is should walk so much after the flesh. Do not you feel sorry sometimes? I do with regard to myself; but we have a good God; this God, this God.

O, if we could but declare Him to you today in the unction of the Spirit. "This God". Not any god, but this very God, distinct and different from every other, every false god. There is none else, He said, I know not any, and you will know no other if you are under His teaching. I know not any; there is no other. "To us" says Paul "there is but One God the Father and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, and we by Him." Ah, the knowledge of this will make us enter into a covenant with God by sacrifice. "Come", they said, under the power of God, "Come, let us make a perpetual covenant", and have you not sometimes in secret said to the Lord - Unworthy though I am, my feeble faith, my humbled soul, take Thee to be life and righteousness and all for time and eternity, and been willing, Paul-like, to give up everything, renounce and lose and abandon everything, to win Christ and be found in Him. "This God". How did the Psalmist know Him? By God appearing to him; and that is how we must know Him. O sinner, nothing will break your infidelity and remove your blindness, but some appearance of God to you. And does He appear to people today? Yes; He appears to them in the teaching of His Spirit, in the operations of His Spirit, in the shining of His grace. He does appear to people and He visits sinners. He would never visit the earth at all if He did not come to visit sinners, but He does visit sinners.

This God is the God we adore
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend

"Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" It was an anxious time, and a curious time, an enquiring time when Jesus came, and while He was on earth. And He was such a personality that men enquired about Him, and they conjectured, they guessed; some Elias, some a prophet, some John the Baptist risen from the dead. You will do nothing better naturally; you will do nothing better. Whom do you say, you, My disciples; who am I to you, and what? "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". And how came Peter to know that? "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee" - Christ came from heaven and how could flesh and blood reveal that great Person - "but My Father which is in heaven". He says, My Father hath revealed it to you. That is how we must come to know God. O dear friends, if you really feel to need to know Him, and want to know Him, then His good Spirit will

direct you, and you will seek the knowledge of Him in that only way in which it can be obtained, revelation; nothing else, nothing less. "This God"; and He comes to our cases. Let me try to speak a little of this; He comes to our cases. Now the first thing to name here is this, the incarnation of the Son of God. The Apostle John says, "And we know that the Son of God is come". Of all the professions that a man can make, this is one of the best, the greatest, the sweetest. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." And why did He come? Why did He come? He came to our cases my friends; and what was the case He came to when He became Man? Well, this is it. His Father hath made Him sin. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." That is the case, that is the first case, that sin should be taken away from His people and given to Him; that their badness, their infidelity, their ignorance, their transgressions under the law, and all their depravity should be taken away, as to the guilt thereof, and should be laid on Him, and He should bear the burden, weight, and shame and ignominy and curse there. Ah, if you believe you are to die and stand before God, you will want to know one thing, this namely - Did the Lord Jesus take my sin and death? That is the question. He came for this.

And why, dear Saviour, tell me why,
Thou thus wouldst suffer, bleed, and die;
What mighty motive could Thee move?
The motive's plain; 'twas all for love

For love of whom? Of sinners base,
A hardened herd, a rebel race;
That mocked and trampled on thy blood,
And wantoned with the wounds of God.

Ah, when you get to know that, when you get to know by the Spirit of God that that was done for you, then you will follow, in that same hymn I think it is, coming to the last verse

For love of me, the Son of God
Drained every drop of vital blood.
Long time I after idols ran;
But now my God's a martyred Man.

And then you will say, This God, this God is my God. Well, it is a great thing to say. He came to our case; He took our sin and made an end of it. The substitutionary work of Christ is here. He took the place of His wicked people; He took the place of dead sinners, and their wickedness and their death He made an end of by the sacrifice of Himself.

He took the dying traitor's place,
And suffered in his stead;
For man (O miracle of grace!)
For man the Saviour bled.

And when you can put your name in, through the witness of the Spirit, then you can say "This God is my God". My God on the cross; my God on the cross. Ah, if you have faith to see Him there in your place - your God on the cross - and see the curse due to you falling upon Him, poured out like fire into His bones - my God on the cross - O you will love Him then; you will love Him there and cleave to Him and trust Him and confess to Him that you have no hope but Himself; no cleansing can you look for, but by His blood and no justification do you desire, but that which He is. My God on the cross. O beloved friends, we shall need eternity to sing praises to Christ crucified; to Christ for humbling Himself unto death, even the death of the cross. We shall need eternity to bless Him for putting away that wickedness that we contracted and committed, for which there was no sacrifice sufficient but Himself. Sing praises to Him. And here let me say, what a door this is for beggars; what a door of hope. O, look as you may be enabled, at the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, the fountain of grace, the fountain of life, the fountain of righteousness, the fountain of justification and of strength to keep the soul from falling, and of wisdom to guide the soul through difficulties, and of power to keep the soul in the hour of temptation.

"Come, Thou fount of every blessing"

Well may we address such a petition to Him, to Jesus Christ, this God, incarnate Deity. This God on the cross is our God for ever and ever. He was our God in the grave. The burial of the Lord Jesus is put, as you remember - will remember when I name it - is put into that wonderful summary of our holy faith that the Apostle Paul expresses: "I delivered unto you that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures".

Where should the dying members rest
But with their dying Head?

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay". What a wonder dear friends; when your bodies lie in the tomb, as the bodies of believers, of saved people, they will be embalmed in the atonement which will secure their resurrection and their being made like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ. This is God, who saw no corruption; this incarnate One. O, what a God He is. This is the God we adore, our faithful Friend. He left in the grave a long perfume; what a favour for us. He saw no corruption; He was put into a new grave; there was no corruption in it and He left none there; He saw none.

Our God in glory. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept". This God, this same Jesus who was crucified; this same Jesus who gave up the ghost, who dismissed His Spirit, when He knew that all things were accomplished; this Jesus is in heaven. "I saw" said John - he had it revealed to him - "I saw a lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne". Now when faith rises, in the power of the Holy Ghost, to the throne of God, there is majesty, and there is mercy; there is a prevailing intercessor; there is One who, on earth, ere He left it, said to His Father: "I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am". Now He is there, saying I will bring these sinners, on their bended knees, to heaven, bring them to Me. "This God". How interested is Jesus Christ in sinners; O, what an interest Christ has in Brighton; what an interest He has in some sitting here; and when we go to our houses, they are houses in which He has an interest, a

real, living, undying, blessed interest. His eye does not slumber; O what a favour for us; He neither slumbers nor sleeps. "When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee". When thou wast in trouble I knew thee. The Psalmist came to know that too; he said "Thou hast considered my trouble; Thou hast known my soul in adversities." This God who was on the cross, who said "It is finished", who was buried, who rose again and ascended into heaven; this God interceding, ever caring for His people, always interested in them, so intimate is He with them and they with Him, such is His care for them, because they are His body, that He said to Saul: "Why persecutest thou Me?" The enemy cannot touch you without touching your God. Such is His care of His people, He said, when they are troubled He is troubled; "He feels each tempted member's pains, for their affliction's His." And what has this Jesus in heaven? Grace is poured into His lips. When the grace was poured into His lips it was when the Trinity was in council. And when the Lord, His Father, gave Him words to speak, a commandment what to teach, then grace was poured into His lips. In the view of the incarnation that was to take place, when the Son should come and take on Him the seed of Abraham, all this was poured into His lips; in what form and for whom. It was not that He should keep it always, though He always has it; it was to give out. "I have given them the words Thou gavest Me". I have given them; what Thou gavest I have given to My disciples. One word, my friends, is this: "Having loved His Own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." Now when faith sees this, what does it do? Begins to beg more earnestly that that precious love of Christ may be entered into. "That ye may know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge". Faith goes for this; does not your faith see sometimes an infinitude beyond all that you have ever imagined and felt? Now it is that faith in a full Christ that moves a soul to say, O give me out of that fulness. Grace was poured into His lips; He has not exhausted it; He never will. He has got plenty for us and He loves beggars because He loves giving. He loves the poor; He loves the poor. He loves them because He has riches to give them. "Durable riches and righteousness" He has to give to His poor people, and the durable riches are His love, and His righteousness, and His holiness, and His power and His covenant, and when He pours out these mercies, of which He is so infinitely full, then they say: "This God is our God"; we will trust Him; and they do trust Him sometimes. You feel, do not you, occasionally, that you

can say to Him, I do cast my needy soul on Thee; I have nowhere else to go; I have none to go to but Thyself. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?, and there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee." So you cast yourself on Him. And what does He say to such people? I wont cast them out. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out". Always receive them; always receive them; receive them graciously and love them freely. But they begin to object sometimes - I am so wicked, I fall away, I lapse, I turn aside, but He says: "Come unto Me". What for? "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin". I am glad of that word "all sin"; "all manner of sin"; taking the variety of sin that you have to confess to Him, that you, yourself are guilty of. We do not all commit the same sin perhaps but "all manner", whatever there is in your spirit; "all manner of sin", His blood cleanses. Now faith within you will be sure to be going out to Him from time to time, that He will do this for you. "This God" dear friends, "this God", is our foundation. Incarnate Deity is our foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ". "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, and he that believeth shall not make haste"; shall not be ashamed, confounded. Every sinner made living by the Holy Ghost, a living sinner, wants a foundation. He digs deeply in his convictions of sin; he digs deeply beneath all his pretensions and imagined goodness; he digs deeply beyond his profession; he goes below all that and goes on digging and digging in his fears and exercises till he comes to the Rock, the foundation, and there he says, now I can build; his faith builds there. Will that do? O, this God is your foundation; this God whom I declare so feebly to you; this God is the foundation of a soul. Now why is it that the people of God do not move? They are nothing but weakness, a bit of straw and sin in themselves; worms, unequal to anything that is good. How is it that they are not moved? On the Rock they are founded; they build here. Ah, they build on Christ crucified; on the Person of the Saviour they build. God laid this foundation. There are two layings of it by God. First, in eternity, and that was carried out when Christ became incarnate, and the second is when He lays the foundation in every soul taught of Him. They go and build on Him. All hopes of heaven they build here; all expectations of good they build here; all desires that they will be brought through rest here, exercise themselves here. Foundation; what a good thing it is to

have a good foundation. You build too low, those of you who are building beneath the skies. But the poor and the weak and the ignorant and the foolish and the wicked, brought by the Holy Ghost to this Person of the Lord Jesus, to rest on Him, build on the Rock of Ages. Moved in his feelings, wounded by his sins, weakened by them, tempted of the devil, storms, winds, beating rain coming down on the house, move it not; they move it not. The person who is thus tempted and troubled, feels tempted and troubled, but he is not moved. Yes, sometimes the faith of a child of God is strengthened so that he says: Though the earth be removed and though the mountains shake with the swelling of the waves, yet will not we fear. Some of us have had that confidence in God. Some of you have felt in your troubles and distresses and distractions and afflictions, that you could rest here. You have not been moved. Perhaps you have had no great ecstasy in the time of trouble, no very special rejoicing, but you felt, now I can rest with my soul here. All my interests are here and I put them into good hands when I put them into the hands of God, and I rest my soul on Him who cannot change, on Him who said: I will bless; In blessing I will bless you. O, sing praises to Him who is the foundation of your hope. This God, this great God who said of Himself: "I am the Lord, I change not." "I am the Lord"; all that I have declared Myself to be, all that I have revealed Myself to be in Holy Scripture, I am, and "I change not". And, as He is declared and revealed in the Scripture to be the Rock of Ages, and to be the foundation on which He will build His church, He will never change. While God is God our foundation is sure. He is distinguished from all others, distinguished by His eternity, by His love, by His goodness, by His mercy. Distinguished by His miraculous incarnation, distinguished by His vicarious death; distinguished from all others by having an open ear to the cry of a sinner, and open arms to receive a coming sinner, and a heart to bless a coming sinner, and to bless him with all spiritual blessings. "This God". O, have you got a little faith to open to receive Him? Have you got a poor, needy heart to receive Him? Are you bad enough for Him? Empty enough, weak enough, wicked enough for Him? O, have you got a real cry in your soul to Him that He would bless you and bring you to Himself, and build you on Himself? Then you will say - if you cannot say it now - one day you will say: "This God is" my "God for ever and ever". "This God" is my guide, my guide. "I am come a light into the world", He said "that

whosoever believeth in Me should not abide in darkness but have the light of life." O, perhaps you feel so ignorant; you do not know what step to take, or which way to go. Well, one said to Him: "Show me the way wherein I should walk for I lift up my soul unto Thee." Now that may fit you. Lord, I do not know what to do, do teach me. "Show me the way wherein I should walk for I lift up my soul", in its need, in its felt ignorance and inability, "unto Thee". Unto the Lord, this God who waits to answer prayer, and who says, when He lines the path with His blood, "This is the way". Would you leave sin? I am the way from it. Would you leave guilt? I am the way from it. Would you leave your filthy rags? I am the way from them. Would you leave your weakness? You will always carry it, but I am the way from it. The Strength of Israel, the Guide, He says: "This is the way"; the way from a deserved hell to a heaven freely given. "O", some may be saying with Berridge

O where shall I find a Guide to direct
Right skillful and kind and brave to protect

This is the God, this is the Guide. "I will guide thee with Mine eye", in difficulties, in providential matters. You may find yourself unequal to know what to do. What does He say? "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me." O, if only you have a heart to pray, if you have just a little faith to call upon the Lord, He will regard it. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer". So we have a good God to go to. O, it is not a bad thing to feel ignorant; it is a good thing to feel it. Everybody is ignorant, but everybody does not feel it. The saints do feel ignorant and so they are fitted to cry: "Show me the way wherein I should walk for I lift up my soul unto Thee". Dear afflicted creature, God help you to look to Him and He will show you the way from earth and hell to heaven; He will show you the way. He never turns a deaf ear to the cry of need. "This God".

Now one more word here, this full God is ours; this full God. The fulness of the Godhead bodily and all the fulness of God's pleasure and all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, Christ has. Look at this fulness. What little things we are, what little vessels we are. How few, comparatively, are our wants. Here is a full God,

full of love, full of infinite love, infinite patience. O, if we only knew Him. I have begged of Him to enable me to speak rightly of Him, this great One, this full God. What can you need for your soul, what can you need in providence, that the Lord Jesus has not? Take the few things - I speak comparatively and not lightly - take the few things we have in this life of necessity. He says, "If I were hungry I would not tell thee". The cattle on a thousand hills and the gold and the silver are Mine. Look at it. If your faith is limited, as Moses' faith was at one moment, still it would not alter this fulness; everything is in this fulness; men's hearts, men's persons, everything subjected to the Lord Jesus. What a God He is; a God of providence. "Prove Me now herewith"; go to Him, as you have faith, and you will find He will never disown, never dishonour the faith, never bring a waiting soul to disappointment. Then take His fulness of grace. The Father has committed all to Him; all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. If you get more and more exercised about your unholiness, the Spirit will guide you to Him who is made sanctification. If you feel your deadness more and more, the Spirit will show you that Christ is your life, and that your life is hid with Christ in God. If you feel more and more pained at your distance from the Lord and frequent separations from Him, the Spirit will show you that all the sweetness of union and bands of union, and the nearness of a soul to God, the Lord Jesus has, and is. And so, when a full Christ is revealed to an empty sinner, that sinner goes to Him in faith. The little arms of His faith open to lay hold of, and embrace, this Jesus Christ, and the infidelity, and the limiting, and the hardness of heart, and the unthankfulness, they all go; they fly away. As darkness is scattered when the light comes, so every evil thing goes, when the Lord Jesus comes. Faith may be saying in some of you, we wish we got hold of this. God can bring it. Your faith may be little but real, and that faith will never, never fall short of this. It will wait for it till God gives power to say, "This God", this full God, this full Christ is my Christ. To say with Bunyan, my righteousness is in heaven; my hope is in heaven; my Saviour and Redeemer is in heaven. All here; "This God". Not one of any, not one of many, but "this", exclusive of all others. "I know not any". "There is no God beside Me; I know not any". O, to be worshippers of this God. Think of it; there is such a beauty in this religion that no tongue can express it, and there is such a satisfaction in it, when

something of a full Christ flows from Him into the soul. Grace is poured into His lips; consolation is poured into His lips for the miserable, and promises are poured into His lips for those who dare not make any promises to the Lord to behave well. Promises of abiding, promises of support, and promises of salvation; these are in Him and in Him they are yea and amen to the glory of God by us. Would you be revived? Do any of you feel you need reviving? To be brought out of winter into summer? What does He say? "From Me is thy fruit found". You will look in vain for fruit in yourself, but He says, "From Me", thy Saviour, "From Me is thy fruit found". This fruit, you look for in yourself in vain, but when He sheds His mercy and gives His good Spirit and speaks comfortably to the soul, then this fruit is found from Him, and found in your heart and in your affections. "This God is our God for ever and ever". This God, we profess; I profess Him, and O, I think I may say, I love Him. You profess Him and I hope you love Him more than I do. Let us, as we can, cleave to Him and follow Him; turn away from every false thing and every idol and seek to know Him more and love Him better, and cleave to Him with purpose of heart, so that when our little day is ended that may be true of us: "Where I am there shall My servant also be".

AMEN.