

The Necessity for New Birth

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of new birth and eternal life as foundational for a genuine relationship with God.

Scripture: John 1:4, John 3:3, John 3:36, John 4:14, John 7:38, Romans 8:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 3:13, Ephesians 2:1-5, 1 John 5:11-12

Topics: "Eternal Life", "New Birth"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the necessity of new birth through the lens of John's Gospel, illustrating the transition from Nicodemus to the woman at the well as a representation of spiritual rebirth. He explains that true understanding and relationship with God can only be achieved through being born from above, which is essential for entering the Kingdom of God. The sermon highlights that eternal life, which is the divine life of God within us, is the foundation for all aspects of our relationship with Him, including fellowship, service, and hope for resurrection. Sparks further elaborates on the nature of eternal life, its quality, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as crucial for spiritual existence. Ultimately, he calls for a recognition of our need for this eternal life to fulfill our purpose and relationship with God.

Transcript

READ: John 2:1-11; 3:1-21; 4:1-26; 1:4

As we continue our consideration of "Great truths and their Laws, as in John's Gospel," and come into chapter four, we pass from Nicodemus to the woman of Sychar, from Judea to Samaria, with a spiritual link between. It is interesting to notice what a little place time and space have in this spiritual realm of John's Gospel. Chapter four follows chapter three very swiftly. There is just the fragmentary statement at the end of chapter three that the Lord, because of certain uprisings of hostility in Judea from the Pharisees, left Judea, and made His way toward Galilee. That is barely stated and then certain observations are made by John the Baptist, and a comment is made by John, the writer of the letter, upon the words of John the Baptist, and at one point it is exceedingly difficult to know whether it is John or Christ speaking, the two blend so thoroughly (I mean the last part of chapter three), but with that bare reference to the movement you find yourself over a considerable space, both of time and geography, because the Lord has spent nine months in Judea to which no reference has been made. But from the time of His meeting Nicodemus in Jerusalem nine months seem to drop altogether out of existence, and Jesus is here on His way to Galilee in Samaria, at Jacob's well by Sychar. The time is lost sight of, the

geography takes a very remote place. It is in keeping with what we said, that when you come into "John" you come into a different realm from the other Gospels, which are so much related to the earth, and things here, related to time and the earth. You come into the realm of spiritual things in "John," and there geography does not count for a great deal, and time ceases to be a dominating factor; what you come into is the sequence of spiritual history. And so you find yourself moving from Nicodemus to the woman of Samaria, as it were, in rapid transition, but with a spiritual link, a very clear, definite spiritual link between the two, indicating that it is spiritual history that John is writing. It is not the history of time and things here, but it is the history of what is eternal. It is very interesting to recognize that, and it is important, valuable and helpful in our reading of this Gospel. It is the spiritual order of history that is before us here, and that spiritual order is Cana in Galilee, Nicodemus in Jerusalem, the woman of Sychar.

From Nicodemus to the woman of Samaria is our immediate object. We said when we were in chapter two on the sign in Cana of Galilee, the turning of the water into wine at the marriage, that that was an inclusive thing of all that follows in the Gospel. That that sign, that event, that incident in Cana of Galilee, comprehended the Gospel, and all that follows can be found in germ there in Cana. Now we shall see how true that is in these two cases.

Referring to chapter three and Nicodemus, Nicodemus corresponds to the wine having failed. You think about that for a moment and you will see how true that is. Nicodemus comes in all the fulness of natural life religiously, morally, ecclesiastically, intellectually. He presents himself to the Lord Jesus as a model man on the old creation level, even religiously. And what Nicodemus comes for is teaching. He wants to be taught, he wants to learn something more, and the Lord Jesus breaks in instantly, and says in effect: Nicodemus, it is impossible for you, we shall never get anywhere on your level, you must be born from above. In effect He says: You can never learn anything from Me until you are born from above and have that heavenly union which I have, because I am from above. And here at its best, the old wine fails, and Nicodemus is evidently very disconcerted; and that is how they were at the marriage, for the old wine failed. There was an impasse, an arrest in the proceedings, and the atmosphere is just that of: Well, we cannot get any further on this level, with this resource, by this means; we can go no further. Nicodemus corresponds to the wine having failed and the miracle of birth from above; that is Christ's intervention in connection with "Mine hour." The hour of the Son of Man is the hour when He accomplishes that which makes new birth possible.

Why New Birth Is Necessary

And then the Lord presses that further. He does not only show that there is an impasse, and that He cannot get anywhere with Nicodemus, and Nicodemus cannot get anywhere with Him, except on the ground of this birth from above, He proceeds to show why, and He heaps upon poor Nicodemus the ignominy of this situation by following with the serpent in the wilderness. We know that serpent in the wilderness represents God's thought about man. It is elevated, erected upon a pole, lifted up: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness...." Remember the serpent is the cursed thing because it is symbolically the embodiment of sin, it is sin personified. Cursed and lifted up. And oh, the terrible nature of the interpretation of that: "...so must the Son of man be lifted up." And you need Paul to explain: "Christ made a curse for us": "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"; and He therefore was made a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." If you want to know more about the awful comprehensiveness of the curse, read Deuteronomy, chapters 27 and 28. It is all gathered up in one thing, not doing the will of God, not obeying the commandments of the Lord. And He Who came in delight to do the will of God, came to do His Father's will, and Who did it perfectly, at a point in His life

took the place voluntarily of man who had wholly failed to do the will of God, and received the curse of God in exclusion from the presence of God in judgment, and thus represented man, in man's state, and under that curse and judgment represented God's thought about man by nature. Put that over on to a Nicodemus, and you will find there is an awful shock for a man such as he. And the Lord brings that home to Nicodemus. That is bringing things down to a great and terrible depth. A death has taken place; a low place of death has been reached under condemnation and judgment. We may say zero has been reached.

The Truth of Eternal Life

Now then, the way is prepared for the matter of eternal life to be considered, and that is your transition from Nicodemus to the woman of Sychar. Listen: John 3:36, which is the last verse in the chapter, the link between the two chapters: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." That is the serpent in the wilderness. Now that is the link between the two chapters, but of course there ought to be no chapters. Pass on to what is our chapter 4:14: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." When the death place has been reached, and the zero point has been touched, then eternal life can come into view, but not before, and Sychar represents that. Sychar brings in that teaching of eternal life. It is the second great truth, eternal life. There is no need for me to take you back to Cana of Galilee. We can see it so patently, life out of death; but life springing from a zero point. The Lord Jesus marked a very definite pause in things there. His mother said: "They have no wine." He did not just carry the thing on and not allow a sense of an end to be felt, He paused. Yes, that is the end, that is one realm, one history. We are not going to perpetuate that. That pause is related to "Mine hour," and "Mine hour" is always related to the Cross, and the Cross is always a great pause in the history of this universe - Silence in heaven. One history has closed. There is a gap, not a continuity; and then a new history begins. The Lord Jesus said to His mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." There is the pause, and then the taking up after a pause, the bringing in of something new. Not making the old to be eked out to the end of the feast, but the doing of something new altogether: His own principle of: "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles... but new wine must be put into new bottles." Something altogether new coming in. New wine, something different from what was.

So we find that with chapter four we are brought into the doctrine of eternal life, a doctrine which, if we were exhaustively to consider it, would occupy us for many pages, but, for our present, purpose has to be brought within the very small compass of a few lines, so that we must put it into one or two comprehensive statements.

The Meaning of Eternal Life

What is the doctrine of eternal life? In a statement it is the need for having what is of God within, as the basis of all that is related to God in life, fellowship, service, and the eternal future. The question with Nicodemus was that of entering the Kingdom of God. We saw that the Kingdom of God is a state before it is a realm. Only that enters the Kingdom of God which is of God. The realm of God is that in which everything of God and nothing else obtains. Through the death of chapter three we move to the place where we see what is basic to the realm of God, that which has to do with every phase of our relationship to God; that is, the life of God, Divine life, known as eternal life, and that within us, as the ground upon which all the activities and operations of God proceed. Are we going to be united with the Lord? Well, that

is the first step in the life of the believer. That is the very first phase of spiritual life, of the true Christian life. It is being united with the Lord. The nature of union with the Lord is the sharing of His own life, Divine life; the life of God, uniting us with Himself. Not something broken off from Him and given to us, for life can never be cut up into fragments like that and distributed; life is one, one in essence, and it makes organically one every part into which it enters. It is the life of one body, not organized but organic. Union with God then is by reason of receiving the life of God.

Do we want fellowship with God, which is beyond union; a walk in communion? It will be only upon the basis that God's life is active within us. God will commune with that which is of Himself in us. God will bring us into fellowship with Himself by putting something into us with which He can have fellowship. God can have no fellowship with flesh, with man by nature. God's fellowship is with that which is essentially Himself, and that is given to us in the gift of God which is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do we contemplate, or desire service for the Lord? The same principle governs that; that real fellowship with the Lord in service is upon the basis of that life of God, active and energetic within us. Paul speaks about that "energy which energiseth in me mightily"; and then he spoke of God Who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that WORKETH IN US." There is the active vocational service side of things. The doing of God upon the basis of an energetic principle (an energetic "something" I will call it for the moment). Service demands Divine life in us, and Divine life is the basis of Divine service. Many of us have proved that by Divine life we can do what is totally impossible to us by natural life; very often Divine life comes to our rescue when we are well-nigh dead, and enables us to do things which are an astonishment to ourselves, and anyone else who knows of our inner history.

Are we contemplating knowing the Lord more fully? It will be upon the same principle: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." It is as the life of God is unarrested and uninterrupted in us in its growth, in its movement; as we do not put any obstacle in its way by disobedience to its claims and demands, that we enlarge in our spiritual knowledge of the Lord. Life issues in light. Find the believer, the child of God, who is going on freely, and clearly, and powerfully, transparently with the Lord in spirit, without prejudice, without questioning, without controversy, without disobedience, and you will find that that child of God is coming into an ever-increasing knowledge of the Lord. Find the child of God who has put such a difficulty in the way of the Lord by disobedience, a reservation, a hesitation, an arrest, a rebellion, and you will notice two things follow instantly. One is an arrest of life, and the other is a darkening of the understanding. It is always so, the two things go together.

Then further, have we in view the hope of eternal resurrection? Well, resurrection unto life is based upon, and exclusively upon, the fact that we have got eternal life already resident within us. That does not mean that those who have not got eternal life will not be raised from the dead for the judgment purposes. They will! But John makes a discrimination, and that discrimination is also made by Paul. "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life": literally, "the life resurrection." "They that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgement" - the resurrection of eternal judgment. There is a resurrection of life and there is a death resurrection. Resurrection unto eternal life is based upon our having this Divine life in us. That is the argument of 1 Cor. 15. That resurrection body will be formed round a seed, a germ, and it must be there. Something must be there to be clothed upon. Paul speaks of himself and of us as being clothed upon. What is it that is going to be clothed upon? That living spirit indwelt by the life of God. There is no hope of eternal resurrection only on the ground of our already being in possession of resurrection life. Resurrection life will be given a resurrection body. The resurrection body will evidence the resurrection

life, so that we must have spiritual resurrection now in order to have physical resurrection, glorified resurrection, later on.

Now the point of all that is, that the doctrine of eternal life is the need for having what is of God within us, as the basis of everything in relation to God. And in saying what we have said, we have covered the whole ground of the doctrine of eternal life, although if you like to go to your New Testament with a concordance, that will help you in this matter, or if you are able to read the original language, and trace through the one word which is used for eternal life, you will find a tremendous mass of detail and you will see how very illuminating the New Testament is upon this whole doctrine, and how many-sided is its application.

Having broadly stated the truth of eternal life, we come nearer to our chapter, to look for a moment at the local setting of this teaching, and at the teaching of the Lord on this matter. The local setting of it is a very good illustration of the absence of eternal life. You may look at it from several standpoints if you wish. Look at it, for instance, from the spiritual standpoint. The condition of this woman, viewed from the spiritual standpoint, represents an abiding sense of lack; a sense of lack which continues, which persists, no matter what she does. There is an atmosphere of longing, of desire; it may not be that she intelligently understood her own heart, it may not be that she could interpret the deeper feelings of her heart, but undoubtedly there is an atmosphere around this incident of a sense of lack, a sense of longing, a sense of desire. It comes out quite clearly. The Master had only to touch upon the subject of satisfaction, and it was as though instantly she said: Ah! that is what I want to know. Yes, in relation to this sense of lack the activities of life were without satisfaction. "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." In effect she meant: I am all the time coming here to draw, but my continuous activities, in the direction of meeting that lack, go disappointed, never reach an end; I never come to a point where I have any sense of feeling, or of being able to say, Now that is done and never need be done again. If we can read our own hearts we can get well into the atmosphere of this chapter. If we read the spiritual life of the world, it is just that. There is perhaps an uninterpreted, perhaps unrecognized lack in the whole race at heart. There is that sense, recognized, acknowledged, or not so, that there is an incompleteness about things, that something ought to be which is not. That life has in it something of the will-o'-the-wisp, something which draws you on but which you never get. There is a phantom element about life. You know you ought to have something, but you have it not, and you cannot get it; and all that you are doing whether you would put it into words or not, is your own effort, your own activity to get that something which you feel you ought to have possession of and which would bring to an end that sense of lack, would make good an abiding deficiency in life. There is a deficiency about life in nature. Everything, in view of that sense of reaching the ultimate, is a miscarriage, is a breakdown. That is from the spiritual standpoint. Now that is an evidence of the fact that eternal life is not there.

Look at it then, if you will, from a further standpoint - the moral. This woman's life from the moral standpoint was entirely out of harmony with God's standard. We know the story. The Lord Jesus was above all others sensitive. He was not coarse, He was not vulgar, He was not unkind, and yet He would drag that story right out; He would bring that skeleton out of the cupboard and expose it; He would not allow this thing to be covered up. It is an essential thing on the way to life that we come to a place where we recognize how out of harmony with God's standard we are morally. "Go, call thy husband." "I have no husband." "Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." "Sir, I Perceive that thou art a prophet." Do you notice the sleight of hand? "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." She has come up against a challenge, and now she is going to talk about the saints, and to set

one over against the other. She will start upon a doctrinal, and the logical, and ecclesiastical line as a hedge to this thing. People do that when they begin to get at close quarters with the Lord about sin, and they will begin to discuss the saints, talk religion, to hedge the issue; but the Lord knows how to deal with a situation like this. We will not anticipate, though, for a moment. The way to eternal life is to come not only to recognize the fact that there is an abiding lack and deficiency, it is to see that lack as altogether out of harmony with God, and that morally we do not represent God's standard by nature; and if in this woman you think you have a somewhat extreme case, oh! be reminded that it is only a matter of degree, for the Lord has brought the serpent in the wilderness very close to a Nicodemus, and said that even for a Nicodemus the mind of God is that, and it is only a matter of degree. There may be no need for putting ourselves into the category of this woman in actualities of sin, but moral distance from God is just the same in nature whether it be in a Nicodemus representation, or in a woman of Sychar. What I mean is this, that God's standard and irreducible minimum is His Son, the perfection of Christ. Can you stand up to that? Can any man stand up to that? Neither Nicodemus nor this woman can stand up to that. It is only a matter of the degree in actual expression, but the separation from God morally is just the same. You say: How can anyone be saved if Christ's perfections are God's irreducible minimum? We shall find ourselves faced with the question before we are through with this story; what Christ is in Himself.

Then you may look at it from one more standpoint; religiously. We have seen how, as a kind of back door out from this embarrassment and awkward situation, she turned to discuss religion, but she betrayed something when she introduced those matters. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Well, in any case it is tradition without power. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain..." What moral effect has that upon her? What moral effect or spiritual effect has it upon her that she has a temple in Mount Gerizim, and a copy of the Old Testament Scriptures, and her fathers worshipped? It is no use talking about the fact that: "My grandfather was a great saint and my parents good Christians." That is not the way out. So far as she was concerned it was mere tradition without power. It did not bring her to satisfaction or to moral deliverance; and viewed from the religious standpoint, religion was rather an enemy to her than an ally. Religion was no help to her. The religion of her fathers meant nothing to her. And very often the fact that we have been brought up amongst Christians, and have Christian traditions behind us, may be working rather to our undoing or against us than otherwise. It is not always an unmixed blessing to have Christian upbringing. Oh! no one would limit the value, or seek to minimize the value of any help. Some of us wish that we had a good deal more of the strain of genuine saintliness and Godliness in our blood. Perhaps the conflict has been all the greater for want of it, and yet a religious upbringing is not always an unmixed blessing, and certainly it does not mean, that because we have had it, we are all right in the sight of God. Tradition may be without power so far as we are concerned. Certainly it was in her case.

Now all this is the local setting of things, and it all shows the absence of eternal life. It is all one strong argument that there is lacking here that which is the central theme, eternal life. Eternal life answers all these questions. Eternal life brings to an end that sense of eternal deficiency. You know that you have got something which brings finality to your heart, when you receive eternal life. Eternal life brings moral deliverance. You will see how that is in a moment. Eternal life changes all our traditions into living realities. Would that there could be the opening of the flood gates of eternal life into the traditional systems of today. But all this was seeming life that was not life, but death.

The Nature of Eternal Life

Then what is the nature of eternal life? There are four Greek words translated "life" in the New Testament. (1) "Bios," which means the manner or period of life, the kind of life we lead, or the means of living and the duration here. (2) "Psuche," which means animal life; sometimes breath; it really means a living being, a being that is animate or possesses life. (3) "Pneuma," which is spirit, and very largely means liveliness, activity. It is only used in this case once, in Rev. 13:15. But "pneuma" is the Holy Spirit. (4) "Zoe." This is the word always related to God, or almost always. It is the gift of God in Christ, what Christ came to give; what Christians alone have. There is the denominative "eternal (aeonian) 'Zoe'"; incorruptible life, Divine life.

Having said that, and arrived at this eternal life, we are able to notice its nature. It has two elements. One is its quality, and the other is its duration; its quality, and its abiding endurance. Its quality is its main factor, and is the factor in its permanence; and because its quality is its permanence, when it is received it brings with it a sense of permanence, and therefore of satisfaction. It is the life of God, and being the life of God has in its very essence the very nature of God. That is eternal. That is final. That is absolute. And when you receive that in germ, and in a vital way, you know that you have found the answer to all your questions and all your longings, and it is only a matter of time now for you to enter intelligently into the answer of everything.

The effect of receiving eternal life within us is to bring instantly a sense of having reached an end. I know it opens up new possibilities, new ranges, but you know you have got the essence of satisfaction. You may yet have much to learn, you may have a long way to go, there may be new worlds to be explored and conquered, but you have got the secret of the end of all in possessing this life.

What is the first thing that one really born from above is conscious of? When you really do pass from death into life, and are born from above, what is the first uninterpreted, undefined, but very real thing in your consciousness? Well, you have found what you have been longing for! You have reached an end of that long history of dissatisfaction; moreover, you have discovered the secret of your very being, why you are here in this world; you have a sense of being here for something now. The spontaneous issue of that life in the New Testament was that the people immediately went out and talked to others. It created a purpose and an object in life. Their whole bearing and conduct said: We have found the explanation of our being in the world. You never will find that, until you find eternal life. It brings that as its essence. Why are we here? You have the answer to that question when you have the Lord! You may not be able to define it, but you know by an inner strong sense that you are here with a purpose, and that purpose is not something of time, it is eternal. It links you with eternity. It is the essence of eternal life which brings satisfaction and, therefore, the sense of permanence. Its nature is the permanence of the universe, because it is God. Receive that, and you know the deeper meaning of the poor English word "eternal." That is why John has so little to do with time and geography; he is out in that which is eternal.

The Law of Eternal Life

Now I close with just one word about the law of eternal life. What is the law of eternal life? The indwelling of the Holy Spirit! The Lord's words in this chapter about the spring of water within undoubtedly relate to the Holy Spirit, and we must not divide between Divine life and the Holy Spirit. We have to come to see that it is not an "it"; it is He; it is the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of life. Insofar as it is an "it" it is only an expression of Him. We speak of the effect of a person's presence. You come into this room; you are a person, but from you there may come an influence; that influence may be of life, or it may be of death; it may be of joy, or it may be of depression; it may be of good fellowship, or it may be of suspicion. The Holy

Spirit with His presence emanates that which is eternal life; the life is that which comes with Him, from Him, is always a part of Him. It is something in itself, but it is something related to Someone, and you cannot have life as an indwelling reality, as a thing apart from the Person.

We cannot stay to enlarge greatly upon the law of the indwelling Holy Spirit. When speaking of Nicodemus we said that the new birth from above is an advent, not a revival; it is the definite taking up of residence within, in an act, by the Lord. Well, this is only the same truth. On the positive side the Holy Spirit must, in a definiteness of faith appropriation, be received. Do you notice how, later, with the Acts and onward, that is stressed? The Word is repeated again and again: "And that thou mightest receive the Holy Spirit." It was said to Paul at His conversion, and it was said at Pentecost. "Repent and be baptized... and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." To the Ephesian disciples who had not been instructed, and whose relationship to the Lord was, therefore, very imperfect, the Apostle said: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" There must be the recognition of the fact that our life as children of God is based upon our receiving of the Holy Spirit. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." So that the life of the child of God is not just some kind of becoming interested in Christianity and religious things; and taking up religious work, and entering into a religious realm outside of which we lived before, and in which we then had no interest. It is something far more radical than that. It is the Spirit of the Living God, in an act, coming to take up His residence in one who has come to the place where they recognized that they were dead, and there were no possibilities whatever in the realm of God for them except on the basis of being born from above. And the coming in to dwell of the Holy Spirit begins everything, and on that basis everything goes on. We said that the doctrine of eternal life means the putting within of that upon which every Divine activity takes place, but that is the Holy Spirit in us working in harmony with God in heaven; and God in heaven working in us by His Holy Spirit. That is the larger way of putting the same truth. We must not think of this as abstract. It is personal. This life is not merely an essence, a vapor, an abstraction; it is an intelligent thing. You cannot take life as you may take the ether and think of it as having personal intelligence. This life is a life which has the intelligence of God, Eternal intelligence because it is the Holy Spirit. When you think that having the Holy Spirit resident within means that there within us is all the knowledge that God possesses, what tremendous possibilities there are of usefulness! Our business throughout the spiritual life is to learn how to live in the Spirit. Yes, we have in the Holy Spirit all that God has to give us. Now we have to learn how to appropriate what we have, how to ENJOY what we have.

All Related to Christ Personally

Then a final word. The whole matter is related to Christ. Notice what He says here when the woman turns to talk about their temple, their worship, and the temple and worship of Jerusalem. He breaks in with one of His strong arrests and says: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

There are two things there to be recognized. The force of: "But the hour cometh, and now is..."; that, as He uses it, represents a change of history. That phrase means that the whole course of history takes another form. Jerusalem worship, Samaritan worship - they are ended, as such they are finished. Worship is neither here nor there on the old lines. "But the hour cometh, and now is...." What hour? What is the nature of this hour? What is it that in this hour makes that change? In a word - Christ has come, and all the worship that ever was at Jerusalem with the whole system of that worship was all pointing to Him. The Temple? Yes He is the Temple. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up... he spake of the temple of his body." They thought He spake of the temple at Jerusalem. He was saying, in effect: That is

the type, I am the Anti-type! Was there a priesthood? He is the High Priest! Were there sacrifices? He is the Lamb of God! Those sacrifices never took away sin. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Every fragment of that worship was typical, pointing to something typified. That has come, He is here, and now from the external, formal, traditional you come into the true spiritual meaning of that by being spiritually united with Him by the indwelling Spirit.

The other thing clearly is this, that the true worshippers from this hour onward are not those who worship formally, but who are spiritual. The difference between formal and spiritual worship is tremendous. What He is saying is that a spiritual state is basic to real fellowship with the Father Who is a Spirit. A spiritual state! How is that spiritual state brought about? By the Holy Spirit being within. On what ground does the Holy Spirit come within? On the ground that we have taken our place in death and have been born from above.

That is only analyzing the law of eternal life. It is the fact of the indwelling Spirit; the nature of the indwelling Spirit; the result of the indwelling Spirit. The result of the indwelling Spirit is to make us spiritual in all our relationships with the Lord; to make us spiritual people; a spiritual state by reason of the Holy Spirit indwelling making everything now true. The traditional, the formal was not the eternal, it always lacked a sense of being eternal. If we are linked up with what is a traditional system of religion, however good it may be, we know there is a lack about it, if it is just that; but when we come by the Holy Spirit to know Him, Who is for us the Sanctuary of God, the One in Whom we meet the Father, we come to know Him spiritually by the Holy Spirit as our High Priest, as our Sacrifice, as our everything in relation to God; we have come into the truth because we have come by the Spirit: "...in spirit and in truth." You can only know the truth by the Spirit, but when you know the Spirit, then you know the truth.

It may be that some know all about the traditional thing, the formal thing, and do not know the truth. What such need is eternal life. What is needed is the living experience of the Holy Spirit within making alive unto God.

Now it is a tremendous question, a tremendous issue, which is at stake for us. Really, have we eternal life? Do we know the activity and energy of eternal life? Many of us do know this. I hope that can be said of you; if not, well, the issue is tremendous. The Lord lead us by faith to receive the gift, the free gift of God, which is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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