



UNTO *the* FURTHERANCE
of the
GOSPEL

Clarence Saxon



CROWN
CHRISTIAN
PUBLICATIONS

Royal Reading

FAITHfortheFAMILY.com

UNTO *the* FURTHERANCE
of the
GOSPEL

Clarence Sexton

FIRST EDITION
COPYRIGHT
MARCH 2011



CROWN
CHRISTIAN
PUBLICATIONS
Royal Reading

FAITHfortheFAMILY.com

Dedication

EVELYN SEXTON

SHANNON & KRISTI SEXTON
NICK & ALLI

MATT & RHONDA SEXTON
MADISON, ANDREW, JUSTIN & LUKE

TOM & NANCY SEXTON

DAVE & KATHERINE SAMSON

SHEILA KOELBER

CHARLES & WANDA ROGERS

LUCILLE CAUGHORN

This book is dedicated to the great encouragers in my life. My precious wife, Evelyn, tops the list. My sons, Shannon and Matt, their wives and children have always been there for me. My brother Tommy and my sisters, Katherine and Sheila, are loving encouragers. My brother-in-law Charles and his wife Wanda have remained faithful prayer warriors through the years. My mother-in-law, affectionately known as "Miss Lucy," having been married to a Baptist preacher, gave me my first lesson in preaching. I love you, Mom. My journey has been made so much more pleasant because of their faithful love and support. We are having a great time on earth, and it is going to be even better in heaven.

Charles Sexton
Feb 5:12



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND
BIBLE TEACHING SERIES

UNTO *the* FURTHERANCE *of the* GOSPEL

First Edition

Copyright © 2011

Crown Christian Publications

Powell, Tennessee · 37849

CrownChristianPublications.com

FAITHfortheFAMILY.com

ISBN: 978-1-58981-587-2

Design and layout by Daniel LaBarge, Stephen Troell & Ryan Keiter

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations embodied in critical articles or printed reviews, without the prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

OUR RALLYING CRY



ur rallying cry is “*unto the furtherance of the gospel.*” The famous evangelist, R.A. Torrey, said, “My one ambition in life is to win as many souls as possible. It is the most worthwhile thing in life.” The purpose of this book is to rally people around the truth of God and, as friends, to labor together to evangelize the world. It is the responsibility of every Christian to go in the power of the Holy Spirit to the lost, give a clear presentation of the gospel, and bring people to the place of receiving or rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

TRUTH

Knowing that God is the author of all things and that there can be no truth without Him, we conclude that truth begins with God.

FRIENDSHIP

On the night before His betrayal, the Lord Jesus spent a great deal of time instructing His disciples in the matter of friendship. He said to them, “*Henceforth...I have called you friends.*” Friendship is a gift from God. Friendship begins with God as He came to be the sinner’s friend.

WORLD EVANGELISM

World evangelism is not merely a good idea promoted by dedicated Christians. God promised a Redeemer in Genesis 3:15. His Word declares in Acts 2:23, “*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*” World evangelism began in the heart of God.

But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear (Philippians 1:12-14).

Contents

INTRODUCTION, C. H. SPURGEON.....2

Truth

I THE TRUE GOD26
II THY WORD IS TRUTH 42
III THE SPIRIT of TRUTH
and the SPIRIT of ERROR.....58
IV SPEAKING the TRUTH in LOVE..... 72

Friendship

V THE GIFT of FRIENDSHIP.....90
VI LET THERE BE NO STRIFE I PRAY THEE..... 106
VII AN EXAMPLE of FRIENDSHIP 120
VIII DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIPS132

World Evangelism

IX JESUS CHRIST IS the SON of GOD.....152
X THE GREAT COMMISSION 166
XI SALVATION UNTO the ENDS of the EARTH.....178
XII FELLOWHELPERS to the TRUTH 194

APPENDIX, WHY I AM A BAPTIST.....210

TRUTH



Dedicated to
DILLARD HAGAN

These chapters on truth are dedicated to my first pastor, Dillard Hagan. His vigilant effort to establish the truth in my heart set me on a plain path for ministry.

I	THE TRUE GOD	26
II	THY WORD IS TRUTH	42
III	THE SPIRIT of TRUTH and the SPIRIT of ERROR.....	58
IV	SPEAKING the TRUTH in LOVE.....	72

THE TRUE GOD

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

I John 5:13



ur view of God determines all else in life. The clearer our vision is of the God of the Bible, the clearer all else in life will be.

All truth begins with the true God. God does not change, so truth does not change. Every true Christian should know and love the truth. The Bible says of the lost, *“They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved”* (II Thessalonians 2:10).

Nothing in all the world is more important or more valuable than the truth. The New Testament church is *“the pillar and ground of the truth”* (I Timothy 3:15).

Because God and truth are inseparable, truth is always under attack by Satan and his forces. God is the source of all that exists (Romans 11:36). Every truth revealed in nature was authored by Him (Psalm 19:1-6). He has given us His Word. The Bible is

God's revelation of Himself. He has given the perfect, infallible truth of Scripture (Psalm 19:7-11).



*All truth
begins with
the true God.
Truth does not
change because
God does not
change.*

The question "What makes it 'true'?" takes us immediately back to God. This is why God incarnate, Jesus Christ, Himself is called "*the truth*" (John 14:6). Christ came to earth as the very embodiment of truth. The Lord Jesus became a man without ceasing to be God.

Truth is not determined by men, it is declared to be truth by God. The Lord Jesus prayed, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:17). His Word "*liveth and abideth for ever*" (I Peter 1:23). What was once true will always be true.

It is impossible to define truth without reference to God. What is universally absolute? God is!

We live in a world of many gods, but there is only one true and living God. Do you know the true God as your personal Saviour?

I John 5:13-21 says,

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and

he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 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. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Our God is the true God. He alone is the true God. The Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Jesus of the New Testament are one and the same.

The Bible says in Isaiah 45:18-23,

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared

this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.



Because God and truth are inseparable, truth is always under attack by Satan and his forces.

I like to say that my faith is biblical Christianity. In Hebrews 5:12 we read about *“the first principles of the oracles of God.”* These are

foundational. The whole structure of truth rests upon these. Without these, nothing else can stand. A good friend has written,

These first principles...constitute an irreducible minimum of truth which must be accepted before anyone may become a true Christian or walk as a sincere believer.

This irreducible minimum of truth is so essential to the faith that if people fall short of this, we must not recognize them as true Christians—both for their sake (to avoid spiritual delusion) and for the sake of the truth. We should not recognize them to be Christians if this irreducible minimum of scriptural truth is not received and upheld as the exclusive way of salvation. These essential, basic, rudimentary, foundational truths are what we call the fundamentals.

We identify with God’s people through the centuries who have held to these Bible truths at all costs.

The truth begins with the true God. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. God says of Himself, *“I am God, and there is none else.”* It is wonderful that as John comes to the conclusion of this epistle, the Spirit of God leads him to pen this expression concerning the true God. John was a most privileged man to be in such intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ. John was the man privileged to be the human penman for five books of the New Testament. As we come to the conclusion of this book, in these last verses, John brings us to the true God.

THE TRUE GOD GIVES ASSURANCE THAT WE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE *in HIM*

He is the God who cannot lie. The true God says that we can know that we have eternal life. The Bible says, *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God”* (I John 5:13).

Notice He says, *“These things...”* We must read through the entire epistle and mark *“these things”* as we find them. When *“these things”* are found in one’s life, they give evidence of eternal life.

As we take the book of I John as a whole, we find that there are specific, spiritual birthmarks that identify the true believer in Jesus Christ. These are evidences of our salvation. They speak loudly of the fact that we have *“passed from death unto life,”*

and that eternal life, the life of the Eternal One, is a present possession for each child of God.

When dealing with people about what we refer to as the “assurance of their salvation,” many of us take them immediately to I John 5:13 *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*

Yes, we can know, but we are taking the verse out of context. Notice the expression, *“these things.”* What are *“these things”*? We read this verse as if it says, “This verse is written.” But it does not say, “This verse is written.” It says, *“These things have I written...”* This verse summarizes the entire book.

You may have made a profession of faith. You may know the Lord as your Saviour. But you are not going to live in the joyful assurance of the present possession you have in Christ Jesus unless *“these things,”* these birthmarks that are found throughout the book of I John, are found in your life.

THE TRUE GOD HEARS *and* ANSWERS PRAYER

People around the world pray to many gods, but the Bible says that the gods to whom they pray cannot hear, and they certainly cannot answer. The true God hears and answers prayer.

I John 5:14 says, *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.”* What a promise! This confidence grows out of the absolute assurance that we have eternal life. Prayer is the language of eternal life. We have been born of the Spirit of God. We have

been quickened from the dead spiritually; we have been made alive in the Lord Jesus. Out of this eternal life we have absolute confidence that our God is the true and living God who hears and answers prayers.

It is vital that we pray in His will. The Bible declares that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. This means that His will must become our will. In this battle of wills, we are to yield to God; we are to want what God wants. There is a personal struggle here; it is a struggle with God. We win by yielding to Him.



*Prayer is the
language of
eternal life.*

This is the same thing the Lord Jesus taught His disciples in what we call the “model prayer.” He prayed and taught them to pray, *“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”* (Matthew 6:10). We often want our will to be done. So the struggle is between us and God. It is a battle of our wills. Whose will shall prevail?

The place to truly begin in prayer is with a searching of God’s heart and a knowledge of God’s Word. I must have an understanding of spiritual things for me to know what God’s will is. What does God want? I must pray that His will be done. When I pray in His will, I can have confidence that my prayer will be heard and answered.

Much of our prayer life is only a struggle to get through. It is a struggle so that our motives might be refined and purified. It is a struggle that we might exalt God and see Him for who He is—high, holy, exalted, and lifted up. We know that God’s will is always best; God’s will is always perfect. He allows secondary things into our lives to gain our attention; we look beyond the secondary things and see the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul said in Romans 12:1-2,

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The will of God is good; the will of God is acceptable and perfect. Because of a lack of faith, we are frightened to submit to God's will; but when we finally pray, "Lord, Thy will be done," the Bible says that God will hear us and answer our prayers. There is a struggle there. To have real victory in our prayer life, we must pray through that struggle.



When we think God is late, it is because we are early, and our hearts are not prepared to receive what He has for us.

I John 5:15 says, "And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." One thing builds on the other. Once we pray in His will, then we can know that He hears us. Once we know that He hears us, then we can know also that we are going to have the petitions that we desire of Him.

God's timetable is most often not our timetable. When we think God is late, it is because we are early, and our hearts are not prepared to receive what He has for us. There are things I thought I would attempt to do twenty years ago, but I am just doing them now. I thought I was ready for them years ago, but only now is God making these things clear.

If you are going to know God's will, you must be surrendered to His will and desire His will and know that His will is best. We must be familiar with God's Word, because God teaches us about His will in His Word. When we pray in His will, we can be confident that the true God, our God, hears and answers prayer. The real struggle is not to try to get God to hear; it is to try to get our hearts in tune with God so that we might desire His will.

THE TRUE GOD WARNS US CONCERNING *the* SERIOUSNESS *of* SIN

The clearer our vision of God, the more serious the matter of sin becomes. Remember, John is the penman, but these are truly God's words. The Lord knew that we would be reading this in our generation. The Bible says in I John 5:16,

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

All sin is rebellion against God, but here the Bible says that there is a sin that leads to death. All sins certainly will not lead to immediate physical death, but there are some sinful acts that bring death. God warns us. Early in the book of I John, God tells us that if we sin and confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us.

There is a way to deal with our sinfulness on a daily basis. We must keep short accounts with God and make sure that every day we confess our sins to Him. We should bring everything to

God so that we might walk in a clean way and live a holy life. We must be separated unto the Lord and from the world.

When we read the Bible, we find that there are things spoken of in God's Word that can lead to death. We find an example of this in the book of Acts. Acts 5:1-11 says,

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by

her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Can you imagine a meeting like that? These people lied to God, and immediately they died. Not every sin, that is sin unto death, brings death immediately.

The Bible tells us of another incident as we read I Corinthians 5:1-5, which says,

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The "destruction of the flesh" means physical death. He says, "Here is something that is going to bring physical death." I have seen this happen. I know people that I believe committed this sin unto death. They were taken home to heaven prematurely. They suffered physical death. God warns us of this.

In I Corinthians 11 Paul speaks of those who are not serious about the Lord's table and who do not observe this

memorial supper in the way that they should. The Bible says in I Corinthians 11:23-30,

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

This word “*sleep*” in the last verse means physical death. There are some who have taken lightly the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His broken body. There are some who have taken lightly the testimony they should have concerning our Lord's death and resurrection. They have taken lightly the matter of living the Christian life in identity with Christ and the local assembly of baptized believers. God says that they have suffered premature death because of this.

I once heard someone tell a story to illustrate this sin unto death. He told the story of a father with an unruly child who

had company in his home. The child would not behave himself in an orderly fashion. Finally, the father said, “You will have to be in another room while we are entertaining guests because your embarrassing behavior is something we will not tolerate in the presence of these guests.” He physically removed the child from the room to keep the child from embarrassing himself and bringing reproach to his parents.

No doubt there are times when God removes His children from this world because of the shame and reproach they bring to their heavenly Father and the cause of Christ.

The Bible says in I John 5:16-18,

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

God gives a warning concerning sin. You may be a believer. You may think that you can live as you please, but you cannot. You should live your life the way God pleases. It is a serious matter to take sin lightly. God's Word declares this. Our God is not a god of wood or stone! Our God is not a god who cannot see or hear! Our God is the true and living God. The true and living God who sees, knows, and understands our very thoughts warns us concerning the seriousness of sin.

THE TRUE GOD PROTECTS THOSE WHO ARE HIS CHILDREN

Think about these to whom John is writing and those who will be reading this through the centuries. How often it appears to people that the wicked are winning!

I John 5:18 says, *“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...”* This means to continue in the course of sin. Whoever is born of God does not continue on a sinful course.

I John 5:18 continues, *“But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”* God says, “I want you to know that because I am all-powerful, the Devil cannot do with you as he pleases.” We know that there are times, as in the life of Job, when God allows Satan to touch believers. When that happens, it happens only with God’s permission. It is a move that the Devil makes that God sanctifies. It is a time when the Lord gets glory from the Devil’s work.

John says, “I want to assure you that the Lord has a ‘No Trespassing’ sign on you. The Devil knows it is there, and he cannot touch you without God’s permission.”

I John 5:19 says, *“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”* We are *“in the world,”* as the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17, but we are not *“of the world.”* We know that the whole world lies in wickedness, but have we forgotten that our God is the true God? He is on His throne, and the reins of this universe are still in His hands. If you are one of God’s children, God has promised to protect you.

I John 5:20 says, *“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.” If you are one of God’s children, God has given you a spiritual understanding. The Holy Spirit illumines you, teaches you, and gives you an understanding of truth. We are not left here as orphaned children, alone to fend for ourselves. We are in Him who is true. We have been placed in the Lord, in a place of safety and security.

Notice how John concludes I John chapter five. *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”* An idol is anything that comes between you and God. Do not make an idol of your material possessions. Do not make an idol of your family or your job. Do not allow anything between you and God. Every time we do, the Lord allows us to become terribly disappointed in whatever it is that we have placed between us and God. It must be belittled so that God can be exalted.

I am certain that so much of our disappointment with things and people is of our own making, because we have given them a position God did not intend for them to have. The Lord allows the disappointment so that we can see that God must have His rightful place. Nothing in our lives can take the place that only the true God should have. May God by His Spirit deal with us and bring us to this conviction.