

# The True God and Eternal Life'

by H.J. Vine

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*The true God and eternal life can be known through the revelation of God, not by our own intellectual efforts, and this knowledge is found in the Son of God, who is the Way, Truth, and Life.*

**Scripture:** John 3:36, John 6:51, John 14:6, John 17:3, Acts 3:15, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Titus 1:2, 1 John 2:23, 1 John 5:12, 1 John 5:20

**Topics:** "Knowing God", "Eternal Life"

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## Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the profound subjects of 'The true God' and 'Eternal life,' emphasizing that man's intellectual efforts are insufficient to fully understand them due to sin. He highlights that the only way to know these important matters is through God's revelation, not human attainment, and that salvation, forgiveness, and the gift of the Spirit enable us to grasp God's wisdom and grace. Vine underscores that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the key to knowing the true God and eternal life, and that through Him, believers have the high privilege of knowing the Father.

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## Transcript

1 John 5:20

No subjects have called forth the energies of profound thought like these two--"The true God" and "Eternal life"; but after long ages of research, men still have to own they have failed to discover the one and to explain the other. "As touching the Almighty we cannot find him out," is yet the reply to Job's ancient question; and as to eternal life, it is still admitted they know neither the origin of "life" or what it is in itself, much less that which God's Word calls "eternal life."

Is man to be left in utter ignorance then of these most important matters? Yes, certainly, so long as he depends upon his own abilities to discover them. The abilities of man are indeed great and wonderful, given to him by a wise and beneficent Creator; but, at their best, they are incompetent to fathom the depths or scale the heights of the two subjects of which we speak; much less so now that sin has marred those remarkable abilities.

If man be unable to discover them by his own intellectual efforts, is there no way at all by which he may know them? certainly there is a way. God does not mock us by speaking of them in His Word! He desires that they should be known, even though the knowledge of the true God and eternal life surpasses all other knowledge.

What then is the way? By the revelation of God and not by the attainment of man. Surely God is able to reveal Himself! Why should any question that He is competent to do so? The truth is, if man could attain to this excellent knowledge his pride would exalt itself; and that is why he is so slow and unwilling to admit the only way, that of revelation, for then all the glory must be God's.

Nevertheless the man is a superlative fool who still pursues the wrong path when the right one is open to him. Of such it is written, "Professing themselves to be wise they become fools." Let the learned as well as the ignorant but take the place which is rightly ours--that of fallen, sinful, and dependent creatures, needing mercy, grace, and revelation from God, and there will be a grateful and plentiful supply through the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Salvation for the fallen, forgiveness for the sinful, through Him Who died and rose again, are first made ours; then, the Spirit being given to us, we are enabled to take in the revelation which is made in the marvellous wisdom and grace of God. Salvation and forgiveness in Christ must be ours, and the consequent gift of the Spirit, to enable us to receive that which God makes known, for the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit, for they are folly to him (1 Cor. 2:14). Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, neither has it come into man's heart that which God has prepared for them that love Him, "but God has revealed them to us by His Spirit" (v. 10) Here then is the way. Man is shut up to God, and not left to his own resource and energy of mind. How becoming this is for the creature, and how gracious of the Creator so to order it.

Before the coming of the Son of God into the world the true God was unrevealed, and it was not until the Spirit was given that any were capable of taking in the revelation made by the Son. From the world's foundation the eternal power and divinity of God were to be perceived in the things that are made, but not the true God Himself. Again, He spoke in various ways in the prophets, but it was in the person of the Son He spoke fully and finally. It needed One who was in Himself God to be adequate to perfectly declare God. This assertion is self-evident and needs no argument. After the Spirit was given, John wrote, "No one has seen God at any time"--how sweeping is such a statement, covering the times previous to Christ's coming in flesh--but, he continued, "The only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18). Approaching the gospels in the grace and power of the Spirit ungrieved we shall behold in the glorious Son the full revelation of God. What an entrancing unfolding for our anointed eyes to feast upon in Jesus, our Saviour, our Lord, Gods beloved Son!

"He was the image, in man's lowly guise

Of the invisible to mortal eyes;

Son of His bosom, come from heaven above,

We see in Him, incarnate, 'God is love.'"

Eternal life goes along with this revelation which is made in the Son. We are told in John 17:3, "And this is the eternal life, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." These words are spoken by the Son to the Father in the hearing of His disciples. It is to be noticed, the Father is here called the true God, just as the Son is called the true God in 1 John 5:20. It is not that there are two Gods, but the Son is God and the Father is God, even as also the Holy Spirit is God; but it is in the Son, become man, we see "God manifest in the flesh." Now the believer on the Son has eternal life, as we read in John 3:36, and the high privilege of such is to know the Father and the Son.

He that has the Son has life (1 John 5:12) and he "that confesses the Son has the Father also" (2:23). It is never stated the other way, as though it were reciprocal. "No man comes to the Father but by Me," said the Son of God. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." This excludes all the efforts of man apart from the Son: it shuts out the natural man even at his very best. The Son is the Way, not simply a way! The Son is the Truth, not simply a portion of it! The Son is the Life, not simply a partial manifestation of it. Yea, "He is the true God and eternal life."

Although God excluded man from the tree of life when he fell, it was not originally forbidden him. The way to life is now opened up by the death of Christ for man; as he said, He gave His flesh for the life of the world; again, He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life (John 6:51, 54). The promise of life, however, was given of God before the ages of time (Tit. 1:2), but it was "the Originator of life" Himself (Acts 3:15, N.Tr.) who came to make it known, and to open the way to it for man, but they slew Him. Nevertheless God raised Him from the dead; yea, He Himself rose in the power of endless life; and thus victory over death is now seen in Man risen from the dead. Death is vanquished by "the Originator of life."

To those who know these things how precious are the words of 1 John 1:1--"We have heard, we have seen with our eyes, we have contemplated, and our hands have handled the word of life." The life itself has been manifested, the eternal life which was with the Father, and it is made known to us that the fellowship which was enjoyed at the beginning with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, might be ours also; and it is added, "These things write we to you that your joy may be full."

How could it be otherwise for those of whom it is written, "We know that the Son of God is come, and has 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" (1 John 5:20). May our hearts rejoice and revel in all the abiding blessedness of this, and heed the final word of John's epistle, which the next verse gives, that the fullness of joy which is rightly ours may be unspoiled, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

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