

***How to
Teach***

Bible Doctrines to Children

**Guidelines to
help
children's
workers to
better
understand
Bible
doctrines and
how to teach
them to
children**



Sam Doherty

How to Teach Bible Doctrines to Children

*A manual to help children's workers to better
understand Bible doctrines,
and how to teach them to children*

**BY
SAM DOHERTY**

A series of training manuals for children's workers:

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Published by

Child Evangelism Fellowship - Specialized Book Ministry

Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

P O Box 308, Lisburn, BT28 2YS, Northern Ireland, UK

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DEDICATION

On July 17th, 1996 my dear friend and co-worker David McQuilken went to be with His Lord and Saviour after a protracted period of illness. He and I had worked together for 45 years in the ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship, and we had always enjoyed a very close personal friendship.

My wife and I were the founders, and then the National Directors for 14 years (1950–1964) of CEF of Ireland. David and his wife Mollie worked with us during most of that time. When we became European Regional Directors they became Irish National Directors. They served God in this capacity for over 30 years and were greatly used by Him in the building up of a very strong CEF work all over Ireland. Today there are almost 100 full-time CEF workers from the little province of Northern Ireland with its population of 1½ million.

Two years ago they handed over the leadership of Irish CEF to their successors Henry and Madeline Berry. But they did not retire. They continued to work full-time with CEF. David carried on a teaching, preaching and helping ministry in Ireland and also in different parts of Europe. In addition, David became co-editor of the book project which I had initiated and he was working closely with me on this. Indeed David's very last act of service, before his death, was to write the foreword to my second book "How to Lead a Child to Christ."

He had planned to become more and more involved in this book project. But God had some special service for him in the Glory; and so He took him home.

I want to dedicate this third book "How to Teach Bible Doctrines to Children" to David, and also to his wife Mollie to whom we tender our sincerest sympathy on David's departure to be with his Lord.

This was the book David had always wanted printed. He was a great lover, and an able preacher, of Bible doctrines. Right up to his departure to be with the Lord Jesus Christ David was a wonderful testimony and example to all he came into contact with. He was completely at peace and was looking forward to being "absent from the body and present with the Lord." His two favourite words, which he repeated often during those last weeks were "No condemnation."

He knew, understood and wholeheartedly believed and rejoiced in the great doctrine outlined in Romans 8 v1: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” And this truth meant very much to him both in his life and at his death.

David was concerned that there was a comparative lack of good doctrinal teaching in much of today’s work among children. And he wanted this book to be produced so as to help and encourage children’s workers worldwide to teach Bible doctrines to their children.

May God help us each one to understand these great Bible truths and then to teach them to children all over the world. This is what David would have wanted—more than anything else.

Sam Doherty

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing **the word of truth**” (2 Timothy 2 v15).

Paul wrote, “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, **to doctrine**” (1 Timothy 4 v13).

FOREWORD

In the Bible College classroom where, starting more than three decades ago, my working days have been spent, I keep encountering a puzzling scenario involving students who come from Christian homes. Despite having grown up in the church many of them do not have a firm grasp of basic Christian doctrines. No, they haven't fallen prey to false teachings; but many of these young people find it difficult to articulate clearly what they believe. Given the number of hours spent in Sunday school and church this is hard to explain.

I believe that all too often children in Christian homes and churches are served a simple fare of stories; they are not taught doctrine. Thus they know about David killing Goliath, Daniel surviving in the lions' den and Jesus feeding the five thousand. To be sure, this is commendable. Children love stories; and story-telling may be easier than teaching doctrine. Concepts are harder to present than events, and less exciting than drama. But ultimately children will (or should) ask the question: What do these stories teach us about God and about ourselves?

Sam Doherty is an expert in eliciting doctrine from stories and in systematically teaching biblical truth. I have sat under his ministry many times where he has done just that. He is also a competent communicator. Whole generations of his students now scattered and active throughout Europe and beyond have profited from the "know how" contained in this book. I congratulate you upon obtaining it. Children in our post-Christian society need to understand what the Bible teaches. They need to be taught this both accurately and interestingly. "How to Teach Bible Doctrines to Children" will help you achieve those goals. Read it and use it.

*Doyle Klaassen
Principal, Brake Bible School
Germany*

INTRODUCTION

The need for this book

Most, if not all, children's workers will agree that one of the greatest problems we face today is that the vast majority of boys and girls have very little, or no, understanding of Bible truth. This is true even in many countries which are Christian in name (although not in fact).

At the same time we all believe that it is the truth which makes people free—including boys and girls (John 8 v32). The world's children need to hear, understand and act upon Bible truth or doctrine.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing **by the Word of God**" (Romans 10 v17).

But "how can they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10 v14).

The purposes of this book

I have written this book for children's workers with two goals in mind:

- To help children's workers think through the main Bible doctrines for themselves so that they will have a better understanding of them. We cannot, obviously, teach that which we ourselves do not clearly understand.

A number of younger children's workers, in particular, have expressed to me their desire for a book on doctrine which they could use as a basis for their own personal doctrinal studies. I trust that this book will help them; and I would suggest to all of you that you work your way through the book—page by page, Bible verse by Bible verse, using it to study and understand what the Bible teaches.

Could you set aside, say, 30, 45 or 60 minutes each day to make a detailed study of the main doctrines of the Bible, using this book as a guideline? If you could, I believe that God would help you and bless you in a special way in your own relationship with Him, in your understanding of the Bible, and in your ministry to the children.

I am especially concerned that as you and I study doctrine we should endeavour at all times to bring our lives, our words and our actions into line and into tune with the doctrines we come to

understand, believe and teach. Otherwise we “become as sounding brass” or “a tinkling cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13 v1).

The greatest testimony which you and I could have is “He (she) practised what he (she) preached.”

- To help and prepare children’s workers to teach these doctrines to the children to whom they minister—in a simple, logical and attractive way. The greatest need of the world’s children is, I believe, for a solid, biblical, doctrinal, teaching evangelism; and I would like this book to help make this a reality.

I have worked with Child Evangelism Fellowship for over 46 years. It is the largest Mission to children in the world with almost 2,000 full-time workers, and many thousands of volunteer workers. I am thankful for the size of our Mission and for the millions of children reached each year. But I am especially thankful for the emphasis CEF has always placed on the teaching of truth, and not just the telling of stories. This emphasis has always been a great help, and challenge, to me. And I trust that this book will help, to some extent, to further this emphasis.

The background of this book

This is a book the contents of which I have worked on for many years and which I have taught to **many** groups of students at the European Child Evangelism Fellowship Leadership Training Institute. The contents are based upon the notes I have produced for these students down through those years. Much of the contents are not original. Many ideas and outlines have been gleaned from books written by godly men down through the centuries. However, I am unfortunately not able, after all these years of developing and adapting the book, to identify the sources which have been such a help. I have, instead, in the bibliography at the end of this book, tried to identify the books which have been the greatest help and blessing to me.

I also want to acknowledge the help I have received from time to time through the writing and teaching of Jennifer Haaijer, a very gifted and able Child Evangelism Fellowship teacher, and through many personal discussions with David McQuilken to whom this book has been dedicated.

This is a book which I have always wanted to produce, and to make available to children’s workers around the world. There is, I believe, very little available on the subject of teaching doctrine to children

in many of the world's languages. That is why I have had many requests from children's workers—especially in Eastern Europe—to produce such a book.

The title of this book

The title I have used is “How to Teach Bible Doctrines to Children,” and throughout the book I use the word “doctrine” or “doctrines” over and over again. The word “doctrine” means “teaching” and refers, as we will see later, to the truths which we as Christians believe and teach. There are many of these in the Bible.

It is clear that there is a fixed and objective body or system of truth which has been revealed by God in His Word, the Bible, that this body of truth is the foundation of the Christian Church (1 Corinthians 3 v 10; Ephesians 2 v 20), and that it has been committed to us as God's stewards (2 Timothy 1 v 13 and 14; 1 Timothy 1 v 11; 1 Corinthians 4 v 1, 2).

The contents of this body or system of truth—which we as believers are expected to study, understand, believe, guard and teach—are called in Scripture by several names: the Faith (1 Timothy 4 v 1), the Truth (1 Timothy 3 v 15), the Word (2 Timothy 4 v 2), the Gospel (1 Timothy 1 v 11) and the Doctrine or teaching (1 Timothy 6 v 3). These names are used many times and refer basically to the same fact—that there **is** a body of truth which has been revealed to us, and that all we believe and do needs to be based upon it.

In our study of this revealed system of truth (and how to teach it to children) we will generally refer to its individual and constituent parts or truths as “doctrines.”

The method used in this book

I realise that there are different views among Christians concerning some of the doctrines I have included in my book. Several options were open to me when writing the book:

- I could avoid such doctrines completely. This would obviously avoid any kind of controversy. However, I felt that all these doctrines were important, and that none should be omitted.
- I could outline equally all the viewpoints on each doctrine. But I did not have the time and space to do this. In addition this would not be the teaching style I would favour.

- I could outline what I myself feel to be the biblical teaching on each doctrine. This was what I decided to do. I then leave it to the reader to go to the Scriptures to find out if what I have presented is correct. You can then think it through for yourself and either accept it or reject it. The teaching given in this book is my own—and the result of my own study of Scripture. Although I am satisfied and happy with the conclusions I have come to, I want to underline the obvious fact that I am neither infallible or inspired!

I would like to emphasize again that this book expresses my own personal views on doctrine, and I take full responsibility myself for all I have written. In addition I should point out that this book does not represent the official position of Child Evangelism Fellowship.

I have sought to write everything in a spirit of love, and only with a desire to glorify God. I have many dear brothers and sisters in the Lord who could agree with me on the main fundamental truths of the Word of God, but who would not agree with some of what I have written. But I love them in the Lord and rejoice in the fellowship we have together, and I am thankful for their godly lives and for the way God has blessed them in their ministries. If we still don't agree with some of the conclusions I come to in this book then let us agree to disagree in a spirit of love.

I trust and pray that the simple outlines in this book will assist you, my dear children's worker, in your understanding of doctrine, and also that it will encourage you and help you to teach these great Bible truths to the children who need them so much.

At the same time I trust and pray that all of us who read the book and who study the doctrinal outlines in it will carefully and conscientiously apply each truth to our own lives. Doctrine is especially relevant when it results in spiritual growth, changed behaviour patterns, a burden for lost souls and a more devoted service of our Lord and Saviour.

God's will for each one of us is not only to understand doctrine, not only to teach it, but also to "Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2 v10).

SECTION I: WHAT IS DOCTRINE AND HOW CAN WE TEACH IT?

Chapter 1: What is Doctrine?

Doctrine is the systematic, logical, orderly presentation of what Christians believe and teach concerning God, and every area of human thought and experience affected by belief in God—as outlined in the Word of God.

Doctrine is the fixed, settled and objective body of truth revealed by God to the apostles and prophets and written by them for us through inspiration.

Both of these definitions are very good. But the shortest and simplest definition is simply **“Doctrine is what we believe and teach.”**

Doctrine is what we believe—and not what we do. What we do is the application and result of doctrine.

So when we teach doctrine to children we are showing them, and teaching them, the facts about a particular truth and what they **should believe** concerning it.

For example, if we are teaching them about Jesus Christ we would want them to understand and believe that He was a perfect man. We would also teach them that He was, and is, truly God. These are both doctrines or truths which children need to understand and believe.

But we also need to show them the applications of those doctrines to their own lives so that they will not only believe the doctrines—but that they will act, or do something, based on those doctrines which they have been taught.

Jesus Christ is perfect man (that is the doctrine). **Therefore** you should seek to imitate and be like Him (that is the application).

Jesus Christ is God (that is the doctrine). **Therefore** you should worship Him (that is the application).

Let us have a few “tests” to make sure that we understand what doctrine is. Which one of the following statements is doctrine?

- You must trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour
- Do not tell lies to God
- The Holy Spirit lives in every believer
- There are 66 books in the Bible

Which one of the following statements is not doctrine?

- Jesus Christ died on the Cross for sinners
- Jesus Christ wants you to tell others about Him
- Jesus Christ was truly man and lived a perfect life
- Jesus Christ prays for believers

In each of the following pairs of statements one is doctrine and one is application. Can you see which is which?

- Trust God for all your needs. God is faithful
- Jesus Christ is coming back again. Watch and pray
- Read your Bible every day. The Bible is God’s Word and absolutely true
- God is holy. God wants you to be holy
- Jesus Christ can help you overcome your bad temper. Jesus Christ is God.

Did you notice that each application stated is the application of the doctrine given?

It is not correct to teach doctrine on its own—without application. It is not helpful to give an application without teaching the doctrinal truth on which it is based. The biblical method of teaching, as portrayed clearly in Paul’s letter to the Romans, is to teach doctrine, and truth (as he does in Chapters 1–11), and then to show the readers or listeners the application of these truths to their own lives (as he does in Chapters 12–16). We can see the same principle in the description of the early church in Acts 2 v42 which shows that **doctrine** came first, and that on that foundation were based fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers.

This combination of doctrine and application can be seen over and over again in Scripture:

2 Timothy 3 v16 shows that the first purpose of the Scriptures is to teach **doctrine** and that reproof, correction and instruction follow that and are based upon it.

This biblical pattern of doctrine plus application can also be seen clearly in our Lord's teaching (for example the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew Chapters 5, 6 and 7) in Paul's teaching (e.g., Acts 13 v16-41), and in Peter's teaching (e.g., Acts 2 v14-40).

The book of Ephesians is a classic combination of doctrine (Chapters 1-3) and application (Chapters 4-6). This is brought out clearly by Paul's use of the link word "therefore" in Ephesians 4 v1. This is similar to the way he used the same link word in Romans 12 v1.

In 1 Peter 1 v23-24 Peter teaches that the Word of God is incorruptible and indestructible. That is the doctrine. He follows it by encouraging his readers (in 2 Peter 2 v1 and 2) to desire it and read it. Doctrine leads to application. Application is based upon doctrine.

- ✧ To teach children to obey God, without giving the doctrinal reason that God made them is incomplete.
- ✧ To teach children to love the Lord Jesus Christ, without teaching them that He died for them is incomplete.
- ✧ To encourage Christian children not to grieve the Holy Spirit, without teaching them that the Holy Spirit lives in them, is incomplete.
- ✧ To teach children to believe in Jesus Christ, without teaching them that salvation is by faith, is incomplete.
- ✧ To teach children that they should be holy, without teaching them that God is holy, is incomplete.

In all the above cases it is also incomplete to teach the truth given without also explaining the application.

It is necessary to understand not only what doctrine is, but also how it came to us.

Step 1—Revelation

All truth comes to man from God, and we can only know it because God has chosen to reveal it to mankind. Otherwise we would never know it.

God revealed His truth to two groups of men:

The prophets. God spoke directly to men like Moses, Isaiah and Daniel and revealed truth to them. For example, God showed to Moses how He had made the world. If He had not done so, Moses would never have known.

The apostles. God revealed truth to men like Paul, Peter and Matthew in New Testament days. For example, God revealed to Paul the truth of justification by faith. Otherwise Paul would not have known it.

We do not know exactly how God revealed truths to these two groups of men. But we know that He did! (Romans 1 v17, 18; 1 Corinthians 15 v3; Galatians 1 v11, 12).

However, if God had **only** revealed truths to these men many years ago we in our generation would have had no knowledge of them. For the sake of future generations some method of communicating truth was necessary.

Step 2—Inspiration

Not only did God the Holy Spirit reveal truth to the prophets and apostles but He also guided and inspired them to write these truths down (2 Timothy 3 v16; 2 Peter 1 v21). In this way multitudes of others in the years that lay ahead could also come to know them and understand them. Because Moses wrote down how God created the world we can also know what happened, and on the basis of that realise how great and how powerful God is. Because Paul explained the truth of justification by faith in his letters we can understand it and on the basis of that understanding we can trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

This process is known as inspiration. All the writings of the prophets and apostles were, and are, absolutely true because the Holy Spirit guided them in what they wrote and preserved them from error.

Like revelation, inspiration is complete and finished. When the last book of the Bible was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit nothing more needed to be written.

God's revelation in the Bible is now complete. Nothing can, or needs to, be added. All the truth we need is here—in the Word of God.

Step 3—Illumination

All the truth and doctrine we need is contained in the written Word of God. But the Holy Spirit also has a present ministry with regard to truth. This is not revelation or inspiration both of which are finished and complete but, instead, illumination. He helps us to understand the truths which are already written in the Word of God. These are the truths which He wants us, and helps us, to understand and believe about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, ourselves, sin, the Bible, the way of salvation, sanctification, the future, and so forth (John 16 v12-15; 1 Corinthians 2 v12; 1 John 2 v20, 27).

For example, the truth of justification by faith was **revealed** to the Apostle Paul. He wrote this truth down for our benefit in the Bible under the **inspiration** of the Holy Spirit. But in the 16th century the mind of Martin Luther was **illuminated** by the Holy Spirit so that he could understand the truth which was already there. This was not a new truth. It was an “old” truth which had remained hidden for many centuries.

Step 4—Application

Truth or doctrine is not just something to be believed. It should have an influence on us.

We have already seen earlier in this chapter that we should never teach doctrine to children without applying it. When I myself come to understand and believe a specific Bible doctrine (through the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit) I need to ask myself the question “What does this doctrine mean for me personally? What should I do because of it?” And I believe that part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to help me to apply it, and should lead to a change not just in my thinking but in my actions. In the same way we need not only to help the children to understand Bible doctrine, but to see what it means for them in what they think, say and do.

It is important to realise how important doctrine—sound doctrine—is. **What we believe** determines:

What we are. I am what I believe. My doctrine is the basis of my character. For example, 1 Peter 1 v16 shows me that holiness in my life is based upon a correct understanding and application of the truth of God's Holiness.

What we do. I act on the basis of what I believe. My doctrine is the foundation for my actions. For example, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians to deal with the problem of adultery in the church he reminded them in 1 Corinthians 6 v15 and 19 of two doctrines. If they **properly** understood that they were part of the Body of Christ, and if they **really** knew that the Holy Spirit lived in their bodies no one would want to unite his body with a woman in an adulterous relationship.

What we teach. Doctrine is the basis for our ministry of evangelism and our ministry of edification. Without it children cannot be saved—nor can they grow. Conversion is the response of the heart to truth. Evangelism which is not doctrinal is not biblical evangelism. If we by-pass the mind the result is often false or shallow decisions, disillusionment or post-conversion problems. The more a child knows before he is saved, the better. Those with good teaching before they come to Christ have generally fewer problems after they trust Christ. Also a lack of doctrinal understanding causes Christian children easily to be led astray (Ephesians 4 v14) and hinders spiritual growth.

In the light of this chapter we can understand why certain statements about doctrine are **not** correct and **not** true.

"Doctrine is not important. It does not matter what you believe. The only thing which matters is action and love."

Of course doctrine is important because it determines our action and gives a basis for our love.

"Doctrine is theoretical—and only suitable for old men with long gray beards in dusty libraries."

This shows a complete misunderstanding of doctrine and its effects and influences. If properly understood it is most practical—for everybody.

"Unity is more important than doctrine. Let us find something we all believe in, unite on the basis of that, and not divide or separate because we believe differently."

This philosophy is the basis of the ecumenical movement and has caused many problems and much compromise. When we see how important doctrine is we cannot possibly agree with such a viewpoint. Biblical fellowship can only be enjoyed with those who are agreed on all fundamental doctrines. We may differ on relatively minor doctrines and still have fellowship—but on fundamental doctrines—NEVER!

“Doctrine is vague and uncertain. There are certain doctrines we cannot be sure about, and we can all be right and correct even if we don’t agree.”

Far from it! The doctrines of the Bible are clear and definite, and never contradict each other.

“Doctrine is only for adults—and not for children.”

How sad such a statement is. When we understand how important doctrine is, we really want to share it with, and teach it to, children—so that they can be saved, helped and blessed.

“Doctrine is only for saved children. Unserved children cannot understand it.”

Again, what a misconception! It is, of course, true that unsaved children—indeed all children—cannot by themselves have a spiritual or heart understanding of doctrine. But the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to illuminate the children as we teach it. It is good to remember, also, that the Gospel message is doctrinal teaching:

- ✧ *God is the Creator of the universe*
- ✧ *God is holy and just, and must punish sin*
- ✧ *Everyone has sinned and broken God’s law*
- ✧ *God loves the world and sent His Son Jesus Christ*
- ✧ *Jesus Christ took God’s punishment for sin*
- ✧ *Jesus Christ rose again and is alive today*
- ✧ *Jesus Christ is Lord and demands obedience*
- ✧ *Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone*
- ✧ *Salvation results in forgiveness of all sin, and in a new nature*

“Doctrine is dry, dusty and not interesting—especially for us young people.”

Far from it! If thoroughly studied and properly taught it is fascinating.

Chapter 2: Why Teach Doctrine To Children?

There are many reasons why we children's workers should make it our goal to be teachers of doctrine.

Doctrine Is the Basis of What They Are and Do

Firstly, we teach doctrine to children because (as we saw in the last chapter) it is the basis of what they are (their character) and of what they do (their actions). They need, first of all, to understand and believe the doctrines of the Bible if they are going to be what God wants them to be.

2 Timothy 3 v16 reads "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Doctrine comes first, and leads then to the three applications given.

They Live in a Very Difficult World

Secondly, we teach doctrine to children because the contemporary world is a very difficult world for "today's child." The best preparation for it and defence against its evils and problems is an understanding and application of Bible truths.

Today's children live in:

- a world of materialism.
- a world of humanism. Man is in the centre. Man's chief end is to glorify man and enjoy him for ever. This philosophy appears in schools, in the media—and sometimes even in the churches. It leads to agnosticism and even atheism.
- a world of hedonism or pleasure seeking.
- a world of existentialism. There are no objective standards for conduct. "If it feels right and doesn't harm anyone do it."
- a world of wrong and harmful influences.
 - ✓ drugs
 - ✓ sex
- a world of violence and disregard of authority.

- a world of the occult.
- a world of false teaching and rejection of truth. 2 Timothy 4 v3 is so true today outside, and even sometimes inside, the church.

It would seem as if the devil is making a special effort to destroy our boys and girls. We need to be active, and combat all those influences and pressures by the teaching and application of Bible truth. John 8 v32 promises that “the truth shall make you free.”

“But how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10 v14).

They Understand So Little about Doctrine

Thirdly, we teach doctrine to children because there is a great dearth of doctrinal understanding among children:

Many have never been taught doctrine and are biblically illiterate.

Many have been taught false doctrine, and this creates an even more difficult situation.

Even in some evangelical churches children are often taught Bible stories and Bible facts—but relatively few of the Bible truths which can be learned from those stories and facts. Bible stories should be the vehicle for teaching Bible truths, and not an end in themselves.

More and more children in our world today understand and believe less and less doctrine. This is mainly because it has not been taught to them.

Hosea writes in Hosea 4 v6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” How true this is today of our children.

Teaching Doctrine Is the Biblical Pattern of Ministry

Fourthly, we teach doctrine to children because this is the biblical pattern of ministry:

- The Lord Jesus taught doctrine (Matthew 7 v28)
- He commanded us to teach it (Matthew 28 v19, 20)
- His apostles taught it (Acts 5 v21, 25, 28 and 42)
- His apostles commanded us to teach it (1 Timothy 3 v2; 1 Timothy 4 v13; 1 Timothy 4 v16; 2 Timothy 4 v2; Titus 1 v9)
- The early church was based upon it (Acts 2 v41, 42)
- The epistles show an ideal combination of doctrine and application

Time and space do not allow me to develop these six points outlining doctrinal teaching as the biblical pattern of ministry. I would, instead, recommend that you study each point in detail using the verses I have given plus many more which support and explain the biblical pattern which we are to follow and imitate.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a Baptist Pastor in London during the latter half of the 19th century. He was greatly used by God, and many people were saved in his church—the Metropolitan Tabernacle—which was attended by between 5,000 and 6,000 worshippers every Sunday morning and evening. He was one of the greatest pastors and preachers in church history.

He had a special love for children, and a great desire to see them saved and serving Jesus Christ. Consequently, he founded and developed many Sunday schools, and a large orphanage with hundreds of children who attended his services each Sunday morning.

He was a great believer in child conversion, and he also encouraged all his Sunday school teachers to teach the doctrines of the Gospel and of the Word of God to their children. He himself was, at all times, a preacher and a teacher of doctrine.

Here are several quotes from some of his sermons:

“We have heard it said by some that children cannot understand the great mysteries of religion. We even know some Sunday school teachers who cautiously avoid mentioning the great doctrines of the Gospel because they think children are not prepared to receive them. I do hold that there is no doctrine of the Word of God which a child if he be capable of salvation is not capable of receiving. I would have children taught all the great doctrines of truth without a solitary exception that they may in their after days hold fast by them.”

“The only way to keep chaff out of the child’s little measure is to fill it brimful with good wheat. Oh that the Spirit of God may help us to do this. The more the young are taught the better. It will keep them from being misled.”

“If there be any doctrine too difficult for a child it is rather the fault of the teacher’s conception of it than of the child’s power to receive it, provided that child be really converted to God. It is ours to make doctrine simple; this is to be a main part of our work. Teach the little ones the whole truth and nothing but the truth; for instruction is the great want of the child’s nature.”

Chapter 3: How Can We Ourselves Understand Doctrine?

Before we can teach doctrine we must understand it ourselves! Someone has said, “If the teacher is in a fog, the children will be in darkness.” Paul was able to teach doctrine even to the uneducated and to slaves because he knew it and understood it so well himself.

We also need a good foundation of doctrine as a basis for our own character and for our own actions—and not just for teaching it to children.

There are six basic principles which will help us in our understanding of doctrine.

We Need to Work Hard

Doctrine comes **from the Bible**. Therefore we must make it our goal to study the Bible regularly and thoroughly. There is no place for human speculation or theorizing. I am thankful for the older man who took me aside when I was a young Christian and advised me to study, understand and apply the doctrines of the Bible. I have endeavoured to do this ever since and, while it has been hard work, it has been a tremendous blessing.

The doctrines we are looking for are scattered throughout **the whole Bible**. Therefore we must realise that the study of doctrine **is** hard work. There is no easy way to find and systematize our beliefs.

“**Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a **workman** that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2 v15).

We Need to See the Panorama

To have a correct understanding of doctrine it is necessary to find and see **the panorama**, or the **general sweep** and overall viewpoint on the teaching of that doctrine throughout the Bible. If we then find verses or passages which **seem** to teach something different we need to recognize that these verses must have another interpretation. In some cases our limited ability and understanding do not allow us fully to discover what that other interpretation is. We may not fully

understand what such verses teach. But we know what they don't teach! We must always remember that the Bible **never contradicts** itself.

It is not possible to have two "truths" which contradict each other.

We Need to Be Clear

Doctrine is really **quite simple** to understand provided we are willing to study the Word thoroughly and depend upon the Holy Spirit for illumination. The truths of the Bible are **clear**—and should not cause confusion. It is, I believe, God's Will for us to see clearly and to understand the truths of His Word. He does not want us to be "in a fog." That is why the Holy Spirit has anointed each of us (1 John 2 v27) and has given us an unction (1 John 2 v20)—that we may know **all** things (1 John 2 v20).

We Need to Teach It

What we have learned we must teach to children. Firstly, because they need to hear it and understand it; and secondly because the more we teach doctrine the better we will understand it ourselves.

I personally believe that I have learned more about doctrine and the truths of the Bible through teaching them, than in any other way. This would, of course, include what I learned through my preparation for that teaching; and, in addition, what I have also learned in response to the questions, challenges and sometimes scepticism of those I was teaching.

We Need to Read Good Books

While our study of doctrine must of necessity focus upon the Bible and what is taught there, we need to realise that there is a great reservoir of doctrinal studies available to us. Men of God have for many years studied the great truths of the Bible and have recorded the results of their studies in writing for our benefit. We should avail ourselves of what they have produced. They will be a great help to us in our studies. As I said in my introduction these men have, through their writings, been a great and indispensable help in the preparation of this book and its contents.

However, it is important to discern between books which are helpful and books which are not helpful. There are many liberal and modernistic theologians whose books will harm us and poison us. We do not want to read and study these books. Be careful what you read—and what you listen to. It could cause you more harm than good.

You will find a list of helpful books on doctrine in the Bibliography on pages 194 and 195.

We Have a Helper

We must pray that **the Holy Spirit** will help us as we study. One of His ministries **is** illumination—and He has come to guide us into all truth (John 16 v13). We have already referred to the verses in John's first epistle which speaks about the unction (1 John 2 v20) and the anointing (1 John 2 v27) which we have received from God the Holy Spirit. The Greek word is the same in both cases; and obviously refers, in the context, to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in helping every believer to know all things (1 John 2 v20), and to be taught all things by Himself (1 John 2 v27). The fact that all believers are anointed in this way is emphasized in 2 Corinthians 1 v21.

We, therefore, need to ask for His gracious help as we read the Bible and as we study the doctrines which He revealed to the apostles and prophets, and which He inspired them to record for our benefit. Is He not equally able, and willing, to help us understand these truths?

Chapter 4: How Should We Teach Doctrine To Children?

There are seven basic principles to understand and follow when teaching doctrine to children.

It Needs to Be Taught Simply

The old fashioned method of teaching catechism, with the learning of questions and answers by rote, and the use of long complicated words, had many good points. But simplicity was not one of them. The teacher needs to teach doctrine in language which is easy for the children to understand and using concepts and ideas that are not too complicated. You need to remember that many of our children have no Bible background whatsoever. Theological language is therefore a foreign language to them. You cannot be too simple.

It Needs to Be Taught Attractively

Another disadvantage concerning the method of teaching catechism mentioned above was its lack of attraction and interest for the child. It tended to be rather dull. It is important that the children really listen to what is being taught, and for this to happen an attractive presentation is needed. It is especially helpful when your doctrinal presentation can be visualized, and when frequent illustrations can be used. The concept of simple and vivid illustration needs to be especially emphasized—whether these illustrations are from the Bible, or from every day life, or even from imagination (provided it is made clear to the children in the latter case that it is only imagination).

It Needs to Be Taught Logically and Systematically

Biblical doctrine **is** logical and it all fits together in a clear logical way. It deserves therefore to be taught logically and systematically. It is a help, first of all, to the teacher when he teaches in a logical way. It is easier to teach logically. And it is also a help to the child to be taught logically. It is easier for him to follow each step in the lesson when it is logically based upon the previous step.

Of course no matter how logical you are you cannot convince your hearers—without the gracious illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. Yet, at the same time, it is good for children and teenagers to know that the doctrines of Scripture can be presented in a clear and logical way; and this will be a real help to their understanding of them.

It Needs to Be Taught Specifically

One of the major mistakes we are all guilty of is that we generally try to teach too much at any one time. It is better to concentrate your teaching on one doctrinal truth and ensure that the children understand **that** truth. Other truths, especially those which have been previously taught, can be mentioned if they help us to teach the one truth more effectively. But concentration in teaching should always be your aim.

It Needs to Be Taught Practically

Doctrine should not only be theoretical. Every doctrine taught needs to be applied to the every day lives of the children.

Each doctrine should be taught to all the children present. They **all** need to understand it. But because there are two kinds of children (saved and unsaved) two applications will be needed. The vast majority of doctrines allow this two-fold application. The unsaved children need to be evangelized on the basis of the doctrine taught; and you need to apply the same doctrine to the saved children to edify and feed them.

The Bible continually emphasizes the need always to make clear, direct and definite applications of biblical truth to the lives of those being taught. Stories of children in an every day situation can be used frequently to illustrate these applications.

These stories may be true stories, or imaginary stories can be used if it is explained to the children that they are imaginary.

It Needs to Be Taught Helpfully

As you teach doctrine, the children, and especially the older children and teenagers, will often have questions which are quite critical. One of the most frequent questions will be—“How do you know that?” Or a common reaction will be “Prove it.”

It is most important to react to their questions and reactions helpfully and in the right way. Your answer, and especially the way you give it, will influence the child considerably—one way or the other.

There are two responses which are completely wrong, and most unhelpful.

- “Don’t ask silly questions. You are here to listen—not to ask.”
- “You are not supposed to ask questions about a subject like this. Questions are unspiritual, and show a lack of faith.”

Instead you need to try to answer the child’s question and to do so in as logical and as helpful a way as you can.

If you don’t know the answer, don’t “waffle.” Tell the child you don’t; but at the same time tell him that you will do your best to find the answer and that you will let him know at a later date. Then be sure to do that!

It Needs to Be Taught Prayerfully

You are always dependent, in your doctrinal teaching, upon the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. He is come “to guide into all truth” (John 16 v13). On the one hand the unsaved children are spiritually blind (2 Corinthians 4 v4) and unable to understand truth spiritually, and with their hearts, without the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2 v14). At the same time, the understanding of saved children is, on its own, extremely limited and dull, and requires the Holy Spirit to give enlightenment and clear understanding (Ephesians 1 v17, 18).

Therefore as you prepare and teach your doctrine lesson you should ask yourself seven questions:

- Is it simple and easy to understand?
- Is it attractive and easy to listen to?
- Is it logical and systematic and easy to follow?
- Am I concentrating on one truth—or trying to teach too much?
- Does it have clear practical application for every child?
- Has my reaction to questions and criticisms been helpful?
- Have I prayed that the Holy Spirit will illuminate the minds of the children?

Chapter 5: When and Where Should We Teach Children Doctrine?

We should be continually looking for opportunities throughout our 60-minute programme to teach doctrine because we realize how important and how vital this is for the children.

There are three main opportunities for the teaching of doctrine.

1. Doctrine Should Be Taught in Every Bible Lesson

The best way to teach doctrine is through the regular systematic expository teaching of the Word of God to children, teaching them the truth(s) which is (are) in the particular passage concerned.

In many Bible Lessons the central truth which you will want to teach is a doctrine. Therefore in your preparation you always need to ask yourself four questions:

Which one truth does the lesson actually teach and which I would like the children to understand?

Is there some truth:

- about God?
- about Jesus Christ?
- about the Holy Spirit?
- about myself?
- about sin?
- about salvation?
- about the Bible?
- about the Christian life?
- about the future?

What is the application of this truth?

- To the unsaved children. How can I use this truth to help show the children their need of salvation and the way of salvation?
- To the saved children. How can this truth help them to grow spiritually?

How does this truth relate to other truths?

Truth can never be understood or should never be taught in isolation. Consequently, other truths can and should be mentioned (even if they are not in the passage), provided they help in the teaching of this truth.

How can you do all of this?

There are two possibilities:

*Doctrine Can Be Taught as it Appears in the Bible Lesson
You Are Teaching*

Usually you teach your Bible lessons in chronological order. For example, you start with the lesson on Creation and then work your way systematically through the book of Genesis. Or you start with the lesson on the birth of Jesus Christ and progress step by step through His life and ministry.

When you do this it is unlikely that the main doctrinal truths contained in these lessons will be in a logical systematic or thematic sequence (although the lessons themselves are in a logical chronological sequence). Doctrine is being taught in and through these lessons but the doctrines themselves are not being developed in an organized and planned fashion.

This is the way in which much of the Bible is written. So it is a good and justifiable method of teaching.

This method of teaching can be illustrated in the first five lessons of Genesis:

Lesson	Doctrinal Truth
Creation	God is all powerful and can do anything
Adam and Eve	Sin separates us from God
Cain and Abel	We can come to God through the shedding of blood
Enoch	God wants us to walk with Him
Noah	There is only one way of salvation — requiring obedience.

These lessons are in chronological order but the five doctrinal truths taught through them are not in logical and systematic order.

*Doctrine Can Be Taught Logically
in Specially Chosen Series of Lessons*

It is obvious that the various doctrines are spread throughout the Bible. But it could be a help to bring such doctrines together from time to time and to teach them, week by week, in a logical and systematic fashion. If you don't ever follow this type of teaching plan there is a real danger that there will be some doctrines—important doctrines—which you will not teach.

Also a series of doctrinal lessons like these can help the children to see how the truths which they may have heard over a period of years fit together.

For example, you could decide to teach a series of systematic lessons on "God." Your lessons would be systematic doctrinally but the Bible stories you choose on which to base your lessons will not usually be systematic. They will be selected from different parts of the Bible. In other words your lessons will be theologically and thematically systematic but not chronologically systematic.

Doctrine	Lesson
God is Creator	The Creation of the world (Genesis 1)
God is holy	Isaiah's vision and his response (Isaiah 6)
God is love	The conversion of Saul (Acts 9 v1-22)
God is patient	Elijah running from Jezebel (1 Kings 19)
God is wise	Joseph and his problems (Genesis 37-50)

Or you may decide to teach a short series on "The Lord Jesus Christ"

Doctrine	Lesson
Jesus Christ is God	The four men and their friend (Luke 5 v18-26)
Jesus Christ is perfect man	The Christmas story (Matthew 1 v18-25; Luke 2 v1-20)

Jesus Christ is prophet	The story of Nicodemus (John 3 v1-16)
Jesus Christ is priest	The ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ (Luke 24 v45-53; Acts 1 v1-11)
Jesus Christ is king	The second coming of Jesus Christ (John 14 v1-4; Acts 1 v11; 1 Thessalonians 4 v13-18).

Or you may decide to teach a short series on “Sin”

Doctrine	Lesson
Sin is disobeying God God must punish sin	Adam and Eve (Genesis 3 v1-24) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5 v1-11)
Sin is universal	Abraham and Moses and their sins (Genesis 12 v10-20; Exodus 2 v11-15; Numbers 20 v7-13)
Sin has consequences	David and Bethsheba (2 Samuel 11, 12)
God forgives sin	Jonah and Nineveh (Jonah 2 and 3)

Another possibility would be to teach a short series on “The way of salvation”

Doctrine	Lesson
Only Jesus Christ can save	The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8 v26-40)
Salvation is by faith alone	The Philippian jailer (Acts 16 v16-34)
Salvation involves repentance	The Prodigal son (Luke 15 v11-32)
Salvation makes us new people	Zacchaeus (Luke 19 v1-10)
Salvation brings complete forgiveness	The account of Saul’s conversion (Acts 9 v1-22)

Rather than making a choice between these two types of Bible lesson systems it is advisable to include both in an annual teaching plan. For example, the first ten weeks could be devoted to a series of

lessons on a doctrinal theme (e.g., God, or sin, or Jesus Christ, or the way of salvation); and the rest of the year spent with one or more series of lessons taught chronologically.

2. *Doctrine Can Be Taught Through Flashcard Lessons— Each of Which Concentrates on One Doctrine*

These can either take the place of the Bible Lesson mentioned above and become the lesson itself; or they can be taught weekly using one page at a time—for, say, five minutes—in addition to the Bible Lesson.

This is similar in some ways to the catechism method mentioned earlier but should be made much more attractive and interesting. This type of teaching can be very effective. Indeed in one of these lessons you can sometimes teach more Bible truth than in a regular Bible lesson.

You need to remember that if you don't teach doctrinal lessons like these there are a number of doctrinal truths which you will never teach your children—simply because it would be difficult to find Bible stories which would have these doctrines as their central truths. For example, the doctrine of regeneration. How often do you teach it in your Bible lessons? Yet it is one of the main doctrines in the Bible.

You should also remember that there are many passages of Scripture which are doctrinal in emphasis, and you will never teach them if you concentrate only on Bible stories and the lessons you can develop from them.

These flashcards can be easily prepared and produced. They are also a relatively cheap form of visual, which could be of great help in countries where low incomes make the purchase of flannelgraph difficult.

These flashcard lessons could be separate individual lessons each dealing with one specific doctrine. Or they could be linked together in a series of five or more lessons teaching different aspects of one doctrinal theme (e.g., "Truths about God"). A third possibility is to produce a series dealing with the main inter relating truths of the Gospel, for example, five lessons answering the following questions:

Who is God?
What is sin?
Who is Jesus Christ?
What did Jesus Christ do for me?
What is the Bible?

This latter series has been printed in flashcard form by European Child Evangelism Fellowship and is entitled “What Every Child Ought to Know.”

3. Doctrine Can Be Taught in Other Parts of the 60-minute Teaching Programme

This method of teaching doctrine can be especially effective when it is linked with the central truth of the Bible Lesson.

Through the explanation and singing of songs such as:

“Love, love, l-o-v-e” (Doctrine—God is love)
“One way God said to get to heaven” (Doctrine—There is only one way of salvation—through Jesus Christ)
“Do you know that you’ve been born again?” (Doctrine—Regeneration)

Through the teaching of Bible verses such as:

Isaiah 53 v6 (Doctrine—The universality of sin)
Ephesians 2 v8 (Doctrine—Salvation is by faith alone)
2 Corinthians 5 v21 (Doctrine—God sees the believer as righteous as Jesus Christ is)

Through teaching the doctrines of prayer in preparation for prayer time.

Through the telling of missionary stories, using incidents in the missionary’s conversion, call and service to teach and illustrate doctrine.

Through well-planned revision reminding the children of the truths previously taught. Quizzes can be a real help for such revision.

Chapter 6:

How Can We Use Flashcards to Teach Doctrine?

We have already seen briefly the value of this method of teaching doctrine (page 28); and I feel it now would be a help to see in some detail how to produce a doctrinal flashcard lesson. There are several simple steps to follow:

Choose Your Doctrine

You could choose one isolated subject which you feel the children need to understand; or your lesson could be part of a series—on a broader overall doctrinal theme such as God or Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit, or sin, or the way of salvation.

A comprehensive list of the doctrines which children could be taught follows in the next chapter.

Study the Doctrine You Have Chosen

Think it through carefully and make extensive notes. Your study can be helped in a number of ways:

- By using a Bible concordance to locate the verses and passages where this doctrine can be found.
- By using a chain reference Bible such as the Thompson chain reference Bible or the new Scofield reference Bible. These Bibles will show the main parts of the Bible which teach or include the doctrine concerned.
- By using a Bible dictionary which will give a detailed outline of your doctrine.
- By referring to **good** books of general theology and doctrinal outlines and finding the section which concerns your doctrine.
- By referring to **good** books which deal specifically with the doctrine you wish to understand and teach.
- By reading and studying the outline of your doctrine which appears later in this book.

Write Your Title—a Question Which Will Lead into Your Lesson

On the basis of your study and your notes write down a short question which will lead normally and naturally into your doctrinal presentation.

This question will be answered by the eight sentences which follow. This question should be short, interesting, and lead naturally into your theme.

If, for example, your doctrine is “regeneration” you would not want to use a question such as “What is regeneration?” (that is not interesting) nor “Do you understand the theological implications of the new birth?” (that is too complicated).

I would suggest “How many birthdays have you?” That is simple and interesting and leads naturally into your subject.

If your doctrine is “Faith” you would not want for obvious reasons to ask the question, “What is faith?” nor a question such as “What does it mean to believe, to trust or to have faith?”

It would be better to use an introductory question such as “Have you ever flown in an aeroplane?” This would be an interesting start for the children, and in certain circumstances could lead to answers and discussion. At the same time it would introduce your doctrinal theme. A person flies in an aeroplane (or gets into a train or bus) because consciously or unconsciously he believes that the pilot is well trained and knows what he is doing; and because he believes the aeroplane is well and securely built. That is an example of trust.

Write Eight Sentences Which Will Provide a Skeleton Outline of Your Presentation

These sentences will outline your doctrine—in a logical way.

It should not be too difficult “to divide” your doctrine up into eight simple sentences. This is, of course, very easy if you just take a very general doctrinal theme. For example, if you choose as your subject “God,” it is not difficult to make eight sentences—“God is holy, God is love,” and so forth. But this does not really allow teaching in depth. It is better to take a specific doctrine such as “God is wise”—and divide and break up all you know on this doctrine into eight simple steps or sentences for children. Starting at the bottom of page

39 I have given an example of how to use a question and eight sentences to outline a doctrinal lesson. There are many more later in this book.

The sentences used should be:

Short. You do not want them to be more than seven or eight words. They should be fewer than that if possible. Some of the children you will be speaking to may not be good readers. Also you do not want your visuals packed with, or congested by, too many words.

Simple. Keep your words and thoughts simple and easy for children to understand.

Logical. Each sentence should lead clearly and logically to the next sentence. Doctrine is logical and your sentences should display order and progression of thought, as the lesson develops step by step.

To be logical in this way you often need to go back beyond the beginning of your theme. For example if you are dealing with the doctrine of redemption you would not start specifically with that doctrine. To be logical you would need to “go back” and deal with the Holiness of God, and the sinfulness of man **before** getting into your doctrine.

Practical. You need to apply the doctrine very clearly and practically to the children. There are two kinds of children (saved and unsaved). Therefore you should endeavour to apply your doctrine in two ways—to evangelize unsaved children, and to help saved children to grow. You cannot really and thoroughly apply the doctrine until you have taught it. So your later sentences (often the seventh and the eighth) would usually be the application sentences for these two groups of children, and the **main** places where you will apply the doctrine you have taught. However, you will often introduce applications earlier and briefly in the lesson without them yet being visualized. This avoids keeping all the details of the applications to the end.

Plan How You Will Produce the Flashcards Which Will Visualize Your Lesson

You will need nine flashcards—using fairly strong paper. They should be big enough to allow a good sized group to see what is written and pictured on them, and strong enough to enable you to handle them with ease.

On the first flashcard put your question, and print the other eight sentences on the eight remaining flashcards. Be sure that your printing is neat and clearly visible. It does not need to be professional.

On each of the nine flashcards put, beside the printed sentences, a picture or a visual which illustrates the question or sentence. These do not need to be elaborate, but they do need to fit in with the words in each case.

European CEF has produced a series of pictures which can be used in this way. This series is called “The Visual Maker’s Clip Art” and is not expensive. You can trace these pictures, or cut them out and use them, or best of all you can photocopy them. The addition of some colour would help.

Write Out the Full Text of Your Lesson

Use the question and the eight sentences as the skeleton—and flesh them out. In other words, you will write nine **long** paragraphs each preceded by the chosen sentence. Each of these paragraphs would consist of what you would say to the children as you are showing the flashcard with which it is linked. Ideally you should speak for about 1½–2 minutes with each flashcard.

There are at least two ways to write out the text of your lesson:

- You can do it with the nine sections mentioned above using the sentence given as your title and “lead in.” If the sentences have been carefully and logically chosen the nine paragraphs will fit together well into a systematic lesson. This is probably the easier and simpler way to write out your lesson.

You need to be sure not just to teach the truth given in the sentence—but also to illustrate it. It is a help to have at least two, three or four illustrations at different times (provided they are relevant) as they help to keep the children’s attention and also help them to understand what you are teaching.

- You can use a continuous story that links all nine paragraphs together. This could be a Bible story. The Bible story could be chosen first and then the sentences to outline the doctrine could be deducted from it. Or if you have decided on your sentences you could choose a Bible story which would follow and explain those sentences.

The other alternative would be to make up one continuous story from every day life which would teach, explain and illustrate the sentences you have chosen.

You now have a lesson which you can use, or which you can reproduce for others to use.

Chapter 7:

What Are the Main Doctrines We Should Teach?

Concerning God

- ↗ There is a God—and only one
- ↗ God is the Creator
- ↗ God is spirit
- ↗ God is holy and just
- ↗ God is love
- ↗ God is all powerful
- ↗ God is faithful
- ↗ God never changes
- ↗ God is wise
- ↗ God is everywhere
- ↗ God knows everything
- ↗ God is majestic
- ↗ God is gracious
- ↗ God is merciful
- ↗ God is patient
- ↗ God is jealous

Concerning Jesus Christ

- ↗ Jesus Christ is God
- ↗ Jesus Christ was born as a baby with a human mother and a Divine Father
- ↗ Jesus Christ is truly and perfectly man
- ↗ Jesus Christ died on the Cross for sinners
- ↗ God the Father punished His Son Jesus Christ for our sins
- ↗ Jesus Christ rose again from the dead
- ↗ Jesus Christ prays for believers
- ↗ Jesus Christ is Lord
- ↗ The ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ
- ↗ Jesus Christ is coming back again
- ↗ Jesus Christ will be the Judge

Concerning the Holy Spirit

- ↗ The Holy Spirit is God
- ↗ The Holy Spirit lives in believers
- ↗ The Holy Spirit gives assurance to believers
- ↗ The Holy Spirit makes all believers more like Jesus Christ

- ✧ The Holy Spirit convicts and regenerates sinners
- ✧ The Holy Spirit has baptized all believers into the Body of Christ
- ✧ The Holy Spirit has sealed all believers
- ✧ The Holy Spirit guides believers
- ✧ The Holy Spirit gives believers help and power to live and to serve
- ✧ The Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers

Concerning the Bible

- ✧ The Bible is God's Word and absolutely true
- ✧ The Ten Commandments show us God's standards and reveal our sin

Concerning Sin

- ✧ Sin is disobeying God and His commandments
- ✧ Sin must be punished by God
- ✧ Sin separates us from God
- ✧ Sin is universal.
- ✧ All people are sinners by nature and by practice
- ✧ Death and eternal separation from God are the results of sin

Concerning the Way of Salvation

- ✧ Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ
- ✧ Sinners need to turn from sin to be saved
- ✧ The sinner who believes is justified
- ✧ The sinner who believes is born again
- ✧ The sinner who believes is adopted into God's family
- ✧ The sinner who believes is redeemed
- ✧ The sinner who believes has everlasting life
- ✧ The sinner who believes is part of the Body of Christ
- ✧ Believers can be sure they are saved
- ✧ One day all believers will be glorified

Concerning the Future

- ✧ At death believers go immediately into the presence of God
- ✧ When Christ returns every believer will receive a resurrection body
- ✧ Jesus Christ will judge the service of believers
- ✧ Heaven is the place of everlasting joy and glory—where God is
- ✧ Hell is a place of punishment and everlasting separation from God
- ✧ God will make a new heaven and a new earth

Concerning the Christian Life

- ↗ The sinner comes to God by faith and he then lives by faith
- ↗ Sanctification is the process by which God the Holy Spirit makes us holy and more like Jesus Christ
- ↗ It is not possible to be sinless, but it is possible to have victory over a sin

Concerning Other Doctrinal Subjects

- ↗ All believers are part of the universal church and should be members of a local church
- ↗ The devil is the enemy of God and God's people
- ↗ Angels are spirit beings who minister to believers
- ↗ Death is the separation of body and soul

Chapter 8: How Could We Teach the Doctrine “Justification by Faith?”

I feel it would be good, at this point, and as a conclusion to this first section of the book to think about how we might teach one specific doctrine to children. The one I have chosen is “Justification by Faith,” the doctrine which John Calvin called “the hinge of all doctrine,” and the understanding of which according to Martin Luther indicated whether a church was alive or dead.

Understand it First of All

The first step in teaching any doctrine is to be sure that you understand it yourself.

A Definition of Justification

Justification is that legal act of God whereby He declares that the sinner who has truly trusted Christ has all his sins (past, present and future) forgiven and, at the same time, has a new standing of righteousness because God now sees him in Christ and as pure as He is.

Biblical Teaching Concerning Justification

- ✧ The source of justification is the grace of God (Romans 3 v24)
- ✧ The price of justification is the Blood of Christ (Romans 5 v9)
- ✧ The proof of justification is the Resurrection of Christ (Romans 4 v25)
- ✧ The means of justification is faith (Romans 5 v1)
- ✧ The evidence of justification is good works (James 2 v21, 24)

Five Conclusions about Justification

- ✧ Justification occurs at **one** time when a sinner trusts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. It is not a process.
- ✧ Justification changes my position. It does not change me. But regeneration which occurs at the same time changes me and gives me a new nature. It is not possible to have one without the other.

- I cannot grow in my justification. There are no degrees in it. Either I am justified or I am not.
- No one person is more justified than another person
- I cannot lose my justification provided I am truly justified and that there is clear evidence in my life that I am. This evidence is the result of the regeneration which **always** accompanies justification.

See pages 111-113 for more information concerning justification.

Then Teach It

How can you teach this subject to children in a way that is simple and interesting? I would like to suggest five possible methods.

Through Bible Lessons.

These lessons could have justification by faith as their central truth, "The sinner who trusts Christ is completely forgiven, and God sees him as pure as Christ is."

There are a number of Bible lessons which would allow this possibility:

- The Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18 v9-14)
- David and Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9)
- Philemon and Onesimus (Philemon—especially verses 17, 18 and 19)
- Abraham and his new righteousness before God (Genesis 15 v6; and Romans 4 v3)
- The Old Testament sacrifices at the tabernacle. The hands of the sacrificer are laid on the sacrifice and the sacrifice takes the place of the sacrificer who then goes free (Exodus 27 v1-8; Leviticus 1 v4)
- The parable of the marriage feast and the wedding garments (Matthew 22 v1-14). You could also link this with Luke 15 v22.

Through the Teaching of a Flashcard Lesson on this Doctrine

To do this you should follow the plan outlined in Chapter 6. The question and eight sentences used for this lesson could be as follows:

- How deep is the sea? (This is a reference to Micah 7 v19)
- God is holy and must punish sin

- ✧ You have sinned
- ✧ You cannot be forgiven by works or by other people
- ✧ Jesus Christ took the punishment for your sins
- ✧ You need to trust Him as your Saviour (personal application to unsaved)
- ✧ All your sin will be forgiven
- ✧ God will see you pure like Jesus Christ
- ✧ Your life will show that you are forgiven (personal application to saved)

Through the Teaching, Explanation and Repetition of Bible Verses

There are many verses such as Psalms 103 v12; Acts 3 v19; Acts 13 v38, 39 (emphasizing the forgiveness of sins); Romans 5 v19; 2 Corinthians 5 v21 (emphasizing the imputation of Christ's righteousness).

Through the Use of Illustrations

- ✧ You could use biblical illustrations of the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness as outlined in Isaiah 61 v10 (along with Colossians 3 v9 and 10) and in Zechariah 3 v3-5.
- ✧ You could use illustrations of this truth from everyday life:
 - ✓ The convicted criminal who goes free when the judge pays his fine
 - ✓ The boy who steals at school but is not punished because another boy takes his place and his punishment
 - ✓ The hen who died in the forest fire, but whose chickens were saved because they were under the hen's wings
 - ✓ The explanation of bank accounts—and the transfer of money from one account to another. So our sin was transferred to Christ's account and His righteousness is transferred (or imputed) to "our account."
- ✧ You could use the Wordless Book. The white page is a good illustration of how God sees us when we trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour. It is not a picture or illustration of what we are—but of what God sees us to be!

It is most important to use such illustrations when teaching this important doctrine. Indeed one or two or three illustrations or stories

concerning children should be “worked into” each Bible lesson or flash card lesson to make it more interesting and more attractive.

Through Stories from Church History

It is good for children to learn about the Reformation and how Martin Luther and others came to an understanding of this great doctrine; and the effect this has had on the history both of the church and the world.

SECTION II: A DETAILED STUDY OF SPECIFIC DOCTRINES—AND HOW TO TEACH THEM

Chapter 1: The Verbal Inspiration of the Bible

The Bible is the written revelation of God, consisting of 66 books in two sections (Old and New Testament) and containing everything we need to know, believe and do, so that our souls might be saved and God both glorified and served.

We believe that the Bible is verbally inspired. Inspiration is the process by which God influenced, guided and assisted the writers of the Scriptures so that they were able to record what He had revealed to them without error or mistake. These men wrote with their own style and personality. But they were so guided by the Holy Spirit that there is no error whatsoever **in any word** of the original writings. And reverent biblical scholarship has ensured that the Bible we possess is as close to the original inerrant writings as it is possible to come.

Consequently, the Bible is without mistake or contradiction in **all** that it teaches; and can be completely relied upon. The Lord Jesus said “Thy Word is truth” (John 17 v17).

Inspiration is complete. Nothing can be added, nor should be added to the Scriptures. All the revelation and truth we need is contained in its 66 books.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, (or is God breathed) and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3 v16).

“For the prophecy (of the Scripture) came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1 v21).

How do we know that the Scriptures are verbally inspired and are completely true?

They claim to be the Word of God:

- Old Testament claims about itself include Exodus 20 v1; Hosea 1 v1.
- New Testament claims about the Old Testament include Acts 1 v16; Acts 28 v25 and 1 Peter 1 v10, 11.
- New Testament claims about itself include 1 Corinthians 2 v13; 14 v37; Galatians 1 v11, 12; 1 Thessalonians 2 v13; 2 Peter 3 v1, 2.
- The Old Testament uses over and over again expressions such as “God said” and “The Lord spoke.” These back up the claims to inspiration. Such expressions can be found about 250 times.

Either these claims are true or false. If the latter, the Bible is a book containing lies, and/or false claims, and cannot be depended upon for anything. It is either the Word of God (as it claims to be); or it is not a good book.

Many prophecies in the Bible have been exactly fulfilled many years after they were recorded.

Only God can know the future and be able to record what will happen. Children, and especially teenagers, find this especially interesting and helpful.

It is of special value and interest to read all the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and see how every one has been fulfilled exactly—for example Isaiah 7 v14; 9 v6; Micah 5 v2; Zechariah 9 v9; Zechariah 11 v12, 13.

Christ repeatedly used and testified to the Old Testament as the Word of God.

He obviously regarded it as the Word of God—and so should we (e.g., Matthew 5 v17, 18; 12 v39, 40; Matthew 24 v37-39; Mark 12 v36; Luke 24 v25-27, 44, 46; John 3 v14). This is a very important evidence of the inspiration of Scripture, and should be continually emphasized.

The Word of God has a wonderful harmony and unity.

This is quite remarkable when we realise that it was written by approximately 40 men from different backgrounds and different countries over a period of 1,600 years.

The Bible has shown its power to change lives, homes, communities and even nations.

No other book in the world has changed lives, as the Bible has, and “turned sinners into saints.” No other book has had such an influence on millions of homes, many communities and even in a number of nations.

The witness we have in our hearts, from the Holy Spirit.

This witness gives us assurance that it is truly the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 1 v5, 6; 1 Thessalonians 2 v13; 1 John 2 v20, 27).

This doctrine is, in many ways, THE basic doctrine. All other doctrines are based upon the vital truth that the Bible is God's Word and therefore absolutely true. The source of all our doctrines is the Bible. Therefore if we are not sure about the verbal inspiration of Scripture we cannot be sure of anything.

*I trust that you, my dear reader, are convinced that the Bible **is** God's word and therefore absolutely true. This does not mean that you understand, or can explain, everything in the Bible. There are verses and even passages which are very difficult to understand. But we believe them even if we don't understand them.*

*It is wonderful to be firmly established upon the inspired Word of God. Others will criticise you or even laugh at you because you believe **all** the Bible to be true, and many will see you as very “old fashioned.” But don't worry about that. God will bless you as you believe, honour, teach and stand up for, His Word. Also it might even be that, while such people criticise you or make fun of you, they have in their hearts a respect for you because you know what you believe, and are willing to take a stand on it.*

The Verbal Inspiration of the Bible Teaching Ideas and Outlines

Use Bible stories/lessons which have this as their central truth.

- *The walk to Emmaus in Luke 24 v1-35. This story shows how the Lord Jesus regarded the Holy Scriptures and how He used them to teach concerning Himself. Reference can also be made to some of the prophecies concerning Him—and how they were fulfilled exactly.*
- *The giving of the law to Moses (Exodus 19 onwards). This story shows the divine origin of the law as part of the Scriptures.*
- *Josiah and the Book of the law (2 Kings 22). This story shows that the Word of God cannot be destroyed and that it has power to speak to men's hearts.*
- *Jeremiah and the roll (Jeremiah 36). This story also shows that God's word cannot be destroyed.*
- *The temptation of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 4 v1-11). This story shows the power of the Scriptures against Satan and sin.*
- *Joshua's call (Joshua 1 v1-9). This story shows the value of reading, learning and meditating upon the Bible in the lives of God's servants.*

Use a flashcard lesson with the following sentences printed on the visuals. These sentences would also provide the framework for the text:

- *Do you like to receive letters?*
- *The Bible is a letter to you from God*
- *It was written by 40 men*
- *It is completely true*
- *It tells us about God*
- *It tells us about ourselves*
- *It tells us what to do*
- *Trust Jesus Christ and you will be saved (personal application to unsaved)*
- *Read it, believe it and obey it (personal application to saved)*

Helpful visuals from Child Evangelism Fellowship

- *God's Word and Me, Volumes 1 and 2 (12 lessons about the Bible) from CEF Inc.*
- *God Speaks to Me (6 lessons about creation, the Bible and Jesus Christ) from CEF Inc.*
- *Digging for Buried Treasure (1 lesson on Bible study) from CEF Inc.*
- *What Every Child Ought to Know (5 lessons about God, sin, Jesus Christ and the Bible) from European CEF*

Chapter 2: The Doctrines of God

The doctrines of God are extremely important and they are the basis both of evangelism and of Christian growth. It is absolutely essential for you as a teacher to understand them yourself for your own spiritual development; and then to teach them in an intelligent, orderly, practical and devotional way to your children.

The believer's main goal should be to know God, to worship Him and to glorify Him—on the basis of the truth learned about Him in the Bible. Yet one of the main problems in our churches today (if not the main problem) is that so many Christians do not really know what God is like.

The Bible teaches the doctrines of God in at least four ways:

1. By emphasizing His existence

There IS a God (Genesis 1 v1; Hebrews 11 v6).

He has revealed Himself:

- ↗ in creation (Psalm 19 v1; Psalm 139 v14; Acts 14 v16, 17; Romans 1 v19, 20)
- ↗ in our conscience (Romans 2 v14, 15)
- ↗ in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4 v6; Colossians 1 v15-17, Hebrews 1 v1-3)
- ↗ in the Bible (Genesis 1 v1; Deuteronomy 29 v29; Psalm 19 v7-11; John 17 v8, 14, 17; John 20 v30, 31; 2 Timothy 3 v16)

2. By explaining His nature

God is Spirit (John 4 v24). This has been the nature of God from all eternity. He is invisible and has no body (John 1 v18; Colossians 1 v15; 1 Timothy 1 v17, 1 Timothy 6 v16, 1 John 4 v12). Therefore we cannot actually see, nor will we ever see, God the Father or God the Holy Spirit. This truth about the nature of God is quite difficult for children to understand, and therefore it is not easy to teach it to them. You need to emphasize three conclusions concerning the spirit-nature of God:

- ↗ He is completely different from us (and that is what we should expect).

- ✧ It is difficult for us to understand that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit do not have bodies and are invisible.
- ✧ We should believe this truth—and worship God.

We **will** see God the Son because He became flesh 2,000 years ago and for the first time God had a human body and a human nature. God the Son still has His Body but that Body is now glorified. He is the visible image of the invisible God (John 14 v8, 9; Colossians 1 v15). When we see God the Son we will see exactly and perfectly what God the Father is like (John 1 v18; 14 v9; Hebrews 1 v3), and in that sense we **will** see the Father.

When God revealed Himself in the Old Testament and was seen by people like Moses, Isaiah or Ezekiel, He probably did so through Jesus Christ, His Son. It would seem that Jesus Christ took upon Himself a body for these pre-incarnation appearances so that He could be seen. Compare, for example, Isaiah 6 v1 and John 12 v37-41. But this body was temporary and was not His permanent body. He became flesh and took a permanent body at His incarnation (John 1 v14).

God is personal (Jeremiah 9 v24). He can be known (John 17 v3). He speaks (John 17 v17), He listens (Matthew 6 v6) and He wants our fellowship (Micah 6 v8).

This is a new truth for many children who think of God as someone remote, impersonal or even as an image or an idol.

There is one God. This is clearly taught throughout the Bible (Deuteronomy 6 v4; Isaiah 44 v6-8; Isaiah 45 v5; 1 Corinthians 8 v4; 1 Timothy 2 v5).

God is a Trinity. God is one in His essential Being, but there are three Persons within the Godhead, each fully and wholly God—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

There are indications of the Trinity in the Old Testament:

- ✧ Genesis 1 v26; Isaiah 6 v8. The first person plural is used in both verses.
- ✧ Numbers 6 v24-26. This is a three-fold blessing.
- ✧ The appearances of the Angel of the Lord (e.g., Genesis 22 v11; Joshua 5 v13-15). This was the Lord Jesus Christ in His pre incarnation appearances; and He was called God or the Lord (Genesis 18 v1, 13, 14, 17-33)

There is clear teaching concerning the Trinity in the New Testament:

- The baptismal formula in Matthew 28 v19
- The apostolic benediction in 2 Corinthians 13 v14
- The voice of the Father, the descent of the Spirit and the manifestation of the Son come together in Mark 1 v10 and 11
- Many verses such as John 14 v16; 1 Corinthians 12 v4-6; Ephesians 4 v4-6; 2 Thessalonians 2 v13 and 14; and 1 Peter 1 v2 link all three together.

There are references in the Bible to activities which are attributed to all Three:

- Creation (Isaiah 40 v28; Psalm 104 v30a; and John 1 v3)
- Preservation (Nehemiah 9 v6; Job 34 v14, 15; Hebrews 1 v3)

There are three interesting pictures or symbols of God in the Bible:

- Deuteronomy 32 v11. The eagle is a symbol or picture of God the Father, especially seen in the Old Testament. He is above us. He bears us on His wings, keeping us from falling.
- Matthew 23 v37. The hen is a symbol or picture of God the Son—especially seen in the Gospels. He is among us. He saves us from judgment under His wings.
- John 1 v32. The dove is a symbol or picture of God the Holy Spirit, especially seen in the Acts and Epistles. He is within us. He cares for us.

There are two errors to avoid at all times:

- There are not three Gods. There is only one God but there are three Persons within the Godhead
- Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three different expressions or manifestations of God according to office or activity. They are three separate Persons.

3. By outlining His works

The works of God can be divided into three groups.

His work in Creation

- He created the world from nothing in six days (Genesis 1 and 2)
- He creates people today using their parents as the means (Isaiah 42 v5; Psalm 139 v13-16; Ecclesiastes 12 v1; Acts 17 v24-26)

His Work in Providence or Control

God upholds and controls all things (Nehemiah 9 v6; Psalm 103 v19; Ephesians 1 v11; Colossians 1 v17; Hebrews 1 v3)

- ↗ He controls the forces of nature and all His creatures (Psalm 29 v1-11; Psalm 135 v6, 7; Psalm 147 v8 and 9; Psalm 148 v7-10)
- ↗ He controls all men (Job 14 v5; Psalm 33 v14-15; Psalm 75 v6-7)
- ↗ He controls all nations and rulers (Deuteronomy 32 v8; Psalm 22 v28; Proverbs 21 v1)
- ↗ He controls history (Daniel 4 v34, 35; Acts 17 v26)
- ↗ He controls all circumstances (Proverbs 16 v33; Amos 3 v6; Jonah 1 v7; Matthew 6 v25-34)
- ↗ He controls Satan (Job 1 v6-12; Revelation 20 v2, 3, 7-10).

God is truly and completely sovereign over **all** things.

His Work in Redemption

- ↗ Redemption was planned by God the Father as part of His eternal purpose (Acts 4 v24-28; Ephesians 1 v4-6; Ephesians 3 v11; 2 Timothy 1 v9; Titus 1 v2; 1 Peter 1 v20)
- ↗ Redemption was purchased by God the Son (Matthew 20 v28; Acts 20 v28; 2 Corinthians 5 v21; Hebrews 2 v14, 15; 1 Peter 1 v18, 19)
- ↗ Redemption is applied by God the Holy Spirit, convicting and regenerating sinners (John 3 v3-8; John 16 v8-11; Acts 16 v14; Titus 3 v5, 6; 1 Peter 1 v2)

4. By describing His attributes

The attributes of God are the inherent qualities of His character and nature.

They include the following:

- ↗ His holiness
- ↗ His righteousness or justice
- ↗ His faithfulness
- ↗ His love
- ↗ His mercy
- ↗ His grace
- ↗ His goodness or loving kindness

- His wisdom
- His patience
- His truthfulness
- His jealousy
- His omniscience
- His omnipotence
- His omnipresence
- His immutability
- His eternity
- His majesty
- His transcendence
- His sovereignty

A study of God's attributes can be a great blessing to the one who is willing to take time to do it thoroughly. It will help you to know more about God, to know Him better and more personally and to worship Him more intelligently.

A knowledge of God's attributes (with their personal and practical applications) will similarly be a great blessing to your children. So you should teach them simply, attractively and thoroughly both in your evangelism of unsaved children and in your edification of saved children.

There will be a detailed study of some of the key attributes of God in the chapter which follows.

Before closing this chapter I would like to draw your attention to my book "The Problems of a Children's Worker—and God's Solution." This book was the first in this present series of books for children's workers, and teaches in detail how to know God. If you have not received a copy, please write to me at the address at the front of this book and I will send you one.

The Doctrines of God *Teaching Ideas and Outlines*

His Existence

Use Bible lessons to teach this truth

- *The Creation story (Genesis 1 and 2 with Romans 1 v20)*
- *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew 27 and 28 with 1 Corinthians 15 v14-17)*
- *Any of the great miracles of the Old Testament and New Testament*

Use a flashcard outline

- *Did anybody make this watch?*
- *Look at yourself*
- *Look at nature*
- *Think of many great miracles*
- *God did all of these*
- *God has spoken in His Word*
- *God has shown Himself in Jesus Christ*
- *He wants you to trust Him (personal application to unsaved)*
- *He wants you to worship Him (personal application to saved)*

His Nature

Use Bible Lessons to teach these truths:

- *God is a Spirit—The Samaritan woman in John 4*
- *There is one God—Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18)*
- *God is a Trinity—The Baptism of Jesus Christ (Matthew 3 v13-17)*
- *God is personal—Enoch (Genesis 5 v21-24) and Noah (Genesis 6 v9) who walked with God*

Use a flashcard outline to teach that God is a Trinity

- *1 + 1 + 1 = 1?*
- *There is one God*
- *There are three Persons in one God*
- *God the Father loves us*
- *He wants the very best for us*
- *God the Son died for our sins*

- Trust Him as your Saviour (application to unsaved)
- God the Holy Spirit lives in believers
- Ask Him to help you live for Him (application to saved)

With regard to the teaching of the Trinity it is important **not** to use illustrations which can cause problems.

- To use as an illustration of the Trinity an egg (one egg but three parts) or a tree (one tree but three parts) is really quite **irreverent**. We don't want to compare God to an egg or to a tree. Such illustrations are **not biblical**. Also these illustrations are **not correct**. God does not have three parts. He is three Persons.
- To compare the Trinity to water as it appears in three different forms (liquid, frozen and gaseous) is also **irreverent**. In addition it is **false teaching** and is presenting the age old heresy that the three Persons of the Trinity are separate manifestations of God in His different roles. It is not possible to have water in its three different forms at the same time!

If you want to use a symbol to represent the Trinity in your flashcard presentation you could use an equilateral triangle (symbolizing the Trinity of God) within a circle (symbolizing the unity of God). This would however be a symbol rather than an illustration.

Personally, I feel that it is difficult—even impossible—to illustrate this great truth. I also believe that it is good to present the doctrine of the Trinity to children as a mystery. It is something they and you cannot understand. In this way you will endeavour to create a sense of awe and wonder. **Explain to the children that if we could understand everything about God, He would not be God.**

This is a truth **to believe**. It lies beyond our understanding. But it usually creates no problem for children.

His Works

Use Bible lessons to teach these truths

These will be many and varied. Many Bible Lessons deal with one or other of the works of God. We could describe the Bible as a detailed record of God's works.

- His work in Creation can be outlined in the Creation story of Genesis 1 and 2.

- *His work in Providence can be taught through lessons such as “A Bride for Isaac” in Genesis 24.*
- *His work in Redemption can be clearly presented through the story of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The application of that redemption to the human heart can be presented through lessons such as the conversion of Lydia and the Philippian jailer in Acts 16.*

Use a flashcard lesson to outline God's works.

- *How do you spend your time?*
- *God made the world in six days*
- *God made you*
- *God holds everything together*
- *God controls everything and everybody*
- *God sent His Son to die for you*
- *The Holy Spirit speaks to you*
- *Trust Jesus Christ and you will be saved (personal application to unsaved)*
- *Worship the God who has done so much (personal application to saved)*

His Attributes

We will see how to teach some of these in the chapter which follows.

Chapter 3: The Attributes of God

We cannot cover all of God's attributes in these notes nor can we go into very much detail. But we will endeavour to touch on a number of them; and in the section which follows give some ideas on how to teach them.

I would emphasize again the value to your own life of understanding and applying the attributes of God. They will provide you with a real treasure trove of truth.

I would also underline the importance of teaching the attributes of God simply, attractively, thoroughly and practically to your children. They will assist you in your evangelism; and they will also be of great help in your feeding and nurturing of saved children. Most of God's attributes can be applied to both saved and unsaved children.

There are several ways to teach God's attributes to children:

- **By teaching them as central truths as they appear in your regular Bible lessons.**
- **By teaching a series of lessons on the attributes of God.** You could use a different Bible Lesson to illustrate each attribute.
- **By teaching flashcard lessons each dealing with one attribute.**
- **By bringing teaching concerning God's attributes into other parts of the total teaching period:**
 - ✓ when singing
 - ✓ in the missionary story
 - ✓ during prayer time

More detailed information about teaching the attributes of God can be found on pages 66-71.

In the pages which follow we will look briefly at each of God's main attributes. We will endeavour to answer three questions concerning each one:

- What does this attribute mean? We will try to give a clear, but brief, definition and explanation.
- Where do we find teaching about this attribute in the Bible?

This also will be outlined very briefly because space is limited. You can expand the answer yourself.

- What is the practical application of this doctrine to the children and, of course, to ourselves? There are two kinds of children—saved and unsaved. We will therefore look for two applications or groups of applications, each one relevant to the group concerned.

The Holiness of God

What does it mean?

Positively it means the complete perfection and purity of God's nature, character and actions

Negatively it means that He is entirely separate from and free from all that is evil and sinful

Where is it taught?

This is the attribute which is most taught and emphasized in Scripture and there are many, many verses and passages which teach it. These include Psalm 99 v9; Habakkuk 1 v13; John 17 v11; Acts 3 v14; Ephesians 4 v30; 1 Peter 1 v15, 16.

Applications to the saved:

- You should be holy (1 Peter 1 v16)
- You should serve and worship God in reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12 v28, 29)

Application to the unsaved:

- Your sin must be forgiven before you can go to Heaven (Revelation 21 v27)

The Justice and Righteousness of God

What does it mean?

God's justice is His holiness in action. He must punish sin and He must reward righteousness. He is completely fair and always does what is right.

Where is it taught?

Genesis 18 v25; Deuteronomy 32 v4; Ezra 9 v15; Psalm 11 v4-7; Psalm 145 v17; Zephaniah 3 v5; John 5 v30; Romans 2 v2.

Applications to the saved:

- God will always keep and honour His Word and promises to you (Nehemiah 9 v7, 8)
- God rewards you when you work for Him and for others (Hebrews 6 v10)
- God wants you to be just and righteous (Micah 6 v8)

Applications to the unsaved:

- You will be judged by God if you don't trust Christ (Romans 1 v16-18)
- You will be forgiven by God if you trust Christ (Romans 3 v24-26)

The Love of God

What does it mean?

The love of God is that attribute by which He desires the highest good for His creatures and by which He eternally gives of Himself to others regardless of the sacrifice involved.

The objects of His love are His Son (John 17 v24), the world (John 3 v16) and His people (John 16 v27).

His love is manifested in the death of His Son (John 3 v16), His pardon for the penitent (Isaiah 55 v7), His care for His people (Isaiah 63 v7) and His chastisement of His people (Hebrews 12 v6-11).

Where is it taught?

Many verses and passages throughout the Bible teach the love of God. These include Exodus 34 v6; Psalm 25 v6; Psalm 36 v7-10; Psalm 51 v1; Hosea 11 v1-4; Matthew 5 v44, 45; John 3 v16; 1 John 3 v16, 17; 1 John 4 v8, 16.

Applications to saved:

- Thank Him and worship Him for His love (Colossians 1 v12-14; 1 John 3 v1)
- You should love God more and more (1 John 4 v19)
- You should love others, even your enemies (Matthew 5 v44-48)

Application to unsaved:

- God loves you, sent His Son to die for sin, and wants to save you (John 3 v16; Romans 5 v8)

The Grace of God

What does it mean?

God's grace is one special aspect of His love. It is His completely undeserved favour by which He bestows eternal life and many blessings on the repentant believer. The two main aspects of grace taught in the Bible are:

- ↗ Saving grace—the grace which saves a sinner (Ephesians 2 v8-10)
- ↗ Living grace—the grace available to help believers in their everyday living (2 Corinthians 12 v9)

Where is it taught?

Acts 20 v24, 32; Romans 11 v6; 2 Corinthians 8 v9 and 9 v8; 2 Corinthians 9 v14; Titus 2 v11; 1 Peter 4 v10.

Applications to saved:

- ↗ Be thankful for the grace which saved you (1 Corinthians 1 v4)
- ↗ Depend upon daily supplies of grace to live for God (2 Corinthians 12 v9)
- ↗ Be gracious to others (Ephesians 4 v29)

Application to unsaved:

- ↗ You can only be saved by God's grace and not by your own works or merits (Ephesians 2 v8, 9)

The Mercy of God

What does it mean?

God's mercy is that attribute which withholds from the sinner the judgment which he justly deserves.

The grace of God gives to the sinner what he does not deserve. The mercy of God does not give to the sinner what he does deserve. Mercy removes the guilt and penalty of sin (1 Timothy 1 v13-16), grace imputes righteousness to the believer (Romans 3 v24).

Where is it taught?

Deuteronomy 4 v31; Psalm 62 v12; Psalm 86 v15; Psalm 103 v8; Psalm 145 v8.

Applications to saved:

- ↗ Praise and thank God for His mercy (Psalm 108 v3, 4)

- Be merciful to others who wrong you (Matthew 5 v7)

Application to unsaved:

- Despite all you have done God will forgive you if you repent and trust Christ (1 Timothy 1 v13-16)

The Patience of God

What does it mean?

When we do something wrong against God, and He doesn't judge us immediately—that's patience. Patience delays the execution of judgment, but does not necessarily eliminate it.

Other comparable words for God's patience are—His long-suffering and His persistence.

Where is it taught?

Acts 13 v18; Acts 14 v16, 17; Romans 2 v4; Romans 15 v5; 1 Peter 3 v20; 2 Peter 3 v9.

We see God's patience in His dealings with sinners (Acts 14 v16; Romans 2 v4; 1 Peter 3 v20; 2 Peter 3 v9) with Israel (Acts 13 v18) and with us as His people (Psalm 86 v15, 16 and Jonah 4 v4-11).

Applications to saved:

- Meditate upon God's patience and marvel at it (2 Peter 3 v15). But don't take advantage of it (Romans 2 v4)
- Praise and worship God for His patience (Psalm 145 v8-10)
- Thank God for being so patient with you (1 Timothy 1 v12-16)
- Ask God to help you be patient with others (Galatians 5 v22; Colossians 3 v12)

Application to unsaved:

- God has been patient with you and the door to salvation is still open for you. But don't wait—His patience may not continue (2 Peter 3 v9, 10)

The Majesty of God

What does it mean?

Majesty comes from the Latin word *Majestas* which means "greatness." When we ascribe majesty to God we acknowledge and declare His greatness and seek to worship Him.

Where is it taught?

This great truth is taught or implied throughout the Scriptures and when expressed, usually gives rise to worship (1 Chronicles 29 v11-13, Psalm 95 v3-6; Isaiah 6 v1-4; Ezekiel 1 v26-28; 1 Timothy 6 v14-16; Revelation 1 v10-18; Revelation 4 and 5).

Applications to saved:

- ✧ Meditate upon God's majesty (Psalm 77 v11-20)
- ✧ Be quiet and reverent in God's Presence (Habakkuk 2 v20)
- ✧ Worship the God of all Majesty (1 Chronicles 29 v13)
- ✧ Obey Him (Exodus 3 v2-10 and 4 v20; Revelation 4 v10; Revelation 5 v14)

Application to unsaved:

- ✧ This mighty King of Kings will judge you, if you do not bow down before Him—and trust His Son Jesus Christ (Acts 17 v30, 31)

The Sovereignty of God

What does it mean?

God has absolute authority and rules over His creation. He has the right and ability to do as He alone chooses to do.

He controls everything and everyone. He can do—and does—whatever He pleases. Nothing happens unless He causes it or allows it. He is on the throne of the universe working all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1 v11). God has a plan for the world and for man towards which He is working, and no one or nothing can change or upset that plan. God is never disappointed, dissatisfied, defeated or dethroned.

In order to be sovereign, God must be all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present. But the sovereignty of God is greater than any one of the attributes which it contains. Indeed it is this doctrine which gives meaning and substance to all other doctrines, and it is regarded by many theologians as “the foundation doctrine of Christian theology.”

God is sovereign in creation (Psalm 95 v3-6; Psalm 139 v14; Revelation 4 v11) in providence or control (1 Chronicles 29 v11; Psalm 103 v19; Hebrews 1 v3) in salvation (Acts 4 v28) and conversion

(John 6 v37; 44; Acts 16 v14). All creation, creatures, countries, circumstances and climates are under His control.

Where is it taught?

The truth of the sovereignty of God is, as we have seen, the key truth of the whole Bible, and the doctrine upon which most other doctrines depend or hinge. Consequently, it is taught throughout Scripture in a very clear way (1 Chronicles 29 v11 and 12; Psalm 24 v1; Psalm 46 v10; Psalm 47 v7; Psalm 115 v3; Psalm 135 v6; Isaiah 46 v10; Daniel 4 v35; Ephesians 1 v11).

Applications to saved:

- An understanding of God's sovereignty will encourage and deepen your worship of God (1 Chronicles 29 v10-13)
- An understanding of God's sovereignty will give you comfort and peace in times of trial, difficulty, temptation and sorrow (Isaiah 26 v3, 4)
- An understanding of God's sovereignty will give you encouragement and confidence in your evangelism (Acts 18 v9, 10)
- An understanding of God's sovereignty will give you a deep sense of security at all times (Romans 8 v31-39)

Application to unsaved:

- Do not argue with a sovereign God. Obey Him and trust Jesus Christ (Romans 9 v18-21)

The Omnipotence of God

What does it mean?

God is all powerful, and can do anything He chooses to do. Nothing is impossible or too hard for Him.

Where is it taught?

Genesis 17 v1; Genesis 18 v14; Jeremiah 32 v17, 27; Matthew 19 v26; Mark 10 v27; Luke 1 v37; Ephesians 3 v20.

Applications to saved:

- He is able to keep you from falling (Jude 24; 2 Timothy 1 v12)
- He is able to help you when tempted (Hebrews 2 v18)
- He is able to supply your needs (2 Corinthians 9 v8)
- He is able to deliver you (Daniel 3 v17)

- He is able to help you grow spiritually (Ephesians 3 v16-20)
- He is able to raise your body from the dead and change it (Philippians 3 v21)

Application to unsaved:

- He is able to save you (Hebrews 7 v25)

The Omniscience of God

What does it mean?

God knows everything—past, present and future. His knowledge is perfect and complete. He never makes a mistake. Nothing is, or can be, hidden from Him.

Where is it taught?

Genesis 18 v13-15; Psalm 139 v2-6; Proverbs 15 v3; Mark 2 v8; Romans 11 v33; Hebrews 4 v13; 1 John 3 v20.

Applications to saved:

- He knows all your needs and problems and can help you (Hebrews 4 v13-16)
- He knows the way you should go and is able to guide you (Isaiah 30 v21)
- He knows what you are doing and where you are. Be careful! (Proverbs 15 v3)

Application to unsaved:

- You cannot hide your sin from God. He knows about it—but He is ready to forgive you (1 Chronicles 28 v9)

The Omnipresence of God

What does it mean?

God is everywhere present in a real and personal way. There is no place where He is not. He is, however, not present everywhere in the same sense. His general presence is everywhere; but His special presence is in Heaven and in the hearts of believers.

Where is it taught?

1 Kings 8 v27; Psalm 139 v7-12; Isaiah 66 v1; Jeremiah 23 v23, 24; Acts 7 v48, 49.

Applications to saved:

- You are never alone. God is there (Isaiah 43 v2).
- Be careful where you go. God is there too (Psalm 139 v7).

Application to unsaved:

- You can never escape or get away from God (Jeremiah 23 v24)

The Faithfulness of God

What does it mean?

He is faithful to His plan or programme. When He calls us to do something, He always supplies us with whatever we need (1 Thessalonians 5 v24).

He is faithful to His covenant people (Deuteronomy 7 v6-9; 1 Peter 2 v9) and never lets us down.

He is faithful to His promises (2 Timothy 2 v11-13). He always keeps the promises He has made in His Word—the general promises He has made to all His people (e.g., Hebrews. 13 v5b), and the specific promises He makes to individual Christians.

Where is it taught?

Numbers 23 v19; Deuteronomy 7 v9; Psalm 36 v5; Psalm 89 v8; Lamentations 3 v23; 1 Corinthians 1 v9; 1 Corinthians 10 v13; 1 Thessalonians 5 v24; 2 Thessalonians 3 v3; 2 Timothy 2 v13; 1 Peter 4 v19; 1 John 1 v9.

Applications to saved:

- Trust God. He will never let you down (Psalm 37 v25; 1 Peter 4 v19)
- Be sure that every promise God has made will be fulfilled (2 Corinthians 1 v20; 2 Timothy 2 v13)
- Be faithful at all times (1 Corinthians 4 v2) and keep your promises (Proverbs 14 v5)

Applications to unsaved:

- God has promised to save you if you trust Christ (John 3 v16). Trust Him today
- God has promised you will be lost forever if you do not trust Christ (John 3 v36)

The Wisdom of God

What does it mean?

God knows what is best for us and that which will most glorify Him, and He knows the steps whereby He can achieve this goal in our lives and ministries. In addition He is actively working to bring this about. So He sends into, or allows in, our lives circumstances which may seem unpleasant but which will bring us to the place which will glorify Him and will be best for us.

Where is it taught?

Job 12 v13; Psalm 104 v24; Isaiah 40 v13, 14; Isaiah 40 v27, 28; Romans 11 v33-36; Romans 16 v27; 1 Corinthians 1 v24 and 30; Ephesians 3 v10; Colossians 2 v3; 1 Timothy 1 v17.

The life of Joseph with all its problems is a good example of the wisdom of God—and **this** was the lesson which Joseph learned (Genesis 45 v5, 7, 8; Genesis 50 v20).

Applications to saved:

- ↗ God knows what is best for you and is in control of all the circumstances in your life. They are for your good and His glory (Romans 8 v28).
- ↗ Trust Him—even in the dark. Put your hand into His Hand and be at peace (1 Peter 4 v19).
- ↗ Accept whatever comes with joy and peace. Don't give up and don't become bitter (2 Corinthians 12 v7-10).
- ↗ Repudiate your own wisdom and trust Him. He is worthy of your trust (James 1 v5-8).
- ↗ Worship Him and thank Him for His wisdom and guidance (Romans 11 v33-36; 1 Timothy 1 v17).

Application to unsaved:

- ↗ All the circumstances in your life, whether they seem good or bad, have been allowed by God to encourage you to turn to Him and trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour (Job 36 v4-12; Romans 2 v4).

The Jealousy of God

What does it mean?

God loves His children, and wants their love and obedience. He does not want us to love and follow other gods whatever they might

be. God's jealousy is a zeal to protect a love relationship which is for our good, and for His glory. He wants to protect and keep that which He loves. This attribute is usually related to idol worship and compromise. It aims at restoration and results, if necessary, in chastisement.

Jealousy in man is usually the opposite to God's jealousy. In man it is often a vice and not a virtue—where he wants what others have and hates them because he can't have it.

Where is it taught?

Exodus 20 v3-5; Exodus 34 v14; Joshua 24 v19; Psalm 79 v5; Luke 14 v26; John 2 v13-17; 1 Corinthians 10 v22

Applications to saved:

- ↗ Always give God the first place in your life (Deuteronomy 6 v4, 5; Mark 12 v29, 30)
- ↗ Worship Him—and no one else (Exodus 20 v5)
- ↗ Be jealous for Him and His glory (1 Kings 19 v10, 14)

Application to unsaved

- ↗ You have sinned by not giving God His rightful place in your life. But He will forgive you if you come to Him—through Jesus Christ (Deuteronomy 4 v23-29)

The Immutability of God

What does it mean?

It is impossible for God to change in His nature, His attributes, His counsels and His will.

Where is it taught?

1 Samuel 15 v29; Psalm 102 v26, 27; Malachi 3 v6; Hebrews 1 v12; Hebrews 13 v8; James 1 v17

Application to saved:

- ↗ The God of the Bible is the same God today—and able to help you with your problems (Hebrews 13 v5-8)

Application to unsaved:

- ↗ In the Bible He saved people, like the Philippian jailer, who trusted Jesus Christ. He hasn't changed—and will do the same for you (Hebrews 7 v24, 25)

The Attributes of God *Teaching Ideas and Outlines*

The teaching and application of God's attributes to children should occupy a large part of your ministry to them. There are three main ways to do this.

Use Bible Lessons to Teach These Truths

Each of these lessons can have an attribute of God as its central truth:

- *God is holy—The story of Sinai and the giving of the Law (Exodus 19 and 20)*
- *God is righteous and just—The story of God's judgment of Achan (Joshua 7)*
- *God is love—The story of the Crucifixion*
- *God is gracious—The story of David and Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9) with the prayer of the publican (Luke 18 v9-14)*
- *God is merciful—The story of the conversion of Saul (Acts 9 with 1 Timothy 1 v13-16)*
- *God is patient—The story of Elijah running from Jezebel (1 Kings 19)*
- *God is majestic—The story of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ (Matthew 17 v1-8; and 2 Peter 1 v16)*
- *God is sovereign—the story of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3 and 4)*
- *God is all-powerful—The creation story (Genesis 1 and 2)*
- *God knows everything—The story of the healing of the palsied man (Mark 2 v1-12 and especially verse 8)*
- *God is everywhere—The story of Jonah Chapters 1 and 2*
- *God is faithful—The story of Noah, the ark and the rainbow (Genesis 6-8)*
- *God is wise—The outline of the problems, and the blessings, of Joseph (Genesis 37-50)*
- *God is jealous—The story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18)*
- *God never changes—The story of the call of Moses and the revelation of God's Name (Exodus 3 v1-15 with John 8 v58)*

Use Flashcard Lessons to Teach These Truths

These can be lessons on individual attributes, or on two or more related attributes. A number of possible outlines follows:

God is holy and just

- *Are you always good?*
- *God is completely good*
- *No sin in His Presence*
- *You and I are sinners*
- *God is completely fair*
- *He must punish sin*
- *Jesus Christ took the punishment for sin*
- *Trust Him—no punishment (personal application unsaved)*
- *God wants you to be holy (personal application saved)*

God is love

- *Is it possible to love those who hurt us?*
- *God is holy and fair*
- *We are sinners*
- *Our sin hurts God very much*
- *But God loves us very much*
- *He gives us many good things*
- *Jesus Christ died for our sin*
- *He will save you if you trust Him (personal application unsaved)*
- *God wants you to love others (personal application saved)*

God is merciful and gracious

- *Have you ever done anything wrong—and been punished?*
- *God is holy and must punish sin*
- *We have sinned and deserve punishment*
- *If we trust Christ we will not be punished*
- *God shows His mercy towards us*
- *If we trust Christ God gives us special gifts*
- *Forgiveness, a new nature, eternal life (personal application unsaved)*
- *We are sinners and don't deserve them*
- *Thank Him for His Grace (personal application saved)*

God is patient

- *What do you do when someone hurts you?*
- *God is perfect and must punish sin*

- *We are sinners*
- *We deserve God's punishment*
- *God is patient and does not punish us immediately*
- *Jesus Christ took God's punishment on the Cross*
- *God loves us and wants us to trust Christ*
- *God will not wait forever. Trust Christ now (personal application unsaved).*
- *God wants you to be patient with others (personal application saved)*

God is majestic

- *Would you like to meet the queen (or President)?*
- *God is our Father—when we trust Christ (Personal application unsaved)*
- *He is always close to us*
- *We can talk to Him*
- *God is also the King of kings*
- *He is far above us*
- *In the Bible we see Him on the Throne*
- *We are reverent in His Presence*
- *We worship—and obey—Him (personal application saved)*

God is sovereign

- *Is anyone in control?*
- *God controls the universe*
- *God controls the weather*
- *God controls the animals*
- *God controls all people*
- *God controls the nations and rulers*
- *God controls all circumstances*
- *Worship the God who controls all (personal application saved)*
- *He has made a way for you to be saved and secure (personal application unsaved)*

God is all-powerful

- *Who was the most powerful person ever?*
- *God made the world in six days*
- *God opened the Red Sea*
- *God levelled the walls of Jericho*
- *God saved the whole city of Nineveh*

- *God raised Jesus Christ from the dead*
- *Nothing is too hard for the Lord*
- *He can save you—no matter how sinful you are (personal application unsaved)*
- *He can help you with any problem you have (personal application saved)*

God knows everything

- *How much do you know?*
- *God knows everything*
- *God knows all that has happened*
- *God knows the future*
- *God knows your every sin and secret*
- *God knows what is best for you*
- *Jesus Christ died to forgive you and to change you*
- *Trust Him—that is the best start for you (personal application unsaved)*
- *Ask Him, every day, to guide you (personal application saved)*

God is everywhere

- *How many places can you be in—at one time?*
- *God is not limited to any one place*
- *God is everywhere at the same time*
- *You cannot get away from Him*
- *Jonah tried and failed*
- *God has two places where He lives especially*
- *He lives in Heaven*
- *He lives in the hearts of those who trust Christ (personal application unsaved)*
- *He will be with you—wherever you are (personal application saved)*

God is faithful

- *Do you always keep your promises?*
- *God has made many promises in His Word*
- *God always keep His promises*
- *He promised no more great floods*
- *He promised to send His Son—to die for us*
- *He promises to save those who trust Christ (personal application unsaved)*

- *He promises never to leave Christians (personal application saved)*
- *He loves and cares for His children*
- *He never lets us down*

God is wise

- *“Why should this happen to me?”*
- *God has a plan for your life and work*
- *God knows how to get you there*
- *God works so that you will get there*
- *He sends—or allows—all that happens*
- *These are always for your good*
- *Joseph learned this lesson*
- *Trust God when problems come (personal application saved)*
- *The first step in God's plan for you—trust Christ (personal application unsaved)*

God is jealous

- *What has first place in your life?*
- *God loves you and wants the best for you*
- *Jesus Christ died for you*
- *He wants to be your Lord and Saviour (personal application unsaved)*
- *He wants to have first place in your life*
- *There are many “gods” in the world today*
- *God's command—don't worship other gods*
- *Worship and obey God alone (personal application saved)*
- *This pleases God—and is best for you*

God never changes

- *What did you look like five years ago?*
- *Everything and everyone changes*
- *God never changes*
- *God never grows old—or dies*
- *God's Word and promises never change*
- *God always acts in the same way*
- *He always punishes sin*
- *He always saves those who trust Christ (personal application unsaved)*

- *He wants you always to keep your promises (personal application saved).*

Use Other Parts of Your Teaching Programme to Teach These Truths

Teach and explain songs such as:

God is So Good (the love and goodness of God)

My God is So Great (the omnipotence of God)

Yesterday, Today, Forever (the immutability of God)

Teach, explain and encourage the children to learn Bible verses such as:

Romans 16 v27 (the wisdom of God)

Isaiah 6 v3 (the holiness of God)

2 Corinthians 12 v9a (the grace of God)

Use stories about missionaries to show how they came to understand the attributes of God—through the Word of God and through their experiences.

Helpful Visuals from Child Evangelism Fellowship

- *What Every Child Ought to Know (5 lessons about God, sin, Jesus Christ and the Bible) from European CEF*
- *Knowing God (5 lessons on the Names of God) from CEF Inc.*
- *I Can Know God (Supplemental aids for preschoolers) from CEF Inc.*

Chapter 4: The Doctrines of Jesus Christ

Summarized Outline of Chapter

The Person of Jesus Christ

- ↗ He is perfectly human
- ↗ He is truly God

The Work of Jesus Christ

- ↗ His birth
- ↗ His life
- ↗ His death
- ↗ His burial
- ↗ His resurrection
- ↗ His ascension and exaltation
- ↗ His intercession
- ↗ His second coming
- ↗ His final judgment

The Person of Jesus Christ

His Humanity

He was, and is, completely and **perfectly** human.

The Doctrine

His humanity was shown

- ↗ by His human parentage. He became human at His incarnation by a human birth. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1 v18; Luke 1 v35) and His mother was a woman called Mary (Matthew 1 v18; Matthew 2 v11; Galatians 4 v4)
- ↗ by His natural growth and development (Luke 2 v40-47; 52)
- ↗ by His personal appearance (John 4 v9; John 21 v4, 5, 14)
- ↗ by His possession of a complete human nature—spirit (Luke 23 v46), soul (Matthew 26 v38) and body (Matthew 26 v12).
- ↗ by His human limitations which He deliberately chose to impose upon Himself—without in any way sacrificing His deity. Only God could do this.

- ✓ physically He could be tired (John 4 v6) and hungry (Matthew 4 v2)
- ✓ intellectually He chose, as a man, to increase in knowledge (Luke 2 v52)
- ✓ spiritually He prayed (Mark 1 v35) and was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10 v38)
- by the human names given to Him—especially the title Son of Man which was used 80 times in the four Gospels

His humanity was perfect and sinless

- His Father said so (Hebrews 1 v8, 9)
- He Himself said so (John 8 v46)
- His friends said so (Acts 3 v14; 2 Corinthians 5 v21; 1 Peter 2 v22; 1 John 3 v3, 5)
- His enemies said so (Matthew 27 v3, 4; Matthew 27 v19; Luke 23 v41; Luke 23 v47; John 18 v38)
- The demons said so (Mark 1 v23, 24)

The humanity of Jesus Christ is an important truth.

This fact is especially emphasized in John's first epistles when he writes:

"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come **in the flesh** is of God and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come **in the flesh** is not of God; and this is that spirit of anti-christ..." (1 John 4 v2 and 3).

The Application

His perfect humanity plays an essential role in God's plan of salvation.

When understood, this truth is a real source of encouragement and blessing for us. Only by becoming a man could He fulfil the following responsibilities and ministries; and be qualified thereby to be your Saviour.

- He could be your substitute (2 Corinthians 5 v21; Hebrews 2 v14, 15; Hebrews 2 v17)
- He could be your mediator and great High Priest (1 Timothy 2 v5; Hebrews 7 v24-28)
- He understands you (Hebrews 2 v17, 18; Hebrews 4 v15)
- He is your example (John 13 v15; 1 Peter 2 v21)

His Deity or Divinity

Jesus Christ was, and is, truly and absolutely God. When He became a man He did not sacrifice, or leave behind, His Deity. As perfect man He could be the substitute in His death for one person; but only as God could He be the substitute for many many people.

The Doctrine

We know that He is God because of:

His claims

- ✧ He said He was (John 5 v17, 18; John 8 v58, 59; John 10 v30, 31)
- ✧ He accepted others' affirmations of His Deity (John 20 v28, 29)
- ✧ He accepted worship (Matthew 14 v33; Luke 24 v52)
- ✧ He forgave sin (Mark 2 v5-10; Luke 7 v48-50)

His miracles

Their main purpose was to be signs that would back up and support His claims and prove that these claims were true (John 20 v30, 31). A good example of this can be found in Matthew 8 v23-27.

His sinless life to which many gave testimony

- ✧ His friends witnessed to this
 - ✓ He did no sin (1 Peter 2 v22)
 - ✓ He knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5 v21)
 - ✓ In Him was no sin (1 John 3 v5)
- ✧ His enemies witnessed to this—especially just before His Crucifixion (Matthew 27 v4; Matthew 27 v19; Matthew 27 v24; Matthew 27 v54)
- ✧ God the Father witnessed to this (Matthew 17 v5)

His resurrection

- ✧ This was God the Father's final witness and Amen to the claims of His Son (Romans 1 v4).
- ✧ It was also the final sign given by Jesus Christ to the scribes and Pharisees concerning who He was (Matthew 12 v38-40).

Our own personal experience and assurance

- ✧ We know He is God because of all He has done personally for us and in us.

The Application

This wonderful doctrine if thoroughly understood and completely believed will have a number of consequences in your life, and in the lives of the children to whom you minister.

Because Jesus Christ is God:

- He can do anything. He is **able** to save anyone—no matter how sinful (1 Timothy 1 v12-17). He is **able** to help you with your weaknesses (Galatians 2 v20; Ephesians 5 v25-27; Hebrews 7 v25)
- His death is sufficient for everyone and anyone (Matthew 26 v28; John 3 v16; 1 Timothy 2 v4; 1 Timothy 2 v6; 1 Peter 1 v18-21; 1 John 2 v2)
- You must worship Him as your God and Saviour (Luke 24 v52; John 5 v23; Philippians 2 v9-11; Hebrews 1 v6-9; Revelation 1 v5, 6; Revelation 5 v8-14)
- You must obey Him when He speaks to you through His Word (Matthew 28 v18-20; Ephesians 5 v22-24; Philippians 2 v10; Colossians 1 v18; 3:16, 24)

The Work of Jesus Christ

We will outline now what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us and for our salvation.

His Birth

The incarnation of Jesus Christ, when He, for the first time, became, permanently, a man and took upon Himself a human nature (John 1 v14) was an essential preparation for His death for sin (Galatians 4 v4, 5).

- He chose to be born (Psalm 40 v6-8; Hebrews 10 v5-10)
- He was born at precisely the time chosen by His Father and Himself (Galatians 4 v4)
- He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1 v35)
- He was born of a virgin (Genesis 3 v15; Isaiah 7 v14; Luke 1 v34)
- He was, and is, the perfect union of two natures—human and divine
- His birth was normal, basically similar to all births; His conception was miraculous and completely unique.

His Life

This is an important part and aspect of the work of Jesus Christ. This can be evidenced by the large section of the four Gospels devoted to it, and to the frequent references to it made by the apostles in their writing and preaching.

The life of Jesus Christ is important because:

- ✧ It reveals God to us. In His character and actions He shows us what God is like (John 14 v7-9; Hebrews 1 v1-3; 1 John 1 v1-4)
- ✧ It includes the greatest teaching and preaching the world has ever heard (John 7 v46)
- ✧ It includes many of the greatest miracles the world has ever seen. These demonstrate the divine compassion and, especially, the divine power (John 20 v30, 31), and confirm the witness of Jesus Christ concerning both His Person and His Work (John 10 v25)
- ✧ It gives mankind an example to follow (John 13 v15; Romans 8 v29; 2 Corinthians 3 v18; Philippians 2 v5; Colossians 3 v10; 1 John 2 v6; 1 Peter 2 v21). God wants us to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ✧ Above all, it was an essential preparation for His death. His keeping of the law and active obedience to God's Will, as a perfect man, were the essential qualification and preparation for His atoning sacrifice and passive obedience to God's Will on the Cross (Romans 5 v18, 19; 2 Corinthians 5 v21; Hebrews 7 v25-28; 1 Peter 1 v18-20; 1 Peter 3 v18). The work which He finished (John 17 v4) was not just the work, and His obedience, on the Cross. It was also the work, and His obedience, during the 33 years which preceded the Cross.

His Death

This is the central and most important aspect of His work. It could be called "the central truth" of the whole Bible. The Old Testament looks forward to it; the New Testament looks back to it.

The importance of His death

- ✧ to the prophets (1 Peter 1 v11, 12)
- ✧ to the angels (1 Peter 1 v12)

- to departed saints (Luke 9 v30, 31)
- to Heaven (Revelation 5 v8-12)
- to the Scriptures (Luke 24 v25-27; 44-48)
- to the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15 v1-4)
- to us (Galatians 6 v14)

The necessity of His death

It was necessary because of:

- the holiness of God (Habakkuk 1 v13)
- the love of God (1 John 4 v10)
- the sin of man (1 Peter 2 v24, 25)
- the purposes of God (Acts 2 v23; Acts 4 v28; 1 Peter 1 v20)
- the prophetic Scriptures (Luke 24 v25-27)
- This was the only way of salvation (Mark 8 v31; Luke 12 v50; Luke 22 v37; John 3 v14)

The nature of His death

- It was **substitutionary** (Isaiah 53 v4-6, 8, 11, 12; 2 Corinthians 5 v21). He took our place. 1 Peter 3 v18 reminds us of the four great facts concerning His death:
 - ✓ Who suffered? Christ, the just One
 - ✓ When did He suffer? Once (and once only)
 - ✓ Why did He suffer? For sins
 - ✓ What was the purpose of His suffering? To bring us to God
- It was **sacrificial** (Mark 10 v45; Romans 3 v25; 1 Corinthians 5 v7; Hebrews 9 v25-28; 1 John 2 v2). God the Father punished and poured out His wrath for our sin upon His Son (Isaiah 53 v4-6, 10; Matthew 27 v46).
- It was **satisfactory** (Isaiah 53 v11; John 19 v30). Redemption is a **finished** work. In His death Jesus Christ gave Himself to His Father's will and judgment (Psalm 40 v6-8; Hebrews 10 v5-10) and because He was willing to do this God the Father gave Him a people (John 17 v2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24; Hebrews 12 v2).

The scope of His death

There are two evangelical viewpoints both of which have been believed by very many Christians.

- He died for everybody (1 Timothy 2 v6; Hebrews 2 v9; 1 John 2 v2)

- ✧ He died for His people (the elect) (John 10 v3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 15; Acts 20 v28; Ephesians 5 v25)

In the past, the second viewpoint had been the majority viewpoint of the evangelical church. Today the first would be the majority viewpoint. But it is essential that those who hold to either one of these viewpoints does not see the other viewpoint as, in some way, heretical!

My own personal belief is that He died for everybody—but especially for the elect! Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4 v10 that He is “the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe . . .” His Death is sufficient for everybody—but it is efficient only for those who believe.

The results of His death

- ✧ for everybody—the opportunity of, and invitation to, salvation (Titus 2 v11; Revelation 22 v17)
- ✧ for believers—justification (Romans 5 v9), regeneration (Titus 3 v5, 6), adoption (Galatians 4 v3-5), redemption (1 Peter 1 v18, 19), eternal life (John 3 v16), union with Christ (Ephesians 1 v3-14), victory over sin (Romans 6 v3-7, 14), victory over the fear of death (Hebrews 2 v14, 15) and fellowship with God (Hebrews 10 v19-22)
- ✧ for Satan—defeat (1 John 3 v8), loss of power (Hebrews 2 v14) and judgment (John 12 v31; John 16 v11)
- ✧ for the universe—eventual deliverance from the curse of sin (Romans 8 v21-23)

His Burial

The fact of His burial is included in the outline of the Gospel contained in 1 Corinthians 15 v1-4.

- ✧ It shows that He was truly dead although His body was not subject to corruption (Psalm 16 v9-11; Acts 2 v23-27)
- ✧ It takes away from believers any fear we may have concerning burial. He has been this way before us! (1 Corinthians 15 v55)

His body remained in the grave for three days. Where was His soul (and spirit) during those days? Some have taught that He descended into Hell (or Hades), and that He proclaimed what He had done to those who had died in faith and were in “the place of departed spirits.”

He then “led captivity captive” and took them to Heaven. They use verses to support this such as Acts 2 v27; Romans 10 v6-7; Ephesians 4 v8-10; 1 Peter 3 v18-20; 1 Peter 4 v6. This is possibly true. But I feel that these verses do not **clearly** teach this and there are, I believe, other interpretations of them which are more satisfactory. The simplest and, I believe, best explanation is that He went to be with His Father in Heaven (or Paradise) for those three days just as we will when we die. Then on Easter morning His spirit was reunited with His body and He was raised from the dead. This is also a picture and a pattern of what will happen to us.

Verses which support this include the following: Luke 23 v43 with 2 Corinthians 12 v4 and Revelation 2 v7; Luke 23 v46 with Acts 7 v59; 1 Corinthians 15 v20-23.

Some theologians, including John Calvin, believed and taught that Jesus Christ descended into Hell on the Cross, not after His death. This was, of course, perfectly true. Because He took our punishment and our Hell we will not be punished and will not go to Hell.

The statement in the Apostles creed that “He descended into Hell” (after His death) is at best doubtful.

His Resurrection

This aspect of the work of Jesus Christ is always closely linked to and related to His Death. It receives special emphasis in the preaching and writing of the Apostles because it was the known and visible proof of the veracity of what they were teaching. This doctrine is unique as far as the religions of the world are concerned; and it is seen, in the Bible, as a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15 v14).

The importance of His resurrection

- to the Old Testament prophets (Job 19 v25; Psalm 2 v7; Isaiah 53 v10-12; Luke 24 v25-26)
- in the ministry of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 12 v39, 40; Matthew 16 v21; Matthew 17 v9; Mark 8 v31; Mark 9 v9; John 2 v19-21). He made it clear that it would happen.
- to the apostles in their preaching (Acts 2 v24-36; Acts 13 v30-37; Acts 17 v31). It was an essential part of their message.

- to the apostles in their writing (Romans 4 v23-25; 1 Corinthians 15 v1-58; 2 Timothy 2 v8)
- to the early Christians. Their most common form of greeting and salutation was “The Lord is risen; He is risen indeed.”
- as part of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15 v1-8)
- to us as Christians. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead we are still in our sins (1 Corinthians 15 v17), our faith is vain or empty (1 Corinthians 15 v14) and there is no future hope for those who die in Christ (1 Corinthians 15 v18)

The meaning of His resurrection

The word “resurrection” means “a raising again” of that which is dead. It can therefore refer only to the body—and means a literal resurrection or raising again of **the body** of Jesus Christ from the dead. It cannot refer to a “spiritual resurrection.” It was the body of the Lord Jesus which actually died; and which was actually raised again from the dead. His spirit (and soul) did not die.

The evidences of His resurrection

- The empty tomb (Luke 24 v3) and the undisturbed grave clothes (John 20 v6, 7). No other possible explanation has ever been given for this—apart from the resurrection. Matthew 28 v11-15 outlines one very weak attempt to do this—and it is almost laughable.
- The appearance of the risen Lord to many people (who were not expecting to see Him). These included Mary (John 20 v16); the women (Matthew 28 v9, 10); Peter (Luke 24 v34); two disciples (Luke 24 v13-32); the ten disciples (John 20 v19); Thomas (John 20 v26-29); seven disciples (John 21 v1-14); James, the half brother of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 15 v7); over 500 people (1 Corinthians 15 v6) and Paul (Acts 9 v5; Acts 26 v16; 1 Corinthians 9 v1).
- The change in the disciples. Compare, for example, Mark 14 v66-72 with Acts 2 v14-23—to see the great change in Peter.
- The personal experience of many people today (Ephesians 1 v19-20).

We sometimes sing “You ask me how I know He lives; He lives within my heart.”

We can truly say “I know He rose from the dead because I met Him and spoke with Him this morning.”

The results of His resurrection

- It establishes the Deity of Jesus Christ beyond any doubt (Romans 1 v4; John 2 v18-22)
- It proves that His Death was sufficient for our salvation (Romans 4 v25)
- It prepared the way for His Heavenly Intercession and Priesthood (Romans 8 v34)
- It gives us the assurance of our own resurrection (1 Corinthians 15 v18-20; 2 Corinthians 4 v14; 1 Thessalonians 4 v14)
- It gives us assurance concerning our justification and our acceptance by God (Romans 4 v23-25; 5 v1)
- It demonstrates the power of God (Ephesians 1 v19, 20)
- It shows the power available to us (Ephesians 1 v19, 20; Philippians 3 v10)
- It encourages and makes possible holy living (Colossians 3 v1-3)
- It shows the world that resurrection and judgment are certain for all (John 5 v26-29; Acts 17 v31)
- **He is alive—to save sinners and sanctify saints**

His Ascension and Exaltation

The meaning

The ascension of Jesus Christ occurred when, in full view of the disciples, He was taken up bodily and visibly into Heaven 40 days after His resurrection (Mark 16 v19; Luke 24 v50, 51; Acts 1 v9-11; Hebrews 4 v14)

His exaltation was that act of God by which the risen and ascended God/man was given the place of power (Philippians 2 v9) and authority (Matthew 28 v18) at the right Hand of God (Mark 16 v19; Ephesians 1 v20).

The necessity

- His ascension and exaltation were both prophesied in the Old Testament (Psalm 68 v18; Psalm 110 v1)
- They were foreseen and also spoken of by the Lord Jesus (Luke 9 v51; John 6 v62; John 20 v17)

- They were the final stage, proof and evidence of His redemptive work (Acts 2 v34-36; Philippians 2 v7-11).
- Great emphasis is given to the truth of Christ's exaltation and lordship in the evangelistic preaching and in the writing of the apostles (Acts 2 v33-36; Acts 3 v13; Acts 5 v31; Acts 10 v36; Romans 10 v9, 12, 13).

The results

- He is our fore runner (Hebrews 6 v20)
- His ascension and exaltation demonstrate Christ's lordship of the universe (Philippians 2 v9-11)
- They demonstrate Christ's headship of the church (Ephesians 1 v20-23)
- They were followed by His gift of the Holy Spirit to believers (Acts 2 v33)
- They were followed by His preparation of dwelling places in Heaven for believers (John 14 v2).
- They were followed by His intercession for believers (Romans 8 v34; Hebrews 4 v14 and 7 v24), and they assure us of free and confident access to God's Presence (Hebrews 4 v14-16).
- They assure us of our place in Heaven (Ephesians 2 v6).

His Intercession

The first six aspects of the Work of Jesus Christ have been completely finished. But He also has a present ministry.

Jesus Christ is interceding constantly and incessantly for His people at God's right hand. He is our Advocate (parakletos) (1 John 2 v1), our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4 v14; 8 v1) and our representative (Hebrews 9 v24).

His intercession involves at least three activities:

- **He represents us** (Hebrews 9 v24) and **defends us** against the accusations of Satan, the devil (or accuser). He is our Advocate or defending counsel (1 John 2 v1) pleading our cause judicially on the basis of His redemptive work (Romans 8 v33, 34). Because of this no condemnation is possible for the believer (Romans 8 v34; Romans 8 v1). Our advocate has never lost a case yet—and He won't ever.
- **He prays for us** (Luke 22 v32; John 17 v9, 20; Hebrews 7 v25).

He prays for all believers at all times and in all their difficult situations. He knows exactly what to pray for—and His prayers are always answered.

He prays, for example, that we will be kept (John 17 v11, 15), be joyful (John 17 v13), be sanctified (John 17 v17), be united (John 17 v11; v21-23), be with Him (John 17 v24), and behold His glory (John 17 v24).

- **He helps us** in times of need (Hebrews 4 v15 and 16).

Because He has lived on this earth for 33 years, He understands the difficulties and the temptations we face. He is touched by what we are going through, and sympathizes with us. At the same time He is ready to give us “grace to help in time of need” as we ask for it.

His Second Coming

In addition to the seven aspects of the Work of Jesus Christ outlined (six completed and one continuing) there is one more part of His Saving Work which is still future—and which will finally complete the work of redemption.

The fact of the second coming

- The Lord Jesus promised it (John 14 v3)
- The Old Testament prophets foresaw it (Daniel 7 v13)
- The angels declared it (Acts 1 v11)
- The apostles taught it and prophesied it (1 Timothy 6 v14; 1 Peter 1 v13; 1 John 3 v2)
- The early Christians, and the church throughout the centuries expected it (1 Corinthians 16 v22)
- The plan and purposes of God require it as the final stage in His redemptive work (Hebrews 9 v24-28)
- The world needs it (Romans 8 v21-25)

The importance of the second coming

- It gives hope to the believer (Titus 2 v13)
- It encourages us to live holy lives (1 John 3 v3)
- It challenges us to serve Him better (Matthew 25 v14-30)
- It comforts believers who are bereaved (1 Thessalonians 4 v14-18)

The nature of the second coming

It will be personal (John 14 v3), bodily (Acts 1 v11) and visible (Matthew 24 v30; Revelation 1 v7). It will be glorious (Matthew 26 v64) and from Heaven (Philippians 3 v20)

The relationship of the second coming to the Millennium

(The 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth):

There are three viewpoints (see page 85):

- The second coming precedes the Millennium (Pre-Millennianism)
- The second coming follows the Millennium (Post-Millennianism)
- The Millennium is a period of unknown length (the 1,000 years are symbolic and not literal) which started at the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and will continue until He returns (A Millennialism)

All of these are evangelical viewpoints. The first one is the most commonly held viewpoint (and the one I personally would still believe). It receives most support from the literal reading and meaning of Revelation 20 v1-8. But the third one is believed by many and has many good points. They see Revelation 20 v1-8 as symbolic rather than literal. Very few Christians today hold to the second viewpoint although it was quite popular during the 19th century.

The time of the second coming

- No one knows (Matthew 24 v36; Acts 1 v7)
- Jesus Christ Himself deliberately and with His divine power chose not to know when He would return (Mark 13 v32)—at least when He was here on earth

The results of the second coming

- The full and completed salvation of the believer, including the resurrection of those who have died (1 Corinthians 15 v51-57)
- The assessment of the believer's service and work (1 Corinthians 3 v10-15; 2 Corinthians 5 v10)
- The resurrection of, and judgment for, the unbeliever (John 5 v28, 29; Revelation 20 v12-15)
- The final judgment of Satan (Revelation 20 v10)

- ↗ The destruction of death and sin (Romans 8 v19-21; 1 Corinthians 15 v26; Revelation 21 v4)
- ↗ A new heaven and a new earth (Hebrews 1 v11-12; 2 Peter 3 v10-13; Revelation 21 v1)

While there may be some relatively minor points about which believers differ, the two great truths about the second coming of Jesus Christ are:

- ↗ ***He is coming back again***
- ↗ ***It could be today***

And the main application for everyone is that we need to be ready for His return.

His Final Judgment

The Bible ascribes the work of final judgment particularly to our Lord Jesus Christ after His Second Coming. He will then bring everything to its correct and final conclusion.

The fact

The Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that there will be a final judgment (Acts 17 v30-31; Romans 2 v5; 2 Peter 2 v9; Revelation 20 v11-15).

Some Christians believe that there will be at least three separate judgments and that these will take place in the last days but at different times:

- ↗ A judgment of the nations with regard to their treatment of the Jews (Matthew 25 v31-46)
- ↗ A judgment of the works of believers at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5 v10)
- ↗ A judgment of unbelievers at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20 v11-15)

Other Christians believe that there will be one final judgment for all mankind (Acts 17 v30-31). This would be for both believers and unbelievers, but on different grounds and for different purposes.

I was taught and have always believed the first viewpoint. But I see the possibility of the second viewpoint. It does seem more simple.

However, I do not feel that the exact details concerning the day(s) of judgment matter so much as the fact that there will be a judgment, and at that time everything will be made right.

The nature

- Jesus Christ will be the judge

Paul speaks of “Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing” (2 Timothy 4 v1). Peter says that Jesus Christ is “He which was ordained by God to be the judge of quick and dead (Acts 10 v42).

The Lord Jesus said of Himself, “The Father . . . hath given him authority to execute judgment” (John 5 v27).

- Unbelievers will be judged

All unbelievers will stand before Jesus Christ for judgment (Romans 2 v5-9; Revelation 20 v12).

This judgment will not be to decide if they will be condemned or not. They have already been condemned because they have already rejected Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour (John 3 v18). There will be no second chance for anyone.

The purpose of this judgment will be:

- ✓ to demonstrate that they deserve condemnation and punishment by revealing the sinfulness of their lives and the folly of their rejection of Christ (Ecclesiastes 12 v14; Matthew 12 v36; Matthew 25 v41-46; Luke 12 v2-3; Romans 2 v5-9; Romans 2 v16).
- ✓ to determine the degree of punishment. It seems that they will be judged “according to their works” (Revelation 20 v12, 13). Other Scriptures indicate that those with greatest opportunity will receive greatest punishment, and vice versa (Luke 12 v47-48; Matthew 11 v22-24; Luke 20 v47).

- Believers will be judged

This is emphasized especially in Romans 14 v10, 12; 1 Corinthians 3 v8-15 and in 2 Corinthians 5 v10. We as believers **will** stand before the judgment seat of Christ. But several truths need to be clarified:

- ✓ this judgment is not to decide if we will be saved or not, and if we will enter Heaven or not. That decision was already made the day we trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour ((John 5 v24)
- ✓ this judgment is not to reveal and condemn all that we as believers have done before, or since, becoming believers. There is “no condemnation to them which are in Christ

Jesus” (Romans 8 v1). God has forgiven and forgotten. He will not bring it all up again.

- ✓ this judgment is, as I understand it, to judge the service of believers (not their lives) and to determine the degrees of reward, or crowns, for them (1 Corinthians 3 v12-15; 2 Corinthians 5 v9, 10; Luke 19 v17-19).

However although the Bible teaches that there will be degrees of reward in Heaven this will not in any way affect or lessen the joy, bliss and glory of **all** who are in Heaven. Our joy in Heaven is not in our crowns but in our Saviour (Revelation 4 v10, 11; Revelation 5 v8-14)

The Bible teaches the glorious fact that Jesus Christ is, and will be, a **righteous** Judge and that He will always do and decide that which is right and just (1 Peter 1 v17; Romans 2 v11; Revelation 19 v1-2).

An Outline of the Three Offices or Ministries of Jesus Christ

Fallen man has three basic problems

- ✧ Ignorance and spiritual blindness (1 Corinthians 2 v14; 2 Corinthians 4 v4)
- ✧ Sin
 - ✓ its penalty—we are guilty (Romans 3 v19)
 - ✓ its power—we are polluted (Romans 3 v12-18)
- ✧ Hostility towards, and rebellion against, God (Romans 5 v10; 8 v7; Colossians 1 v21)

Jesus Christ is the solution to all three problems

“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1 v30).

- ✧ He is **our wisdom**—and dispels our ignorance (Colossians 2 v3)
- ✧ He is **our righteousness** dealing with sin’s guilt and penalty (1 John 2 v2) and **our sanctification** delivering from sin’s power (1 John 2 v1)
- ✧ He is **our redemption**—and has translated us into His Kingdom (Colossians 1 v13, 14)

The purpose of His Work, His ministries and His offices is to deal with these three problems

- **Christ** is our prophet (Acts 3 v22-24)—the Word of God (John 1 v1, 14)

A prophet **reveals** truth through His words, His life and His deeds (John 17 v8). That is how he dispels our ignorance.

✓ We must **listen** to Him (Matthew 17 v5)

✓ We must **learn** from Him (Matthew 11 v29)

- **Jesus is** our priest (Hebrews 7 v24)—the Lamb of God (John 1 v29)

A priest **reconciles** to God (Hebrews 9 v12) and deals with our sin (Hebrews 7 v27).

He died on the Cross (Hebrews 9 v26)

- to deal with the guilt of our sin (2 Corinthians 5 v21)
We are justified (Romans 5 v1)
- to deliver from the power of our sin (Matthew 1 v21)
We are regenerated (2 Corinthians 5 v17) and are being sanctified (1 Thessalonians 5 v23)

He intercedes for us (Hebrews 7 v25)

- defending our justification (Romans 8 v33, 34)
- helping our sanctification (Hebrews 4 v15, 16)

He **has** appeared (Hebrews 9 v26)—His ministry of reconciliation in the past

He **does** appear (Hebrews 9 v24)—His ministry of intercession in the present

He **will** appear (Hebrews 9 v28)—His ministry of benediction in the future

✓ We must **trust** Him (Hebrews 12 v2)

✓ We must **thank** Him (1 Timothy 1 v12)

- The **Lord** is our king (Ephesians 1 v20-22)—the Son of God (Matthew 16 v16). His Kingdom is not future. He is Lord of the universe now. God has made the God/man Lord and Christ (Acts 2 v33-36).

A king **rules** over us (Colossians 1 v13). He “subdues” us and removes our hostility (Colossians 1 v20).

- We were His enemies (Romans 5 v10)
Now we are His friends (John 15 v14)
- We were rebels (1 Timothy 1 v13)

Now we are His subjects (Acts 2 v33-37)

- ✓ We must **own** (acknowledge) Him as Lord (John 13 v13)
- ✓ We must **obey** Him (John 13 v14-17)

Warning: We cannot divide Jesus Christ or His ministry and accept one or two parts. He is everything to us—or He is nothing.

We always need to remember that Christianity is CHRIST! The central doctrines of our Christian faith focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ—the Son of God and our Saviour.

He and He alone is the way to God, the truth about God, and eternal life from God (John 14 v6).

Therefore it is essential that we learn as much as we can about Him, so that we can know Him better and so that through Him we can know the Father (John 14 v6, 7).

The Doctrines of Jesus Christ Teaching Ideas and Outlines

These doctrines are absolutely central to the whole teaching of Scripture; and it is vital that they are regularly and thoroughly taught to the children. When commencing a new ministry to children it is important that they are well taught in the early stages of that ministry—as a good basis for all that will follow. You should also keep returning to them whenever opportunity allows.

Use Bible Lessons to Teach These Truths

These doctrines can and should be taught whenever possible as the central truths of Bible lessons.

The lessons which could best be used for this purpose are lessons on the life of Christ. For example, Child Evangelism Fellowship has produced a series of 24 flannelgraph lessons (in 4 volumes) on this subject—and they cover over a period of time, as central truths, most of the doctrines of Christ we have outlined.

Truths concerning both the person and work of Jesus Christ can also be taught through Old Testament Bible lessons. The main theme of the Old Testament is also Jesus Christ (Luke 24 v25-27, 44, 45).

- *Truths concerning His person can be taught in lessons where the Lord Jesus Christ makes a pre-incarnation appearance. These include Genesis 18 v1-22; Genesis 32 v22-32; Joshua 5 v13-15; Isaiah 6 v1-13 (compare John 12 v37-41) and Daniel 3 v25.*
- *Truths concerning His work can be taught in lessons like the Passover (Exodus 12), the Brazen Serpent (Numbers 21 v5-9), the two offerings (Genesis 4 v1-15), the Ark (Genesis 6-8), the offering of Isaac (Genesis 22 v1-14), the tabernacle and the offerings (Exodus 25-30). These lessons illustrate, or preview, what Jesus Christ would come to do—for our salvation.*

There are also a number of lessons in the Acts of the Apostles which can be used to give clear teaching about Jesus Christ. For example

- *Jesus Christ the exalted Lord who gives the Holy Spirit to believers (Acts 2 v1-40)*
- *Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven (Acts 1 v1-12)*
- *Jesus Christ the Lamb of God (Acts 8 v26-40)*

- *Jesus Christ the one who loves, saves and then uses His enemies to His Glory (Acts 9 v1-22)*
- *Jesus Christ the one who changes people (Acts 16 v1-34)*

At this time I would like to suggest two Bible lessons which could be used to teach each of the doctrines of Christ outlined in the previous chapter. There are of course many other lessons which could be used. The first lesson of each two chosen is the more obvious one. But the other one, while not so obvious, could also be well used for this purpose.

The Person of Jesus Christ

<i>His perfect humanity</i>	<i>The woman taken in sin (John 8 v1-11; and v46). The temptation of Jesus Christ (Matthew 4 v1-11)</i>
<i>His complete deity</i>	<i>The healing of the palsied man (Matthew 9 v1-8) The three miracles outlined in Mark chapter 5—involving a child, a woman and a man.</i>

The Work of Jesus Christ

<i>His birth</i>	<i>The Christmas story (Matthew 1 v18-25; Luke 2 v1-20) Sin and the seed of the woman (Genesis 3—especially verse 15)</i>
<i>His life</i>	<i>The boyhood of Jesus Christ (Luke 2 v40-52) The Passover Lamb (Exodus 12 v5-7; Luke 23 v4, 14, 22, 41, 47—and verse 33)</i>
<i>His death</i>	<i>The crucifixion story (Luke 23) The brazen serpent (Numbers 21 v5-9; and John 3 v14-16)</i>
<i>His burial</i>	<i>The death and burial of Jesus Christ The Lord Jesus and the two temples (John 2 v13-25)</i>

<i>His resurrection</i>	<i>Thomas, the doubter (John 20 v19-31)</i> <i>Saul's conversion (Acts 9 v1-22)</i>
<i>His ascension and exaltation</i>	<i>The ascension story (Acts 1 v1-14)</i> <i>The death of Stephen (Acts 7)</i>
<i>His intercession</i>	<i>Jesus Christ prays for Peter (Luke 22 v31-34)</i> <i>A comparison and contrast between the high priest in the tabernacle and our Great High Priest in Heaven (Exodus 28, 29; Hebrews 8-10)</i>
<i>His second coming</i>	<i>The ten virgins (Matthew 25 v1-13)</i> <i>Noah and the ark (Genesis 6-8; Matthew 24 v36-41)</i>
<i>His final judgment</i>	<i>The Parable of the talents (Matthew 25 v14-30)</i> <i>Paul in Athens (Acts 17 v16-34)</i>

Use Flashcard Lessons to Teach These Truths

This is a very good way to present most of the doctrines of Jesus Christ. Pictures to visualise the lessons are relatively easy to obtain because there are many children's books which contain coloured pictures of scenes and events from the life of Christ.

Jesus Christ is perfect man

- *What happened at the first Christmas?*
- *Jesus Christ is God*
- *He became a man*
- *He was a baby, a child, a teenager, an adult*
- *He understands you*
- *He never said or did anything wrong*
- *He obeyed all God's laws*
- *He took the punishment for our sin on the Cross (personal application unsaved)*
- *He is our example (personal application saved)*

Jesus Christ is God

- *Has anyone ever seen God?*
- *Jesus Christ was a man—no sin*
- *He was also God*

- *He said He was*
- *He did many miracles*
- *God the Father agreed with Him*
- *God the Father raised Him from the dead*
- *He is able to save you—no matter how bad you are (personal application unsaved)*
- *Worship and obey Him (personal application saved)*

The birth and life of Jesus Christ

- *Do you like babies?*
- *Jesus Christ was God and lived in Heaven*
- *He was born in Bethlehem*
- *He lived a perfect life—33 years*
- *He showed us what God is like*
- *He taught us many wonderful truths*
- *He kept all God's laws*
- *He became a sacrifice for our sins (personal application unsaved)*
- *He set us an example (personal application saved)*

The death of Jesus Christ (two lessons)

- *Would you like to go to Heaven when you die?*
- *God is holy—no sin in Heaven*
- *We are sinners—cannot go to Heaven*
- *Jesus Christ left Heaven*
- *He took God's punishment for our sin on the Cross*
- *Trust Jesus Christ—all your sin will be forgiven (personal application unsaved—part 1)*
- *Trust Jesus Christ—He will change you (personal application unsaved—part 2)*
- *You will go to Heaven when you die*
- *Thank the Lord Jesus for His death (personal application saved)*

Or

- *Why did Jesus Christ die?*
- *God is holy and pure*
- *You have broken God's laws*
- *Your sin separates you from God—forever*
- *God sent His Son to die for sinners*
- *God punished His Son for your sins*

- *You need to trust Him now (personal application unsaved)*
- *All your sins will be forgiven*
- *You will be with God forever (personal application saved)*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ

- *Are you afraid to die?*
- *Jesus Christ died on the Cross for your sins*
- *Three days later He rose again*
- *Trust Him—you will be saved (personal application unsaved)*
- *The grave was empty*
- *Many people saw Him*
- *He is alive today*
- *He will help you live for Him (personal application saved)*
- *You do not need to be afraid to die*

The ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ

- *Where is Jesus Christ today?*
- *Jesus Christ died and rose again*
- *40 days later—He went back to Heaven*
- *The disciples saw Him go*
- *The angels said He would return*
- *He is in Heaven and is Lord*
- *Everything and everybody are under His control*
- *You do not need to be afraid of anything (personal application saved)*
- *Bow your knee before Him and trust Him (personal application unsaved)*

The intercession of Jesus Christ

- *Do you like holidays—with no work?*
- *The work of Jesus Christ on the Cross is finished*
- *Trust Him—you will be saved (personal application unsaved)*
- *But He still works today*
- *Sometimes Christians sin*
- *Jesus Christ defends you and stands up for you*
- *Sometimes Christians have problems and difficulties*
- *Jesus Christ prays for you*
- *Jesus Christ is ready to help you (personal application saved)*

The second coming of Jesus Christ

- Do you know what will happen in the future?
- Jesus Christ came to the earth—to die for us
- He rose again and went back to Heaven
- He will come back again to the earth
- He will return in glory and power
- We don't know when—be ready (personal application saved)
- He will raise the dead
- He will take His children home
- He will judge the unsaved—trust Him now (personal application unsaved)

The final judgment of Jesus Christ

- Have you ever been in a law court?
- God is holy—we are sinners
- Jesus Christ died for our sin—and rose again
- He returned to Heaven—He is Lord
- He will judge the world—one day
- Unbelievers will be separated from Him
- Trust Him—you will never be separated (personal application unsaved)
- He will examine your service (personal application saved)
- You will receive rewards

Use Other Parts of the Total Teaching Time to Teach These Truths about Jesus Christ

There are many good hymns, songs and choruses which centre upon Jesus Christ and teach truths about Him.

- “What a Friend we have in Jesus” (The perfect humanity of Jesus Christ)
- “His Name is Wonderful” (the deity of Jesus Christ)
- “Wounded for Me” (the death of Jesus Christ)
- “He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today” (the resurrection of Jesus Christ)

The teaching and learning of Bible verses such as Galatians 4 v4 and 5 can be a real help.

The teaching of missionary stories which emphasize the message which the missionaries preached can be both helpful and interesting.

Helpful Visuals from Child Evangelism Fellowship

- *Life of Christ (4 volumes each with 6 lessons) from CEF Inc.*
- *God Speaks to Me (6 lessons about creation, the Bible and Jesus Christ) from CEF Inc.*
- *Knowing Christ (5 lessons based on the "I am's") from CEF Inc.*
- *My Wonderful Lord (5 lessons based on the titles of Christ in Isaiah 9 v6) from CEF Inc.*
- *The One Who Was Different (1 lesson on Jesus Christ, the Son of God) from CEF Inc.*
- *God Is So Great (1 lesson on the birth of Jesus Christ) from CEF Inc.*
- *The Message of a Star (1 lesson on the birth of Jesus Christ) from CEF Inc.*
- *A Very Special Day (1 lesson on the birth of Jesus Christ) from CEF Inc.*
- *A Shepherd for You (1 lesson on the death of Jesus Christ) from CEF Inc.*
- *A Saviour for You (5 evangelistic lessons based on the life and work of Jesus Christ) from European CEF*
- *The Lord Jesus Christ (5 doctrinal lessons on the Person and work of Jesus Christ) from European CEF*
- *The Greatest Story Ever Told (1 evangelistic lesson with large figures based on the events surrounding the Death of Christ) from European CEF.*
- *What Every Child Ought to Know (5 lessons on God, sin, Jesus Christ and the Bible) from European CEF*

Chapter 5: The Doctrines of Man, of Sin, and of Salvation

The Bible gives us four pictures of man:
Innocent man—man as he was originally created.
Fallen/sinful man—man as he became through his disobedience and sin.
Redeemed man—man as he can become through the death of Christ.
Glorified man—man as he will become one day if a believer.

Innocent Man

The Bible teaches us several important facts about man as he was originally created:

- He was created directly and instantaneously by God from the dust of the earth (Genesis 1 v26, 27; 2 v7). His body was created first of all and then his soul. This rules out completely the “theory” of evolution which claims that life came first. Also the Bible makes it very clear that Adam was the first man (1 Corinthians 15 v45).
- He was created in the image of God (Genesis 1 v27). This means that he had intellectual and moral faculties, that he had personality and knowledge and that he had endless being.
- He was a tripartite being. He was created with a body (his physical nature), a soul (his emotional and volitional nature) and a spirit (his spiritual nature).
- He had a mind with which to think (Genesis 2 v15, 20), emotions with which to feel (Genesis 3 v8) and a will with which to decide (Genesis 2 v15-17). This will was originally a completely free will. He did not have a sinful nature which would influence that will—as it does with us. Consequently he was both free, and able, to do whatever he wanted to do.
- God created man for His glory (Isaiah 43 v7; Colossians 1 v16; Revelation 4 v11) and to have communion with Him (Genesis 3 v8, 9).

- The first woman was created from the man (Genesis 2 v21, 22; 1 Corinthians 11 v8; 1 Timothy 2 v13).
- God put man on probation in the garden (Genesis 2 v15-17). We don't know how long this period of probation lasted.

Fallen Man

The Bible tells us how this happened.

- Man disobeyed God and His command (Genesis 3 v1-8; Romans 5 v12-19; 1 Corinthians 15 v21, 22; 1 Timothy 2 v13, 14).
- This disobedience was sin—and as a result man fell from his original innocent state and became a sinner (Genesis 3 v7-12).
- The temptation to sin came from without—from Satan through the serpent (Genesis 3 v1-5); and not from within. Man did not, as yet, have a sinful nature.
- Eve was deceived and yielded. Adam was not deceived but yielded (1 Timothy 2 v14).

The Bible gives clear teaching about sin—what it is and what it does:

- Sin is against God (Psalm 51 v4)
- Sin is transgression of God's Law (1 John 3 v4)
- Sin must be punished (Romans 6 v23)
- Sin is universal (Romans 3 v23)
- We are sinners by nature (Ephesians 2 v3)
- We are sinners by practice (Matthew 15 v19)

The Bible tells us the immediate consequences of man's sin and fall

- For man and woman—physical and spiritual death (Genesis 2 v17; 3 v19), a fear of God and a hiding from His presence (Genesis 3 v8), shame because of sin (Genesis 3 v7) and expulsion from the garden (Genesis 3 v24)
- For the man—the ground was cursed and he became subject to exhausting physical labour (Genesis 3 v17-19)
- For the woman—sorrow and pain in child bearing and subjection to the man (Genesis 3 v16)
- For the serpent—it became a reptile which repels (Genesis 3 v14)
- For Satan—judgment through the future death of Jesus Christ (Genesis 3 v15)

The Bible tells us the results for the whole human race.

- The reason why the human race became sinful

The federal headship of the human race had been invested in Adam. What he did was therefore representative of the whole human race. We were in Adam, so when he sinned we all sinned. His sin and the results of it were imputed to all his posterity (Romans 5 v12; 15-19; 1 Corinthians 15 v21, 22). This is known as original sin. Each man and woman born into the world is therefore born with a sinful nature (Ephesians 2 v3) is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2 v1, 5) and will die physically (Romans 5 v12; 6 v23). The only exception was the Lord Jesus Christ.

- A description of sinful man

Every person born into the world since then (except for the Lord Jesus Christ) can be described in four ways:

- ✓ He is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2 v1, 5)
- ✓ He is spiritually blind (2 Corinthians 4 v4)
- ✓ He is controlled by sin (Colossians 1 v13)
- ✓ He is an enemy of God (Romans 5 v10; 8 v7 and 8)

It is obvious from this biblical description that sinful fallen man is helpless as far as salvation is concerned. Being dead, blind and controlled he has no ability to be saved or even to take the first step in salvation. Being an enemy of God he has no desire to be saved, unless God first works in his heart and life.

It is therefore God who must take the first step in salvation—not man. Fallen man has a free will in the sense that he is free to do what he wants to do. But he is not free to do what he ought to do—unless God gives him that ability. In other words he has complete freedom of choice—but not complete freedom of will.

- The results for sinful man

As a consequence fallen man has two basic problems

- ✓ He is guilty before God (Romans 3 v19). His standing and position are wrong. This is a legal problem which needs a legal answer.

- ✓ He is polluted by his sin (Romans 3 v9-18). His state and personality are wrong. This is a moral problem which needs a moral answer.
 - The needs of sinful man
Fallen man has therefore two basic needs
 - ✓ He needs to be forgiven (Acts 2 v38; 13 v38). This will solve his guilt problem.
 - ✓ He needs to be changed (John 3 v5, 7). This will start to solve his pollution problems
 - God's answer for sinful man
Jesus Christ died for fallen man on the Cross. His Death had two main purposes and consequences:
 - ✓ To justify him (Romans 5 v1). This gives him a new position and solves his guilt problem.
 - all his sin is forgiven
 - God sees him as pure as Jesus Christ
 - ✓ To change (regenerate) him (2 Corinthians 5 v17). This makes him a new person. The process of sanctification begins and will continue until he is glorified.
He can now, increasingly, live a life which is well pleasing to God because the basis of the pollution problem is solved.
- Both of these happen instantaneously when a sinner repents and trusts Jesus Christ as His Lord and Saviour.

Summary

Man's Problem	Christ's Death	F A I T H A N D E P E N T A N C E	God's Work	Our Evangelism	Do you want to be forgiven and changed?
1. Guilt 2. Pollution	To forgive To change		Justification Regeneration	He will forgive you. He will change you.	

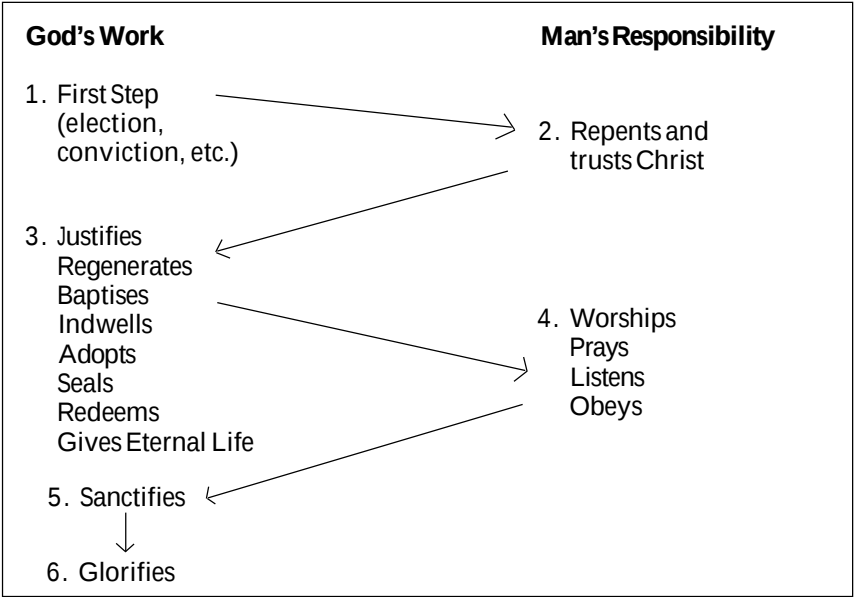
Redeemed Man

In the next chapter there will be a detailed examination of redeemed man and the doctrines of salvation. In the meantime it will be helpful

to look at an overview of God’s plan of salvation. As you follow the six steps one by one, please refer to Figure 1 on this page.

1. This diagram shows that it is God who takes—indeed must take—the first step. This is because of fallen man’s condition. He is dead, blind, controlled and hostile.
2. It is then, secondly, man’s responsibility to act on the basis of the “step” God has taken—that is to repent and to trust Christ.
3. When he does that God will do a number of things in him and for him. Eight of these are outlined below in Figure 1. However, that is, for him, only the beginning.
4. Now he has at least four responsibilities to fulfill—to worship, pray, listen and obey (Joshua 5 v13-15).
5. As he fulfills these responsibilities God will work continuously in his life in the process of sanctification.
6. Then the day will come when, sixthly and finally, he is glorified either through death, or the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Figure 1



You may want to refer to Figure 1 on the previous page from time to time as we study the doctrines of salvation in more detail in the next chapter.

Glorified Man

The believer looks forward to that time when one of two things will happen.

- Jesus Christ will come back again, translate him and take him to heaven. At that moment his body and his soul (and spirit) will all be glorified together and he will be like Jesus Christ (1 John 3 v2).
- Or he will die. At the moment of death his soul (and spirit) will be glorified and made perfect. They will go to be with Christ which is far better (Luke 23 v43; 2 Corinthians 5 v8; Philippians 1 v23; Hebrews 12 v23). His body will be buried and will decay.

When Jesus Christ comes back again his original body will be raised up and will be changed into a glorified body. This body will no more be subject to death or sin and will be like Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15 v35-54; Philippians 3 v21). It will then be reunited with his previously glorified soul (and spirit)—and that will be his eternal condition (Revelation 21 v3).

At the return of Jesus Christ, the believer will appear before the judgment seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3 v12-15 and 2 Corinthians 5 v9, 10). His work for Christ on earth will be examined and he will receive rewards for that work. There is no possibility of condemnation—of any kind—for the believer (John 5 v24; Romans 8 v1). The joy of every person in Heaven will be full and complete for all eternity.

At the return of Jesus Christ the unsaved dead will also be raised and reunited with their souls. Their souls have been already in a place of darkness and punishment (Matthew 25 v41-46; Luke 16 v19-31). They will then be judged at the Great White Throne and cast into the lake of fire (Romans 2 v5-12; Revelation 20 v11-15).

Doctrines of Man and Sin and Salvation

Teaching Ideas and Outlines

Children need to be taught—clearly and simply—what the Bible teaches about the origin of man, the fall of man, the biblical picture of man as he is today, and the possibilities open to man through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Use Bible Lessons to Teach These Important Truths

The origin and fall of man can best be taught by the presentation of Genesis Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Most children are conditioned to believe the theory of evolution, and need to be taught the truths of creation. Be positive in your teaching. Teach what the Bible says and emphasize that it is the Word of God. You will need to refer to the theory of evolution and explain why you do not accept it. But try to do so in a positive and loving way without becoming too critical or negative. Pray that God the Holy Spirit will open the understanding of the children to accept and believe what you are teaching.

The biblical description of sinful and fallen man as he became and as he is today can be clearly illustrated in a number of Bible Lessons:

- ✧ Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)*
- ✧ Noah and the ark (Genesis 6-8)*
- ✧ Esau sells his birthright (Genesis 25 v27-34)*
- ✧ The prosperous fool (Luke 12 v16-21)*
- ✧ Zacchaeus (Luke 19 v1-10)*
- ✧ The prodigal son (Luke 15 v11-32)*
- ✧ Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5 v1-11)*

And many more.

The truths concerning man's salvation can also be taught in and illustrated by many, many Bible lessons:

- ✧ The Passover story (Exodus 12)*
- ✧ Naaman the leper (2 Kings 5 v1-14)*
- ✧ The Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18 v9-14)*
- ✧ Nicodemus and the brazen serpent (Numbers 21 v4-9; John 3 v14-16)*
- ✧ The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8 v26-40)*
- ✧ The conversion of Saul (Acts 9 v1-20)*
- ✧ The jailer at Philippi (Acts 16 v25-34)*

There will be many more ideas on teaching the doctrines of salvation at the end of the next chapter. (See page 127.)

Use Flashcard Lessons to Teach These Truths

One lesson could help children understand what the Bible teaches about themselves

- *Have you ever looked in God's mirror?*
- *God created the first man perfect*
- *Adam sinned—we all are sinners*
- *We are dead, blind and controlled by sin*
- *Jesus Christ died for our sin*
- *Trust Him as your Lord and Saviour (personal application unsaved)*
- *All your sin will be forgiven*
- *You will be changed*
- *One day you will be like the Lord Jesus (personal application saved)*

Another lesson could give children a better understanding of what sin is and does. The sentences used in this lesson are different from the usual sentences—as they are all in the form of questions. They could also be used as a “quiz” for revision purposes.

- *What is sin?*
- *Where does it come from?*
- *Who has sinned?*
- *What does God think about sin?*
- *What are the results of sin?*
- *What did Jesus Christ do?*
- *What must I do? (personal application unsaved)*
- *What will be the result?*
- *Can I overcome sin in my life? (personal application saved)*

Helpful Visuals from Child Evangelism Fellowship

- *Wordless Book Visualized (5 evangelistic lessons) from CEF Inc.*
- *Heaven and How to Get There (1 evangelistic lesson) from CEF Inc.*

Chapter 6: The Doctrines of Salvation—in More Detail

In this chapter I would like to return to the doctrines of salvation so that we can examine all the different doctrines involved in much more detail than was possible in the last chapter.

Consequently, we will look at each of these doctrines to find out what they really mean, where they are taught in the Bible and how they can be personally applied to ourselves and, of course, through us to the children.

Election

What does it mean?

Election was an act of God before creation in which He chose people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His own sovereign good pleasure

- If we really understand the biblical picture of fallen sinful man (dead, blind, controlled and hostile) it is obvious that God **must** take the first step in their salvation—whatever that step is called.
- There can be no doubt that the Bible clearly teaches the fact of election (see the verses on page 107).
- It is important that **all** the glory in a person's salvation goes to God, and none to the individual. When I am in Heaven I can only say, "God brought me here." I will have nothing for which to commend myself. This means that God receives all the glory (1 Corinthians 1 v26-29; Ephesians 1 v4-6; Ephesians 1 v11, 12).
- The Bible also teaches that man is responsible to repent and believe; and that, if he does not do this, he will not be saved. We therefore need to accept the fact that the Bible teaches two truths which **seem** to contradict each other:
 - God is sovereign in salvation (John 6 v44; John 15 v16; Ephesians 1 v4)
 - Man is responsible in salvation (John 3 v16; Acts 2 v38; Acts 16 v31)
- A person who goes to hell cannot say, "God sent me here." He can only say, "I brought myself here." I do not and cannot

believe that God chooses or elects people to be lost. The Bible does not teach this. This is something which **they** choose themselves.

This **seems** to contradict what we have already outlined above. But the seeming contradiction is due to the smallness of our understanding. We are unable to reconcile these two truths—but we should believe both of them.

- The Bible teaches, I believe, that only one of the following statements is correct concerning my salvation:
 - ✓ God is 100% responsible, and I have no responsibility
 - ✓ God has no responsibility for my salvation; I am 100% responsible
 - ✓ God is 50% (or 90%) responsible and I am 50% (or 10%) responsible
 - ✓ God is 100% responsible and I am 100% responsible
- Only the last statement is correct. It may not seem logical and may seem contradictory—but this is what the Bible teaches.

Where is it taught?

The following verses show clearly that it is God who takes the first step in our salvation. Sometimes this step is referred to as election (1 Thessalonians 1 v4), ordination (Acts 13 v48), choice (John 15 v16) or predestination (Romans 8 v29). At other times different words are used.

- God draws (John 6 v44)
- God gives (John 6 v37a)
- God calls (Acts 2 v39)
- God opens (Acts 16 v14)

But they all clearly show that “salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2 v9). John 6 v37a; John 6 v44; John 6 v65; John 15 v16; John 17 v2; Acts 13 v48; Acts 16 v14; Acts 18 v10; Romans 8 v28-30; Romans 9 v15, 16; 1 Corinthians 1 v26-29; Ephesians 1 v4, 5; Ephesians 1 v11, 12; Ephesians 2 v8; 1 Thessalonians 1 v4; 2 Thessalonians 2 v13; 2 Timothy 1 v9.

What is the application to me?

- It encourages me to give God all the glory for my salvation
- It shows me that God can save anyone He wishes—at any time He wishes (even just before death). No one is too difficult for

Him. This gives confidence when we pray and when we evangelize. Why would God burden me to pray for someone and witness to him if He was not going to work in that person's heart? It also gives possible hope with regard to the death of a loved one to whom we had witnessed but who had not made any outward profession of salvation.

- ✧ It gives me comfort and assurance that God **will** always accomplish His purposes—which are right and good.
- ✧ It also reminds me that God uses people to accomplish His purposes. A belief in, and a correct understanding of, election encourages me to pray for people and to evangelize people—believing that God is going to use my prayers and my witness in their salvation (2 Timothy 2 v10). Many great missionaries (like William Carey and David Brainerd) and preachers (like Charles Spurgeon and Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones) have believed firmly in this doctrine.
- ✧ We believe that all the world is by nature lost without Jesus Christ and needs to be evangelized (Matthew 28 v19, 20; Mark 16 v15; Luke 24 v46-48; John 20 v21; Acts 1 v8). **This includes the children.** They also need to hear the Gospel, and it is **our** responsibility to evangelize them.

We must avoid, at all times, any belief in, or teaching of, the doctrine of election which lessens our need to evangelize the world, and which discourages, in any way, our involvement in that great task.

Repentance

What does it mean?

Repentance is a change of mind concerning God and sin which leads to a change of direction and a turning away from sin.

- ✧ It involves the mind—and an understanding of what sin is (Psalm 51 v3; Luke 18 v13; Luke 15 v17)
- ✧ It involves the emotions—and a conviction of, and sorrow for, sin; (John 16 v8-11; 2 Corinthians 7 v9; Luke 15 v18, 19)
- ✧ It involves the will—and a desire to turn from sin (Isaiah 55 v7; Acts 3 v19, 26; Luke 15 v20).

True repentance is, of course, only possible as the Holy Spirit works in the sinner's heart, opens his eyes, convicts him and gives him a

desire to turn from sin and to be different (Acts 3 v26; Acts 5 v30, 31; Acts 11 v18; 2 Timothy 2 v25).

Where is it taught?

- It was clearly taught and expected in the Old Testament (Isaiah 55 v7)
- It played a major part in the earlier ministries of the New Testament—John the Baptist (Matthew 3 v1 and 2), the Lord Jesus (Matthew 4 v17), and the twelve disciples (Mark 6 v12)
- The Lord Jesus showed that it was an essential part of the Gospel message (Luke 24 v47)
- It played a major part in the evangelistic ministries of Peter (Acts 2 v38; 3 v19) and Paul (Acts 14 v15; 20 v21; Acts 26 v18, 20)
- It is God's desire and will for all men today (2 Peter 3 v9)
- It plays an essential part in man's salvation (Luke 13 v3)
- It is a basic and fundamental truth of Christianity (Hebrews 6 v1)

What is its application to me?

- It is an essential part of the Gospel message and should not be omitted. Salvation is by faith alone but the faith which saves is never alone. It always includes repentance. Consequently, we should explain to unsaved children that God will expect to see a change in their lives when they trust Christ, and a turning from sin; and we should challenge them concerning their desire and willingness for this change. If we omit to teach repentance and to challenge the children concerning it, we run the risk of producing a type of "easy-believism" which can cause great harm to the children.
- It is something which continues throughout the Christian life. As the believer is convicted of sin and is sorry for it, he turns from it in repentance (2 Corinthians 7 v9; Revelation 2 v5, 16; 3 v3, 19).

Faith

What does it mean?

Conversion consists of two aspects:

- In repentance the sinner turns away from sin
- In faith he turns to Christ

Both happen at the same time. They are like the two sides of one coin. They are different but inseparable. Neither can truly exist without the other.

Faith is that act by which a person abandons reliance on himself to merit salvation but instead casts and rests himself on Jesus Christ and thereby receives the gift of eternal salvation.

Faith consists of three elements or parts

- Intellectually it involves a basic knowledge and understanding (Romans 10 v14-17)
- Emotionally it involves conviction and belief (Romans 10 v9, 10)
- Volitionally it involves trust and committal (Romans 10 v11-13)

All three are necessary to the possession of a genuine saving faith. It is not enough for a sinner just to know and understand what the Lord Jesus has done and even for his heart and emotions to be touched and affected by what he knows (James 2 v19). Just to believe something is not enough. To be saved the sinner must, on the basis of what he knows and how he feels, actually and actively put his trust in Jesus Christ. This trust is the “crowning act of faith”—and without it salvation is not possible (John 1 v12; Acts 11 v21).

Therefore in the conversion of every sinner the mind needs to be convinced, the heart needs to be moved and the will needs to be yielded.

True faith is only possible as God works in the heart, and as He imparts to sinners the desire and ability to believe (Ephesians 2 v8, 9).

Where is it taught?

- It was always required by Jesus Christ in His dealings with people (Matthew 8 v5-10; Matthew 15 v21-28; Mark 2 v1-5; Mark 10 v46-52).
- It was an essential part of the great commission given to us by the Lord Jesus (Mark 16 v15, 16)
- It was preached by the apostles as the sinner’s responsibility so that he could be saved—by Peter (Acts 10 v43), by Paul (Acts 13 v39; 16 v31; 20 v21), and by the evangelists in the early church (Acts 8 v6, 12, 37; 11 v21).

- It is essential for salvation (John 3 v36), the foundation of a right relationship to God (Romans 1 v17), and basic to a normal Christian life (Hebrews 6 v1; Hebrews 11 v6).
- It results in the forgiveness of sin (Acts 10 v43), justification (Romans 5 v1), freedom from condemnation (Romans 8 v1, 33, 34), peace with God (Romans 5 v1), assurance of future glorification (Titus 3 v7), eternal life (John 20 v31), the partaking of the divine nature (2 Peter 1 v4, 5), the indwelling of Christ (Ephesians 3 v17) and entrance to God's family (John 1 v12).
- It is the foundation of all Christian character and fruitfulness (2 Peter 1 v5-7).
- It leads to sanctification (Acts 26 v18), victorious living (1 John 5 v4, 5), joy and satisfaction (1 Peter 1 v7-9), fruitfulness (John 7 v38, 39), answers to prayer (Matthew 21 v22) and power (Mark 9 v23).

There are many other verses stressing the importance of faith. These include John 5 v24; Romans 1 v16; 2 Corinthians 5 v7; Galatians 3 v26.

What is its application to me?

- I need to be sure that I personally have trusted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.
- I should always be sure to include teaching concerning faith, and what it really means (see page 110), and its results, in my evangelism of unsaved children with a clear challenge to them to trust Christ.
- I need to be sure that, as a Christian, I am living by faith day by day. Faith in Christ is not only the initiatory step to the Christian life. It is the continuing principle of that life.
- I need to teach this principle of continuing faith to saved children.

Justification

What does it mean?

Justification is that legal act of God whereby He declares that the sinner who has trusted Christ is free from guilt and punishment and that he has a new standing of righteousness before Him. It answers the question of Job posed in Job 9 v2.

Justification has two consequences for the sinner who puts his trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour:

- God forgives all his sin—past, present and future (Acts 13 v38, 39; Romans 5 v1) and he will never be condemned (Romans 8 v1; 33, 34) or separated from the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8 v35-39)
- God sees him in Christ and as pure and as righteous as Christ is (2 Corinthians 5 v21; Philippians 3 v9). God imputes to the sinner the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Romans 4 v5, 11, 23-25; 1 Corinthians 1 v30) and he is therefore completely righteous in God's sight (Romans 3 v22-26)

There are several important truths about justification which we need to understand:

- It changes the sinner's position, but not his character or condition
- It happens at one moment of time. It is not a process
- There cannot be any growth or development in justification.
- No person can be more justified than another person
- **True** justification cannot be lost
- Justification is received by faith alone in Christ alone on the basis of grace alone

John Calvin described the doctrine of justification by faith as the hinge of all doctrine. Martin Luther regarded an understanding (or lack of understanding) of this doctrine as the sign of a living (or dying) church.

Where is it taught?

- Its source is God (Romans 8 v33) and His grace (Romans 3 v24)
- Its price is the Blood of Christ (Romans 5 v9)
- Its channel is faith (Romans 5 v1; Romans 3 v26, 28; Galatians 2 v16)
- Its proof is the resurrection of Christ (Romans 4 v25)
- Its evidence is works (James 2 v24)
- Its results are peace (Romans 5 v1) assurance of future glorification (Romans 8 v30) and the privilege of being heirs of God with the assurance of eternal life (Titus 3 v7)

What is its application to me?

- All my sin (past, present and future) is forgiven by God the Judge at the moment of my conversion—from an eternal point of view. As a Christian I still sin and this sin will take away my joy and my fellowship with God. I need to ask God my Father (not my Judge) to forgive these sins so that my joy and fellowship can be restored. But that has nothing to do with my justification or the eternal judicial forgiveness of my sin—which is final, complete and irreversible.
- Because justification is such a key, vital and fundamental truth I need to teach it often to the children—both saved and unsaved.

A student at our three-month Leadership Training Institute, where I was teaching, and who came from a country with a good reformed evangelical background said to me, “The greatest problem in our country and in our churches is that so many Christians and pastors do not really understand the truth of justification by faith.”

Regeneration

What does it mean?

Regeneration is that act of God by which He makes dead sinners alive and gives them a new nature.

- the sinner who was spiritually dead receives new life (Ephesians 2 v1, 5; John 3 v16)
- the sinner who was hostile to God becomes a new person with a new nature (2 Corinthians 5 v17)

There are several facts to remember about regeneration

- It takes place at one moment of time (just as physical birth does). However there is usually a process which leads up to it. This involves a growth in understanding and conviction. There will certainly be a process which flows from it. This process is called sanctification. **But regeneration itself is a crisis not a process.**
- Many know when their regeneration took place; but there are also many who don't or who are not sure. However, it is not important to know when it happened. It is important to know that it has happened.
- There are no degrees and no growth in regeneration. There are

degrees and growth in the process of sanctification which follows—but not in regeneration itself.

- No one person is more regenerated than any other.
- **True** regeneration (as opposed to a profession of faith alone) cannot be lost or withdrawn—but it must show itself in a change of nature. If there is no change there is no regeneration.
- Justification and regeneration occur at the same time—when the sinner trusts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Justification changes his position, but not his nature. Regeneration changes his nature but not his position. Both are the necessary results of God’s wonderful salvation. It is not possible to have one without the other. The person who says he is justified—but there is no change whatsoever in his nature—is not justified (James 2 v17, 18, 20, 24, 26).

Where is it taught?

Its Reality

The Lord Jesus uses the word “born” six times in John 3 v1-9. He is talking about a real experience. The new birth is real. It is as real an experience as physical birth.

Peter refers to his readers as “new-born babes” in 1 Peter 2 v2 and encourages them to desire “the sincere milk of the Word.”

Its Meaning

It is not a reformation. It is not “a new leaf.” It is not the old nature patched up and made new. It is actually a new birth, resulting in a new person with a new nature (James 1 v18; 2 Peter 1 v4; John 3 v3-7).

Its Necessity

- It is the only way **for everybody** into God’s kingdom. That includes religious people like Nicodemus (John 3 v3-5).
- It is the only way to receive spiritual life. Man is spiritually dead and he needs life (Ephesians 2 v1)
- It is the only way to receive a new nature and a change of character. Man has a sinful nature which needs to be changed (Romans 3 v10-18)
- It is the only way to become a friend of God. Man is hostile to God—and needs a change of heart and direction (Romans 5 v10; Romans 8 v3-8)

Its Cause

- It is a sovereign act of God the Holy Spirit (John 3 v8; Titus 3 v5; James 1 v18) who enlightens, convicts and then regenerates
- It is a mystery (like the wind) and hard to understand (John 3 v8)
- The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God in regeneration (James 1 v18; 1 Peter 1 v23). The word “water” in John 3 v5 refers, I believe, to the Word of God. This is explained in Ephesians 5 v26.
- Man is responsible to receive that Word and believe it, and to receive the Lord Jesus Christ into his life (John 1 v12, 13)

Its Results

- Entrance into God’s kingdom (John 3 v5)
- Life which is new, spiritual and eternal (John 3 v14, 15, 16; Ephesians 2 v1, 5)
- A new nature (2 Corinthians 5 v17; 1 John 2 v29) although the new-born person is far from perfect because there is still “remaining sin” in his life (1 John 1 v8, 10)
- Entrance into the family of God (John 1 v12)
- Victory over the world and sin (1 John 5 v4)
- Good works (Ephesians 2 v10)

What is its application to me?

- I rejoice that God has worked in me and has regenerated me. I am not what I should be, I am not what I would like to be, but I praise God that I am not what I used to be.
- I need to teach this great truth to children so that they will know that when they trust Christ, they will be changed and that He will enable them to live a life pleasing to Him. I therefore need to challenge the children not only if they want to have their sins forgiven and receive eternal life; but also if they want to be different and please God. Both of these challenges need a positive response before a child can be saved.
- I also need to explain to children who profess to be saved that if they see no change whatsoever in their lives they are not saved.

Adoption

What does it mean?

Adoption means “the placing of a son.” Adoption is that legal and judicial act of God whereby He not only places the sinner, who believes, into His family and makes him His child but, at the same time, advances him and gives him the privilege of being an adult son, and His heir. It happens at the same time as regeneration and is closely linked to it.

One well-known theologian calls this the greatest of the blessings which accompany salvation.

Where is it taught?

This truth is taught in Scripture from three points of view:

- ✧ Adoption was planned in eternity past (Ephesians 1 v4, 5) when God chose those who would become His sons and daughters—and His heirs.
- ✧ Adoption actually takes place when the sinner believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Romans 8 v15; Galatians 4 v5).
- ✧ Adoption will be manifested when Jesus Christ comes back again and our salvation will then be complete (Romans 8 v23).

What is its application to me?

- ✧ Now that God is my Father and I am His heir I can
 - ✓ come to Him (Matthew 7 v7-11)
 - ✓ talk to Him (Matthew 6 v9)
 - ✓ listen to Him (Ephesians 1 v17, 18)
 - ✓ trust Him (Matthew 6 v26, 32)
- ✧ Now that God is my Father He will:
 - ✓ listen to me (1 John 5 v14, 15)
 - ✓ care for me (Luke 12 v27-32)
 - ✓ chasten me if necessary (Hebrews 12 v5-11)
 - ✓ supply all my need (Matthew 6 v8)
- ✧ Now that God is my Father I have:
 - ✓ the family name (1 John 3 v1)
 - ✓ the family likeness (Matthew 5 v44-48; Romans 8 v29)
 - ✓ many brothers and sisters (1 John 1 v3; 3 v14)
 - ✓ family love (John 17 v24-26)

What a tremendous truth to teach children. Please don't omit it.

Spiritual Baptism

What does it mean?

The baptism of, or with, the Holy Spirit is that act of God which places the sinner into the body of Christ at the moment of his conversion. The boy or girl (or adult) who trusts Christ is, at that moment, baptized by Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit into His Body, the Church.

There are several important facts concerning this doctrine which we need to understand:

- Some Christians hold a completely different view of the baptism of the Holy Spirit from that which I have stated. Their view is that it is a definite experience which can, and should, take place in the life of a believer **after** his conversion and which will have dynamic results in his life; and that it is a second step which every believer needs to take, and a second blessing which every believer needs to enjoy. This teaching is based on several historical incidents in the Acts of the Apostles. These incidents did happen at special times in the history of the early church for a special purpose. But there is no indication anywhere that they should be repeated. They were historical and not doctrinal. This “second step” viewpoint is nowhere taught either in the Gospels or the Epistles as a doctrine to believe, and upon which to act. Therefore I do not accept this teaching.
- It is most important, when studying a doctrine, to base that study on the doctrinal teaching of the New Testament and not just upon historical incidents which occurred in the Acts of the Apostles. The doctrines of the church are outlined in the 21 **epistles** plus the **teaching** of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels, and the **teaching** of the apostles in the Acts. The historical incidents of the five historical books do not, **on their own**, form doctrinal teaching. For example, Peter walking on the water and the communal sharing of the early church were historical occurrences but do not on their own constitute doctrinal practices for us today.
- There are no commands in any of the epistles for believers to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. A number of these epistles were written to churches with serious problems. But they were

not taught that they should be baptized with the Spirit. They were, instead, reminded that they had been baptized with the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12 v13).

- The baptism of the Spirit is a positional truth and not an experimental truth. Some people confuse biblical terminology and refer to the baptism of the Holy Spirit when they mean in reality the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Spirit is experimental; it is a command to believers (Ephesians 5 v18); and it should be a continuing and repeated experience through which the believer receives power.
- The biblical pattern is:
 - ✓ **One** baptism with the Holy Spirit which places us in the body of Christ at conversion. This is a positional truth.
 - ✓ **Many** fillings with the Holy Spirit which help us to live for Him on a daily basis. This is an experimental truth.

Where is it taught?

- It is mentioned **prophetically** in Luke 3 v16 (with Matthew 3 v11; Mark 1 v8; John 1 v33; and Acts 1 v5). These verses make it clear that Jesus Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit—in what was then the future. It should be understood that the baptism of fire which the Lord Jesus also refers to in Matthew 3 v11 and Luke 3 v16 is a baptism of judgment, and a different baptism from the baptism with the Spirit. The context (Matthew 3 v7-12; Luke 3 v7-17) makes that clear.
- It is mentioned **historically** in Acts 11 v15-16 with relation to what had happened in the house of Cornelius and referring back to Acts 2 v1-4 (the Jewish Pentecost). Both of these two historical incidents were the fulfilment of the prophecies given above. On these two occasions the believing Jews and the believing Gentiles were—for the first time—baptised into the body of Christ.
- It is taught **doctrinally** in 1 Corinthians 12 v13. This is the only **clear** and definite reference to, and explanation of, this doctrine anywhere in the 21 doctrinal books.

“For by one Spirit are (or ‘were’) we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

We learn four things from this verse:

- This verse definitely refers to the baptism of (with or in) the Holy Spirit.*
- It was something which had happened in the past. This is a statement—not a command. These Christians at Corinth were the most carnal and worldly of all the New Testament Christians at the time when Paul wrote to them. But they had been baptised with the Holy Spirit.
- It refers clearly to **all** believers. There is no suggestion whatsoever of two groups of believers—those who have been baptised with the Holy Spirit and those who haven't.

If all believers have been baptised with the Spirit it must have taken place at their conversion. At that time each believer comes to share in the great blessing of Pentecost.

- The result of this baptism is being placed into, and becoming part of, the body of Christ. We read many times in the New Testament that we as believers are “in Christ” (e.g., Ephesians 1 v1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13). We are no longer “in Adam” but “in Christ.” This is a great and wonderful Bible truth—and it is the result of the baptism of the Spirit.

What is its application to me?

- I praise God for this great truth that I have been baptised by Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit into His body and church.
- I want to teach it to saved children so that they will see, more and more, the wonder of God's salvation—and their special position in Christ.
- I want unsaved children to know that Jesus Christ will also do this for them—if they trust Him.

The Gift and Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

What does it mean?

At the moment of regeneration the Holy Spirit comes to live in the heart and life of every true believer. Therefore **all** believers have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Through justification I receive a new position. That deals with my guilt.

Through regeneration I become a new person. That deals with my character.

Through adoption I receive a new Father and family. That deals with my loneliness.

Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit I am placed in a new body. That deals with my separation.

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit I receive a new power. That deals with my weakness.

- ✧ Some Christians believe and teach a different viewpoint from what I have outlined. Their view is: that a person receives Jesus Christ and the gift of eternal life at conversion; and that this person is now a Christian—but often a “carnal” Christian. To become a “spiritual” Christian a second step or experience is necessary. This second experience is the reception of the Holy Spirit.
- ✧ I do not believe that this is biblical teaching. It is based again almost exclusively on several historical incidents in the Acts of the Apostles—which can be easily explained from a purely historical point of view. They are not examples to be followed or blessings for us to experience.

For example, one well known historical incident occurs in Acts 8. The Gospel was preached in Samaria and for the first time people who were not Jews trusted Jesus Christ (verses 6 and 12). This was revolutionary. It had never happened before. So God withheld the gift of the Holy Spirit (verse 16) until Peter and John came and could confirm (especially for the Jews in Jerusalem) that these Samaritans were truly converted. Then they received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles’ hands. This was an unique historical step in the expansion of the church, and should not in any way be interpreted as a doctrine to be believed or a step to be taken by future generations of Christians.

- ✧ We need to be reminded again that the doctrines we believe and which provide the basis for our actions need to be based primarily on the doctrinal teaching in the doctrinal books of the New Testament. They should not be based exclusively on historical incidents, important and vital as these were in the history and development of the church.
- ✧ There is no command to believers anywhere in the epistles for them to receive the Holy Spirit despite the fact that many of those to whom the letters were written had spiritual problems.

In fact the opposite is true. Many verses in the Epistles (see below) make it clear that all believers have already received the Holy Spirit.

- There is no prayer addressed by a believer to God asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit after the Death, Resurrection and Exaltation of Jesus Christ.
- When we receive the Holy Spirit (at conversion) we really do receive Him—and not just part of Him. He does not come “in installments.” The fullness of the Holy Spirit (see page 163) is not receiving more of Him. It means Him receiving more of us.
- It is important to see the clear distinction between receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (He comes to live in us at conversion) and receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit (He gives us abilities to serve the church of Jesus Christ).

Where is it taught?

- There are many verses throughout the Epistles which teach that all believers **have received** (past tense) the Holy Spirit. These include Romans 5 v5; Romans 8 v11; 1 Corinthians 2 v12; 1 Corinthians 6 v19; Galatians 3 v2; Galatians 4 v6; 1 John 2 v27; 1 John 3 v24; 1 John 4 v13.
- An interesting example of this teaching may be seen in 1 Corinthians 6 v19. Paul was writing to a church with many problems. But he did not exhort or command them to receive the Holy Spirit—as a second experience. Instead he told them “your body **is** the temple of the Holy Spirit.” He then applied this doctrine to show them the importance of keeping their bodies holy.
- The Lord Jesus taught in John 7 v39 that those who would believe on Him would receive the Holy Spirit.
- Peter taught this truth when he preached on the Day of Pentecost. He promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to unsaved people if they would repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2 v38).
- Paul taught that if a person was not indwelt by the Holy Spirit he was not a Christian (Romans 8 v9).

What is the application for me?

- The Holy Spirit lives in me—or, to put it in another way, Jesus Christ lives in me through the Holy Spirit. That truth should encourage me to keep my body pure because it is His temple.
- What a wonderful salvation. When God saved me He “thought of everything.” As a result of trusting Christ as Saviour I have someone living inside me who is ready and willing to help me in my Christian life.
- How important it is to teach this truth over and over again to the children.

The Sealing with the Spirit

What does it mean?

- The sealing with the Spirit is that act of God whereby He puts His mark or seal upon the person who believes—at the moment of his conversion. This seal or mark is invisible to human eyes and is the Holy Spirit Himself.
- A seal symbolizes three realities. It has three meanings and applications as far as our salvation is concerned.
 - ✓ A seal is often used today to mean that a transaction is finished (e.g., the seal on a document of sale). So the matter of our salvation is finished—and will never be “opened up” again.
 - ✓ A seal is often used as a mark of ownership (e.g., the King’s use of his ring in former days or the cattle ranchers’ brand on his cows). So the Holy Spirit is God’s mark of ownership upon us.
 - ✓ A seal is often used as a means of security (e.g., the sealing of official envelopes or, in the Bible, the sealing of the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ). So we as Christians are absolutely secure.

Where is it taught?

- This doctrine is referred to four times in the New Testament.
 - ✓ 2 Corinthians 1 v22. The sealing of the Spirit is linked here with the earnest of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also the earnest or the “down payment” of our salvation, which will one day be full and complete. This earnest is also referred to in 2 Corinthians 5 v5 and Ephesians 1 v14. All these

references to the earnest of the Spirit are, like the sealing of the Spirit, in the past tense. Both have already taken place, for all believers, at conversion.

- ✓ Ephesians 1 v13. “Having believed—at the moment of belief—ye were sealed.” The sealing took place at conversion. The transaction is **finished** and complete.
- ✓ 2 Timothy 2 v19. “. . . having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His.” That is **ownership**.
- ✓ Ephesians 4 v30. We were “sealed unto the day of redemption.” That is **security**.
- The sealing of the spirit is **always** referred to in the past tense and Ephesians 1 v13 links it with our initial act of saving faith.
- God seals us with the Holy Spirit when we trust Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

What is the application to me?

- All the four verses given and the three meanings outlined emphasize that my salvation is absolutely secure. God has set his mark or seal upon me, and I have complete peace.
- Children need a sense of security also—both temporal security and eternal security. The teaching of this great truth will be a help and encouragement to them also, and will bring great peace.

Redemption

What does it mean?

In its broadest sense redemption covers the entire work of God, in Christ, delivering man from the penalty, power and presence of sin.

Its specific meaning refers to that work of Jesus Christ on the Cross whereby He buys us out of the slave market of sin, releases us from its bondage and gives us freedom.

The word “redeem” means to “loose, release or set free by paying a ransom.” The image is that of a slave market. We are the slaves—slaves to sin. Jesus Christ paid—through the shedding of His Blood on the Cross—the full price needed to buy us out of that market, and set us FREE.

Where is it taught?

- Redemption is foreseen in the Old Testament:
 - ✓ In the redemption of the first born (Exodus 13 v11-16;

Numbers 18 v15-16).

- ✓ In the duties of the kinsman redeemer (Leviticus 25 v47-55) and the story of Boaz and Ruth (in the book of Ruth).
- The work of redemption was accomplished by Jesus Christ on the Cross (Matthew 20 v28; Acts 20 v28; Romans 3 v24; 1 Corinthians 1 v30; Galatians 3 v13; Galatians 4 v4, 5; Ephesians 1 v7; Titus 2 v14; Hebrews 9 v12; 1 Peter 1 v18-19).
- Redemption becomes a reality to the sinner when he trusts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Romans 6 v22; 1 Corinthians 6 v19-20; 1 Corinthians 7 v22-23; Titus 2 v14).
- Redemption will be complete when Jesus Christ returns (Luke 21 v28; Romans 8 v19-23; Ephesians 1 v14; Ephesians 4 v30; Philippians 3 v20, 21;).
- Redemption is the song of the saints in Heaven (Revelation 5 v9; Revelation 14 v3, 4).

What is its application to me?

- I am free (Romans 6 v18, 22; Galatians 5 v1). There is no need for me to be controlled by sin. The yoke of sin and slavery has been broken. The war has been won, even though there are many battles with sin and skirmishes to be engaged in “behind the lines.”
- But the result of this freedom is not licence and lawlessness. I love my new Master and I serve Him (1 Corinthians 6 v19-20). We are released—to serve Him. “In His service is perfect freedom.”
- What a great truth this is to teach children. Children need to be free, and they need to know how they can be free.

Eternal Life

What does it mean?

Eternal life is life that goes on for ever and ever. The person who trusts Jesus Christ will live forever in Heaven with Jesus Christ. His body will die (unless Jesus Christ comes back again) but the “real person” will never die. This eternal life does not commence at death. It is a present possession—commencing at regeneration. It also means a quality of life, and the ability to be able to live life fully in the here and now (John 10 v10).

Where is it taught?

There are many references to eternal life as the present possession of the believer in Jesus Christ (John 3 v16; John 10 v28; John 11 v25-26; John 17 v2, 3; Romans 6 v22; Romans 6 v23; Galatians 6 v8; 1 John 5 v13).

What is its application to me?

- The first and obvious application is that I will never—and can never—perish. If I receive eternal life the moment I am saved then I cannot be lost. If I were at a later date to be lost the logical conclusion would be that the life I received was not eternal, and that God’s Word was therefore not true.

John 10 v28 and 29 makes this very clear. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” The result of this clear teaching is peace and assurance concerning the future and concerning eternity.

- I want to live this life to the full here and now. The Lord Jesus did not just come to give us life—but that we might have it more abundantly (John 10 v10).
- I want my children to have this same peace and assurance. So I will teach this doctrine to them simply, clearly—and often!

Summary of the Doctrines of Salvation

The writer to the Hebrews speaks in chapter 2 verse 3 of “so great salvation”; and it certainly is “so great.” As we mature in our Christian life and take time to study the doctrines of salvation we are amazed at all God did in our lives that moment when we first repented of our sin and trusted Christ. Our salvation was not something small, or just a first little step. It was something really BIG in God’s sight, and it becomes bigger and bigger in our sight as we come to understand better what really happened at the moment of conversion. We did not realise or understand all of those truths at that time; but we are beginning to see them more and more clearly. As we do, we praise God for His wonderful plan of salvation and all that it accomplished for us and for so many others—including an innumerable host of boys and girls.

At least eight different works were wrought by God for us and/or in us the moment we turned from sin and trusted Christ. All these works occurred at exactly the same time. They were instantaneous—but each one was different from the other, and had a different consequence and end result.

My problem	God's work at conversion	The result	Leading to
My guilt	Justification	A new position	Assurance
My sinful nature	Regeneration	A new person	Sanctification
My loneliness	Adoption and family	A new Father	Prayer
My separation	Baptism with the Spirit	A new body	Fellowship
My emptiness	Indwelling of the Holy Spirit	A new “resident”	Fullness
My insecurity	Sealing of the Holy Spirit	A new security	Peace
My bondage	Redemption	A new freedom	Victory
My fear	Eternal life	A new future	Joy

Praise God for such a wonderful salvation. It glorifies Him and meets ALL our needs.

Doctrines of Salvation

Teaching Ideas and Outlines

Repentance

You can use a Bible Lesson to teach this truth

- Repentance at salvation
 - ✓ The Prodigal Son (Luke 15 v11-32)
 - ✓ Zacchaeus (Luke 19 v1-10)
 - ✓ Day of Pentecost (Acts 2 v1-41)
 - ✓ The two sons (Matthew 21 v28-32)
- Repentance in the Christian life
 - ✓ David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12 v1-14; Psalm 51)
 - ✓ Peter's denial and restoration (Matthew 26 v69-75; Luke 22 v31-32; John 21 v7-17).

You can use a flashcard lesson

- In what direction are you going?
- God is holy
- I am a sinner—going in the wrong direction
- Jesus Christ died for my sin
- I know that I have sinned
- I am convicted of my sin
- I want to turn from my sin
- I trust Jesus Christ as my Saviour (personal application unsaved)
- I am going in a new direction (personal application saved)

Faith

You can use a Bible Lesson

- Faith at salvation
 - ✓ Noah and the flood (Genesis 6-8; Hebrews 11 v7)
 - ✓ The Philippian jailer (Acts 16 v16-34)
 - ✓ The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8 v26-40)
- Faith in the Christian life
 - ✓ Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 15, 16, 18, 21; Hebrews 11 v11, 12)
 - ✓ Moses and the Red Sea (Exodus 13, 14; Hebrews 11 v29)
 - ✓ Joshua and the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6; Hebrews 11 v30).

You can use a flashcard lesson

- Do you trust the driver of your bus?

- *God is powerful and in complete control*
- *God always keeps His Word*
- *You can depend on Him*
- *Jesus Christ promised to save you*
- *Trust Him and He will (personal application unsaved)*
- *God promised to meet all the needs of His children*
- *Abraham trusted Him*
- *You should trust Him also (personal application saved)*

Regeneration

You can use a Bible lesson

- *Jesus Christ and Nicodemus (John 3 v1-16)*
- *The new Zacchaeus (Luke 19 v1-10)*
- *The new Saul (Acts 7 v58; 8 v1-4; 9 v1-20)*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *How many birthdays do you have?*
- *We were born—dead*
- *Jesus Christ died to give us life*
- *Trust Him—born the second time (personal application unsaved)*
- *New life—new nature*
- *You need to grow (personal application saved)*
- *Your food—the Bible*
- *Your strength—the Holy Spirit*
- *Your goal—to be like the Lord Jesus*

Adoption

You can use a Bible lesson

- *The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6 v9-13)*
- *The Prodigal son (Luke 15 v11-32)*
- *The Father's care for His children (Matthew 6 v25-34; Matthew 7 v7-12)*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *How many fathers do you have?*
- *God wants to be your Heavenly Father*
- *Jesus Christ died to make this possible*
- *Trust Him—God is your Father (personal application unsaved)*
- *You can come to Him and talk to Him at any time (personal application saved)*

- *You can trust Him for everything*
- *He will care for you*
- *He will correct you*
- *You have a special place in his family*

Spiritual Baptism

You can use a Bible lesson

- *Pentecost (Acts 2 v1-40)*
- *The conversion of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10)*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Do you belong to any group or team?*
- *You were born as part of the human race*
- *Jesus Christ died for you*
- *He sent the Holy Spirit*
- *Trust Jesus Christ— you will be part of His body (personal application unsaved)*
- *Jesus Christ will be your Head (personal application saved)*
- *He will give you a work to do*
- *All Christians are part of His body—the church*
- *You should also belong to a local church*

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

You can use a Bible lesson

- *Pentecost (Acts 2 v1-40)*
- *The conversion of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10)*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Why do you like Christmas and your birthday?*
- *Jesus Christ died for your sin*
- *Trust Him—the gift of eternal life (personal application unsaved)*
- *Trust Him—the gift of the Holy Spirit*
- *The Holy Spirit is also God*
- *Your body is His home*
- *Be careful what you do with your body (personal application saved)*
- *He wants to make you like the Lord Jesus*
- *The Holy Spirit also gives you gifts*

Or

- *Who lives in you?*
- *The Holy Spirit is God*
- *He came into the world at Pentecost*
- *Repent and trust Christ (personal application unsaved)*
- *The Holy Spirit lives in you*
- *He helps you pray and read*
- *He helps you tell others*
- *He makes you like Jesus Christ*
- *Keep your body pure—He lives there (personal application saved)*

The Sealing of the Spirit

You can use a Bible Lesson

- *The sealing of the stone at the den of lions (Daniel 6 v17) and The sealing of the sepulchre (Matthew 27 v66).*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Why do cowboys in USA brand their cattle?*
- *Jesus Christ died for your sins*
- *Trust Him—you will be saved (personal application unsaved)*
- *God will put his special mark on you—the Holy Spirit*
- *The Holy Spirit is also God*
- *You belong to God for ever*
- *The seal is secure—no one can break it*
- *The work of salvation is finished*
- *You can be secure and sure (personal application saved)*

Redemption

You can use a Bible lesson

- *The Passover story (Exodus 12)*
- *The story of Onesimus (Philemon)*
- *Ruth and Boaz (Ruth)*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Are you free?*
- *We are all born sinners*
- *We are slaves to—controlled by—sin*
- *Jesus Christ died to free us*
- *The price of our freedom—His Precious Blood*
- *We trust Him—we are free (personal application unsaved)*

- *Then we serve Him*
- *And we want to glorify Him*
- *One day—we will be completely free*

Eternal Life

You can use a Bible lesson

- *The Lord Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3 v1-16)*
- *The death of Lazarus—and his restoration to life (John 11)*
- *The rich young ruler (Matthew 19 v16-26)*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Is it possible to live for ever?*
- *We are all sinners*
- *The result of sin is death*
- *Your body will die—one day*
- *Jesus Christ died for your sin*
- *Trust Him—your sin will be forgiven (personal application unsaved)*
- *The “real you” will never die*
- *Your body will be raised again*
- *The “complete you” will live for ever and ever*

All of these doctrines of salvation can also be taught through the songs which children learn to sing during your teaching programme, and through the Bible verses which they learn. They can also be illustrated by the missionary stories you tell.

Helpful Visuals from Child Evangelism Fellowship

- *Turned Around (5 evangelistic lessons) from CEF Inc.*
- *God's Good News (6 evangelistic lessons) from CEF Inc.*
- *Wordless Book Visualized (5 evangelistic lessons) from CEF Inc.*
- *Heaven and How to Get There (1 evangelistic lesson) from CEF Inc.*
- *Six Wonderful Things (1 evangelistic lesson) from CEF Inc.*
- *A Saviour for You (5 evangelistic lessons) from CEF of Europe*
- *What Every Child Ought to Know (5 lessons on God, sin, Jesus Christ and the Bible) from CEF of Europe*
- *God's Wonderful Salvation (5 evangelistic lessons) from CEF of Europe*

Chapter 7: Can a Saved Child Lose His Salvation?

I would like to answer this question in two ways. Firstly, I will give, by way of introduction, a summary of what I feel the answer to be. And then, secondly, I will endeavour to respond to a number of questions which might arise from that summary. Most of these answers will be based upon what we have already learned in Chapter 6 concerning the doctrines of salvation.

Summary

This is a question which often arises and one which I have often been asked by those who work with children. I feel that I need to give an answer to it even though I realise that not all of my readers may agree with it. But I would suggest that you work your way slowly and carefully through my outline—referring and comparing everything I write to the Word of God. Then you should come up with your own conclusion.

There are two main viewpoints concerning this subject:

- Some say, and teach, that when a child makes a profession of salvation and “makes a decision” to trust Christ, that he is eternally secure and cannot lose his salvation—no matter what happens after that. He will always be saved—even if he completely loses his interest in spiritual things, and turns away fully and irreversibly from them.
- Others say, and teach, that it is possible for a child who has really and truly trusted Christ to turn away deliberately, completely and finally from Him at a later date. If he does this he loses his salvation, and will need to be saved again.

Which of these two viewpoints is correct, and what is the biblical answer to the question in the title which introduces this chapter?

I believe that neither is correct. I personally cannot accept either viewpoint as being what the Bible teaches.

I believe that the Bible teaches that a person who has **truly** trusted Christ (and has not just made a profession or a “decision” to do so)

cannot lose his salvation. BUT that genuine faith in Christ will mean three things:

- He will have a new nature and a new desire to please God.
- He may backslide into the world but he cannot possibly be happy there. His new nature will be at odds with the world and with his sins.
- He **will** come back again to God and will show by his perseverance that he is truly saved.

He can lose his joy, his peace, his fellowship with God but, if **truly** saved, he cannot lose his salvation. God will keep His Hand upon him and one day he will be restored to the joy of his salvation.

The person who makes a profession of salvation but demonstrates no **permanent** change in his life is not saved. If and when he “goes back into the world” he does not lose his salvation. He was not saved.

John writes in 1 John 2 v19, “They went out from us but **they were not of us**. For if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us.”

Peter and Judas had both professed to trust and follow the Lord Jesus. Both of them sinned grievously and “went back into the world.” Peter was truly regenerated—and was unhappy in the world. He did not lose his salvation. He lost his joy. And the Lord Jesus brought him back again to the joy of his salvation. Judas was not regenerated. He did not lose his salvation. He was never saved, and he died in unbelief.

How Can You Prove that a Truly Saved Person Cannot Lose His Salvation?

There are many Bible verses and passages which make this very clear.

- John 5 v24. This verse outlines the three results of faith in Christ—everlasting life, no condemnation, and no more death.
- John 6 v37-40. These verses show clearly that none of God’s people will or can be lost.
- John 10 v27-29 is very clear. Those who **follow Him**
 - ✓ have eternal life
 - ✓ will never perish
 - ✓ cannot be plucked out of the hand of the Lord Jesus and the hand of the Father

- ✧ Acts 13 v38 and 39. These verses clearly show that **all** sin is forgiven (from an eternal point of view) when a person trusts Christ—his past sin, his present sin and his future sin.
- ✧ Romans 5 v1-11 outline the results of salvation by faith—justification (v1), peace with God (v1), access into His presence (v2), a sure hope of glory (v2), salvation from wrath (v9) and reconciliation with God (v11). These show that salvation is finished and complete.
- ✧ Romans 8 v1 shows us that the true believer will never be condemned. This is emphasized again in Romans 8 v31-39 and, in addition, the believer will never be separated from God—no matter what happens.
- ✧ 1 Corinthians 1 v8. This verse teaches us that our security is in His Hand. He will preserve us, because He is faithful (v9).
- ✧ Philippians 1 v6. In this verse we read that He will surely complete the work He has started.
- ✧ 1 Thessalonians 5 v23-24. These verses clarify that the work of preservation is God's, and that we can depend upon His faithfulness.
- ✧ 2 Timothy 1 v12. Our assurance is based upon **His** power and **His** ability to keep.
- ✧ 2 Timothy 4 v18. We read again that **He** will preserve and keep us.
- ✧ 1 Peter 1 v5. In this verse we read that our hope is based upon **His** power, and that we are kept by Him.

And there are **many** more such verses.

When studying this doctrine—and indeed any doctrine—it is most important to find the general teaching of the Bible or Bible “panorama” on the subject. There may be verses which seem to contradict that general teaching. But they cannot. There are no contradictions in Scripture. So there must be some other explanation of them.

An understanding of all that happens to the true believer at the moment of salvation shows how impossible it would be for these great truths to be reversed and cancelled.

- ✧ He is justified (Acts 13 v39). This is a judicial decision made by God that **all** his sin (past, present, **and future**) is forgiven, and that God now sees him as pure as Christ is. How could

God forgive all sin, and then at a later date not forgive all sin? How could God withdraw or change such a decision? In this case it would mean that He would deny Himself. (See page 111.)

- The believer is regenerated when he trusts Christ (John 3 v3-8; 2 Corinthians 5 v17). He receives a new nature and is a new person. How could he possibly lose that nature and become the old person again? (See page 113.)
- The believer is now a child of God and adopted into God's family (John 1 v12; Romans 8 v15-17). How could he possibly lose this position and go in and out of God's family—with God sometimes being His Father and sometimes not? (See page 116.)
- The believer becomes part of the Body of Christ at conversion—through the baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12 v13). Can the Lord Jesus lose parts of His body? (See page 117.)
- The Holy Spirit comes to live in him (Acts 2 v38; 1 Corinthians 6 v19). How could the Holy Spirit possibly enter and leave according to the spiritual temperature of the person concerned? The Corinthians had many spiritual problems and some of them were “back in the world.” But Paul told them that the Holy Spirit lived in them, and that they should bring their lives into line with that truth. (See page 119.)
- The believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit at conversion, and has received the earnest (or down payment) (Ephesians 1 v13, 14). The main purpose of a seal and an earnest is security. (See page 122.)
- The believer is redeemed by the Blood of Christ (1 Peter 1 v18). The price has been paid. He has been bought out of the slave market of sin. How could the Lord Jesus possibly cancel the transaction and put him back in again? (See page 123.)
- He receives eternal life (John 3 v16). How can he lose eternal life? If he lost it, it would not have been eternal. (See page 124.)

The more we understand of what happens to the sinner when he **truly** trusts Christ the more we realise how impossible it would be for those wonderful truths to be reversed or changed.

The Bible teaches clearly that God chooses, predestines or elects those who trust Christ—away back in eternity and before we were born (John 15 v16; Acts 13 v48; 1 Corinthians 1 v26-29; Ephesians 1 v4, 5; 2 Thessalonians 2 v13; 2 Timothy 1 v9).

How can anyone whom God has chosen lose what God has chosen him for? Can God's choice be cancelled? (See page 106.)

In Romans 8 v29 and 30 all five of the words Paul uses to describe salvation go together—foreknown, predestined, called, justified and glorified. They all happen to the same people. Those who are predestined on the basis of God knowing them and setting His love upon them will be justified and glorified.

The Bible makes it clear that the Lord Jesus is defending us as our representative and advocate (Hebrews 9 v24; 1 John 2 v1). How could He possibly lose one of those whom He represents and defends? (Romans 8 v33, 34). (See page 82.)

The Bible shows us that the Lord Jesus is praying for all believers as our Great High Priest (John 17 v9, 20; Romans 8 v34; Hebrews 7 v25):

- that we will be kept from the evil one (John 17 v11, 15)
- that we will be with Him (John 17 v24)
- that our faith will not fail (Luke 22 v31-32)

All His prayers will be answered. How could He possibly lose some of those for whom He has prayed? (See page 82.)

Are there verses and passages which teach (or seem to teach) that a true believer can lose his salvation?

Yes, there **are** verses which **seem** at first glance to teach that a true believer can lose his salvation by turning away from Christ and going back completely into the world.

These passages include:

- Hebrews 6 v4-8
- Hebrews 10 v26-31
- 2 Peter 2 v20-22.

There are three points to understand with regard to these and other similar passages:

- The Bible never contradicts itself. The general teaching of Scripture is that a true believer cannot lose his salvation. Verses which seem to teach the opposite cannot possibly do so. We

may not understand completely what these verses teach; but we can certainly know what they do not and cannot teach.

- I believe that all three passages given above show that a person can come very, very close to salvation. Those described in these verses are not true believers. God has worked in their hearts and has spoken to them. They have come close to salvation—but have turned away at the last moment. They have closed the door of salvation for themselves. They have not lost salvation. They never had it. Because of the hardness of their hearts they have lost the opportunity God gave them to be saved and it will be very difficult for them to trust Christ. Indeed it will be impossible—if they continue as they are.
- One of the main purposes of these passages and other similar passages is to warn believers to make sure they are saved. It is good and it is biblical for believers to examine themselves (1 Corinthians 11 v28; 2 Corinthians 13 v5; Galatians 6 v3, 4; James 1 v22, 26). A believer is not justified if he is not regenerated. If there is no permanent change in his life he is not saved (2 Corinthians 5 v17).

Is it possible for a true believer to go back into the world?

Of course it is—for a short time or even for a longer time. Which of us can say that we have never backslidden? But the true believer will not, and cannot, be happy in the world because of the new nature God gave him when he trusted Christ. God will keep His hand upon him and will eventually bring him back.

If he is completely and permanently happy in the world and is in no way convicted about being there he was not saved.

Both David and Peter sinned grievously and went back into the world. But they were unhappy there—and God restored both of them. They lost their joy and fellowship with God—but not their salvation.

Is it possible for a person to profess salvation—and not be saved?

Of course it is. A person can say he is saved and even behave for a time like a Christian and yet not be truly saved and regenerated. It is only a profession.

James in the second chapter of his letter shows that there are two kinds of faith:

- A dead faith. Some **say** they have faith but show no evidence of that faith by their works. That proves they do not have faith and are not saved—no matter what they say (James 2 v14, 17, 20, 26). Those who make such professions do not lose their salvation if, and when, they go back into the world. They never had it.
- A living and a saving faith. This is a faith which shows itself by its works; and the works are a proof that the faith is genuine. Faith is the root. Works are the fruit and evidence (James 2 v18; 21-26).

Two of the soils in the parable of Matthew 13 v18-23 (the stony soil of verses 20 and 21 and the thorny soil of verse 22) represent those who profess salvation but time and circumstances show that they were not saved. Only the soil which produces fruit (verse 23) represents the person who is saved—even although the amount of fruit may vary (verse 23).

It is even possible to be a preacher and to see results from that preaching and yet not be truly saved and regenerated (Matthew 7 v21-23).

What conclusion can I come to when someone who was a bright Christian goes back into the world? Is he still saved?

There are two possibilities:

- He had truly trusted Christ. Therefore in his heart he is unhappy and knows he is wrong; and God will keep His Hand upon him. He has not lost his salvation.
- He had made a profession but had not truly trusted Christ. He is happy and content in the world. He has not lost his salvation. He was not saved.

The problem is that we have no way of knowing if the person concerned is a backslidden Christian, or if he is someone whose profession of salvation was not genuine. We do not know their hearts. We should not try to judge. God knows! But, at the same time, we should not try to give any false comfort or assurance to such. We need to challenge them to be right with God.

What is the position of a carnal Christian before God?

This is a subject which has caused a lot of confusion—and even harm. The Bible teaches, I believe, two truths:

- There is no such thing as a **completely** carnal Christian. A person who is living completely, permanently and happily under the control of the flesh is not a Christian. Paul makes this clear in Romans 8 v4-9. The carnally minded person according to Paul is dead (v6) and an enemy of God (verse 7), and the Holy Spirit does not live in him (verse 9).
- We are all carnal Christians at times. There were believers in the Corinthian church who were carnal at the time Paul wrote to them (1 Corinthians 3 v1). But Christians are not divided into two groups (carnal and spiritual). All Christians are both carnal (at times) and spiritual (at times). The dominant direction of every Christian's life is spiritual, but he can be under the control of the flesh (and be carnal) for shorter or even longer periods. Paul illustrates this from his own life in Romans 7 v14-25. A person who is completely carnal is not saved.

We all as Christians need to progress and grow in sanctification. This growth will mean that we become more and more spiritual and less and less carnal.

What does God do with a Christian who has backslidden?

The Christian who backslides leaves himself open to the possibility of God's chastisement—not God's condemnation. There is no condemnation for the believer (Romans 8 v1, 33, 34); but there is the possibility of chastisement. God the Father chastens and disciplines His children, for our good and for our growth. This is clearly taught in Hebrews 12 v5-13; and is illustrated in what happened to Jonah in the first chapter of that book.

There may also be occasions when God decides to take a believer who is backslidden home to Heaven without him coming back to the joy of his salvation in this life. This is the most extreme form of chastisement. This does not, I believe, happen very often but it is possible and several examples of this are recorded or referred to in the Bible:

- Acts 5 v1-11. I believe that this was what happened to Ananias and Sapphira, and it is recorded in Scripture to warn us not to be like them.

- ✧ 1 Corinthians 5 v5. This verse also seems to refer to the possibility of a believer dying because he was involved in sin (verse 1). But it emphasizes that his spirit will be saved.
- ✧ 1 Corinthians 11 v30. Because of the sin in some of the believers' lives (verse 27) and their lack of self examination, some of them were being chastised through illness (verse 30) and some had died (verse 30).
- ✧ Revelation 2 v5. This verse clearly indicates that if a church, or an individual, leaves their first love (verse 4) there is the possibility of their witness being removed. In the case of an individual this would seem to mean death.
- ✧ 1 John 5 v16. Many commentators believe that the sin unto death mentioned in this verse is a sin—or a sinful state—which could lead to, and be punished by, physical death.

We must be careful, however, never to conclude that if a believer is sick, or if he dies, this is an evidence of God's chastisement. We must never jump to such conclusions and make the mistake that Job's friends made. The examples I have given illustrate God's final and most extreme way of dealing with a backslidden Christian; and would not be, I feel, His usual and general way of disciplining. But these incidents are given to warn us concerning, and help us to avoid, the dangers of disobedient backsliding.

Does a Christian need to ask for the forgiveness of his sins—when all his sins have already been forgiven at his conversion?

Sin, and the forgiveness of sin, needs to be seen from two points of view.

- ✧ When a person trusts Christ **all** his sin, from the point of view of eternity, is forgiven by God the Judge—once and for all. This includes **all** sin past, present and future. That subject will never be raised again. There will never be any condemnation for the believer (Romans 8 v1; 8 v31-34).

The eternal forgiveness of sin is a once and for all experience at conversion and never needs to be repeated (Acts 13 v38, 39; Romans 5 v1; Colossians 2 v13).

- ✧ The person who has trusted Christ has entered into a new relationship with God. God is not His Judge any more. God is his Father. As a child of God he will sin (1 John 1 v8 and 10).

The result of this sin will be to lose his joy, his peace and his fellowship with God. So he needs to confess his sin **to his Father** and to receive forgiveness for it. This is the day-to-day temporal forgiveness of sin which has been committed, as it were, within the family (Matthew 6 v12; 1 John 1 v9) and needs to be distinguished from the once for all eternal forgiveness of sin. The former is related to my day to day experience; the latter to my eternal position.

The difference between these two “kinds” of forgiveness is illustrated, I believe, in John 13 v6-10. From an eternal point of view the believer is already and completely washed (v8b and 10b). That is, he is completely and eternally forgiven. From a temporal point of view the believer still needs “to have his feet washed” (v10a). He needs day to day forgiveness.

Many problems can arise if we don’t understand clearly the answer to this question; and the result of these problems can often be a lack of assurance and peace. For example . . .

If at conversion only past sins are forgiven eternally, what does the forgiveness of future sins depend upon? Are future sins only forgiven eternally if we confess them? What happens if we don’t confess them? What happens if we don’t even know about them—or if we forget to confess them? How can we know if we have confessed **every** sin? Did Jesus Christ die and pay the price for all our sins, or only those up to our conversion? Were not **all** our sins still future when He died for them? You can see the uncertainty and even confusion which could result from such questions. What a joy it is to know “there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 5 v1).

Does this doctrine not encourage Christians to sin and to live as they like—because they know they cannot lose their salvation?

Certainly not.

A professing Christian cannot do what he likes, live in sin and complete disobedience to God (and truly enjoy it). He cannot turn his back on Jesus Christ in this way and still be saved.

The Bible does not teach that. The person who does this—and is happy and content in doing it—is not saved.

The Bible teaches that the person who is truly saved cannot go back into sin for ever, and enjoy it. He can fall back, and can make mistakes, and commit grievous sins, but not for ever, and not with joy. The indwelling Holy Spirit, and his new nature, would make a life of continual sin, disobedience and rejection—coupled with joy and peace—impossible.

Is it possible to have complete, full and permanent assurance of salvation? Is it possible to say, “I am absolutely sure that I will be in Heaven with Jesus Christ when I die.”?

The answer to both questions is a resounding “Yes.” Read the section on “Assurance of Salvation” (page 146). What a joy it is to be able to hear again the words of the Lord Jesus in John 10 v28, “I give unto them (my sheep) eternal life and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand,” and to say with Paul: “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Timothy 1 v12).

This assurance is not just a conviction that “I am saved today and if I died today I am sure I would go to Heaven.” It is of course that. But it is more than that.

The believer should be able to say “I am saved today, and I will always be saved. No matter when I die, I am sure I will go to Heaven.” That is assurance of salvation.

I have met many born again believers who did not have that kind of assurance. They knew they were saved at that particular moment; but they were not sure that they would still be saved in one year, five years or ten years time. True assurance of salvation means that we know, without a doubt, that our salvation is sure and secure for ever—and that it is as sure as the promises of God. God has promised to every true believer that he now has eternal life, and eternal life is life which will never, and can never, cease. We can therefore know right now that when we die we will certainly and surely be in Heaven with Jesus Christ for ever.

Praise God for such a wonderful assurance. This is what God the Holy Spirit wants every true believer to have; and I trust that as you, my dear reader, read, and think about, the promises of God you will have the full and absolute assurance that you will never perish.

Chapter 8:

The Doctrines of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit—His Personality and Deity

The Holy Spirit is a Person

- His works affirm personality
 - His work in Old Testament days, for example, included creation (Genesis 1 v2; Isaiah 40 v12-14), revelation (2 Peter 1 v21) inspiration (2 Timothy 3 v16), indwelling in some people (Numbers 27 v18), ability and filling for some people (Exodus 31 v3), and miracles (Judges 14 v6).
- The masculine personal pronoun is used of Him (e.g., John 16 v13).
- He does things only a person can do:
 - ✓ He speaks (Mark 13 v11)
 - ✓ He teaches (Luke 12 v12)
 - ✓ He appoints (Acts 20 v28)
 - ✓ He guides (Acts 8 v29)
 - ✓ He intercedes (Romans 8 v27)

The Holy Spirit is God

- He is called God (Acts 5 v3, 4).
- He has all the divine attributes:
 - ✓ Eternal (Hebrews 9 v14)
 - ✓ All-powerful (Luke 1 v35, 37)
 - ✓ Omnipresent (Psalm 139 v7-10)
 - ✓ Omniscient (1 Corinthians 2 v10-13)
- He does work only God can do
 - ✓ Creation (Psalm 104 v30)
 - ✓ Resurrection (Romans 8 v11)
 - ✓ The giving of gifts (1 Corinthians 12 v8-11)
 - ✓ Inspiration (2 Peter 1 v21)

The Work of the Holy Spirit—Before Pentecost

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

- He came upon special people at special times for special purposes—to bestow.

- ✓ Strength (Samson—Judges 14 v6)
- ✓ Power to do miracles (Elisha—2 Kings 2 v9)
- ✓ Wisdom (Joshua—Deuteronomy 34 v9)
- ✓ Ability (Bezaleel—Exodus 31 v3)
- ✓ Inspiration (The Writers of the Old Testament Scriptures—2 Peter 1 v21)
- ↗ He left those who deliberately and persistently disobeyed God.
 - ✓ Saul (1 Samuel 10 v10, 1 Samuel 18 v12)
 - ✓ Samson (Judges 14 v6, Judges 16 v20).

The Holy Spirit in the life of John the Baptist

He was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth (Luke 1 v15) so that he could:

- ↗ Prepare the way for the Messiah (Luke 3 v4),
- ↗ Preach repentance (Luke 3 v3),
- ↗ Prophecy the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3 v16)

The Holy Spirit in the ministry of the disciples during the life-time of the Lord Jesus

They did their miracles with the commission from the Lord Jesus, and with the power from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 10 v20; Luke 10 v19, 20).

The Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus

- ↗ The Lord Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1 v35).
- ↗ The Lord Jesus was full of (not filled by) the Holy Spirit (Luke 4 v1). This was a permanent and continuing condition—and not, as in the case of believers, a repeatable experience.
- ↗ The Lord Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Luke 3 v21, 22; Luke 4 v18; Acts 10 v38), and He chose to do His miracles in the power of the Spirit.
- ↗ The Lord Jesus was given the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3 v34).
- ↗ The Lord Jesus offered Himself a sacrifice for sin through the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9 v14).
- ↗ The Lord Jesus was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 3 v18).

The Work of the Holy Spirit at and Since Pentecost

The work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Ten days after the ascension of the Lord Jesus, on the day of Pentecost, and as the disciples waited in Jerusalem in obedience to His last command, the Holy Spirit came upon, and into, the gathered disciples. This was the birth of the Christian Church. It was a definite moment in time just as was Calvary; and while we today enjoy its benefits it, like Calvary, cannot be repeated.

This sending of the Holy Spirit was the promise of God the Father (Luke 24 v49; John 14 v26; Acts 1 v4; 2 v33a) in accordance with the prayer of the Lord Jesus (John 14 v16, 17) and it was especially the gift of the Lord Jesus to the church (Acts 2 v33b).

The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to unbelievers

- He strives with them (Genesis 6 v3).
- He witnesses to them (John 15 v26)—concerning Jesus Christ.
- He convicts or convinces them (John 16 v8-11):
 - ✓ concerning sin (primarily that of not believing on Christ)
 - ✓ concerning righteousness (primarily the righteousness of Christ)
 - ✓ concerning judgment (primarily the judgment of Satan and sin at the Cross)

The work of the Holy Spirit in every believer

When a person—be he adult or child—trusts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, the Holy Spirit does a number of things for him and in him. Such operations are fully and completely the possession of all believers, and cannot vary from time to time or from believer to believer.

These include:

- Regeneration (see page 113)
- Spiritual Baptism (see page 117)
- Indwelling (see page 119)
- Sealing (see page 122)

The experimental work of the Holy Spirit available to every believer

There are a number of operations of the Holy Spirit which believers **may** and should have in their lives. They are available to them, and **should** be enjoyed by them; although it is possible for a believer not

to enjoy them fully because of lack of teaching, lack of understanding, or the presence in his life of deliberate sin and disobedience. The enjoyment of these operations may, therefore, vary from time to time or from believer to believer.

These include the following:

- Assurance
- Sanctification
- Fruit
- Power
- Guidance
- Gifts
- Help in prayer
- Understanding

Assurance

What does it mean?

Assurance is the work of the Holy Spirit (1 John 3 v24). It is also called the witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8 v15-17; 1 John 5 v7-10). The main results of this assurance is a knowledge of having God as our Father and of being in God's family (Romans 8 v15-17; Galatians 4 v6), the knowledge that the Holy Spirit lives in us (1 John 3 v24; 1 John 4 v13), and the assurance that we have eternal life (1 John 5 v13).

How can we have assurance?

The primary means used by the Holy Spirit to give us assurance is the Word of God. We read in 1 John 5 v13, "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.**"

God has promised in His Word to save those who trust Christ or call on Him (John 3 v16; Romans 10 v13). God is faithful and always keeps His promises. Therefore the believer can know for sure, on the basis of God's Word and His promises, that he is saved—and saved for ever. That is what eternal life means!

Secondly, the Holy Spirit helps us to know we are saved when we observe the change which He has wrought in our lives (1 John 2 v3, 5, 29; 1 John 3 v6, 9, 14, 19; 1 John 4 v7, 12, 13, 15, 16; 1 John 5 v2). As Christians we are far from perfect—but there has been a

change in the general direction of our lives, and this change is evidence of regeneration and new nature. We are no longer carnal, no longer completely under the control of the flesh and no longer continuing in, and enjoying, a life of sin.

Can we lack, or lose, assurance of salvation?

It is possible for a child of God not to have assurance—or to lose the assurance he had because of:

- ↗ lack of teaching and understanding
- ↗ neglect of the Word of God
- ↗ disobedience and/or deliberate sin

Sanctification

What does it mean?

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit by which He gradually changes the believer, and makes him more and more righteous in his character and more and more like Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3 v18; 1 Thessalonians 4 v3-7; 1 Thessalonians 5 v22, 23; 2 Timothy 2 v21; 1 Peter 1 v16). When a believer is justified, at conversion, he receives from God an imputed righteousness (the righteousness of Christ). During his sanctification he receives from the Holy Spirit an imparted righteousness—a gradual step by step change and transformation which inches his state closer and closer to his standing. God has chosen us to be holy (Ephesians 1 v3-4) and conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8 v28-29).

The Bible teaches that the believer at conversion and justification is, at the same time, positionally sanctified. The root meaning of the word “sanctification” is “set apart.” So he is “set apart” for God at that time positionally and is a saint (1 Corinthians 1 v2; 1 Corinthians 6 v11; Hebrews 10 v10, 14; 1 Peter 1 v2). Every believer is already sanctified in this way.

Positional sanctification is the beginning of, and leads into, the process of practical sanctification (John 17 v17; Ephesians 5 v26).

This process of sanctification commences at regeneration and continues until glorification. It is experimental and gradual in its nature. A key verse concerning sanctification is 2 Corinthians 3 v18. In that verse we can find the answers to four questions:

- ↗ What is it? A process (“from glory to glory”).

- ✧ What is its purpose? To become like Christ (“changed into the same image”).
- ✧ Who does it? The Holy Spirit (“by the Spirit of the Lord”).
- ✧ What must I do? Behold the Lord in the Word. (“with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord”).

Sanctification is not an option for the Christian. It is essential. If there is **no** sanctification there is no salvation (Hebrews 12 v14; James 2 v24). There is no such thing as an unsanctified believer—although some believers are more sanctified than others, and it is possible for a believer to grow in his sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4 v10; Ephesians 4 v12-15; 1 Peter 2 v1, 2).

It is also possible for the believer to regress or go back in his sanctification—especially through neglect of the Word of God (John 17 v17, 19; Ephesians 5 v26), through lack of diligence in prayer (James 5 v16) or worship (John 4 v23, 24) through lack of fellowship with other believers (Hebrews 10 v25), or through disobedience (Romans 6 v12-14).

God’s purpose for the world is not to save it—but to save “a people for Himself” from the world.

They are:

- ✧ A chosen people—in Christ (Ephesians 1 v4)
- ✧ A justified people—by Christ (Romans 3 v24)
- ✧ A sanctified people—like Christ (2 Corinthians 3 v18)
- ✧ A glorified people—with Christ (John 14 v3)

How are we sanctified?

Sanctification is the result of a partnership and fellowship between God and regenerated man. We need to have the desire, and make the decision, to be what God wants us to be. Then He gives the power. It is therefore a co-operation between God and us.

We see these two aspects of sanctification in Philippians 2 v12, 13:

- ✧ Our responsibility “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (v12).
- ✧ God’s power “It is God which worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure (v13).

First of all, we have our responsibilities to fulfill. We are asked to work out, show or display the evidences and result of the salvation we possess (Philippians 2 v12). Our responsibilities in the process of

sanctification could be summarized in four key words from Joshua 5 v14 and 15. Joshua sees the Lord Jesus and reacts in four ways:

He **worships** Him (verse 14)

He **speaks** to Him (verse 14)

He **listens** to Him (verse 15)

He **obeys** Him (verse 15)

Worship—pray—listen—obey

As we fulfill these four responsibilities God will work in us (Philippians 2 v13) and the Holy Spirit will sanctify us (1 Thessalonians 5 v23, 24), and make us step by step like the Lord Jesus (Romans 8 v29; 2 Corinthians 3 v18).

In this process He uses the Word of God (John 17 v17; Ephesians 5 v26; 2 Thessalonians 2 v13; 1 Peter 2 v2).

It needs to be emphasized again that sanctification is a process. It is not something which can be achieved in one step or by using some “simple” 1-2-3 formula. Also, the Bible does not anywhere teach a two-stage salvation with the first stage called regeneration and the second stage called the baptism of the Spirit. Other names sometimes given to this so-called “second stage” are the fullness of the Spirit, or the entry into a victorious life, or the second blessing, or the change from being a carnal Christian to being a spiritual Christian.

The Bible does not teach that there are two kinds of Christians—those who are baptized with the Spirit, and those who are not baptized with the Spirit, those who are carnal and those who are spiritual; those who are always living victoriously and those who are not, those who have received the second blessing and those who have not.

Teachings like these have several results which can cause problems:

- They foster the idea of a spiritual aristocracy. This can encourage pride in those who have “taken the second step” and bring discouragement to those who haven’t.
- They lower and lessen the value and importance of what takes place when we trust Christ.
- They can give people who have taken “a first step” (possibly under pressure or in a highly charged emotional atmosphere) and are now “carnal Christians” a false sense of assurance of salvation. If such people have no interest in spiritual things whatsoever, they are, in all probability, unsaved.

If we were to draw a diagram of the Christian life it would certainly not look like Figures 1, 2 or 3.

Figure 1

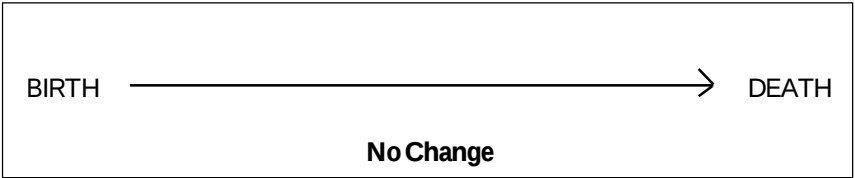
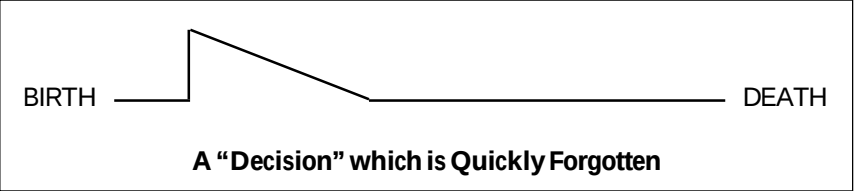


Figure 2



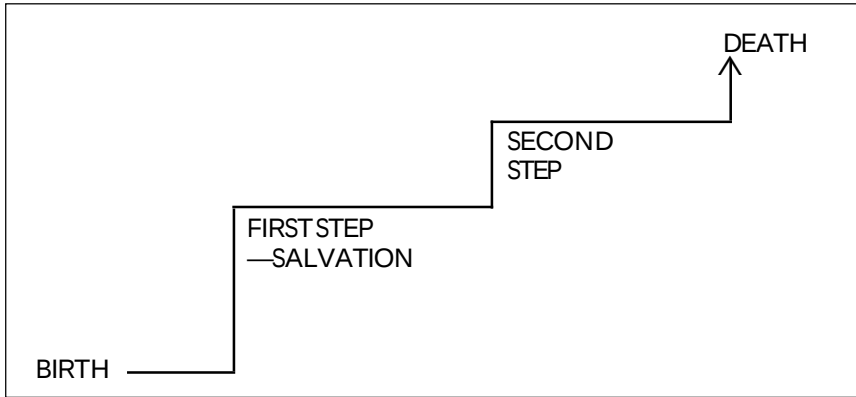
Figure 3



None of these are Christian viewpoints.

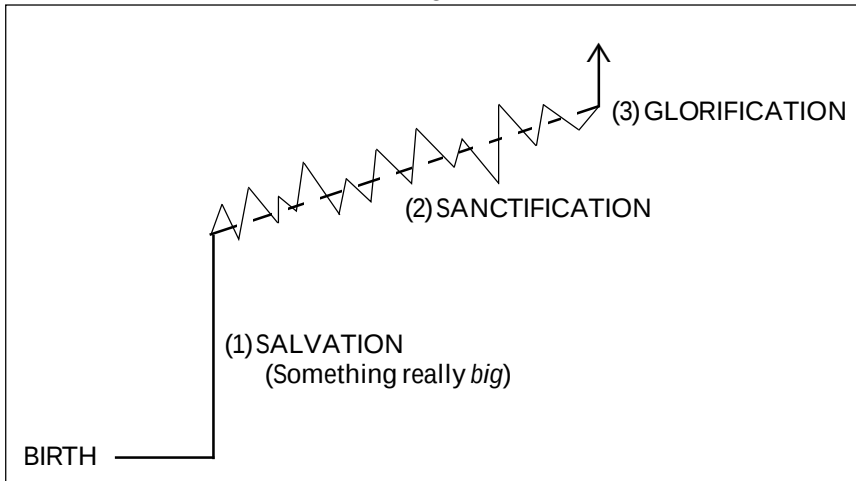
Also, I do not believe that Figure 4 is a diagram of the Christian life—although many Christians feel it is:

Figure 4



I believe the correct biblical diagram would look like this:

Figure 5



In Figure 5, one and three are “crisis” experiences. Two is a process. In all of these the Holy Spirit is accomplishing His purpose to make us like Jesus Christ.

The process of sanctification does have its high points when we are very close to the Lord, and also its low points when everything seems dark. But the overall direction is, and should be, upwards.

The Bible teaches that there is no simple and easy way to be sanctified. There are no “short-cuts.” The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit sanctifies us. But it also speaks of us striving (Hebrews 12 v4), wrestling (Ephesians 6 v11, 12), fighting (1 Timothy 6 v12), engaging in a race (1 Corinthians 9 v24-27; Hebrews 12 v1), disciplining ourselves (Romans 12 v1, 2; 1 Thessalonians 4 v3), working out (Philippians 2 v12), and putting to death (Romans 8 v13; Colossians 3 v5).

Even the great Apostle Paul had his problems as can be seen in Romans 7 v14-25.

What is the application to me?

- ↗ I need to be sanctified—and “as holy as it is possible for a saved sinner to be this side of glory” (Robert Murray McCheyne). This is the Will of God and a command from Him (Colossians 3 v5; 1 Thessalonians 4 v3). I am expected to grow and perfect holiness in the sight of the Lord (2 Corinthians 7 v1; Philippians 3 v10-12).
- ↗ To be sanctified I need to worship—pray—listen—obey.
- ↗ I also need to teach the great truths of sanctification to Christian boys and girls.

The Fruit of the Spirit

What does it mean?

The fruit of the Spirit is the visible and experimental result of sanctification. As we worship, pray, listen and obey and, as the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, fruit will grow in our lives and be visible to all. This fruit refers primarily to beauty of character and likeness to Christ, and secondarily to service or soul winning.

Where is it taught?

The three main passages are:

- ↗ John 15 v16. In this verse the Lord Jesus says that He chose us and ordained us to go and bring forth fruit. This whole section (John 15 v1-17) outlines the importance, necessity and conditions for fruit bearing.

- 2 Peter 1 v5-8. These verses outline eight Christian graces or fruits which as they grow and develop ensure that we will not be “unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Galatians 5 v22 and 23. These two verses give the nine fold fruit of the Spirit:
 - ✓ in our relationship to God (love, joy, peace)
 - ✓ in our relationship to men (long suffering, gentleness, goodness)
 - ✓ in our relationship to ourselves (faith, meekness, self discipline)

“The fruit of the Spirit” writes Paul “**is** love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-discipline.”

Although Paul lists nine fruits of the Spirit he uses the singular word “fruit” and the singular verb “is.” Love is the foundation of all these fruits.

What is its application to me?

I need to ask myself some questions:

- Does this fruit exist in my life? It should if I am saved.
- Is it growing in my life each day? God wants it to.
- Am I encouraging my saved children to be fruit bearers?

The Power of the Spirit

What does it mean?

There are two areas in which I need help:

- In my life I need strength to be holy and to overcome sin
- In my ministry I need power if it is to be effective

I need to have the desire to be what God wants me to be, and to do what God wants me to do. But I don’t have the power and strength in myself. So God supplies that power through the Holy Spirit who lives in me.

This could be illustrated by a motor car and its driver. The driver wants to control his car, to slow it down and to stop it—especially when he is going down hill. Is this possible? How can he do this? Does he have the power to do so? No! Only the brake can stop the car. Will the brake stop it—on its own? No! The driver needs to have the desire and to make the decision.

So the Psalmist David writes in Psalm 141 v3, “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.” He asks God to control his lips. He knows that he himself cannot do it and that only God can do this. But he also writes in Psalm 39 v1 “I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.” He himself needs to desire control over his mouth and to exercise the necessary discipline. Power over his lips is only possible when David’s desire and God’s power come together and unite to achieve the desired goal.

Where is it taught?

- Power for living—Romans 5 v5; Romans 8 v2, 4, 13; Galatians 5 v16; Galatians 5 v22-23.
- Power for service—John 7 v38-39; Acts 1 v8; 1 Corinthians 2 v1-5; 1 Thessalonians 1 v5.

What is its application to me?

I need to have the desire to live and serve as God wants me to, and I need to be willing to do what I can to be effective and victorious in both these areas. But only God the Holy Spirit can make my life and my service fruitful and effective. So I need to ask Him and trust Him to do just that.

The Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Introduction

We need to understand four facts about God’s Will:

- It is personal (John 16 v13). The Holy Spirit guides each person individually and personally.
- It is possible (Colossians 1 v9). God wants us to know His Will.
- It is provisional (John 7 v17). We can only know His Will if we are completely open to that Will, and really want to know it and obey it.
- It is progressive (Psalm 119 v105). God shows us His Will only one step at a time. Knowledge of the next step depends upon obedience to this step.

We need to see the two aspects of God’s will:

- The general will of God which is the same for all believers, and concerns our lives as a whole. It consists of easily-found

biblical principles. For example,

- ✓ Christians are expected to be joyful, be prayerful and be thankful (1 Thessalonians 5 v16-18). These are God's Will for every believer.
- ✓ It is **never** right for a Christian to tell a lie (Colossians 3 v9)
- ✓ It is **never** right for a Christian to marry a non-Christian (2 Corinthians 6 v14-18)
- The specific will of God which is different from one believer to another, and concerns such subjects as marriage, employment, type and place of ministry, Bible school etc.

How can we, as believers, know this specific guidance of the Holy Spirit today?

God's guidance in Bible times (up to the completion of the written Word of God):

- God often guided visibly
 - ✓ Through objects (e.g., a star—Matthew 2 v2), a pillar of cloud (Exodus 14 v19, 20)
 - ✓ Through signs (e.g., Gideon—Judges 6 v36-40)
 - ✓ Through angels (e.g., Mary—Luke 1 v26-38)
 - ✓ Through visions and dreams (e.g., Joseph—Genesis 37 v5-11)
 - ✓ Through the drawing of lots (Acts 1 v26)
- God often guided audibly
 - ✓ Through a voice (e.g., Noah—Genesis 6 v13)
 - ✓ Through prophets (e.g., David and Nathan—2 Samuel 12 v1-14)
 - ✓ Through animals (e.g., Balaam's ass—Numbers 22 v22-35)

God does not usually guide in any of the above ways today, and it can be dangerous to look for God's guidance in any of these ways. For example, it might seem attractive, and simple, to ask God to show us what we should do, or to ask Him to confirm a decision we have made by "giving us a sign." Sometimes we can be so bold as to tell God what that sign should be. It is true that God did guide occasionally in this way in the Old Testament. But that was before He had completed and given to us His written Word. What happens if the sign does not materialize? Or if it materializes differently from what we asked? Do we try again?

I am not saying that God never gives signs to those who ask Him for them today. God is sovereign and can do what He wishes. But this is not His normal way to guide believers today; and if practised can easily lead to confusion and doubts.

God's guidance today (after the completion of the written Word of God). Five principles can help us know God's Will for our ministry (and all other aspects of our lives).

- ✧ We should use our **heads** to **learn** (Romans 12 v2):
 - ✓ Where the needs are and where the opportunities are
 - ✓ In what direction our abilities and likings lie
 - ✓ If there are any open doors for us and our ministries
 God has given us transformed minds to think with and, while we must not depend completely on them and their conclusions, we must not by-pass them.
- ✧ We should use our eyes to **look**—into the Word (Psalm 119 v105; 11 Timothy 3 v16). God uses His Word to lead us today. This is not through looking for spot verses, but through regular systematic Bible study, and the knowledge of Bible principles. God speaks to us today through His Word. Often God uses a verse—not directly connected with the place or type of ministry—to confirm what He has shown in some other way.
- ✧ We should use our **ears** to **listen**—to the advice and guidance of Spirit-filled men (Acts 11 v25, 26; Acts 16 v3). We must not be “lone wolves.” We often need help from others of more mature experience—especially in the context of our local church.
- ✧ We should use our **hearts** to **lean**—on the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit as we pray and as we wait upon Him. He gives us a quiet assurance and peace concerning the direction in which He wants us to go (Isaiah 30 v21). His peace should be “the referee” in our hearts (Colossians 3 v15). If we don't have this peace we should not move.

The Holy Spirit uses all of these ways to guide believers. When we want to know His Will, He will cause all four to combine, and to show us a definite direction to go in.

When this direction is known, or when we are reasonably sure that this is the direction to move in then:

- ✧ We should use **all** we have to **launch** out into His Will (Acts

13 v1-3). There may be times when we are not 100% sure of what to do—and this is especially true for some people who find it difficult to make major decisions. I believe that in a situation like this if the person is, say, 98% sure he should go ahead! Then he should ask, and trust, the Lord to block the way or change the direction if he has, in good faith, made a mistake. It is easier to change the direction of a moving object than one which is stationary.

To experience God's guidance therefore we need to THINK—READ—ASK—PRAY and MOVE.

The Gifts of the Spirit

Introduction

This can be a very controversial subject and I would like to underline that the views expressed here on this subject are my own personal views and as a result of my own studies. They are presented for your thought and study. You need to come to your own decision and viewpoint. If it disagrees with mine, let us “agree to disagree”—IN LOVE. We can still have, and enjoy, fellowship together.

What is a spiritual gift?

It is:

- A supernatural ability (1 Corinthians 12 v4-6),
- Given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12 v11a),
- Distributed according to His sovereign choice (1 Corinthians 12 v11b),
- Used in service for Him and to help others (Ephesians 4 v12; 1 Corinthians 14 v3, 4).

We know that:

- Every Christian does not have the same gift (1 Corinthians 12 v29, 30).
- Every Christian does have at least one gift (1 Corinthians 12 v7).

Where are spiritual gifts listed?

The following passages outline the gifts of the Spirit:

Mark 16 v17, 18; Romans 12 v6-8; 1 Corinthians 12 v8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4 v11; and 1 Peter 4 v10-11.

In most of these passages, the context is “the Body of Christ.” The gifts are given primarily for the benefit and growth of the Body. They are not for the benefit and growth of the individual.

Why were/are spiritual gifts given?

Ephesians 4 v12, shows the answer clearly. They are/were given “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Every gift has (or had) a specific function or purpose, and an essential part to play in the growth of His body—the Church. This verse underlines again the fact that the spiritual gifts we have received are not for our own personal use and edification although we can obviously be blessed through our obedience in using them. They are to bless the church as a whole and help it grow.

What are spiritual gifts like?

Spiritual gifts are exactly what the Bible pictures them to be. Those which are in existence today are, or should be, exactly the same as they were in Bible times.

For example, if the gift of miracles exists today then—

- It will be similar to the gift clearly portrayed in the Bible—Moses at the Red Sea, Elijah on Mount Carmel, the Lord Jesus stilling the storm, Paul and blind Elymas in Acts 13 v11.
- It will be exercised through a person—as in Bible days. The gift of miracles is the ability given **to a person** to perform miracles. This ability must be distinguished from miracles themselves. Miracles are acts of God which are contrary to nature. They can still be seen from time to time (e.g., the new Birth). There **are** miracles today. But that does not mean that the gift of miracles, or the ability to perform miracles, is still in existence. There is a great difference between miracles and the gift of miracles. I believe in the existence of the former today, but not the latter.

If the gift of tongues exists today it will be similar to the biblical gift of tongues in Acts 2 v4-13. These were real languages which were unknown to the speaker but familiar to the hearers.

If the gift of healing exists today the healings will all be complete and instantaneous as in the Bible. Also the healing of all kinds of illnesses will be involved—up to and including raising of the dead.

There is a great difference between healing and the gift of healing. I believe in the existence of the former today—but not the latter.

Have all the spiritual gifts always been in existence?

Definitely not. For example, the Bible makes it clear that the gift of miracles was not in operation at all times during Bible history. There were three great periods when such gifts of miracles were given.

- During the life of Moses and Joshua.
- During the ministry of Elijah and Elisha.
- During the life of the Lord Jesus and during the ministry of the Apostles in the Acts.

But many great and godly men of God did not know, or even see, such a gift (e.g., Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Joseph, David, Nehemiah, and John the Baptist).

Such gifts depend not upon the spirituality of man but on the sovereign choice and plan of God.

What are/were the specific functions and purposes of spiritual gifts?

Every spiritual gift has/had a function—and a part as we have seen to play in the building up of the Church of Christ. **That** is its purpose.

I believe that spiritual gifts can be divided into three groups **according to function.**

Ministry Gifts

- God has given to certain people, in the church, the ability to see clearly, and understand, Bible truths, to set them in order and to teach and impart them to the church.

Such gifts are, teaching (Romans 12 v7) exhortation or encouragement (Romans 12 v8), evangelism (Ephesians 4 v11), and shepherding (Ephesians 4 v11).

- God has given to certain people in the church the ability to minister (or serve) (Romans 12 v7) to lead (Romans 12 v8) to help (1 Corinthians 12 v28) to give (Romans 12 v8), to show mercy (Romans 12 v8), and to trust God in a special way (1 Corinthians 12 v9).

The church needs these gifts today. I need these gifts and others need them. So I would dearly like to have one or more of them to help

others; and I believe that God has given these gifts to others to help me.

Sign Gifts

At a time when God's written Word was not complete, as it is today, God gave sign gifts to confirm the **spoken** Word of God, and to show people that this spoken Word was truly from God (Mark 16 v17-20, Hebrews 2 v3, 4).

Such gifts included the working of miracles (1 Corinthians 12 v10), the gift of healing as exercised by a person (1 Corinthians 12 v9), the gift of speaking in a foreign language—completely unknown to the speaker (1 Corinthians 12 v10), the casting out of demons (Mark 16 v17), the handling of snakes (Mark 16 v18), and the drinking of poison (Mark 16 v18). I personally do not need these gifts—and I do not seek them. They are not needed today as they were in New Testament times. Therefore I believe that for this reason God has withdrawn them.

Revelation Gifts

At a time when there was no New Testament, the church of Jesus Christ needed to know what God was saying to them. They needed to have many new truths revealed to them, and only God could give this revelation to them.

Because this written revelation had not yet been given God spoke directly to the early church as they met to worship, through revelation gifts. These were the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 12 v10), the word of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12 v8), the word of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12 v8), the discerning of spirits (1 Corinthians 12 v10), and the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12 v10). All that was said through such gifts was directly from God, without error, and as inspired as the written Word itself. The main revelation gift in the early church was the gift of prophecy and the key person, in many ways, was the prophet. Because of the importance of this gift to the early church, it is described in great detail in 1 Corinthians 14.

I personally do not need these gifts and do not seek them. Nor does the church need them any more.

Should we expect all of these spiritual gifts to be in use today?

I believe that the answer depends on the function of the gift concerned. If there is a need for that gift today then we should expect

it to be in use. If not, we should not expect it.

Ministry Gifts

The teaching gifts are desperately needed today. The great need of the church is to be exposed to the Word of God, to understand it and to apply it to our lives. We would therefore expect to see these gifts in operation today. The church has also, today, a great need for the other ministry gifts—for leaders, shepherds, servants, helpers, givers, and those who are merciful or of great faith.

Sign Gifts

The written Word of God is now complete. It speaks for itself, is proven and is attended by the power of the Holy Spirit. I do not feel that we need **anything** today to confirm God's written Word. When it is proclaimed, it is sufficient of itself. The power is in the Word of God today. I would not therefore expect to see sign gifts in operation today.

Revelation Gifts

Because the written Word of God is now complete there is no need for further revelation. God **has** spoken, and His revelation is complete. We do not need any new truth. However we do need an understanding of the truth which we already have (and that is why ministry gifts are so important and so necessary). I would not therefore expect to see such revelation gifts in operation today, and I would seriously doubt anyone who claims to have such a gift.

All the gifts of the Spirit have been necessary at some time in the building of the Church, but not all at the same time. When a building is constructed today some abilities are needed in the early days of the building, which are not needed later. So, we read a description of the church, as a building, in Ephesians 2 v20—"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." The gifts of apostleship and prophecy were absolutely essential in the building of the church—but they were in the foundation and not "the superstructure."

I have repeated over and over again, "I would not expect to see." At the same time I realise that God is sovereign, and He can do what He wants, when He wants.

How can you find out what your gift is/gifts are?

- Ask God to show you how He wants you to serve the church of Jesus Christ.

- ✧ Understand and list the gifts which you feel are available to the church today. Remember some of the gifts were needed in the early years of the church, but are not needed today.
- ✧ Use whichever opportunities for service come your way.
- ✧ Is there any one aspect of service you feel most drawn to? Most happy in? Most capable of? Most blessed in?
- ✧ Ask your pastor and church leaders if they feel this is a gift which God has given you.
- ✧ Develop and use this gift as much as you can (1 Timothy 4 v14; 2 Timothy 1 v6).

Help in Prayer

We have two primary needs in our prayer life.

- ✧ We need to know what and for whom to pray
- ✧ We need to have a burden to pray and we need to have power in our praying

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to meet these two needs in our prayer life.

- ✧ He guides us concerning what we should pray for (Romans 8 v26a; Ephesians 6 v18; 1 John 5 v14).
- ✧ He burdens and empowers us as we pray (Romans 8 v26b; Ephesians 6 v18; Jude 20).

Jesus Christ prays for us in Heaven.

The Holy Spirit prays through us in our hearts as He guides us and burdens us.

Understanding

One of the primary ministries of the Holy Spirit today is to teach us, and to help us, to understand the Word of God. The Lord Jesus promised that He would do this in John 16 v12-15.

This ministry is referred to three times in the Epistles and is described as an anointing or unction. The Holy Spirit anoints us so that we will understand the Word of God. These references also make it clear that this anointing ministry is for all believers and not for a privileged few.

- ✧ 1 John 2 v20 “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”

↗ 1 John 2 v27 “the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.”

↗ 2 Corinthians 1 v21 “He which . . . hath anointed us is God.”

An extended account of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is outlined in 1 Corinthians 2 v9-16.

The Fullness of the Spirit

I am dealing with this vital subject separately from the eight ministries of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers today because it is really the foundation of all of those eight ministries:

How can I have assurance of salvation?

How can I be sanctified?

How can I bear fruit?

How can I have power in my life and ministry?

How can I know God’s guidance?

How can I know and use the gifts He has given me?

How can I pray more effectively?

How can I understand God’s Word more clearly?

The answer is—through the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean?

It does not mean some kind of ecstatic mystical experience—although it is an experimental truth.

It does not mean that I need to receive more of the Holy Spirit. Some people see themselves as a partly filled vessel—which needs to be “topped up.” They want to receive more of the Holy Spirit—so they can then be filled by Him. But we do not receive the Holy Spirit in installments. We receive **Him** at conversion—not part of Him.

The fullness of the Spirit means that He receives more of me. The Bible teaches that I am a temple or house in which the Holy Spirit lives (1 Corinthians 3 v16, 17; 1 Corinthians 6 v19, 20). But there may be rooms in my house which I wish to keep for myself, and to which I do not want to give Him access. Being filled with the Spirit means that I give Him access to all of my temple—so that He can then fill it.

Basically the fullness of the Spirit relates to obedience and control. When I obey Him and give Him control He fills me and enables me to

experience and enjoy, more and more, the eight ministries we have been describing.

There are other commands and concepts used in the New Testament which are alternative ways of describing the Fullness of the Spirit:

Walk in or after the Spirit (Romans 8 v4; Galatians 5 v16, 25)

Be led by the Spirit (Romans 8 v14; Galatians 5 v18)

Where is it taught?

The main passage is Ephesians 5 v18-21. Paul writes in verse 18, “Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

There are four conclusions we can draw from Ephesians 5 v18 and the grammar used:

- ✧ The fullness of the Spirit is a command. The imperative mood is used.
- ✧ The fullness of the Spirit is for all believers. The plural number is used.
- ✧ The fullness of the Spirit is only possible in His strength. The passive voice is used.
- ✧ The fullness of the Spirit is a present, continuing experience. The present continuous tense is used.

This passage, and related passages, teach us that to be filled with the Spirit means, simply, to be controlled by Him. We can draw this conclusion from three facts:

- ✧ The command to be filled with the Spirit is given in relation to, but is contrasted with, a command not to be drunk with wine. What is the similarity (or dissimilarity) between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit? A drunk man is under the control of wine; a Spirit filled man is under the control of the Spirit. The underlying thought is therefore one of CONTROL.
- ✧ The corresponding verses in Colossians 3 v16-18 underline this thought of CONTROL especially in relation to the Word of God— the vehicle which the Holy Spirit uses to give guidance and commands to the believer.

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom . . . teaching . . . admonishing . . . singing . . . giving thanks . . . submitting.”

- The words “be filled” used here by Paul often have the thought of “control.” That which fills a person controls him. In Luke 5 v26 the people were “filled with fear.” That means they were controlled by fear. “Filling” means “taking possession of”—and that means “CONTROL.”

To be filled with the Spirit therefore simply means to be under His control and to be obedient to His Will.

While Ephesians 5 v18 is the “key verse” on this subject there are thirteen other references to the fullness of the Spirit in the New Testament—mostly in the Acts of the Apostles (Luke 1 v15, 41, 67; Luke 4 v1; Acts 2 v4; Acts 4 v8, 31; Acts 6 v3; Acts 7 v55; Acts 9 v17; Acts 11 v24; Acts 13 v9, 52).

A study of these verses in their contexts leads us to the following conclusions:

- Being filled with the Spirit is experimental but not a once for all experience. The disciples who were filled with the Spirit in Acts 2 v4 were filled again in Acts 4 v8 and Acts 4 v31. Paul was filled with the Spirit in Acts 9 v17; and again in Acts 13 v9 and Acts 13 v52. There is “one baptism—but many fillings.”
- The fullness of the Spirit is a state or condition which continues for a time; or, in the case of the Lord Jesus, permanently
 - ✓ The Lord Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4 v1)
 - ✓ Seven men . . . full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6 v3)
 - ✓ He (Stephen) being full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7 v55)
 - ✓ He (Barnabas) was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11 v24)
- All of these verses fit in perfectly with the concept of the control of the Holy Spirit as explained in Ephesians 5 v18.

What are the results?

In the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles those who were filled by the Holy Spirit or who were full of the Holy Spirit were under His control. Therefore they were able to serve God better and perform the tasks which God had allotted to them.

- They were bold and courageous in their proclaiming of the Gospel and the wonderful works of God (Acts 2 v4-11, 14-40; Acts 4 v8-31; Acts 9 v17-20).
- They were blessed in their preaching ministry (Acts 11 v24; Acts 13 v52; Acts 14 v1).

- They were able to minister to the needs of fellow believers (Acts 6 v3).
- They were able to die peacefully (Acts 7 v55).

In Ephesians 5 v18 the emphasis is placed more on the results in the life and character of a believer. There are four participles which are linked grammatically with the command “Be filled with the Spirit” and which outline the four consequences and results of that filling:

- **Fellowship** with other believers as expressed in worship together—“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”
- **Praise** to the Lord—“singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
- **Thanksgiving** to the Lord at all times—“giving thanks always for all things unto God.”
- **Submission** to fellow believers—“submitting yourselves one to another.”

The second and third results affect our relationship with God—in worship. The first and fourth results affect our relationship with other believers—in fellowship. The fullness of the Holy Spirit puts us in a right relationship with both God and man.

What is its application to me?

- I need to obey the command “Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5 v18) and be under His control.
- I need to encourage the children to whom I minister to obey that command also.

Other Commands Concerning the Holy Spirit

Walk in (or by) the Spirit (Galatians 5 v16 and 25)

This is, I believe, similar to Paul’s command to be filled with the Spirit. To walk by the Spirit means to walk and live in dependence upon Him, and letting Him have full CONTROL. The result will be holiness of life—“we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Do not grieve the spirit (Ephesians 4 v30)

The Holy Spirit is grieved or hurt when we sin. The context gives us an outline of the things which especially grieve Him—lying, uncontrolled temper, stealing, laziness, selfishness, impure words,

bitterness, clamour, evil speaking, malice, unkindness, hard heartedness, and an unforgiving spirit. Notice that most of these sins involve personal relationships with other people—and the incorrect and sinful use of the tongue. We will not be guilty of them if we are under His CONTROL.

Do not quench the spirit (1 Thessalonians 5 v19)

This would seem, in the context, to be a reference to spiritual gifts. We are commanded not to extinguish (or quench) the gifts which the Holy Spirit has given to us individually. Instead we will be exercising them if we are under His CONTROL. Nor should we despise or disparage the gifts which others have received (verse 20)—although, at the same time, testing of those gifts is encouraged (verse 21).

The Sin (or Blasphemy) Against the Holy Spirit

This sin is referred to in Matthew 12 v31 and 32, and has caused great concern to many young believers, who wonder if they have committed this sin, which cannot be forgiven.

The background to this statement by the Lord Jesus can be found in the passage Matthew 12 v22-30. The Lord Jesus cast demons out of a man by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Pharisees accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Satan. So the sin against the Holy Spirit which they committed was attributing the Holy Spirit's work, as evidenced in that miracle, to Satan. This was, of course, not just an isolated incident as far as the Pharisees were concerned. This statement was made as a consequence of their evil unbelieving hearts and their refusal to accept the evidence which had been presented to them over and over again.

The Lord Jesus is not on this earth today as He was then and is not performing miracles as He did when He was here. So it is not possible for this sin—in its primary sense—to be committed today by **anyone**; and I personally would interpret it in this way.

But the Holy Spirit still bears witness today to the Lord Jesus Christ. To reject that witness is unbelief. The person who does not accept or believe the witness of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ cannot be saved—while he continues in that state. Sinning against the Holy Spirit today—in its secondary sense—is not any one single act. It is a

state of unbelief in Christ as Saviour. It is the continuing and persistent rejection of the Holy Spirit. A person in that state cannot be saved—while he puts himself beyond the range of God's forgiving love.

It must be clear in either case, that it is impossible for **a believer** to blaspheme or sin against the Holy Spirit.

There is no indication whatsoever that the sin of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 was the sin or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. They lied to Him, and as a consequence suffered the temporal judgment of physical death.

Doctrines of the Holy Spirit

Teaching Ideas and Outlines

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

This subject needs to be carefully and simply outlined and taught. Special care should be used to explain the word “Spirit” or “Ghost” as this can often mean something completely different to the modern child.

You can use Bible Lessons to teach these truths

There are many Bible stories and lessons which can be used to illustrate and teach truths about the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. These lessons can be found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (especially the Acts of the Apostles). For example:

- ↗ *His Deity—The Baptism of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 3 v13-17 along with Matthew 28 v19, 20)*
- ↗ *His Presence in the church and in Christians—Pentecost (Acts 2 v1-40)*
- ↗ *His regenerating work—The Lord Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3 v1-16)*
- ↗ *His guidance—The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8 v26-40)*
- ↗ *His power—The change in Peter (Acts 2 v1-40)*
- ↗ *He convicts, saves and builds God’s church—The first converts (Acts 2 v1-40)*

You can use Bible verses to teach these truths

You can use individual Bible verses to teach children the truths about the Holy Spirit which they need to know and understand. You will find many of these verses in the preceding pages. But here are several examples:

- ↗ *His Deity (2 Corinthians 13 v14)*
- ↗ *His convicting work (John 16 v8-11)*
- ↗ *His filling (Ephesians 5 v18)*
- ↗ *His sanctifying work (2 Corinthians 3 v18)*
- ↗ *His indwelling (1 Corinthians 6 v19)*
- ↗ *His power (Acts 1 v8)*

You can use Bible symbols to illustrate these truths

The Bible gives a number of symbols describing certain aspects of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. These can be a great help in

teaching children because of the visual images they present. But careful explanation will be needed in each case.

- *He is like the wind (John 3 v8)—He is invisible but powerful*
- *He is like water (John 7 v37-39)—He satisfies us—and, through us, blesses others*
- *He is like fire (Acts 2 v3)—He demonstrates His approval of those who serve Him*
- *He is like oil (Acts 10 v38; 2 Corinthians 1 v21; 1 John 2 v20)—He sets us apart for His service and helps us in that service*
- *He is like a seal (Ephesians 1 v13; 4 v30)—He is our security, and our Master*
- *He is like a dove (Luke 3 v22)—He is gentle and loving*
- *He is like an earnest or deposit (Ephesians 1 v14)—He is the guarantee of our salvation*

There are, of course, other interpretations of these symbols of the Holy Spirit—apart from the ones I have suggested.

You can use a flashcard lesson to teach these truths

- *Can you see, feel, understand the wind?*
- *God is a Trinity*
- *The Holy Spirit is God*
- *He always points to Jesus Christ*
- *He convicts us of sin*
- *He makes us new when we trust Christ (personal application unsaved)*
- *He helps us to understand the Bible (personal application saved)*
- *He gives us strength to live for Christ*
- *He guides us*

Assurance

You can use Bible lessons

There are not many Bible stories where this can be taught as the central truth of the lesson. But there are stories where it is implied and which will give you the opportunity to introduce the subject and deal with it:

- *The conversion of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16 v19-34) with special emphasis on the promise of verse 31.*

- *Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2 v1-41) with special emphasis on verses 38 and 39.*
- *The Lord Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3 v1-16) with special emphasis on verses 15 and 16.*
- *The Prodigal son (Luke 15 v11-32) with special emphasis on the father's welcome.*
- *The justified publican (Luke 18 v9-14)*
- *Saul and Barnabas in Antioch (Acts 13 v14-52) with special emphasis on verses 38 and 39.*

You can use Bible verses

Refer back to the sections on assurance to see the verses you could explain and teach—and have children learn.

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *How can I be sure?*
- *The Bible is God's Word*
- *It is completely true*
- *God always keeps His promises*
- *He promised to save those who trust Christ*
- *Trust Him—you will be saved forever (personal application unsaved)*
- *You will see a change in your life*
- *Jesus Christ is praying for you*
- *The Holy Spirit gives you peace (personal application saved)*

Sanctification, the Fruit and Power of the Spirit

You can use Bible lessons

Use Bible lessons which show the change in a person's life when he trusts Christ, and the growth and development in his character and spirituality.

- *The conversion and spiritual growth of Paul (Acts 9 v1-31 and the following chapters)*
- *The spiritual growth of Timothy (Acts 14 v7 onwards and Paul's two letters to him)*
- *You can also use and explain the green page of the Wordless Book with good effect when teaching this doctrine.*

You can use Bible verses

See section on pages 147-153.

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Do you like to see things grow?*
- *Trust Jesus Christ (personal application unsaved)*
- *Now God wants you to grow and bear fruit (personal application to saved)*
- *Read His Word and obey it*
- *Talk to Him—at any time*
- *Tell others what you have done*
- *Confess sin and turn from it*
- *The Holy Spirit will help you and work in you*
- *You will grow—and become like the Lord Jesus*

Guidance of the Spirit

You can use Bible Lessons

*There are a number of Bible lessons which illustrate the fact that God guides His children, and from which several basic principles concerning guidance can be taught—although you need to point out that the **method** of God's guidance in the Bible is often not the same as it is today*

- *God guides Abraham's servant (Genesis 24)*
- *God guides and uses Philip (Acts 8 v26-40)*
- *God guides Paul through Barnabas (Acts 11 v19-26) and Timothy through Paul (Acts 16 1-4)*
- *The Macedonian Call (Acts 16 1-10)*
- *The call of Isaiah (Isaiah 6 v1-8)*
- *The call of Paul and Barnabas to missionary service (Acts 13 v1-12)*
- *The call of Moses (Exodus 3)*
- *The call of Jonah (Jonah 1, 2 and 3)*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Have you ever been lost?*
- *God knows everything—past, present and future*
- *He knows what is best for you*
- *Trust Christ. God the Holy Spirit lives in you (personal application unsaved)*
- *He guides through the Word of God*
- *Read it and study it every day*
- *He guides through wise people*

- He gives peace
- Trust God for guidance (personal application saved)

Gifts of the Spirit

You can use Bible lessons

From time to time you will be able to teach a Bible Lesson which shows a gift of the Spirit in operation—one which is necessary for the church (and for the children) of today. You can use these lessons also to encourage the children to ask God to show them what gifts He has given them—and to use them to help others:

- The Lord Jesus—the gift of showing mercy (the healing of the ten lepers—Luke 17 v11-19; Bartimaeus—Luke 18 v35-43; and of the demon possessed girl—Matthew 15 v21-28).
- Barnabas—the gift of encouragement (Acts 4 v36; Acts 9 v27; Acts 11 v22-30; Acts 15 v36-39)
- Philip—the gift of evangelism (Acts 8 v26-40)
- Barnabas—the gift of giving (Acts 4 v31-37)
- John Mark—the gift of helping (Acts 12 v25; Colossians 4 v10; 2 Timothy 4 v11; 1 Peter 5 v13)
- Aquila and Priscilla—the gift of teaching (Acts 18 v1-4; Acts 18 v24-28; Romans 16 v3; 2 Timothy 4 v19)

You can use missionary stories

Stories about missionaries and other people—showing the gift(s) God has given them

- George Muller—the gift of faith
- C.T. Studd—the gift of evangelism
- Alfred Buxton—the gift of helping
- Hudson Taylor—the gift of leadership

You can also give personal examples of people you know who have a gift of the Spirit.

You can use a flashcard lesson

- Do you want to please God?
- Trust Christ—the first step (personal application unsaved)
- God has a work for you to do
- He helps you tell others about Jesus Christ
- He helps you teach and encourage other believers
- He helps you to give

- *He helps you to trust Him more and more*
- *He makes you a helper of others*
- *Ask God to show you what to do (personal application saved)*

The Fullness of the Holy Spirit

There are many effective ways that this truth or command can be taught to our children.

You can use Bible lessons

The main source of these lessons will be in the Acts of the Apostles where we have the record of the lives and actions of men who were filled by the Holy Spirit:

- *Peter's courage on the day of Pentecost and God's blessing (Acts 2 v1-40)*
- *The persecution of the disciples and their reactions (Acts 4 v1-31)*
- *The importance of helping others, and the way to do it (Acts 6 v1-7)*
- *The death of Stephen (Acts 7)*
- *The ministry of Paul (Acts 9 v17-31)*
- *The ministry of Barnabas (Acts 11 v19-30)*

But there are other lessons which can be used to teach the same truth:

- *Joshua—the great leader (Numbers 27 v18; Deuteronomy 34 v9; Joshua 1)*
- *The life and ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 1 v15-17)*
- *Elizabeth and Zacharias (Luke 1 v41-45, 67-80)*

You can use missionary stories

It will be helpful—and challenging—for children to hear how God the Holy Spirit uses people today who are under His control.

Good examples include:

- *Hudson Taylor*
- *William Carey*
- *Amy Carmichael*
- *C.T. Studd*
- *Jim Elliot*
- *Eric Liddell*
- *Corrie Ten Boom*

Visualized lessons on these missionaries (and many others) are available from Child Evangelism Fellowship.

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Who, or what controls you?*
- *Jesus Christ died for your sins*
- *Trust Him as your Lord and Saviour (personal application unsaved)*
- *The Holy Spirit comes to live in you*
- *He speaks to you through the Bible*
- *He wants you to obey Him*
- *He gives you strength to obey*
- *He blesses and uses you—when He controls you*
- *He wants every room “in your house” (personal application saved)*

Helpful visuals from Child Evangelism Fellowship

- *The First Christians and Paul, God’s Servant (12 lessons on the Acts of the Apostles) from CEF Inc.*
- *Children of the Bible (5 lessons on children used by God) from CEF Inc.*
- *Living God’s Way (12 lessons on Christian attitudes) from CEF Inc.*
- *Loving God’s Way (6 lessons on Christian fellowship) from CEF Inc.*
- *Big Questions about Prayer (6 lessons on prayer) from CEF Inc.*
- *Teach Us to Pray (5 lessons on prayer) from European CEF*
- *A Quiet Time (1 lesson) from European CEF*
- *Run Ma Run (5 missionary lessons on Mary Slessor) from CEF Inc.*
- *Devil Kings and Cannibals (5 missionary lessons on John Paton) from CEF Inc.*
- *Hudson Taylor (5 missionary lessons) from CEF Inc.*
- *I Dare (5 missionary lessons on Amy Carmichael) from CEF Inc.*
- *A Man for God’s Plan (missionary lesson on Jim Elliot) from CEF Inc.*

- *His Best for God (missionary lesson on Eric Liddell) from CEF Inc.*
- *A Friend of God (lesson on Joni Erickson) from CEF Inc.*
- *Charles Studd (5 missionary lessons) from European CEF*
- *Corrie Ten Boom (5 lessons on her life and ministry) from European CEF*

Chapter 9:

Four Miscellaneous Doctrines

The Doctrine of the Church

The meaning of the church

The word “church” is the translation of the Greek word “ecclesia”—which means “that which is called out.” It is used in two ways in the Bible:

➤ An organism

The church is the mystical body of Christ consisting of all those of every race, land and age who have been chosen by God the Father (Ephesians 1 v1-4; 1 Peter 1 v1, 2) purchased by the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20 v28; 1 Peter 1 v2), and sanctified, or set apart, by the Holy Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2 v13; 1 Peter 1 v2). Within its ranks are all who receive God’s Son, reflect God’s Holiness and reveal God’s message to others—irrespective of denomination.

The church consists of the people for His Name which He is taking out from among Gentiles and Jews—for His own Glory (Acts 15 v14).

➤ An organisation

The church in this sense consists of those who gather together on the basis of the principles of God’s Word, and in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in any one place to worship God, work for Him and witness to Him (Acts 2 v41, 42; Acts 16 v5).

All of such should be truly repentant and born again believers (Acts 2 v38-41, 44, 47), baptised in the Name of the Triune God (Matthew 28 v19), sound in doctrine (Acts 2 v42), willing to live in fellowship and unity with other believers (Ephesians 4 v2, 3; Philippians 2 v1-3) and in submission to church discipline (1 Corinthians 5 v11-13; Hebrews 13 v17).

The symbols of the church

There are three symbols or pictures of the church in the New Testament:

- ✧ The body— with Jesus Christ as its Head (Romans 12 v4-5; 1 Corinthians 12 v12-27; Ephesians 4 v11-16; Colossians 1 v18).

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, and He works through the members who depend on Him for everything, and He expects obedience from them. A clear view of this symbol will lead to unity, sympathy, appreciation and no jealousy.

- ✧ The bride—with Jesus Christ as her Husband (2 Corinthians 11 v2, Ephesians 5 v25-32; Revelation 19 v7).

Jesus Christ is the Husband of the Church and expects her love, purity, faithfulness and obedience, and anticipates the future consummation of the marriage relationship at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The bride in turn receives love (Ephesians 5 v25), help (Ephesians 5 v26) and security (Ephesians 5 v30).

- ✧ The building—with Jesus Christ as its foundation and chief corner stone (1 Corinthians 3 v10-17; 2 Corinthians 6 v16; Ephesians 2 v21, 22; 1 Peter 2 v4-6)—and in which God dwells today (1 Corinthians 3 v16; 2 Corinthians 6 v16; Ephesians 2 v22).

Jesus Christ is the foundation and He wants us to serve Him—in evangelising the lost, that many more may become living stones in this building. But we can only do so—on the basis of His truth (Matthew 16 v17, 18; 1 Corinthians 3 v10, 11).

The ordinances of the church

There are two main ordinances in the church today:

- ✧ Baptism
 - ✓ It was commanded by Christ (Matthew 28 v19, 20).
 - ✓ It was practised by the early church (Acts 2 v41, 42; Acts 8 v35-39).
- ✧ The Lord's Supper
 - ✓ It was commanded by Christ (1 Corinthians 11 v23-34).
 - ✓ It was observed by the early church (Acts 2 v42).

The purpose of the church

- ✧ To make known the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3 v10)
- ✧ To bring eternal glory to God (Ephesians 3 v20-21).
- ✧ To constitute a dwelling place for God (Ephesians 2 v20-22)

- To bear witness unto the truth (1 Timothy 3 v15).
- To edify its members (Ephesians 4 v11-16).
- To evangelise the world (Matthew 28 v18-20).

The Doctrine of Angels

Children need to be taught about angels—who they are and what they do.

Who they are:

- They are **spirit** beings who have sometimes appeared in human form for a specific purpose (Genesis 19 v1; Genesis 32 v1; Psalm 104 v4; Luke 1 v11, 26; Luke 2 v8-15; Hebrews 1 v14).
- There are very many of them (Revelation 5 v11) and they have different ranks (e.g., 1 Thessalonians 4 v16; Jude 9).
- They have great power (2 Peter 2 v11; Revelation 18 v1).
- They are not to be worshipped (Colossians 2 v18; Revelation 22 v8, 9).

What they do:

- They are the Heavenly messengers or agents of God (Hebrews 1 v14).
- They minister to believers (Psalm 91 v11; Matthew 18 v10; Luke 15 v10; Acts 12 v7; Hebrews 1 v14). It is correct and biblical to believe in “guardian angels.”
- They worship the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 1 v4-8) and minister to Him (Matthew 4 v11; Luke 22 v43).
- Some have fallen (2 Peter 2 v4; Jude 6) and are the agents of Satan.

The Doctrine of Satan

We need to understand and teach the children that there is a devil and that he is the enemy of God and God’s people. And while he himself is not omnipresent the existence of demons means that his influences can be widely felt.

He was a created being of great power and wisdom, but he fell through pride and rebelled against God (Isaiah 14 v12-14; Ezekiel 28 v12-15). He was therefore cast out of Heaven (Luke 10 v18).

He is called the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4 v4), “the prince of this world” (John 12 v31), and “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2 v2).

He is absolutely and thoroughly bad and evil (John 8 v44). His purpose is to deceive and destroy mankind (1 Peter 5 v8) and to try to frustrate the purposes of God (Genesis 3 v1; Matthew 13 v24, 25, 38, 39; John 13 v2).

He still has access to God (Job 1 v6-12; Revelation 12 v10) and is permitted a certain power of sifting or testing of believers. This power is, however, permissive and limited (Job 1 v6-12; Luke 22 v31-32) is subject to God’s power, control and wisdom and is ultimately used for the good of the believer.

He, like everyone else and everything else, is still under the control of an Almighty Sovereign God.

After the Second Coming of Jesus Christ Satan will be finally judged and cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20 v10).

The Doctrine of Death

Most children come into personal contact with death at some time. Also they see it portrayed graphically on the television screen and in the cinema. As a result children have questions about death which need to be answered; and large numbers have fears about death which need to be allayed.

It is therefore essential for children’s workers to have a clear understanding of what the Bible teaches about death; and then to teach these truths simply and clearly to the children.

What is death?

Death means primarily the cessation of life. It is the logical result of the sin of mankind committed by Adam their federal head and therefore by everyone **in him** (Genesis 2 v17; Genesis 3 v1-24; Genesis 5 v5; Romans 5 v12-21; 1 Corinthians 15 v21, 22).

Death is man’s greatest enemy:

- Everyone must pass this way because “it is **appointed** onto man once to die” (Hebrews 9 v27)
- No **man** has ever conquered it (Romans 5 v12). But Jesus Christ conquered it (1 Corinthians 15 v20, 21; Hebrews 2 v14, 15)
- All have, naturally, a fear of it (Hebrews 2 v15)

The Bible teaches that there are three kinds of death:

- Spiritual death. Everyone born into this world is spiritually dead—and has no spiritual life (Genesis 2 v17; Matthew 8 v22; John 5 v24, 25; Romans 6 v23; Ephesians 2 v1, 5; Revelation 3 v1). This death separates the sinner from God.
- Physical death. Everyone born into this world will die physically except those believers who are alive when Jesus Christ comes back again (2 Samuel 14 v14; Romans 5 v12-14; Hebrews 9 v27). This death results in a separation of body and soul. The body dies and is buried. The soul lives—in Heaven or Hell.
- Eternal death or the second death. This is the destiny of all those who are dead spiritually, and who die physically in unbelief (Matthew 10 v28; John 3 v15, 16, 36; Revelation 2 v11; Revelation 20 v6, 14-15; Revelation 21 v8). This death means eternal separation from God.

Believers in Christ were subject to spiritual death before they were saved. They will experience physical death—unless they are alive when Jesus Christ returns. They will never experience eternal death. There is therefore no need for believers to fear death. Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we can cry “Oh death where is thy sting. Oh grave where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15 v55).

Unbelievers are spiritually dead; they will die physically and they will experience eternal death if they do not trust Jesus Christ.

What happens at (physical) death?

- The body dies and physical life ceases. The body is then usually buried—and it decays.
- The soul (and the spirit) of the believer go immediately to be with Jesus Christ in Heaven (Luke 23 v43; 2 Corinthians 5 v8; Philippians 1 v21-23; Revelation 14 v13).
 - ✓ Where is Heaven? We don’t know. But it is somewhere “up above” because Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven.
 - ✓ What is Heaven like? The complete picture is not available to us. But there are many helpful and beautiful descriptions—no sin, no death, no sorrow, no sickness and no separation (Revelation 22). Instead perfect joy, pleasure and activity.
 - ✓ Who is there? God, angels and believers. No one else.

- At the moment of physical death the souls and spirits of believers are glorified and made perfect and sinless (Hebrews 12 v23).
- The soul of the unbeliever goes immediately to a place of separation and punishment (Matthew 25 v41-46; Luke 16 v19-31; Hebrews 9 v27).

The Bible teaches the existence of Hell clearly and without any doubt. It is a place of intense suffering, and of separation from God; and it is eternal. The sin which sends people to Hell is the sin of unbelief and Christ rejection—and there is no second chance.

What happens then to the body?

- When Jesus Christ comes back again all bodies will be raised from the dead. Many Christians believe that there will be two resurrections—that of believers first and then, 1,000 years later, that of unbelievers (Luke 14 v14; 1 Corinthians 15 v22-24; 1 Thessalonians 4 v16; Revelation 20 v5-15). This viewpoint fits in with the pre-millennial teaching as explained on page 84 and illustrated on page 85. Others believe in a general resurrection (John 5 v28, 29; Acts 24 v14, 15). This viewpoint is generally believed by post-millennialists and a-millennialists. (See pages 84 and 85.)
- The resurrection body of the believer will be imperishable, spiritual, glorious and without sin (1 Corinthians 15 v42-44; 49).

It will be the old body which is raised again. That is what resurrection means. But that old body will be changed and glorified. That was what happened at the resurrection of Jesus Christ who was the first fruits (1 Corinthians 15 v23). Our resurrection will be similar therefore to His.

The new body will be like the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 15 v49; Philippians 3 v21; 1 John 3 v2).

Yet we will know each other, just as the disciples recognized the resurrected Lord (John 20 v16-18; 19-20; 27-29). The three disciples were able, in some way, to recognize or identify Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9 v28-33). Also those who had died and who were resurrected at the time of Christ's Crucifixion appeared unto many (Matthew 27 v52, 53) and were, we conclude, recognizable. In addition, Paul

referred to the believers at Thessalonica as his “hope or joy or crown of rejoicing . . . in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming” (1 Thessalonians 2 v19). This implies surely that he would know them and recognize them at that time.

- The bodies of believers who are alive when Jesus Christ returns will be instantaneously changed into immortal glorious bodies (1 Corinthians 15 v51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4 v17). God will, at that time, change the old former body into the glorified body as in the resurrection—but without them needing to die. Their souls (and spirits) will be glorified at the same time.
- When Jesus Christ comes back, the glorified souls (and spirits) of believers, who have died, will come with Him (1 Thessalonians 4 v14), and will be reunited with their risen glorified bodies.
- At the return of Jesus Christ all creation will be renewed (Romans 8 v19, 22-23).
- We will live eternally in these new bodies in a new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3 v13).
- At the return of Jesus Christ the bodies of unbelievers will also be raised again, and reunited with their lost souls. There is no information in Scripture describing their resurrected bodies. They will then be finally judged and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20 v12-15).

What do children need to know about death?

- Jesus Christ has died on the Cross and has taken the punishment for our sins—so that if we are saved there is no need to be afraid of physical death (Hebrews 2 v15). He died to give us spiritual and eternal life (the moment we trust Him), and the resurrection of our bodies from physical death when He returns. His death therefore deals, for the believer, with all three types of death.
- Jesus Christ rose again from the dead. He has conquered death—and because He rose again, so shall we. 1 Corinthians 15 teaches the importance, the value and the relevance of His resurrection for us. He has gone before us and will be with us when we follow Him through death.
- For the believer death is but the entrance to the glories of

Heaven. Although it is normal and natural to have some reservations about, or even fear of, death we can ask God to give us hope and joy as we think of it.

- For the unbeliever death is the end of opportunity. There will be no second chance and no purgatory. Instead there will be separation and punishment from God. But today is the day of salvation. The children who trust Christ will be saved and live for ever.
- We as believers need to pray for those who are not saved and to witness to them so that they also will live for ever. We need to pray that God the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts, and He is able to do this even in the last moments of life.

Four Miscellaneous Doctrines Teaching Ideas and Outlines

Doctrines of the Church

The goal of the teacher should be to see every child under his care become a worshipping, working and witnessing member of a Bible believing local church.

This means:

- *That the teacher should himself be such a church member.*
- *That the teacher should teach the truths outlined concerning the universal church (as an organism), and the local church (as an organisation).*
- *That the teacher should seek whenever possible, and as permitted by parents, to bring the unchurched children to a good church.*

You can use Bible Lessons to teach these truths

These will be found throughout the Acts of the Apostles. Almost every chapter will allow you to teach something about:

- *The beginning of the church (as an organism) (Acts 2 v1-47).*
- *The principles and ordinances of the local church (Acts 2 v41-47).*
- *The mission and work of the local church (Acts 4)*
- *The importance of being in a local church (Acts 14 v6, 7, 21-23; Acts 16 v1-4).*

You can use a flashcard lesson to teach these truths

- *Which part of your body is the most useful?*
- *Jesus Christ died for your sin*
- *Trust Him as your Saviour (personal application unsaved)*
- *You are now part of the worldwide church*
- *You are part of the body of Christ*
- *He is your Head*
- *You have a work to do*
- *You should be part of a local church*
- *You should worship, work and witness (personal application saved)*

Doctrine of Angels

The doctrine of angels is one which has often been neglected in our ministry to children, and children have many wrong conceptions because of the representation of angels they see in books and at Christmas time! Yet the Lord Jesus speaks of angels in connection with children in Matthew 18 v10. So we must teach children who angels are, and what their ministry is. Special emphasis should be laid on the fact that every believing child has a guardian angel. What a help and assurance this can be to the child!

You can use Bible lessons

There are many Bible lessons which portray and describe angels, and which will give you the opportunity to teach children about who they are—and what they do. For example:

- ✧ *The protection of unseen angels (2 Kings 6 v1-23 or Acts 12 v1-19).*
- ✧ *Angels—the servants of God (Luke 1 v11-20; 28-38; Luke 2 v8-20).*
- ✧ *The joy of angels at our repentance (Luke 15 v1-10).*

It should be noted, and taught, that the Angel of the Lord who appears frequently in the Old Testament was a theophany or pre-incarnation appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ (e.g., Genesis 18 v1-33; Genesis 22 v11; Genesis 32 v24-32 [with Hosea 12 v3-5]; Joshua 5 v13-15; Judges 6 v11-24; Judges 13 v3-23). He is often called or addressed as the Lord (Genesis 18 v13, 14; Judges 13 v22) and is worshipped (Joshua 5 v14; Judges 13 v19, 20, 23).

The Doctrine of Satan

It is necessary to teach children concerning the reality of Satan. We must not seek to frighten them but rather warn them, and we must be careful how we teach this subject. But it would be wrong to ignore it. "Forewarned is forearmed."

You can use Bible Lessons

Who he is and what he does can be illustrated and taught in a number of Bible lessons:

- ✧ *Satan the tempter and deceiver (Genesis 3)*
- ✧ *Satan the destroyer but under God's control (Job 1 and 2)*
- ✧ *Satan and his demons (Mark 5 v1-20)*

- *Satan and his attacks. Jesus Christ—our defender (Luke 22 v31-34)*
- *Satan and his destiny (Genesis 3 v15; Luke 10 v18; Hebrews 2 v14; Revelation 20 v1-3, 7-15).*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Do you have any enemies?*
- *God made the devil—a perfect angel*
- *The devil rebelled against God*
- *He is evil—and an enemy of God*
- *He is your enemy too*
- *He tempts you to sin*
- *Jesus Christ died—to defeat him*
- *Trust Him—He will help you (personal application unsaved)*
- *Resist the devil—prayer and God's Word (personal application saved)*

The Doctrine of Death

You can use Bible lessons

There are many Bible lessons in which someone dies; and a number of these will give opportunities to teach the children about death.

- *We do not need to fear death—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ*
- *Jesus Christ the victor over death—the raising of Lazarus (John 11)*
- *Peace in the face of death—the death of Stephen (Acts 7)*
- *Death is the end of the opportunity to trust Christ—the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16 v19-31)*
- *Death—the result of sin and disobedience (Genesis 3; Genesis 5 v5)*

You can use a flashcard lesson

- *Are you afraid of anything?*
- *God made man perfect*
- *Man sinned—death came into the world*
- *We are dead spiritually*
- *Our bodies will die*
- *We will be separated from God forever*
- *But Jesus Christ died and rose—to overcome death*

- *Trust Him—you will be alive spiritually (personal application unsaved)*
- *You do not need to fear death—or separation from God (personal application saved)*

Helpful Visuals from Child Evangelism Fellowship

- *The Church, God's Family (5 excellent lessons on the church from Ephesians) from European CEF*
- *Living God's Way (5 lessons on living and working together) from CEF Inc.*
- *Are You Afraid? (1 lesson on the occult) from CEF Inc.*
- *The Christian Soldier (1 lesson on protection against Satan) from CEF Inc.*
- *Is Satan Real? (1 lesson about the devil) from CEF Inc.*

Chapter 10:

Take Heed unto Thyself and unto the Doctrine

Paul reminds Timothy over and over again about the importance of doctrine. In 1 Timothy 4 v16 he encourages Timothy firstly to take heed unto himself. Is his life in order? Then secondly he asks him to take heed unto his doctrine. Does he understand it? Does he believe it? Is he teaching it?

Then he goes on to say, “Continue, or persevere, in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.” The word “save” used here by Paul refers, I believe, to present salvation from the power of sin (Matthew 1 v21; Romans 5 v10; Philippians 2 v12, 13; Hebrews 7 v25).

Paul was underlining here the importance of doctrine both for the teacher and for the listeners. This has been the main theme of this whole book. We have studied all the main doctrines of the Bible together for our own benefit, and we have tried to understand how best to teach these doctrines to children.

However, we have repeated many times that learning and understanding something is not enough. There needs to be application.

So what is the application of this book’s teaching to you and me? What are we now going to do?

I believe there should be two answers to this question—and these are answers which we have touched upon over and over throughout the book.

Firstly, we ourselves need to determine, in a new way, to study the main doctrines of the Bible. After listening to a number of lectures on doctrine, a worker with Child Evangelism Fellowship said to me, “I am going to make a new start in my studies. I have made up my mind to take time to study the doctrines of the Bible so that I can better understand them.”

I believe that this is a resolution we all need to make—whether we are young in the faith or more experienced. If we do so I am sure that there will be at least four consequences:

- We will get to know the Bible better, with more clarity and

less confusion.

- ✧ We will get to know God better.
- ✧ God will bless us in our lives and help us with our problems.
- ✧ We will be better able to help and teach others—especially the children.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3 v16).

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2 v15).

If you have determined to do this I would suggest the following:

- ✧ Set aside 30-45 minutes each day to study Bible doctrine.
- ✧ Find a guide which will help you to do this. I would suggest that you use this book as your guide. If you do not wish to do that choose a good fundamental book on systematic theology and use it. (See Bibliography on pages 194-195 for suggestions)
- ✧ Ask God to give you clarity of thought and an openness to His Word.
- ✧ Work your way through this “guide book” page by page—with your Bible beside you. Look up every Bible verse and reference.
- ✧ Use a notebook to keep a record of all the main headings. These will construct a framework of doctrine for you so that you can better see how everything fits together, and how simple and logical Bible doctrine really is.
- ✧ Teach the doctrines you have studied to children. You will learn more in this way than in any other.

Most important of all, it is necessary to pay careful attention to the practical applications to your own life of the doctrines you study. It is good to have a clear understanding of these doctrines in your head; but it is absolutely essential that what you have understood touches, affects and, if necessary, changes your heart, your relationship with God and your way of life.

Paul wrote to Titus that “they (the servants) may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2 v10). A life which is consistent with the truths studied, understood and believed will “embellish with honour” or “beautify the Bible” and make its message attractive to

unbelievers. **You** may be the only Bible which unbelievers read.

I want to challenge you to devote yourself to such a study. There is a veritable treasure trove waiting for you in the Word of God, but you need to have a plan and you need to dig. But there are diamonds, gold, silver, rubies and emeralds just waiting for you to find and enjoy.

That's the first application, and will be, trustfully, the first consequence and result of this book.

The second application is to make a new determination to teach the doctrines we have studied to the children. Paul wrote to Titus "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" or "You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2 v1). Paul reminded Timothy again "To reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine" or "to correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4 v2).

This involves several steps:

- You need to see the children's need for good clear doctrinal teaching
- You need to hear and obey our Lord's Command to become involved in this teaching ministry (Matthew 28 v20; 1 Timothy 4 v13).
- You need to find and take opportunities to teach doctrine to children:
 - ✓ in your home
 - ✓ in your local church and Sunday school
 - ✓ in a Good News Club or 5-Day Club
 - ✓ in a children's camp
- You need to study doctrine diligently so that you can understand what you are going to teach.
- You need to prepare conscientiously—so that your teaching will be interesting and attractive.
- You need to teach what you have prepared—and teach it well
- You need to apply what you have taught so as to make it relevant to the children's needs and everyday life.
- You need to pray that God will help the children to understand what you have taught—and that they will apply it to their own lives.

The Lord Jesus said in John 8 v32, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” It will also make the children free—as they come to understand it and apply it through your ministry. For “in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4 v16).

May God enable each one of us to be:

- A diligent student of doctrine (2 Timothy 2 v15)
- A dedicated teacher of doctrine to the children (Titus 1 v9)

And at the same time:

- A consistent and attractive “adorner” of doctrine to all with whom we come into contact (Titus 2 v10)

Amen!

My Teacher

*A Sunday school teacher, can't think of his name,
pulpitless preacher, who never found fame;
So faithful, so earnest, when I was a boy—
He stuck to his task, tho' I tried to annoy;
He never was missing, in cold or in heat,
A smile quickly lighted his face when we'd meet.
He taught by example, as well as by word,
This splendid old teacher, who honored his Lord;
He helped my young life, more than ever I knew.
Later years I remembered, and tried to be true.
I suppose he has gone now, to get his reward,
But because he was faithful, I now know the Lord!*

(Author unknown)

Bibliography

I am outlining a list of books which have been a real help to me personally down through the years in my study of doctrine:

↗ **General Books on Doctrine**

Elemental Theology by Emery Bancroft (Zondervan)
Christian Theology by Emery Bancroft (Zondervan)
A Body of Divinity by Thomas Watson (Banner of Truth)
In Understanding be Men by T.C. Hammond (Inter Varsity)
Essential Truths of the Christian Faith by R.C. Sproul (Tyndale)
Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem (Inter Varsity)
The Sovereignty of Grace by Arthur Custance (Presbyterian and Reformed)
Foundations of the Christian Faith by J.M. Boice (Inter Varsity)
Systematic Theology by L. Berkhof (Banner of Truth)
All the Doctrines of the Bible by Herbert Lockyer (Zondervan)
Truths that Transform by James Kennedy (Revell)

↗ **Specific Books on Doctrine**

Knowing God by J.I. Packer (Hodder and Stoughton)
The Knowledge of the Holy by A.W. Tozer (Harper and Row)
The Attributes of God by A.W. Pink (Publisher unknown)
The Joy of Knowing God by Richard Strauss (Loiseaux)
Our God is Awesome by Tony Evans (Moody Press)
The Sovereignty of God by A.W. Pink (Banner of Truth)
Focus on Christ by John Stott (Collins)
The Master Theme of the Bible by Sidlow Baxter (Tyndale)
Who Moved the Stone by Frank Morrison (Faber)
The Holy Spirit by John Walvoord (Dunham)
Saved by Grace by Anthony Hocksma (Eerdmans)
Amazing Grace by J.M. Boice (Tyndale)
Tell the Truth by Will Metzger (Inter Varsity)
The Gospel According to Jesus by John McArthur (Zondervan)
Faith Works by John McArthur (Word)

➤ **Books on Teaching Doctrine to Children**

There are really very few books which deal directly and comprehensively with this subject. But help can be obtained from the following books:

- * *To Teach Others Also* by R. Hudson Pope (C.S.S.M./Scripture Union)
- * *Talking with Children About God* by G.R. Harding Wood (Henry Walter)
Leading Little Ones to God by Marian Schoolland (Banner of Truth)
- * *Teaching the Word of Truth* by D.G. Barnhouse (Eerdmans)
Teaching A Bible Lesson to Children by J. Haiijer (European Child Evangelism Fellowship)
Teaching Sunday School by Brain Freer (Evangelical Press)
Bible Doctrine Explained for Children by B.A. Ramsbottom (Gospel Standard Trust)
Teaching Toddlers by Carol Miller (Rapids Christian Press)
Teaching Junior High by Carol Miller (Rapids Christian Press)
Teaching to Change Lives by Howard Hendricks (Multnomah Press)

➤ **Helpful Visuals from Child Evangelism Fellowship**

You will have found a number of these listed at the end of each chapter.

Child Evangelism Fellowship has published many more sets of flannelgraph and flashcard lessons outlining many books and sections of the Bible; and these lessons would also be helpful for the teaching of doctrine to children.

More details about all of these can be obtained from the following addresses:

Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc.
PO Box 348
Warrenton
Missouri 63383
USA

European CEF Headquarters
Kilchzimmer
4438 Langenbruck
SWITZERLAND

* These are, I believe, now out of print.