

A testament of devotion

GLIMPSSES OF GLORY

Ted Gibson

*Selected excerpts from his
Biblical Theology and Ministry
with special reference to The Holy Spirit*

Edited by Mark Ingram

As editor I dedicate this book to

My wife Rose who for over a decade has watched me collect Dr Gibson's writings and has encouraged me to complete this little book.

And my children Helen, David, Josh and Ben.

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Introduction

A little over three months after the historic Gallipoli landing of the Anzacs in 1915, an occasion of which our nation commemorates the 100th anniversary this year, Edward Gordon Gibson was born in Sydney. Australia has defined itself as a nation largely from the events of this bloody campaign and much of our national identity has been forged through the flames of that conflict which threw up into the Turkish air the virtuous embers of courage, daring and mateship. This has been fanned into an eternal flame back on the home soil of Terra Australis over the ensuing 10 decades. This historic event has been deeply engraved upon the psyche of our nation which as a result has moulded and marked us out as one of the great free nations of the world.

At one time in 1908 the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald wrote an impassioned prayer when he yearned that there might arise a "Soul Ablaze with the Fire Divine." Seven years later on 27 June 1915 his prayer was answered when Ted Gibson was born to his parents Ivie and Harriett. Little did he know that he would touch this nation in all states beginning with New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania training many leaders, pastors and missionaries who caught his fire of the Spirit and so preached the Gospel to this nation and then to many others beyond our borders. Gibson's preferred oft quoted definition of preaching was that of the D.G. Millar's from his book "Fire in thy Mouth." "To preach the Gospel is not merely to say words but to effect a deed... To preach is to become part of the dynamic event wherein the living, redeeming God reproduced His act of redemption in a living encounter with men through the preacher."

“Show me your glory” was the cry of Moses. This also was the cry of Ted Gibson for his own life and ministry. The grand theme of the Glory of God weaved its way into many lectures as a standalone topic and as a golden thread that wove together and permeated all his Biblical Theology. We heard about it in the lecture rooms, and in his devotions at chapel times with his students. We saw a glimpse of it in his face and life whether observing him publically or in private when speaking with students and others. He came alive when speaking about his God and this affect was infectious to others.

Below are four statements about God’s glory drawn from over 40 years of ministry. The first two are taken from devotions given at Perth Bible Institute during his first principalship then one from his printed student lecture notes in the 1970’s and finally a quote written in retirement.

“God’s glory is that which best reflects what He really is. The glory of God is in us because we will be the best external manifestation of His supreme delight in showing grace and mercy.”(1952)

“Christ is God’s glory. John 1:14. If we have seen Him we have seen the Father. We are most God-like when we are exulting in Christ because we have picked up something of the thrill of God’s being.”(1953)

“Moses had witnessed the awesomeness of Sinai – the thunder, lightning, the voice of God to Israel giving the Decalogue. But he was not satisfied that he had seen God’s glory – i.e. the display of might over Egypt and the revelation of the “ten words.” So Moses asked God to show him his glory - Ex 33:18. This ‘glory’ was the outward manifestation of the intrinsic character of the heart of God. That which was at centre rather than any peripheral qualities no matter how real these latter may be. Yahweh said He would show Moses His goodness – so He displayed His character in a twofold manner

(a) light (b) In His Name – Yahweh. But the character of Yahweh is seen in five expressions merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” (1970’s)

“The characteristics of God’s love are given in God’s display of His glory (Ex 33:18;34:6). The Name, Yahweh, means “I will be what I will be”. And just what he will be depends upon His character. Light when refracted shows itself to be colours of the rainbow. So God’s love is seen in five distinctive O.T. words merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” (Retirement)

His ministry lives on through the present ministries of other pastors and leaders (2 Tim2:22). This book is a companion to his “Life in the Spirit” published in 2009. His passion for God’s glory and his spiritual devotion which is saturated in the fear of the Lord deserves a hearing today. His writings draw out your heart after the living God and speak to today’s world with power.

Our true identity and significance as individuals as well as communities can only be found in the Christian faith. Hope and forgiveness in Christ alone needs to be trumpeted out once again. This can only be done with authenticity when one has a good grasp of the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. This grasp is not only with the head but first is in the deepest recesses of the hearts of his people. Gibson’s writings are like logs of Divine truth which are carefully laid on the hearth of our minds. These truths are derived from his insightful and incisive Biblical Theology, awaiting only the inextinguishable fire of the Spirit to melt our hearts; and so then we preach and witness as George Whitefield said a “felt Christ.”

“Can God survive in Australia?” Bruce Wilson asked over 30 years ago. Yes He can we answer with confidence in God whose gospel has been entrusted to us.

This book, outlining a glimpse of his life, influence and thought as well as giving a sample of his Biblical Theology as it relates to the Holy Spirit, plus a month of daily readings on the journey of faith, is accompanied with the prayer that the Lord might teach and inspire you to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Himself. May we too have a glimpse of His glory and our lives also become a testament of devotion.

Mark Ingram, June 2015

(A former student at BTCQ)

Glimpse of his Life

Edward Gordon Gibson was the fifth child born to Ivie and Harriett Gibson on the 27 June 1915 in Sydney. He had three older brothers and a sister, there being twenty years between the eldest brother Bert and himself. His parents were hoping for another girl!

Years later in a sermon he comments “A hymn we often sing on Mother’s Day runs –“Can a mother’s tender care cease towards the child she bears, yes she may...”.My own mother said to me one day,” The actual Scripture accurately says, “can a mother forget her suckling child.” Then she went on to inform me, “there is always movement and feeling in a mother’s breasts to remind her of her baby’s need to be fed.” Not having been a mother I, could not deny this. Similarly there is something in God our Father that registers every need of the children He has created in Christ Jesus. There are no unwanted children in the Father’s family and His care of us is absolute. Every felt need is responded to in His constant care.” (Sermon “Praying Through to Victory”).

In another sermon he commented that his mother said to him one day “Ted you are a wanted child.” Just why she said it Ted never traced that through with her but he knew that his parents would have liked their fifth child to have been a daughter! Nevertheless this affirmation worked its way into sermons like the one above where this time he applies the affirmation to the parallel family of his Heavenly Father without mentioning specifically that his mother had given him the same assurance in his earthly family.

He did his primary education at Haberfield School, then in 1928 undertook secondary education at Fort Street Boys High. He bore the brunt of many school ground jokes, wishing his parents

had given more thought to the initials of his name EGG! which were emblazoned on his satchel.

He excelled at school and was able to complete his Leaving Certificate. He wanted to be a maths teacher originally but ended up in an accountancy office where he undertook further studies and became an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Accountants in Australia.

As a young person he enjoyed tennis and soccer as well as map drawing. He would often draw and redesigned Sydney and its layout. Many hours were spent on this endeavour. Why, we might ask? Reflecting on this himself he said:

“It was a constructive operation where I was thinking in terms of change and securing change. I guess it related to an innate desire for reaching the ideal and doing something about it. It was a personal dream of what could have been and should be. Everybody must start here and whether it goes any further is determined by quite a number of factors. A spirit of adventure.” (Graheme Monteith “A Biography of Dr E.G.Gibson 1915-1967” Unpublished Dissertation 1995 BTCQ,p7) I wonder if his designs included train lines to those suburbs in Sydney today that are suffering transport problems due to lack of planning!

Either way, Dr G Campbell Morgan’s comments ring true for Ted Gibson’s youth:

“Youth is the time of vision; of choices which create direction for all the coming days...Youth is the time when life is rising to the full, when dreams are being dreamed...the time for building castles in the air, which precedes the actual strain and stress of endeavour; the time when holy, healthy ambition is singing its song to personality.” (Dr G Campbell Morgan – “Great Chapters of the Bible” pp85-86)

At the age of 15, one year before the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened, a bridge of saving grace was established between God and the youthful Ted Gibson. Two years of sitting under the faithful preaching of Rev Horace H Jeffs at Haberfield Baptist Church led to his conversion to Christ on Friday night 31 May 1931 and this event surely had the stamp of eternity written over his life! As a young man he was not swept along by the emotion of the occasion so delayed his baptism until he had read and wrestled with the scripture on this issue and was absolutely sure of his stand.

Along with four other young men, inspired and encouraged by the mentoring of their Pastor, they formed the Young Men's Evangelistic League. He often preached and during holiday times made himself available to do mission work to country towns in NSW. These five young men met together weekly for prayer and all eventually entered the pastoral ministry.

The call to ministry grew during these years and he writes "The Christian call could not be silenced and the sense of vocation could only be fulfilled in entering the full-time Christian ministry, seeming to cut short (to some of my friends, disappointingly) the possibility of a useful and lucrative business career." (Graheme Montieth p11)

When Ted began at the NSW Baptist Theological College in 1940, Rev G H Morling was his Principal and half way through a forty year tenure. Morling was passionate about the training of men for ministry and wrote the following words of encouragement, which shows something of his own spiritual dedication, to another student 20 years before Ted commenced.

On 8 Sept 1921 he wrote "You will not mind me giving you this little advice. Make your study part of your consecration to Christ. It is necessary for your ministry and if it is carelessly done it is not pleasing to the Master. So many students seem to divorce

their studies from their spiritual life. We must be whole men for Christ's glorious ministry. You have hard work before you but you will do it well for Christ." (Mark Ingram "The Life and Ministry of Rev F T Smith" Unpublished Dissertation 1984 BTCQ.p10).

The decade from 1939 to 1949 was one of adventure with many changes, study, and four home mission pastoral appointments. Cessnock 1939-40; Cronulla-Sutherland 1940-42; Croydon 1942-45 and Waverly 1946-49 were the churches where this keen and diligent young pastor cut his teeth. Ted undertook theological studies as well and pursued a courtship with Mona Colechin, who was affectionately known as Lass. Due to college policy they were not able to get married until after his course had finished so no time was lost and he was married on Thursday evening, 16 December 1943, after a four year engagement. Rev G H Morling officiated and a life-long friendship developed between them and Ted sought his counsel out many a time in relation to ministry appointments. Morling also gave him lecturing opportunities at the NSW College and all this was instrumental in shaping the readiness to accept his appointments to the various principalships.

The marriage of Ted and Lass was blessed with three children, Jennifer, Peter and James. From the Sydney pastorate they all moved to Perth where he commenced, in 1949, a ten year ministry as Principal of the Perth Bible Institute. Then it was to NSW Baptist College for just over a year in 1960 and then 6 years in South Australia (SA), firstly at the Adelaide Bible Institute and then the SA Baptist Theological College. The final ministry stint, and his longest, began in 1967 as Principal of the Baptist Theological College of Queensland (BTCQ) from which he retired in 1982.

His counsel and wisdom to students was much sought after and appreciated as evidenced in the following testimonies:

"(One occasion) I recall is that in one of our earlier

ministries when our children were quite young [one was a chronic asthmatic...we went to a Tropical Climate to help save his life]. Dear Dr Gibson came for a Weekend Teaching Ministry [I recall it being on his favourite topic of The Holy Spirit]. My son was having a particularly bad Asthma attack and we were up all night with him. Dr Gibson realizing our exhaustion took my dear Heather aside and told her to..."just sit in that comfortable chair...I want to show you something..." Heather was still quite scared of Dr Gibson so she put aside her fears and did as she was directed. Ted then began to share with her just "How" she needed to "Rest in the Lord" as she rested in that comfortable chair. He beautifully explained the need to "Totally rely on Jesus" to comfort her...as she felt the comfort of the chair supporting her exhaustion. We took that lesson to heart that day and determined to "Totally trust and rely on the Lord Jesus" for ALL our needs. A very precious lesson and a bonus on top of the excellent teaching on "God's Holy Spirit." (John Mills)

"In my second year for various reasons mainly related to my poor study methods and poor assignment technique, I fell behind in my assignments. This came to Doc's attention and I went to see him. As I sat in his office, he behind his desk and I in the chair in front, he talked with me. He adopted that air that sometimes came upon him, an air of seeming detachment. He alternately looked out of the sliding door and then at me. As we talked, he said to me: "Morris this slowness in submitting assignments is not a new problem is it?" I said, "Ah, no Doctor Gibson." He then said to me: "Morris some days ago I was at the dentist." I was concerned to hear about my Principal's dental health but was a little non-pulsed at its relevance to the matter at hand. Doc continued: "While I was in the dentist, I picked up a magazine to read. "Oh", said I, again a little fogged as to the connection between our conversation and the details of my Principal's visit to an oral hygienist's waiting room. "Morris, as I perused the magazine, I noticed that there was a picture of you in it." At these words, I knew instantly as to which

magazine he was referring and therefore the relevance of the matter to the conversation. He said, "The magazine was from the Agricultural College and below the picture there was a small verbal description of you as perceived by your fellow students. "At this point, I realized why many students thought that Doc was almost omniscient. He seemed to know all sorts of details about students and events in the college in an uncanny way. The magazine that he referred to was a year book of my Ag College. The description of me for that year was not particularly flattering particularly in reference to study habits with words such as "...so little study done...it is thought that passing of exams is due to much reading of the Good Book." I was so ashamed of this humorous but partly accurate description of me that I never took a copy of that annual magazine to my home and tried to hide it "away". I was absolutely amazed that "accidentally" Doc had come across this little character sketch. For the rest of the interview I simply nodded my head and mumbled "Yes Doc," "No Doc" as he outlined to me a simple strategy to tackle my problem. I left his office filled. My problem did not immediately disappear but I did make progress and managed to fulfil all the academic requirements of the Baptist College of Queensland and ultimately of MCD and subsequently many years later ACT at doctorate level." (Morris Lee)

"It was during my second year while on the Student Council in charge of Campus Maintenance when I had to discuss the maintenance program for the coming week that a friendship began to develop with Doc. He was not the most practical person that ever walked this earth and often I had to explain issues of maintenance. I must admit that I wasn't much better than him. It was during these times that he took the opportunity to share "a little word with me about what was happening in my life." I remember when he shared with me that he had heard that I had rejected the offer of financial assistance. He pointed out that this was attitude motivated by pride and that I was robbing someone

of the opportunity to serve God by giving, a lesson I have never forgotten.” (Philip Bryant)

An observation of Gibson’s concerning young pastors is worth considering:

“It is quite difficult to distinguish between personal ambition and the purpose of God. God puts you into a place for the purposes of growth. But never fall foul of the silly idea (which is quite unbiblical) that you don’t have to do anything, you just wait upon God and He will do everything. God’s commission is work: “Be fruitful, fill the earth, grow, take over”. So growth is written within the very fibre of biblical faith. Spiritual growth within ourselves, growth of souls, growth in the work of God, are His order. Yet the ego can be wrapped up in that anticipated growth. Therein lies our problem.”

“God usually does not give early success to young leaders. The tendency to human pride is so easy – no one is freed from its possibility. So we need to distinguish human ambition from divine vision. The way to keep yourself from failure here is to make sure that the growth of the soul accompanies the fulfilment of the vision. Growth in me as well as growth in the programme of God is vital.” (“Life in the Spirit”, p15)

A W Pink wrote: “It is not the revealed will of God that His people should spend their old age in idleness, He does not preserve them through all the dangers of youth and the trials of maturity that they should be mere cumberers of the ground.”

Dr Gibson continued to be purposely occupied throughout all his retirement years. Apart from being President General and Vice-President of the Baptist Union of Australia for a total of seven years concluding in November 1990, he actively wrote many A4-sheet bible studies in his little study at Carey Court, “Resthaven” in Brookfield, Brisbane. These were given to students and pastors

that crossed his path and also formed the bases for the fortnightly Bible Class that he conducted for six years until the end of 1990 at the “Resthaven” retirement village where he resided. Earlier that year he lectured in the lay preaching course at BTCQ and he also records fifty four preaching engagements for the year in fourteen different churches. On top of this he also addressed the “Church Leaders” and “Church Planting” conferences conducted by Queensland Baptists. 1989 was a very full year but he found it interesting and challenging and it involved considerable travel both interstate and overseas.

His dear wife Lass died in June of 1990 after two years of nursing home care and forty-six years of marriage. Dr Gibson would often during these final years read over letters which that they had written to each other during their courtship years as a way of connecting with her.

As he looked ahead for what was before him in 1991, he preached at the Tasmanian Keswick meetings at Camp Clayton which concluded on Jan 3. He then flew to Adelaide to attend the National Baptist Convention at Hahndorf, nestled in the Adelaide hills. After this conference the North Queensland College of Ministries in Townsville used his services lecturing in a week-long Summer School. He returned to Brisbane in time for the first semester studies at BTCQ where he had been asked to lecture three periods per week on Theology. He also conducted a period of Greek translation for senior students.

As you can see he was no “mere cumberer of the ground” and in the second semester of 1991, in the week before his death needed to sit down to lecture. He died in his sleep on 17 August 1991.

Glimpse of his Influence

1. He brought an awareness of the value of scholarship to Australian Evangelicals

He was one of the first Baptist pastors to pursue higher academic studies, and this he did intentionally when the current climate of opinion saw them as a threat to faith. This and his growing desire to stay in touch with secular thinking at the time led him to undertake formal part-time studies well into middle age. He completed degrees in MA; BEd; BSc (Econ); BD; ThD.

After ten years at Perth Bible Institute (PBI) he writes of his desire since his own college days:

In “Reviving Grace” (Christophany Dec1959). “During the last year of College training, the Lord sent a revival amongst us. He broke us down before the Cross and we were compelled to face the call of Christ to Overseas Missions. Some went overseas in response to this movement of the Spirit. Others of us, though we faced this matter out before the Lord, received His answer: “I want you at home.” Our Captain can deploy His force as He wills. At the beginning of my college course, I felt constrained of the Spirit to dedicate my life to show to Christ’s glory that scholarship and evangelistic fervour were compatible.”

He was the first Principal of PBI and later at BTCQ to hold a Doctorate. At the age of 39 in 1954, he was awarded a ThD from Berkley Baptist Divinity School in the USA. His thesis was titled “The Historical Development of the Holy Spirit.” This was achieved at considerable personal cost including leaving behind his wife and three children in Perth for a year.

2. He demonstrated an active commitment to inter-denominational co-operation

Not only was this evident through his principalships in Bible Colleges, but later in his last ministry he was a leader in the establishment of The Brisbane College of Theology which had its accreditation with The Queensland Board of Advanced Education. He wrote the initial constitution and was the first Dean. His shift from the Bible College arena to Baptist Theological Colleges in 1964 possibly reflects more the changing academic standards that developed at that time, than a loss of commitment to the cross-denominational co-operation.

3. He modelled a life-long commitment to evangelism/missions within Australia and overseas

Dr Gibson had a life long passion to be an evangelist. His gift, however, was in Bible teaching and his son Jim became the evangelist. Writing of his own interest in missions, which developed during his own theological college days, he reflected: 'The missionary message was then and now is the core of my interests.' ("Reviving Grace" Christophany, Dec 1959)

While at PBI during a summer recess he spent a three month stint at Marribank Mission in WA, actively ministering to the aboriginal people cared for by the mission as well as putting to good use his accounting skills.

In all his principalships he made sure that there were regular missionary emphases and deputations as a normal part of student life. He did much to stimulate the preaching of the gospel in the local church through active involvement in the Billy Graham Crusades, personal conversations, and in encouraging church planting. John Tanner in Brisbane appreciated his encouragement in the Mission to Queensland thrust in the early 1980s. From time to time in Queensland, Doc teamed up with evangelist Rev

Alan Cosgrove providing solid Bible teaching to complement Alan's evangelistic gifting. He also served on the National Board of the Australian Baptist Missionary Society for many years. He was convinced that all church members needed an ongoing commitment to evangelism and mission. This needed to be modelled by the leadership.

4. He took an active participation in committees during his ministry and retirement

Doc freely gave of his time where he felt it was needed. So whether it was College, local church, various Boards of Reference, or serving as President General of the Baptist Churches of Australia, he always gave of his best. He brought to these differing bodies an analytical mind, able to focus on the challenges, policies, and visionary gifts required to anticipate future needs. He always had an expectation that God was at work and immanent, and Ted often leavened the committee process with his sense of humour and a frankness that was nevertheless gentle.

The time devoted to these activities took precedence over writing for publication even during his nine years of retirement. In his first year of retirement in 1983 he spent six months of the year away from home preaching and teaching.

5. He evidenced a highly valued preaching and teaching gift

His daughter Jennifer believes he will be remembered most of all for these qualities. She writes:

“His students were his life and he kept in touch through letter and visits with a number of generations of those that passed through his hands. He brought to his lectures and sermons a strong sense of the framework of scripture and its systematic concepts. His teaching was warm, illustrated from life, often done with the characteristic twinkle in his eye. Though a somewhat reserved

person in casual social situations, his 'presence' and humour made him not only in command of the teaching/preaching situation, but accessible and approachable at the time and afterwards. Students knew when they would go to him for advice not only would he often have already perceived what was concerning them, but he was able to guide and encourage them to prayerfully do something about it."

Former students reflect:

"I am grateful to God for the opportunity to study under Doctor Gibson's tutelage. I always appreciated his often fresh expositions of the Bible. Not only were they faithful to the text but also he constantly strived to bring a heightened sense of the knowledge of God." (Morris Lee)

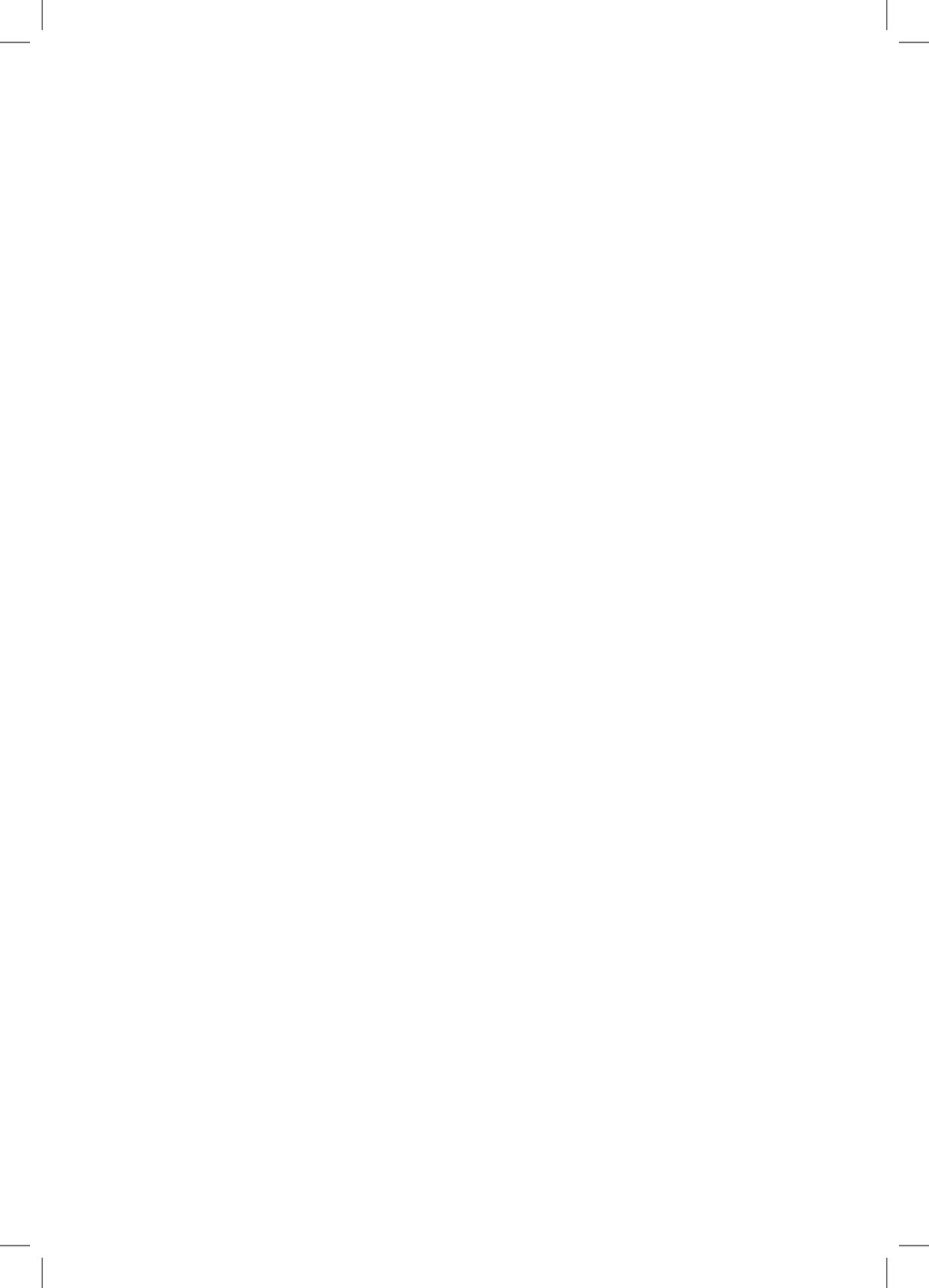
"Doc had an amazing ability to bring scripture alive by explaining often complicated truth using everyday illustrations from family life and life in general. We got to know something of his children, parents and friends as he used illustrations from his life experience to explain scripture." (Philip Bryant)

"That first impression was a lasting impression. Here was a very humble, shy, man, deeply committed to God and to His word. He had a phenomenal grasp of scripture in Hebrew and Greek. It never ceased to amaze me when a student would ask a question in class along the lines of "Doc somewhere in the Bible it says...." and Doc would respond by giving the chapter and verse and going on to explain what the Greek, Hebrew, and Septuagint, etc said. He had a phenomenal grasp of the scriptures in their original language. Doc also had an amazing breadth of knowledge beyond the scriptures in areas such as accounting, economics, history, education, law and science. Always his study was to enhance his understanding of God and His word. He used this knowledge to assist his teaching by often bringing information from these disciplines to prove or

support the scriptures.” (Philip Bryant)

“In the class room Ted came alive! I studied theology under him for the three years that I was a student pastor. His gift of teaching operated at such a high level that I could often remember his teaching almost word for word for weeks after the class. (This was probably God’s grace as Ted didn’t give many printed notes in those days). (Some years ago) while I was teaching a leadership class I repeated a segment of Ted’s teaching about what it means to be “transformed” when he traced the useage of the word from Romans 12 through the transfiguration to 2 Corinthians. A student asked me, “Where did you learn these things?” My reply was, “From my principal – Dr Ted Gibson – more than forty years ago.” (John Tanner)

All the above areas of influence and attributes displayed rested upon his own unshakable commitment to Scripture and to the person of God Himself. Those who regularly “sat under the Word” from his ministry would become aware of an approach to exegeses or theological teaching that was systematic and thorough, yet immediately useable by his hearers in everyday life and their own preaching and ministry.



Glimpse of his Thought

1. Chesed (Heb)

Many of his former students would remember the passion and frequency of his references to God's chesed.

In Exodus 34:6 it is translated as "covenant-faithfulness." The RSV translates it as 'steadfast love.' This word is found 245 times in the Old Testament of which 40 apply to men and 205 to God. Writing on the Nature of God in retirement he states:

"The basic meaning of 'chesed' is 'eager steadfastness' or 'loyalty.' In the Old Testament it mostly is used as steadfastness within a covenant relationship. When the covenant between God and Israel is in view, then God's chesed is His persistent determined steadfast love to Israel – a persistence seen in spite of the fact that Israel had forfeited all covenant rights to it because of its sin and rebellion. Hence God's "chesed" acquired the element of pardon and forgiveness necessary for the restoration of the relationship. As God is "chesed" He will never write Israel off."

On another occasion he wrote:

"You cannot exhaust the Chesed (faithfulness) of God. You know, brethren, we're sunk if we think we can as Christians exhaust the patience of God – the steadfastness of God. "By grace are ye being saved" is strictly "by chesed are you being saved" – by the consistency and the persistency of God's unalterable relationship. It is because of the grace poured into us as Christians we will get

through to the end.” (“Are the Times of The Gentiles Running Out?” Meeting of Ministers Adelaide, 10th April 1972)

Testimonies of others

Rev Glen Brooks, a former student of Doc’s, and retired Baptist pastor recalls an experience of the Day at the Cross on the Thursday before Good Friday in 1959 at PBI. He remembers this was the closest he had ever come to experiencing something of the glory of the presence of God when Doc spoke on Exodus 34:6, and that was 50 years ago!

Rev Dr Max Davidson a former student at BTCQ recalls:

“Classroom memories include some enriching emphases. The joke among the students was that every Doc Gibson lecture came back somehow to Exodus 34:5-6 and the **Chesed** of God. Doc followed the then popular Revised Standard Version translation of the Hebrew word, and made a great deal of the “steadfast love” of God, seen as his enduring and loving covenant commitment to his people. His emphasis affected many of the students.”

Charles Byrne, a member of the Yandina Baptist Church of which the editor was Pastor, wrote a letter on 23rd March 1987, where he graciously exhorts me not to drive the flock but lead them by continually pointing to the Lord our shepherd. Charles comments “ ...when Doc. Gibson came to speak he did more to make me want to be holy by just telling us how gracious the Lord is to us. Do you remember that day? He thrilled my soul. It comes back to what I have said often enough - Lift Jesus higher and that will draw all men to him.

Doc Gibson's message had the result of me saying to myself, - "O Lord I love you and want to serve you and be like you-

help me to be holy and Christlike." He didn't have to tell me to be holy - he just told me about our Father. We ended that service with a hymn. The last verse was a summation of how I felt that day - "But we make His love too narrow, By false limits of our own; And we magnify His strictness/With a zeal He will not own."....Go back to Doc Gibson's text - Ex 34:6-7- feast upon it. Don't feel compelled to whip the sheep into line, just lead them to the Good Shepherd. Expound him - holiness will follow....Docs message clinched it for me. His method won me."

Another student of his 35 years ago, was studying externally at the time (and at this stage had never met nor seen Doc). Listening to Doc's student lectures (BTCQ) on cassette tapes on "The Nature of God" they commented that, "If ever a man can make me feel that God loves me it's Dr Gibson." Again Doc was dealing with God's chesed.

2. The Holy Spirit

A special feature of his ministry was his emphasis on the Person and Work of The Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

"He is God personally present to fulfil in power all of God's programme purposed in love. God is personal not merely an energy. He is dynamic, that is, He is continuously acting or moving toward a goal and does so, motivated by love. "God is love" 1 John 4: 8,16. God was love before the worlds were made. To say "God is love" is to indicate that God is a plurality - and the N T indicates that the plurality is threefold, bearing the titles:-Father, Son, Holy Spirit. But the New Testament love (agape) has a distinct meaning.

It is not basically an emotion or sentiment, though exceedingly “warm”. Agape (love) is self-giving. Thus whenever “love” is used of God or of man’s relation to God, it contains two basic ideas, that of “choosing” and of “giving oneself for or to the object of that choice.” God in love gave Himself for us at Calvary (1 Jn 4:10,13) and in love gives Himself to us by residing in us.(Acts 2:38; Jn 14:23)

Love’s purpose is never less than mutual self giving. God’s love could never be complete or consummated at Calvary, essential though the cross was for our redemption. God’s love can only be fully satisfied in His giving Himself completely to a man who freely chooses God. When God made man in the initial creation He made a creature possible of love’s response and capable of being in dwelt by God. Adam was potentially the dwelling place of God but this he never became because the choice of both Adam and Eve was rejection of God. Jesus was true man. What Adam failed to become Jesus was-God’s Spirit in dwelt and Spirit-infilled Man. (Lk 4:1; Heb 2:14; Jn 14:10; 1Tim 2:5)

So God gave himself **for** us on the cross and **to** us with the gift of the Spirit. Calvary and Pentecost are inseparably linked.”

Dr Gibson here is saying that Calvary and Pentecost are linked like a couple at the altar exchanging vows promising all **for** each other but this then needs to be completed in the giving of oneself **to** each other in life long mutual self-giving.

In c1981 Dr Gibson wrote a two and a half page reading guide on “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit” for the Continuing Education Programme at BTCQ. In his introductory comments he notes that:

“There are two weaknesses generally in the literature available. Firstly, there is a tendency to rush into the New Testament material without first undertaking an adequate study of

the Spirit in the Old Testament. After all, the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of Joel 2:28 as quoted by Peter....”

“The second weakness is the tendency to give the doctrine of the Holy Spirit without adequate reference to God’s overall purposes in the world and for the world. The Spirit is always God acting in power to fulfil all aspects of God’s programme for the world that he created in love. The Theology of the Holy Spirit can never be separated ultimately from the whole range of the Doctrine of God.”

Much of his own work over his life ministry redresses these weaknesses outlined. In his notes:

“The Holy Spirit and Christian Personality ” c1983-4, he writes “...Everywhere in Scripture God is portrayed as dynamic, operating with purpose and as moving inevitably toward a goal of his own choosing (Eph 1:9-10). In all this the Holy Spirit is seen as active. He is God, fulfilling in power the programme determined by God. References in Scripture to the Spirit are given in contexts in which something special is occurring in respect to that programme.”...

“The Spirit of God acts in love with perfect understanding and with adequate power to achieve all the divine goals.”...

“It is the Spirit who enables man to fulfil God’s purposes for him as man continues to live by faith in his Creator.”

“The distinctive work of the Holy Spirit is to bring to pass the purposes of God, not merely to maintain creation.”

“The Holy Spirit is God personally present to fulfil in power all of God’s plan, purposed in love. The Spirit is personal and dynamic, that is, He is continuously acting in power towards God -

determined goals with care and concern. The divine programme is outlined in the Abrahamic Covenant - Gen 12:1-3; 22:16-18. God's outline of intention involved 3 matters - personal blessing on the Patriarchs; creation of a great nation (Israel); and all nations of the earth to be blessed through Abraham's 'seed'."

"What is the role of the Holy Spirit in outreach?"...."The residential presence of the Spirit in the believer enables outreach to be fruitful. The expression, "filled with the Spirit" is used of the Spirit fulfilling the divine programme through the full control of one committed to Christ."... "Christ requires committed people for the power of the Spirit to operate. This operation is always through an available Christian"... "Outreach is not an option to believers. Those scattered after the martyrdom of Stephen went everywhere proclaiming the Gospel. Evangelists, missionaries, church-planters may require special allocations by the Spirit, but each person in whom the Spirit dwells is by that fact alone constituted by God as an outreach for the Kingdom, and is a part of the fulfilling of the divine purposes – in Abraham's seed (Christ) all nations are to be blessed."... "The function of prayer for outreach is to create a unity of the Spirit and the outreach, so that the Spirit may achieve His redeeming purposes. It is in prayer that the outreach makes his own spirit available for the Spirit's purposes."... "Prayer is the awareness of the Spirit's planning coupled with my ready availability to Him for its fulfilment."

In a handwritten one page A4 size notes (possibly late 1989, used perhaps for a sermon and maybe one of his final writings on the Holy Spirit), entitled "The Spirit's Relation to the Biblical Programme," he gives this definition at the beginning "SPIRIT(HOLY) – God personally present to fulfil in power all of God's declared programme, purposed in love. The overall purpose – God fully dwelling in and among his people. Rev 21:1-3."

While President-General of the Baptist Union of Australia, he wrote a series of articles called "Sowing to the Spirit" (1984) republished in 2009 as "Life in the Spirit". In study No (2) commenting on Romans 8:19-26 he concludes:

"So this text is saying to you and to me that in the whole programme of God the Spirit, who knows the depth and the lengths, is the One who moves within us to will and to do of God's good pleasure. And we discover as we move along with the Lord that He surprises us with what He has planned. Have you not found it so?

"Yes, you have the Spirit within who is pleading on your behalf, who is laying hold of your infirmities, praying according to eternal purposes. The net result is that if you walk with Christ, submitting yourselves to Him, he will lead you and enable you to do your part in His grand strategy."

"You will find Romans 8:28-29 eloquently applicable, 'We know that God is causing all things to work together for good to those who are committed to (who love) God, to those who are called according to His purpose.' "

In a series of articles called "Love's Fellowship in the Spirit" (1977) he states, "the expression "Spirit of God" in the Bible is God achieving something that the environment if left to itself could never produce." And further on he writes:

"..God's Spirit is God Himself personally present in power to fulfil in love God's dynamic programme. Thus the "Spirit of God" is not to be equated with some principle of preservation in man himself, but God moving transcendently into a situation to change the status quo. The Spirit ever moves into my humanness to change and redirect, to elevate and transform."

In a study called "The Holy Spirit and the Old Testament" (c1970's), the following comment heads a list of eleven "pointers for understanding significant references." "Ruach (Spirit of God) when mentioned, is underscoring some supernatural operation of God relative to God's ongoing dynamic purpose for man and His world." In a complimentary paper called "The Spirit Related to Individuals in OT"(c 1970's) he states, "Every mention in the O.T. of the Spirit's relation to individuals is to be seen as Yahweh carrying forward, in spite of human weakness and foreign socio-political forces, the plan of establishing Israel. This Spirit activity on individuals was therefore always with national intent."

At the conclusion of this paper he writes:

"There is no idea of the Spirit abiding residentially in an individual so as to produce an ontological change, that is, an alteration of being. Regeneration is restricted to the New Testament era. Yahweh's Ruach is not to be equated with impersonal power but is always Yahweh personally acting in power to alter the status quo of the developing national situation and so bring it into line with Yahweh's chosen purposes."

In the introductory comments of a 5 page article entitled "The "Telos" of the Spirit (from Eden to Paradise)" he observes:

"As the Spirit was involved in the initial creation (Gen 1:2) so the consummation of God's purposes in the New Creation will be fulfilled by the Spirit. (Rom 8:23; Rev 22:17). The Programme of God included the remedy for sin and its consequences, but also the fulfilling of His goal for the original creation."

He wrote in 1967 the following statement which I feel, in all my research into his life and writings, truly typifies him or most accurately represents his own spirituality:

“The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the biblical witness to the immanence of God and when the teaching on the Holy Spirit is alive, there is no sense of the remoteness of God.”

3. Prayer

In his principalship years (1949-82), it was his custom to get up every day at 6am, make his wife and himself a hot honey and lemon drink then retire to his study for his private devotions before breakfast at 7am.

The student’s devotions at PBI for the commencement of the academic year in February 1952 began with the words, “The devotional life is the life lived in conscious fellowship with God.” Dr Gibson knew himself that the minister’s life is the life of his ministry. That being true then surely the heartbeat of his life is the devotional life. So the New Year began with a conscious deliberate acknowledgement of the necessity of this truth to be incorporated into the very fabric of the lives of both students and Principal.

He punctuated every 15 minutes of his work and studies as a pastor with prayer - and so experienced something of the spirit of praying continually. I can personally recall him saying, “I can honestly say in all my life I have never let a day go past without praying for my children.”

His daily pattern when he awoke in the morning was to say “Good morning Lord – what do you have in mind for me today?”, and when he came to put his head on the pillow at night was to affirm, “Lord, I belong to you.”

I recall a theological class in 1981 where Dr Gibson modelled the devotional reading of Psalm 34 before a class of

forty-five students. You could have heard a pin drop as we were all transported into the presence of his God. Before commencing he said that he was conscious of the artificialness of such an exercise. Even so he was prepared to attempt to model before us how he lived in the Psalms. There was no showiness, just delight in the living God who has come into focus through Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit.

A selection of statements concerning prayer:

“While many private prayers, in the nature of things, must be short; while public prayers as a rule ought to be short and condensed, yet in our private communions with God, time is a feature essential to its value.” (1953)

Rom 8:27 “For prayer to be effective it must be Spirit inspired. One evidence of reality in prayer is persistence.” (1950’s)

“Prayer brings release of power by God’s Spirit within. This power is to be seen as ‘love’. Thus prayer is love in action. Love needs to be recognised as a force not merely as an attitude. Love (agape) is self-giving and hence is self-projection energised by and directed by the Holy Spirit.” (1970’s)

“We give ourselves to prayer so that we are correctly related to the situation God is presently at in His global strategy. As we do not know just what that is, we depend upon the Spirit inwardly making intercession for us in an inaudible manner, by deep down yearnings.” (Retirement)

Rom 15:30-33 “Prayer is essential work for the Kingdom. Paul urges them to agonise unitedly...in praying for them. The basis of achieving prayer is that it is through (dia+G) Jesus Christ, and that it is love in action – a love imparted and maintained by the Holy

Spirit, and the focus of the prayer is the extension of the Kingdom of our Lord.” (1970’s)

The boon of the New Covenant is to know God – Jer 31:34; Heb 8:11; Matt 11:27; Jn 17:3. This “knowing God” has two basic sharing elements:

1. Share life itself – existential element.
2. Share life’s program – dynamic element.

There are two essential types of prayer:

Fellowship Prayer: People who live together, share together.(A Christian in Private Prayer 1989)

1. Prayer begins by an awareness of God’s presence Heb 13:5.
2. Prayer continues in mutual self-giving and sharing. I speak. God speaks.
3. The prayer relationship moves in continual awareness of our contrasts:

His greatness/my littleness. His faithfulness/my weakness. His limitlessness/my finiteness. His adequacy/my inadequacy. All I am is of Him. Hence there is the sacrifice of praise. Heb 13:15; Acts 2.47.

4. Though prayer is a Creator/creature relationship, it becomes operative on a new basis when the relationship becomes believer/Saviour.

Creative (Dynamic) prayer

“Creative prayer or dynamic prayer is related to the achievement of the divine programme in the affairs of men.” (1970’s)

“Dynamic (creative) prayer is the mutual sharing in the achievement of the divine programme.” (1970’s)

“Creative praying is related to the achievement of the divine programme in the affairs of men”. (1977)

“It is through the praying saint that God gets his will done in the affairs of men.” (1984)

“Creative prayer – our co-operation with God in getting His will manifested in earthly situations.” (1989)

“God’s goal is that Christ might have all things headed up in Him, Eph 1:9-10. Four essentials of creative prayer are:

1. Identification with Christ’s programme – in love and obedience I accept His programme.
2. Acceptance of God’s commitment to us of the Great Commission, Mt 28:19. I accept the responsibility of the creative commitment given by God to men, hence to me personally. It is also a recognition that God is sovereign in every situation, Rom 8:29.
3. Availability. Psa 37:4-6; Jas 1:7-8. There needs to be a recognition of the will of God in each situation coupled with my readiness to be available to God for any participation he may require of me in that situation.

4. Activation. Creative prayer requires action. The action must be God-revealed and for the benefit of God's stake in the situation. The fulfilment of one's prayer requires action in faith, hope, love.

Faith - commitment of myself to God for His fulfilment of His will.

Hope - an expectation from God to the fulfilment of that purpose.

Love - a focus on the needs of others, not upon my own. Mt 6:14,33."

"The undercurrent of creative prayer is "thanksgiving." This is not just saying 'thank you' but is given **in anticipation of answered** prayer. It is the response of the heart to God's sovereignty and certainty."

"Creative prayer has to do with God's ongoing programme. He plans and works towards a goal."

4. Healing in the Church

The subject of healing was always one of particular practical interest for him.

I am aware of three papers. The first "The Modern "Healing" Movements" was a 10 page paper completed at PBI in 1957.

This paper is a prime example of Gibson's thoroughness in research and ability to collate, order and analyse an issue giving clear biblical perspectives and fresh insights.

There was no simple "Google search" for him but the slow physical search and reflective reading of books from the previous 6 decades 1890 – 1957 – and 36 in all! – with 20 being published for the first time in first half of the 1950's. So it was a hot topic at the time for the churches. He always addressed the issues of the day.

Post 1966 he revised the original paper completed nearly 10 years earlier consulting and analysing the contribution of a further 22 representative published books since 1955. Its new title was "Raising The Healing Potential Of The Church".

This work formed his historical and practical/pastoral summary on the issue.

Finally at BTCQ he developed a new 2 page biblical study sheet for students entitled "Healing And The Atonement" – his own work emerging out of his research.

Concerning the prayer of faith in James 5:15 he writes :-

"This is not just a general belief in God but trust in God to fulfil His revealed will in the specific situation under consideration. The "prayer of faith" (Jam 5:14) of the elders for healing was not a psychological intensity of belief in God's goodness but a prayer based upon the revealed will of God in the specific case. The group praying needs to wait upon God till He shows His hand. Then the expectant faith becomes the prayer of faith." (Healing and the Atonement c 1970's) Gibson also noted with this passage that "there must be the release of all inhibitions by *mutual* confession within the love union of the Church. The "confessing" and "praying"

are in the continuous tense and are not mere actions at the time of, and with a view to, healing. Each is mutual –“to one another”. Healing is but one result of such a fellowship of love.”

He further comments “Christ is indeed sovereign (to heal or not to heal) but allowance must be made for God’s will to work within the level of man’s understanding and free will. Man’s discovery of the laws of health on the levels of the body, psych, emotions, and spiritual life lie within the will of Christ. God does work by law.... We need to learn more of the immanent activity of the Spirit within His established laws of psychosomaticism...God’s will that we should fly in aeroplanes coincided with our discovery of how we could. God’s will does not lay aside the need for our continual advance in discovery of His laws of health. And when we discover them we can only flout them at our peril and then cannot rightly bypass them in a seeming “spiritual” act of faith in God.”

The conclusion of the second of his papers reads:-

“As leaders we should aim at the release of the Spirit in revival power by preaching and praying for the fulfilment of James 5:16 in all our fellowships. The message of the rest of faith and of the sovereignty of the Lord in all aspects of life is essential for revival. This will automatically raise the healing potential of our Churches. Let us not reverse the divine order.”

In his final paper “Healing and The Atonement” referring to James 5: 14-16 he states “It is a pity that so few believe God can give miracles of healing. We have left these verses out of Christian practices to our own great loss.”

Did his life show elements of the mystical or was it devotion on fire?

He referred to God on three separate occasions in his notes as: 'Absolute Love,' 'The Divine Presence,' and 'The Eternal Presence.'

Max Davidson, a former student and lecturer colleague with Doc, recalls him saying that there was some good stuff in Thomas a' Kempis classic book "Imitation of Christ." Rev Dr Max Davidson as a faculty member in his first year at BTCQ in 1982, and Doc's concluding year, recalls:

"On one occasion I mentioned to Ted as we passed in the office that my class topic that afternoon was redemption. His response was one of passion and enthusiasm, 'Redemption, oh wondrous story!' Indeed, passion and enthusiasm were a Gibson hallmark. That is how I remember his talks in the Principal's Hour and chapels when both a student and a colleague."

John Tanner recalls, "...There was a mystical streak that related to his prayer life. In his later years he was a member at Ashgrove. I have a clear recollection that every time I preached there Ted would sit through the sermon with his eyes closed and his face slightly upturned. I assumed that he spent the whole message praying for me and communing with the Lord. I hope this was a positive thing and not a reflection of his impression of my poor preaching!"

Angelo A Giovas, a former student in the early 1980's, recalls being "...impressed when, (under a level of frustration with myself) I went to Doc looking for help in my desire to want to know/experience God at a deeper level. Given Doc's mystical streak I was amazed by his empathy and encouragement. My recollection was that it (his response to the question) was neither

prescriptive nor dismissive. It seemed to have a balance between “yes, it IS possible to know God in a real experiential way, but it takes time and application to grow in that capacity.”

In his doctoral thesis in 1954 Doc writes:

“There has been of recent years a quickening of interest in mysticism. This generally represents a reaction from authority of Church and from that of the Scriptures and an acceptance of the authority of reason infused with an experiential content. The rational movement that would recognize the work of the Spirit as generally operative in the religions of men seeks to find common ground among these religions on a mystical level. Both C E Raven and W R Inge are typical of this tendency. The latter thinks that the Quakers with their stress on Inner Light represents the religion of tomorrow. But W R Inge admits that he is a Plotinist first and a Christian next. The mystic approach may have been of service to remind theologians of the possibility of union with the divine and so draw our attention to the reality of the yearning for personal perfection. H M Reid writes. ‘To the mystics, the Spirit is God’s love immanent in the world, sanctifying men by instilling into their hearts the passion of Love to God.’ But no mystic system that ceases to have Christ and the Cross as essential centre in thought and practice can be called Christian; and immediately Christ is so centralized His **agape** becomes in us directed neighbourwards.” (pp416, 417)

Bruce Thornton commenting on Principal G H Morling, whom Doc Gibson referred to as a leading Australian mystic, states:

“He ‘thirsted for holiness of life, made available by the work of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit’. It was this that drove him to the study of mystical theology – but always, as he would say, with the correctives of Scripture – and caused some to describe him as a mystic.” (“Living with the Spirit” 2004 p vii)

In 1971 G H Morling gave the Annual Lecture at BTCQ on “The Mysticism Element in Christian Religion”, and Doc Gibson personally transcribed and edited the message for distribution to students and anyone else who might have been interested. He obviously noted the great helpfulness of the address and wanted to have it circulated in a printed format.

I believe what Bruce Thornton said of G H Morling as a man is equally applicable to his onetime theological student Doc Gibson, “he developed a strong desire for a relationship with God in which there was intimacy, immediacy and continuing dialogue.” (“Living with the Spirit” 2004 pvii)

Doc learnt to use his own language of the heart and rarely quoted other spiritual masters to underscore and add weight to what he was conveying. As his esteemed principal G H Morling had his own unique winsome style in his 1951 book ‘The Quest for Serenity,’ where he quoted from a range of spiritual masters and mystic writers, so too Doc lets the force and spiritual thrust of a warm patently biblical devotion of life in the Spirit slowly creep up on you – and you in response are left hungering and thirsting for more. His writings bore the mark of one who had an unmistakable acquaintance with God.

The patent centrality of a Christocentric devotion was the hallmark of his life and ministry. Doc would agree with Thomas Kelly’s words, “Let us be quite clear that mystical exaltations are not essential to religious dedication...many a man professes to be without a shred of mystical elevation, yet is fundamentally a heaven-dedicated soul...The crux of religious living lies in the *will*, not in transient and variable states.” (Thomas Kelly “A Testament of Devotion” 1957, p22)

And also with the following by Thomas Merton, “The disheartening prevalence of false mysticism, the deadening grip

that false asceticism sometimes gets on religious souls, and the common substitution of sentimentality for true religious feeling – all these seem to warrant a little investigation of the subconscious substrate of what passes for ‘religion.’” (Thomas Merton “No Man is an Island” 1983,pp37,38)

Doc Gibson didn’t try to explain in any detail the experiential side of Christian experience in his writings. He kept no journal or diary in his later years that I am aware of where he outlined his own personal thoughts on his fellowship with God. His warm pastoral writing in his retirement years was in essence his own testament of devotion with his love for God clearly permeating everything. There was no attempt to go into the philosophical side of the ‘union with Christ’ relationship.

He did though in his writings display immediacy about his walk with God and had a pervasive sense of the immanence of God. This was demonstrated in his notes on the book of Hebrews where on four occasions in Hebrews, the expression ‘draw near to God’ is used and each time they are in the present continuous tense in the Greek. He stressed that we didn’t need to ask for God’s presence because God is present and we need to develop a true spiritual awareness of this fact, and live in the reality of it. He urged student pastors to learn in leading worship with their people to cultivate the art of helping the people experience the presence of the God who is there amongst them. We don’t need to pray asking that God would be present but thank him for the fact that he is, and enjoy the worship and praise offered to him.

In a paper on the Distinctive Marks of the People of God, he noted that, “the people of God have God’s presence. Moses reminded God that God’s presence distinguished God’s people from all others (Exod 33:16). Israel initially had the tabernacle which was replaced by a Temple by Solomon. These sanctuaries existed

that God may dwell among them (Exod 25:8). Paul reminded the Corinthians that we individually (1 Cor 6:19), and collectively (3:16) are God's temple. Jesus in the upper room said to his disciples: 'If a man loves (chooses) me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him and we will come to him making him our home (resting place) - John 14:23....God's presence is by the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:37; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6.'

He makes another point that "the people of God are his "taught ones"...To know God is to know Him in personal fellowship and to enjoy His purposes and power. Church leadership is the medium by which the people of God discover and enjoy what God is and what He can be in us and for us. The people of God are all taught of God (John 6:45). We can only be a truly worshipping people as we know the truth as it is in Christ Jesus – John 4:24; Ephes 4:21." His seventh and concluding remark I will quote in full:

"The People of God respond in love. God in choosing His people in love also gave Himself to His people. Love chooses and gives oneself for and to the one chosen. Hence two characteristics of God are blended. He chose in love and he is faithful to all His love-promises. God's faithfulness is seen in His constancy, His mercy and His loving kindness. God refuses to change His choices. The gifts and callings of God are without change of mind (Rom 11:29). This is emphasized in such verses as Neh 9:32; Psa 89:33; 100:5, 145:8; Joel 2:13; Mic 7:20. In the New Testament the word "grace" is often referring to this characteristic of God. He is ever ready to forgive and restore and by His constancy of grace we persevere. The Old Testament refers to the Godly Ones (Psa 4:3, 30:4). Thus God's faithfulness requires a reciprocal obligation of faithfulness by His people. Similarly we, the people of God, are to show the same faithfulness to God. To love God involves the giving of myself to God continuously and permanently. Love motivates but does not of itself inform. Hence Jesus said, "If you love me you

will keep my commandments – John 14:15, 15:10. Love to God is indicated in our desire to please Him. What pleases Him can only be known by listening to His Word (Rom 10:17)”

Dr D Martyn Lloyd – Jones once made the comment that reading the Puritans writings does something to you, and this “does something to you” power is seen in the patently thorough-going biblical writings of Doc Gibson’s ministry.

The influence of his Australia wide ministry continues today. Many pastors and missionaries have fond memories of their student days under his oversight. Only eternity will reveal the true influence of this man’s love and devotion to God. Like David of old “he served God in his generation” – may we do likewise.



Love's Fellowship in the Spirit

The following studies were first published in the fortnightly publication "The Australian Baptist" in 1977. The editor's hunch is these writings are the abridged version of a 250 page manuscript bearing the same title which was written during a study leave period in the United States in 1975 and intended for publication upon his return to Brisbane. Unfortunately this never did eventuate and the whole manuscript remains 'lost'.

There is a definite symmetry to the work tracing themes through from creation in Genesis 1 to the consummation of all things in the New Heavens and New Earth in Revelation 21/22. The first 4 studies in this series have never been reproduced in any of his other works, and I have collected over 600 A4 pages. The style of writing is different from some of his other works and there is an absence of any personal reference. They have more of a didactic/teaching feel, fitting for a user friendly theological textbook.



1

LOVE SHARES

Love involves a plurality of persons. Love can never be satisfied merely by a person's relation to things but in persons sharing with persons. As Martin Buber would say: life is basically an I-Thou, not simply an I-It, relationship (Luke 12:15).

This series of studies reviews the Biblical drama of God in love sharing Himself with that special creature called man.

As God does nothing in general but everything in particular – the drama is about God and YOU.

Genesis 1:2 introduces us to “Spirit of God.” He was moving over the face of the waters. Grammatically, “Spirit of God” in the Hebrew could be translated “wind of God” or “mighty wind” (NEB), but such a translation is out of harmony with the context. The Hebrew verb translated “move” carries the idea of “fluttering care” as used of the eagle fluttering over the eaglets (Deuteronomy 32:11).

MAN IS THE PEAK

Genesis 1 is not simply about a series of creative acts with man at its peak. It is the story of God and man. God initially prepares a suitable environment for the man He is about to create.

References to the Spirit indicate both super-normality and purposefulness. As Dr Leon Morris remarks in his little book, **“Spirit of the Living God,”** the Hebrew word *rauch* does not simply mean wind but “fierce wind,” not “breath,” but “strong breath,” not “Spirit” but God doing something “supernormal.”

Thus the expression “Spirit of God” in the Bible is God achieving something that the environment, if left to itself, would never produce. “Spirit of God” may thus be defined: God Himself personally present in power to fulfil in love His dynamic programme.

In the New Testament it becomes clear that the “Spirit of God” is a differentiation within the God, who is love.

To say “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8, 16) is to say something about what God is and was before creation. God always was a plurality in mutual self-givingness. For want of a better word, we call these pluralities “persons.”

In creation God speaks and the Spirit produces. The Word and the Spirit are always joined. *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.* (Psalms 33:6). *And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said* (Genesis 1:2-3). The creative word carries both the divine purpose and the divine fiat. The result was a person called man in an environment specially structured for him.

As a person this man had self-awareness and self-determination, and was capable of both communication by speech and also of response of heart and will. The creation of this person called man involved the following three basic aspects.

(1) The Purpose of Man’s Creation This is “*to rule the world*” (Genesis 1:26, 28) as God’s representative. The Fall of man

did not cancel this dominion as Psalms 8 and Hebrews 2:5-9 make perfectly clear. L. Verduin in "**Somewhat Less Than God,**" calls man a "*dominion-haver.*" It is in harmony with, and in fulfilment of, this purpose that we are made to sit together with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6).

(2) The Basis of Man's Dominion Status. Man's basic response to God was "faith." This faith for Adam was a glad recognition of his complete creaturely dependence upon his Creator who, in absolute care, was providing and would provide all as required and promised. Thus faith as creature-response is determinative of man. The entrance of sin did not create the need for faith.

Jesus, who did not sin, lived by faith for He was true man. This human faith has three elements: knowledge of God, trust in God, active obedience to God. The relationship of faith was established by God's creative act. There is no suggestion that man was free to enter or did enter into a pact with God or make any arrangements or terms with God. God and man were in a face-to-face relationship. God communicated to His creature the basic answers to the final questions: Who am I? Why am I here? Who are YOU? Whose world? The tree called "The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" was a reminder that it was God's prerogative to determine good and evil.

The limitation of man's creatureliness meant that his knowledge could never be from himself sufficient in self-understanding and in objective know-how to make final moral judgments and initiate eternal goals. It was precisely over this point that God contended with Job. For man to assume this prerogative was to court death and loss.

TRUST IS NATURAL

But Adam and Eve trusted God. Trust is natural to man. On the basis of God's answers to the final questions, man trusts. This trust is commitment of himself to God for God to undertake His responsibility of absolute care and to fulfil all His promises. Trust is a personal-to-person word and is the core of the "faith relationship." And this knowledge of and trust in God leads gladly and inevitably to active obedience to God in His ongoing programme for man and this world.

- (3) The Consummation of the God-man Relationship.** God created in love. For love to consummate it needs love's response. God could not give Himself fully and finally to man in the act of creation as love's response could only occur **after** creation. The Hebrew word for "love" (*ahabhah*) carries the two fundamental ideas of choosing and self-giving. Though the word can be saturated with emotion and applied to all kinds of human experiences, from harlotry to loyal devotion, in the God-human relationship the two basic ideas prevail dominantly. The "Tree of Life" in the Garden (Genesis 1:9, 3:22) objectively represented that final self-giving of God to man – a self-giving that awaited upon man choosing God in love.

Eternal life is the Eternal One personally living by His Spirit within the man. Love must choose and give oneself to love's choice. What failed in Eden comes to pass in the believer in Christ (John 14:16-23).

2

THE SPIRIT IN HIS LOVING AND STRIVING

We have noted that love shares. This sharing initially and fundamentally is vertical - Godward. God in love shares with His creature, man. Both have spirithood. Both are persons.

We noted that God's Spirit is God Himself personally present in power to fulfil in love God's dynamic programme. Thus the "Spirit of God" is not to be equated with some principle of preservation in man himself, but God moving transcendently into a situation to change the status quo. The Spirit ever moves into my humanness to change and redirect, to elevate and transform. But God also created love on the horizontal plane – man to man.

TRUE MAN IS NO MERE INDIVIDUAL

Individuality is one of sin's consequences – a reflection of self-love. As God's love eternally involves plurality and reciprocity, so a human without other humans is essentially incomplete.

Adam and Eve, by sinning, were not only alienated from God personally but also alienated from each other. The aprons of fig leaves were donned (their sin was not sex) because sexual distinctiveness now stressed their alienation from each other.

This disruption of human relations also involved the problem of authority. The husband shall rule over the wife (Genesis

3:16) and even though in Christ man and wife are joint-heirs of the grace of life, the “rule” is not eliminated, as the context of 1 Peter 3:7 clearly shows. This “rule” is related ultimately to final decision-making in the value judgments of right and wrong.

God could not give Adam choice of being created, but gave him choice of fulfilment of himself humanly. Adam first felt his need to be complemented before God, on Adam’s consent, provided his partner, his counterpart – one corresponding to him (Genesis 2:18). Man can never be truly man on his own and by himself. The idea of a self-sufficient individual is contrary to the biblical concepts of “person” and of “love.”

The first level of unity depicted in Genesis is based upon desire (*eros*) in the area of “flesh” – Genesis 2:26. But the basic idea of I–Thou is “personal” – horizontal and vertical. This is saying that a man is not wholly fulfilled in a woman (or vice versa) for his “spirithood” is ultimately fulfilled in what transcends “flesh.” The first human to human relationship was man to woman, but the latter is not the fundamental or ultimate relationship but the former is.

MAN IS MORE THAN “FLESH”

I am neither an encased soul nor merely an animated body. The unity of my personhood is cardinal. In the Old Testament, “soul” usually translates the Hebrew word *nephesh*. This *nephesh* initially meant “throat,” hence also “breath,” “act of breathing,” “the thing that breathes.” Every living creature is a “living soul,” that is, it has a control centre or ego.

“Soul” is common to all living creatures but it ranges from

the purely automatic instinctive reaction of insects to the real volitional reaction of the human. This expression, “living soul” is used over 12 times (e.g. Genesis 1:10, 21, 24, 30, 2:7, 19, 9:10, 12, 15, 16, Leviticus 11:10, 46).

Man’s uniqueness lies not on being a “living soul,” but in God breathing into man, that is, creating man as a person with spirithood just like Himself. Man’s spirithood is continuously conditioned of God. “Spirit” is not an attribute of “soul.” As electricity in the wire is not the wire nor of the wire, so is man’s spirit to the soul. On death this “spirit” goes to God who gave it (Psalms 31:5, Luke 23:46). The Old Testament indicates that in the Old Testament times the human soul existed in Sheol though enfeebled and reduced to a “mere shadow” – Psalms 139:8, Isaiah 14:9, Luke 16:23.

But man has “flesh” and this flesh is the concrete manifestation of the soul. Man as flesh is man one with the world of creatures. Man shares flesh with other creatures but becomes flesh when he looks for fulfilment in desires that stem only from that which is common to all creatures.

MAN DEVELOPS CULTURE

As a person I have openness to God. My life is open-ended, and I am limited by but not determined by my instinctive drives. This openness to men and environment allowed early civilisation to develop in the production of a technology (Genesis 4/5). Social life appeared impregnated with values reflecting the estimates and decisions of man-without-God. Man from the beginning created his own value judgments based on his exercising the prerogative to determine right and wrong, but as Proverbs 14:12 says, the end of

this course is death.

Human-produced culture was the result of environment not heredity. Thus culture transfer needs to occur under divine control. Man left to himself will always deteriorate. The Spirit of God needed continually to hold evil in check and to renew and recreate. As then, so now. But the open-endedness of culture and the failure in openness to God produced a state where Noah and his family alone were left untainted by social decline. Thus we read in Genesis 6:3, *“My Spirit will not always strive with (abide in, RSV) man for he also is flesh.”*

In this verse the Hebrew has the article before “man” indicating its generic use, meaning “mankind.” The expression, “My Spirit,” always elsewhere in the Old Testament means “God’s Spirit” (e.g. Isaiah 30:1, 42:1, Joel 2:28). The withdrawal of the Spirit would allow mankind to lapse to mere “flesh” level with its mental horizons saturated with terrestrial bestiality – every imagination only evil continually – Genesis 6:5.

God’s patience meant a reprieve from judgment while the ark was being built by preacher Noah who called for repentance (2 Peter 2:5). Christ’s solemn words come to us: *“As in the Days of Noah so shall the coming of the Son of Man be”* (Matthew 24:37-41). This passage describes human activity void of any divine content. And it lies under the condemnation of God.

3

THE SPIRIT AND ELECTION

To love is to choose. To choose is to elect. Man's story is a recital of failure, then fresh beginnings. Those fresh beginnings are love's persistent sharing.

Though the pre-flood culture was unitary, it collapsed in violence and chaos. But God began again by choosing Noah. Choosing is the other side of loving. To love is to choose and then to give oneself for and to the one chosen.

We shall note how God did this with Noah and with Abraham.

NOAH: RECIPIENT OF GRACE

God granted Noah the favour of being the man through whom God would create a new society. As in Adam's creation, now again God gives attention first to the environment. He proposed to Noah a covenant.

The word "grace" (Hebrew, *chen*) appears in the Old Testament first at Genesis 6:8. "*Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*" "*Chen*" is best translated as "favour" and is a spontaneous act of a superior to an inferior.

And also with Noah we have the first mention in the Old Testament of a covenant. God initiated a programme for man's

ecological security. Thus the Noahic covenant is environmental and has the following aspects.

- (1) It was based on promise.** It had been announced before the flood (Genesis 6:18), and depended humanly on Noah's response in his fulfilling the requirements of God (Genesis 7:1). Noah demonstrated his trust and obedience by building the ark.

- (2) It lay within the original creative purpose of God.** Man's dominion is again spelt out (Genesis 9:2-7). As God's representative the blood of man is sacred.

- (3) It takes into account what human history had revealed – the imaginations of man's heart are always evil.** Hence if left to himself, man would never have goals beyond those of "flesh." Flesh can only produce flesh, and never spirit (John 3:6, 1 Corinthians 15:50). Man can only know the things of man, not the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:11).

- (4) It is a perpetual covenant.** As long as man remains, an adequate environment is guaranteed by God. No catastrophe like the flood would eliminate man or the seasonal cycles of productivity. Man must ever sow, but God would give the increase.

(5) It was sealed in sacrifice and with a continuing sign – the rainbow (Genesis 8:20, 9:13).

ABRAHAM: LOVER OF GOD (2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8)

Emil Brunner states the characteristic of God's love as *"to go forth from oneself, to impart oneself...in contrast to the self-sufficient Being of the Absolute of Thought."* God's love particularises and also universalises.

God chose the man, Abram (Nehemiah 9:7), so that His blessing could also be in the whole world. And to choose is to love. But just what God's love can do or will do must always be a matter of revelation.

God's love is not irrational for love has its reasons. But no mortal could imagine the greatness of love's planning (1 Corinthians 2:9).

The Noah Covenant provided for man's environment generally, but in God's call to Abram, God initiated a redemptive covenant, the horizons of which are the things of the Spirit of God. They would include God's Spirit-filled Man, Christ Jesus, and a metamorphosis of even humanity itself.

We note the following initiatives of God.

(1) The promise to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3). Civilisation had quickly apostasised from Babel's Tower and in Babylon Ur the moon goddess was worshipped (Joshua 24:2). The gods were held to be local representatives of the High God,

who left the running of human affairs to these local deities. But the High God dealt directly with Abram and gave him a threefold promise. God would (i) bless him personally, (ii) make of him a mighty nation with its own country, (iii) bring blessing to all peoples through him. Abram's positive response to God's promise cemented a relationship with God which was fruitful for the development of a covenant.

(2) The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 15:6) tells of Abram's obedience to God blossoming into vital faith. God's promise of a son was linked with faith's operation. This faith required two things – Abram's intellectual assent, but also the submission of himself to God for the biological miracle essential to the fulfilment of the promise. His submission was righteousness. Abram acted in harmony with the divine character and requirement. Consequence to this faith act, God proposed the covenant detailed in Genesis 15:7-21, particularising in a people and its land.

(3) The Covenant Oath (Genesis 22:16-18). This is the final form of the Abrahamic Covenant, which is a repetition of the threefold promise of Genesis 12:1-3, updated because of the birth of Isaac. The occasion was God's self-giving love responding to Abraham's supreme love act in offering up Isaac. Is it any wonder that God later chose Jerusalem to place His name there, for on its Mt Moriah God and Abraham met as "lovers."

In the Old Testament Abraham alone is called God's lover (2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8). The translations usually use the English word "friend." But the Hebrew word is the normal word "to love." God calls Abraham's response of love as "*fearing God*" (Genesis 22:12). Hence the requirement "*to fear God*" emphasised in the Psalms, in Isaiah and elsewhere, not only includes a sense of overwhelming awe, but also an attraction in response to God's approach that combines submission (trust) and self-giving love.

The many references to the Spirit throughout the Old Testament (as we shall see) are specifically related to God's fulfilling His covenant oath to Abraham in its threefold aspect:

- (i) **Personal** – to Abraham and to each of like faith (Galatians 3:9).
- (ii) **National** – to a people of God and its country.
- (iii) **International** – worldwide blessing through Abraham's seed.

This covenant under oath (Hebrews 6:17) assures to man its eternal application. It was repeated to Isaac (Genesis 26:3) and to Jacob (Genesis 28:13) and undergirds both the Old Testament programme (Psalms 105:8-10) and the New Testament fulfilment (Luke 1:55, 73, Acts 3:25, Galatians 3:14).

The Old Testament describes the unfolding of the divine programme in creating a people with a country, and enlarges upon the content of the blessing promised and identifies the seed

through whom the worldwide blessing would come.

Galatians 3:13-14 pinpoints the blessing as twofold: the removal of sin's curse through the Seed (Christ) plus the gift of the Spirit – God's final self-giving in love.

4

THE SPIRIT IN HIS DIRECTING AND REVEALING

“Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power (strength) belongs to God” (Psalms 62:11). God alone has strength to fulfil all his purposes.

The Spirit is God personally present in power to fulfil in love all His plans and programme. These purposes and programme we noticed last study were expressed in the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 22:16-18), which arose in the context of God’s elective-love and Abraham’s responsive-love.

H. H. Rowley in **“Biblical Doctrine of Election”** claims that *“Israel was elected in Abraham and elected through Moses.”* God’s love for the patriarchs involved the choosing of their seed (Deuteronomy 4:37, 10:15). To love is to choose. God loved and chose Israel (Psalms 33:12, 47:4, Isaiah 43:4, 20). This self-giving in love inevitably included God’s revealing to His people His purposes and character. These two are inevitably interwoven.

ISRAEL’S ELECTION BY THE SPIRIT

The basis of the Sinai Covenant between God and Israel was the prior display in power of God’s elective love. *“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself”* (Exodus 19:4, c/f Deuteronomy 32:11). To put Israel into the Promised Land, to integrate the nation, to

overcome the tremendous pressures toward syncretism with its apostatisation of true Yahweh (Jehovah) worship - these all required the Strength of Yahweh, that is, the Spirit operative. (Psalms 29:1, 81:1, 93:1, 96:7, Isaiah 51:9). The Spirit in the Old Testament as God's Strength is seen achieving the national goal of the Abrahamic Covenant in these three specific ways:

(1) ADMINISTRATING THE NATION

If Yahweh loved Israel, He must dwell with the nation. A tabernacle must be built, not for Israel to approach God, but for God to dwell among Israel (Exodus 25:8). God ever takes the initiative in love. Hence the Spirit must empower to build a meaningful tabernacle. He gave ability to Bezaleel and others to fulfil this programme (Exodus 31:3, 6 – 35:31). Ezekiel at a later date had a vision of the administrating cherubim. These were under the control of the Spirit (Ezekiel 1:12, 20, 10:17). The Spirit was always involved in the divine planning of the nation (Isaiah 30:1, 40:13, Nehemiah 9:20, 30, Haggai 2:5).

(2) ENDOWING CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

Adequate leadership is imperative for success. For the success of God's operations the leadership in Israel, as in the Church, required the Spirit's endowment. Though the form of leadership varied, the requirement of Spirit endowment remained unchanged. We note these three:

(a) The founders. Moses with his counsellors (Numbers 11:17-29) in the wilderness, Joshua as he takes possession of Canaan (Numbers 27:18, Deuteronomy 34:9) required the Strength of the Lord. The Spirit was active.

- (b) The consolidators.** Culture forces leading to syncretism and proneness to worship nature deities in a new agriculture country required drastic actions by God's Strength to reverse the syncretic processes and teach Israel to walk other than in the ways of the surrounding nations. So in the Book of Judges we read that the Spirit came upon Othniel (3:10), upon Jephthah (11:29), clothed Himself with Gideon (6:34), began to stir Samson (13:25) and came forcefully upon him (14:6, 19, 15:14).
- (c) The initial kings.** Originally Israel was a simple theocracy mediated by a priesthood. The ruling presence of God was symbolised in Yahweh's shrine and ark in Shiloh (1 Samuel 3:21). In Samuel's judgeship fragmented Israel came to a degree of national consciousness. They were tired of each simply doing what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6, 21:25). As Samuel's life drew to a close the nation asked for the appointment of a king. This request was made because of failure to trust in Yahweh. Nevertheless, God granted their request. Thus to evidence the divine introduction of the monarchy the Spirit came upon Saul (1 Samuel 10:6-13). The Spirit also came upon David to show the change of Dynasty (1 Samuel 16:13) and to empower him for office. Israel's king was known as "*Son of God*" (2 Samuel 7:14) not thereby stressing biological ideas but underlining representation. The king was God's representative – the one through whom God ruled.

(3) INTERPRETING GOD'S ACTIONS

Within and supplementing the two above ways lies the prophetic function. This function was to interpret God's

ways to His people and to give explanation of the nation's plight in the light of God's declared plans and revealed character. This required the Spirit's operation as human thought and wisdom were inadequate (1 Kings 18:12, 2 Kings 2:15, 2 Chronicles 18:23, 20:14). Moses was both leader and prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15).

THE ELECTED SEED OF ABRAHAM

The Abrahamic covenant involved not only the national promise but also the international blessing through the Seed. The repeated failure of Israel helped to produce an expectation of a future period of special divine intervention when God would fulfil all He had promised under the Abrahamic Covenant.

We note the following:

Abraham's Seed. The ideal "David" would be a Spirit-endowed leader. The Spirit would rest (abide) on him (Isaiah 11:15). God's chosen Servant is to be a light to the nations and equipped by the Spirit (Isaiah 42:1, 48:16, 61:1). He would be outstanding in his pastoral care of the needy.

- (1) The blessing through the Seed. This firstly has reference to the nation of Israel. The Spirit will cleanse God's repentant people (Isaiah 4:4, 44:3, Zechariah 12:10), renew the nation in its own land (Isaiah 32:15-17), install the divine "David" (Ezekiel 37:14, 24), and enable an enjoyment of continuous fellowship with the Holy One of Israel (Ezekiel 39:6, 29). Secondly, the blessing will be upon all nations (Isaiah 57:15-16, 66:1-2, Joel 2:28-29). God would pour out His Spirit on all

flesh in an abundant measure. The spiritual blessings Israel will experience through the Seed as restored occupants of their own land, are the same blessings the nations will enjoy through the same Seed. These blessings are – forgiveness of sins, and intimate knowledge of God through the Spirit's personal indwelling (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Isaiah 66:2, Galatians 3:14, John 14:23).

The dramatic activity of divine love, expressed in love's choice of Abraham will fulfil God's design. There will be a worldwide trust in (fear of) Yahweh because sovereignly the Spirit will ultimately overcome the tide of evil through the Redeemer who returns to Zion (Jerusalem). (Isaiah 59:19-21).



5

JESUS – GOD’S SPIRIT-FILLED MAN

Love’s final gift is always the gift of oneself. God so loved that He gave Himself. The Good News (Gospel) is just that. God has given Himself for us and to us. Calvary and Pentecost are inseparably linked (Galatians 3:13-14).

Mark points out that the “Good News” began with the ministry of John the Baptist (1:1). John was filled with the Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15), that is, he was completely controlled by the Spirit right through till death.

JOHN’S MINISTRY

The Spirit-led John made three major emphases:

- (1) John pointed away from himself to Christ.** He was the wilderness’ prophetic cry preparing the Way of Yahweh (Jehovah) (Isaiah 40:3, John 1:21-23). This coming Messiah would baptise with the Holy Spirit. This meant that Messiah would exercise the unique function of Yahweh (Jehovah), for the Spirit-baptism was Yahweh’s prerogative alone (Joel 2:28, Isaiah 42:1).
- (2) John demanded water baptism.** This demand was because the Kingdom of God (Heaven) had come near – right on the doorstep (Matthew 3:2, 4:17). All the prophets had

required repentance for acceptance with God. Only John added “water baptism.” This addition was related to the presence of the Kingdom.

- (3) John’s baptism was anticipatory of Spirit baptism.** The Greek word *basileia* often translated “kingdom” is an active noun and basically means “rule” or “reign” rather than area or subjects over which the reign occurs. Thus John was speaking about the “reign of God” as having come. God, of course, has always been “King,” but now His kingly rule was to be exercised in and through His Messiah. This manifestation did not require the acceptance of people for its inauguration, only the presence and availability of Yahweh’s Anointed One – Christ. The offence of John to the Pharisees was his claim that no one was automatically in the Reign of God. Each must submit himself to God’s new reign. Baptism was a sign of that submission.

JESUS’ MINISTRY

The first Adam became a living soul, the last Adam (Jesus Christ) a life-giving spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45). Jesus was truly human. His humanity was not simply our common sinful humanity, nor Adam’s incomplete humanity before the Fall. The humanity of Jesus was what Adam could and should have become through access to the tree of life. The presence and indwelling of the Spirit in Jesus from birth is the human secret of Christ’s personality. And the humanity of the Christian, as distinct from the common humanity, lies in this presence of an indwelling of the Spirit in the believer. The completeness of Jesus’ humanness is seen as follows:

- (1) Christ was born of the Spirit.** To Mary’s query on the

“how” of Messiah’s birth through her, the answer was given indicating that human intercourse was not required (Matthew 1:25, Luke 1:34). But the incarnation would involve God *in toto* in a divine fiat. The Holy Spirit would come upon her, the power of the Highest overshadow her (Luke 1:35). The resultant child would consequently be designated or defined as “son of God.” This expression was regularly applied to the Davidic king on his coronation (Psalms 89:26-27, 2 Samuel 7:14, 1 Chronicles 17:13). But with the Messiah it is now applied to Mary’s babe. He would be “holy,” set apart, as the bearer of the Spirit and as Son of God in an absolute sense. God was now fully present in the person of the Son.

(2) Christ was baptised by the Spirit. Jesus must Himself submit to the Reign of Yahweh. His submission to water baptism was a requirement of His identification with and submission to the Father’s programme. The anointing of the Spirit (Acts 10:38) occurred on Jordan’s bank immediately after His water baptism. This “Spirit-baptism” constituted Him Messiah (Anointed One) and thereby inaugurated the Reign of God. This was “all of God.” John was an onlooker not a participator (John 1:33). The Father attested the Son’s obedience and endorsed the Son’s twofold ministry of king and priest (Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22, Isaiah 42:1, Psalms 2:7). This anointing of the Spirit did not add to the person or being of Jesus but was related to the ministry then inaugurated. That ministry was possible and adequate because Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1).

(3) The Spirit’s ministry was through the New Testament Man. Christ’s power (Luke 4:14), His spiritual understanding (John 3:34), His miraculous works (Matthew 12:28) were the

Spirit's achievement. Jesus knew all truth revelationally. All Christ's ministry is to be understood as Spirit-directed and Spirit-achieved. This was as promised in Isaiah 11:1-5, 42:1-4. The Son's absolute dependence on His Father was met by the Father's Spirit absolutely controlling both heart and life (Hebrews 5:8, 10:9, Philippians 2:8). The reciprocal relationship of Father and Son was complete. In all that Christ did, God was wholly at work (John 14:10).

(4) The Spirit culminated Messiah's ministry. Calvary was not the ministry's sequel but its culmination. Through the Eternal Spirit the Eternal Son offered Himself up as an eternal sacrifice (Hebrews 9:14). It was the Spirit that led the Son up Calvary's mountain. But Calvary was not the end. The Reign of God shining out in splendour through Christ on the Transfiguration mount (Mark 9:2, 2 Peter 1:16) must be manifested in full display. The New Testament Man with all the glorious potential that was His must actualise it as a gift from God. The life of obedience was real and it culminated in resurrection life. The Spirit raised up Jesus and thus declared Him *in power* to be "son of God" (Rom 1:4, 8:11). In His resurrection true complete manhood was finally put on display.

THUS the Spirit, through Mary, produced a "holy" child, set apart for the Father's special purposes, and now in resurrection, with all the potential made actual, the Spirit set apart the very Son of God, the One through whom the Father would gloriously reign. It is the Risen Christ who has declared, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go..."* (Matthew 28:18-19). In our submission to Christ as Saviour and Lord what He is we become. He baptises with the Spirit.

6

PENTECOST: GOD'S SPIRIT REPRODUCING CHRIST

The gift of the Spirit is the gift of love – God's final self-giving to man. Christ on the cross is God giving himself **FOR US** in Christ (Galatians 2:20), but the Spirit at Pentecost was God giving himself **TO US** (Galatians 3:13-14).

Thus Peter's declaration (Acts 2:38) – *“repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for emission of sin and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* – fulfilled Christ's promise of John 14:23. Love can never be fully satisfied with doing things for another but only in giving oneself to the other who was chosen in love.

Pentecost depended absolutely on Calvary, but Calvary must issue in Pentecost. And Pentecost was the love act of the **triune** God.

THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

This expression is Lucan (Luke 24:29, Acts 1:4, 2:33). Some refer this promise to Christ's statements about the New Testament Paraclete (John 14:16). However, the promise nestles within the wider Old Testament background. Joel 2:28 speaks of the pouring out of the Spirit. Jesus reminded His disciples (Luke 11:13) that the Father's care always meant His giving adequately to meet the expressed needs of His children. Does Luke 11:13 enunciate a general principle of asking for the Holy Spirit? Hardly. Just as the way to the Father is through the Son who cannot be by-passed, so the operation of the Spirit as gift is only possible in and through the

Son. Direct dealings with the Spirit without reference to Christ fall outside the provision of the Father.

The “Promise of the Father” has immediate reference to the baptising given initially by John Baptist – the Coming One would baptise with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). Jesus referred to this Johannine prediction (Acts 1:5) indicating that it would be fulfilled soon. Pentecost was Jesus baptising men with the Spirit into the Reign of God.

ON BEING BAPTISED BY THE SPIRIT

To be baptised by the Spirit is to enter into a new relationship with God. It is to be brought under the Rule of God in a specific manner as it operates through God’s Messiah. Christ’s own situation is the archetype from which ours is derived. The Spirit coming upon Jesus inaugurated God’s Reign. The expression “*to be baptised by the Spirit*” occurs seven times and by four persons. John Baptist pointed forward (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33), Christ endorsed John’s prediction (Acts 1:5), Peter applied the promise to the entrance of the Gentiles into Messiah’s Reign (Acts 11:16). In each of these six cases the Greek uses the preposition *en* with the anarthrous *Holy Spirit*. This *en* may grammatically be local (in) or instrumental (by). The “by” is best as the function of the Spirit is to put the believer into Christ. The biblical emphasis is always on the goal of the baptism. It is always “into” Christ or the Kingdom.

The application of the above three historic acts is made to individuals by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:13 – “*by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles.*” Thus baptism into Christ is baptism into the Kingdom. God’s Reign is initially to be conceived as God actually reigning – something God achieved without man’s aid. But man’s participation in, or entrance into,

that Reign awaited the Pentecostal affusion.

PENTECOST: LOVE'S FULFILMENT

Love at its height is an adventure in self-realisation. And Pentecost was just that: God in love from then on indwelt believing men. The Spirit was not newly present but newly related. He who had been "with" men and was now "in" men (John 14:17). This seemingly small word change reflects a biological miracle, a metamorphosis, a transcendent operation of God moving into human lives. The pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost evidenced the King's heavenly coronation (Acts 2:33). The affusion of the Spirit was not an abrupt terminal act, not an occasional visitation on a few days, but a permanent abiding in the many. Christ's person was now available to man. We note the following:

- (1) God's gift of Himself.** The Spirit is never an independent operator. His presence is the presence of the Father and the Son. Faith in Christ brings the gift of God Himself realised in the believing heart by the Spirit's presence.
- (2) God's gift received.** The direction of faith is always toward Christ (Acts 20:21). The focus of attention by the Spirit was, before conversion, on the Sin-bearer, as Lord of life and death, and after conversion, on Christ as our on-going Lord (Colossians 2:6). You cannot receive Christ today, receive the Father tomorrow, and receive the Spirit the next day. There is only one receiving. All three – Son, Father, Spirit – are involved at every point. All of God's gifts are "*in Christ*" mediated by the indwelling Spirit, and only from Pentecost onwards.
- (3) God's gifts bestowed.** Jesus said to Nicodemus, "*You must be born of the Spirit*" (John 3:3, 5) but even if Nicodemus had understood Jesus' words, the new birth

was not available then. Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles gave the invitation, *“If anyone thirst, let him come unto me and drink.”* But Jesus’ promise was proleptic, that is, anticipatory as John 7:39 indicates. It awaited Christ’s resurrection and glorification.

Eternal life is not a thing. It is not a status. It is not a changed life or extended life. It will involve these. Eternal life is the Eternal One living His own unique life – the life of the Son (1 John 1:2) – an introduction to knowing God (Matthew 11:27, John 17:3). This life was first available to men at Pentecost.

Paul asks the question (Galatians 3:2), *“Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law (human effort) or by hearing with faith?”* He refers to the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 22:18) identifying the “seed” as Christ, and the “blessing” as the gift of forgiveness, and the reception of the Spirit.

There are not two faiths. Faith in the Seed issues in the residence of the Spirit (Galatians 3:14). **The moment I move into Christ, the Sin-bearer, in faith, then all that Christ is and has is mine as Love’s gift.**

7

WITNESS AND THE SPIRIT'S FULLNESS

To witness is love proclaiming. And the Spirit makes this witness effective – Acts 1:8. The experience of Pentecost was a collective one. The baptism of the Spirit on the expectant disciples produced a fellowship in which Jesus was Lord. The witness of the Spirit was to that lordship. Pentecost installed the Holy Spirit as the Administrator of Christ's new fellowship of believers. On that notable day the disciples were filled with the Spirit and thereupon became proclaimers of Christ's salvation (Acts 2:4, 1 Corinthians 1:21). The first disciples had a vivid sense of mission. So should we.

WITNESS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Luke concluded his Gospel with Christ's instruction to await the Promise of the Father. *"Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."* This "clothing" requirement was reminiscent of the Spirit clothing himself with Gideon (Judges 5:34). Their mission needed divine power for fulfilment.

The commission to man at the beginning (Genesis 1:28) was to fill the earth and rule it in God's name. This directive was emphasised to Noah (Genesis 9:1), was the subject of amazement to the Psalmist (8:6), and was to be fulfilled according to the divine plan *"in Christ"* (Hebrews 2:9). The enthroned Jesus, and the children God gives Him, will achieve the goal of full control in the world of man, beast, and spirit.

Pentecost was the pivotal happening that released the power of the Spirit for this world-control. Satan had fallen, death vanquished, and sinful men made new creatures in Christ. And this redemptive work, that made men fit for world-wide rule, was the fullness of the Abrahamic covenant. The blessing of forgiveness of sins, with the gift of the Spirit was at last available through the special “seed” (Galatians 3:14). The time was now ripe to speed this good news of salvation to the ends of the earth.

THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

Luke refers 14 times to “*being full of the Holy Spirit.*” Each reference is in a mission context. The two Greek words Luke uses mean basically “to complete, to consummate” and are applied in three main areas.

- (1) Used of things to mean “to fill completely” (Luke 3:5, 5:7, Acts 5:28).
- (2) Used of time to mean “to fulfil,” that is, to fulfil prophecy (Luke 4:21, Acts 1:16) or to complete an assignment undertaken (Luke 2:6, 9:23).
- (3) Used of persons to mean “complete control.” Persons, unlike things, are capable of response. Hence, with persons, “to be filled” really means “to be completely under the control of.”

Luke applies this in two ways.

- (1) In respect to inward emotion or disposition as “*filled with rage*” (Luke 4:28, 6:11)

- (2) In respect to another personality as when Satan filled Ananias' heart, that is Satan completely controlled his heart so that Ananias lied (Acts 5:3). Thus "*to be filled with the Spirit*" means "to be completely under the control of the Spirit" in respect to the matter detailed in the context of the statement.

ILLUSTRATIONS GIVEN BY LUKE

John Baptist for his special ministry as Christ's forerunner was completely under the control of the Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15). Both Elizabeth and Zechariah (verses 14, 67) were completely controlled by the Spirit as they uttered their prophecies concerning Jesus and the Baptist. In Luke 4:1 Jesus is said to be "*fully under the control of the Spirit,*" indicating the outstanding characteristic of His ministry. It was Spirit-controlled. The idea of "control of the Spirit" does not include in itself any idea of residence or indwelling. But in the cases from Pentecost onwards the full control of the Spirit was by "residential possession." The waiting disciples (2:4) under the full control of the Spirit gave witness in foreign language to the "*mighty works of God.*"

The young Jerusalem Church accepted the challenge of the Jewish leaders who opposed the Gospel. They asked for boldness of speech to match the official threats and for display of God's presence by acts of compassion in the name of Jesus. God answered their request. The Spirit, in taking full control, enabled them to go about talking boldly of Christ (Acts 4:8, 31). The Lord sent Ananias to Paul that he "*might regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.*" He urged Paul to put his trust in Christ and call upon the Lord's name confessing Him in baptism (Acts 9:17, 22:16). Ananias also stressed the special witnessing programme God has chosen for Paul – "*you will be a witness for Him to all men*"

(verse 15). Acts 13:9, 52 also refer to being filled with the Spirit in the context of witness.

PERSONAL FULLNESS

The adjectival expressions, *“full of the Spirit,”* used four times in Acts (6:3, 5, 7:55, 11:24), indicates a continuing personal characteristic involved in Christian ministry and witness. Stephen’s stinging challenge to Israel’s leaders was not the speech of an emotionally charged man bringing on his own destruction. It was the inspired speech of a Spirit-controlled man. God intended a great advance to issue from his martyrdom.

Barnabas’ *“faith”* was a Spirit-given ability to see the ongoing purpose of God and to give direction to the Church’s desire to know and follow her Lord. Luke thus in speaking of the Spirit’s fullness has always specifically in mind the advance of the Kingdom of God through the witnessing program.

Paul urged his readers (Ephesians 5:18): *“Be ye completely controlled continuously by the Spirit.”* The total area of control mentioned by Paul is twofold – an inner disposition of thanksgiving towards fellow believers and towards God, exhibited in song, and also overt actions in submission of one to another in the contexts of the home, the church, and the community.

Thus we need to be completely under the Spirit’s control for effective witness and for interpersonal relationships in all conceivable social and private contexts. To secure this *“fullness”* we need to be asking, seeking, and knocking, and in our ready availability Christ answers by the Spirit’s ministry of power and love (Luke 11:9, 13). The possibility of this lies in the Spirit’s residence and possession of the believer.

8

PRAYER AND POWER BY THE SPIRIT

The cry today is for power. Power in politics, power to cure the world's ills. Power to live a holy life, power to witness. Christ promised: *"You shall receive power (dunamis), the Holy Spirit coming upon you and you shall be my witnesses"* (Acts 1:8). In the realisation of their inadequacy the newly-created redeemed fellowship in Jerusalem asked for ability to speak *"with boldness"* – with free uninhibited speech. The Spirit enabled them so to do (Acts 4:31).

THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS BY WORD AND DEED

All the apostles were imprisoned together by the Jewish authorities. To their captors they witnessed to Christ in respect to His exaltation and that forgiveness of sins was to be granted in His name. *"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him"* (Acts 5:32).

The Gospel proclamation coupled with deeds of power were characteristic of the early disciples and of Paul's ministry (Romans 15:19, 1 Corinthians 2:4, 1 Thessalonians 1:5). Paul asked the question of the Galatians (3:5), *"Does He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles (dunamis) among you do so by the works of the law, or by the hearing with faith?"* The constant reference to power in the preaching of the Gospel was related on the one hand to the convicting work of the Spirit in respect to sin

and righteousness, and on the other to the deliverance from the power of the wicked one (John 16:8-11). Compassionate miracles always involved an invasion of Satan's domain (Luke 10:18).

THE SPIRIT AND THE MESSENGER

It was the word of the cross that is the power of God unto salvation – Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:18. But the Kingdom of God does not consist in mere talk but in power (1 Corinthians 4:20). This power involves the messenger. He must work in the name of the Lord and under the full supervision of the Spirit.

The human instrumentality is essential. God needs a man. He is to be *"in Christ,"* that is, *"in the Spirit"* (Romans 8:9). The setting apart for distinctive witness is the Spirit's prerogative (Romans 15:16). So the Spirit said to the Antiochian Church, *"Separate unto Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"* (Acts 13:1).

THE SPIRIT AND PRAYER

The praying believer is the medium needed by the Spirit to achieve the divine purposes. God created man as His image and as both are personal each may communicate. All personal relationships involve communication. Prayer is the mutual articulated communication between God and man. It is mutual. It is a two-way affair. It is articulated for it involves speech. It is not talk about nothing but a communication of purposes and a sharing of oneself.

As man has been given dominion by God, who has a programme, so prayer is of two fundamental types – fellowship prayer and creative prayer. Fellowship praying is the enjoyment of fellowship between God and ourselves, His creatures. Creative praying is related to the achievement of the divine programme in the affairs of men.

In receiving Christ's salvation, my Creator/creature relationship became Father/son for the Father has sent the Spirit of the Son into my heart enabling me to say truly, "*Father*" (Galatians 4:6). By the one Spirit all Christians have access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18). By His residential possession in the Spirit a new intimate fellowship in prayer has resulted and provides the basis for creative praying.

SIX LAWS OF CREATIVE PRAYING

- (1) The law of dependence.** For prayer to be effective it must be in Christ's name (John 14:13) – that is, while Sharing Christ's plans, purposes and programme . The initiative in planning is always to be Christ's.
- (2) The law of obedience.** If you continue in my word (John 15:7). It is the Spirit who searches the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:11) and reveals them to us. Yet Romans 8:26 indicates that there are areas of divine achievement that lie beyond the human comprehension. In the availability of our obedient hearts the Spirit, who resides within, also intercedes with yearnings that cannot be verbalised.
- (3) The law of faith.** The prayer of faith based on the awareness of God's intention. Faith comes by hearing

(Romans 10:17). The sword of the Spirit used to overcome the flaming darts of the devil is an utterance from God – something specific for each occasion (Ephesians 6:18).

- (4) **The law of agreement** (Matthew 18:19). The basis of effective creative praying is unity. If two of you agree. If husband and wife do not agree their prayers are hindered (1 Peter 3:7). For dynamic prayer to accomplish its goals we need to be *“eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit”* – Ephesians 4:3-4.
- (5) **The law of love.** The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and of death (Romans 8:2). This is freedom from self-centredness. It is freedom to love. It is the love of the Spirit that makes a missionary programme fruitful (Romans 15:30). Love is self-giving. Through prayer, *agape*-love, engendered by the Spirit (Romans 5:5), becomes that divinely infused human force utilised by God to achieve Spirit-direct victories in the battles with evil.
- (6) **The law of constancy.** Paul assures us that *“he who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap life eternal”* (Galatians 6:8). There is the necessity of persistence. Prayer needs to be importunate, that is, it refuses to give in to evil (Luke 18:1) but presses Christ’s victory in every situation to the limit. Prayer in the Spirit never gives up (1 Corinthians 13:8) for love abides.

It is the Father’s love that shares His good things with us. As children we continually ask Him and He continually shares by His Spirit all the necessary things for a full life of fellowship, fulfilment, and accomplishment in God’s Kingdom (Luke 11:13).

9

THE SPIRIT AND THE FATHER'S HOUSE

Love, home, fellowship are words that belong together. Home is the place of love, self-giving, and rest. To be really “at home” is to be where all tensions have subsided.

Two biblical words that gather up these realities are “temple” and “house.” The temple is the house of God – God’s place of living. *“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? These are the ones I look on with favour: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word. (Isaiah 66:1-2)*

God makes His home in the believer, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament has much to say about the Father’s House, created in self-giving love.

THE SPIRIT AND THE TEMPLE OF GOD

The Church as the fellowship of the redeemed is a holy sanctuary – built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). As soon as Israel had finally sealed the Sinai Covenant through sacrificial blood (Exodus 24:6-8) God took steps to fulfil His obligation to be their residential God – *“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).*

The Old Testament Tabernacle was not simply for Israel to approach God, but basically for God to come and live amongst His people. The glorious portrayal of New Jerusalem has its basic significance in the words: *“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Revelation 21:22).*

This tabernacling of God is both personal and collective. Paul in Corinthians stresses both aspects.

- (1) **Personal indwelling.** *“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own (6:19).* The contrast is between two becoming one flesh in the sex act but remaining two personalities with separate consciousnesses, and two (the Lord and believer) becoming one spirit and so emerging as one *“body”* with a single consciousness.

The body is for the Lord (verse 13) and consequently the Christian is not free to do what he likes sexually with it. The converted Corinthians had been cleansed from their filthiness, justified in Christ, and set apart by the Spirit for this very purpose (verse 11).

- (2) **Collective indwelling.** In 1 Corinthians 3:16 Christians are called the *“sanctuary of God”* through the indwelling Spirit. Christ’s presence in His redeemed fellowship (Matthew 18:20) is realised in the Spirit’s collective work. There is created by fellowship relations in and through the Spirit a presence of God that is more than just an arithmetical aggregate of persons. There is a new dimension of love in self-giving (Philippians 2:1).

THE SPIRIT BRINGING GOD'S REST

"Rest" was promised by God to Moses – a geographical core with spiritual overtones. *"My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest"* (Exodus 33:14). This "rest" is associated with God's house (Hebrews 3:2-6, 4:1-3). We who are God's house (that is, the redeemed fellowship where God dwells) enter into a "rest" supervised by the Son.

It is at His invitation that we so enter. *"Come unto me...I will give you rest."* This rest is an intimate knowledge of the Father – only possible through the Son (Matthew 11:27-30). This ministry of introduction by the Son has the following aspects in John 14.

- (1) **The invitation.** Trust in Me for in My Father's house are many resting places (Greek, *monai*), verses 1-2. The Son introduces to the Father the one who trusts in Him and consequently the believer rests in the Father's house. To make this possible Christ must prepare a place. The Servant must suffer. Calvary was imperative. There is no other way into God's rest (verse 6).

- (2) **This "rest" is fellowship with the Father.** To Phillip was given the reminder that to submit to Christ is to submit to the Father. To arrive at Christ is to see and know Him for what He is, and to arrive at the Father simultaneously and so be in the house fellowshiping with the Father. All this is the plan of the Father who indwells the Son (verse 10).

- (3) **This “rest” is mediated by the Spirit.** The possibility of enjoying the Father’s rest depends on two divine provisions: firstly, the preparation by Christ, secondly, the indwelling ministry of the Spirit. These two are inseparable. So intimate is the relationship between Christ and the New Paraclete (Spirit of Truth) that the disciples, by the latter’s presence, would not be called orphans (Greek, *orphanous*) (verse 18). In the New Paraclete’s changed relationship with them would be achieved an indissoluble union, their oneness in the Father’s house (verse 20).

REST AS THE GIFT OF LOVE

Jesus sums up the whole discussion on rest in verse 23. Note the following aspects.

- (1) It was God giving Himself in love to man in redemption that made possible the promised “rest.”

- (2) Love’s promise required love’s response for final fulfilment. Hence Christ says: *“If a man loves ME.”*

- (3) This love by man is the act of choosing Christ for what He is, and a consequential giving himself to Christ evidenced in obedience to Christ’s words.

- (4) In final response, the Father and the Son together will love, that is, give themselves to the one loving Christ and so constituting the believer their resting place. The word translated “home” in the RSV is “*resting place*” (Greek, *mone*) and is the singular of the plural used in verse 2.

Thus we come in our need to the Father through Christ and at His invitation, for there are resting places in His house of fellowship (1 John 1:3), and God’s rest thereby given is God making the trusting one His (God’s) resting place. This presence of God thus takes place by the indwelling of the New Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth.

Let us, then, enjoy to the full all that God in love has done and is doing.



10

THE SPIRIT AND CHARISMA

TRUE Christianity is “charismatic”. The Greek word *charisma* means that which is the result of an act of grace (*charis*). The foundational *charisma* is “eternal life” – the result of God’s grace in Jesus Christ. “For the wages of sin is death but the *charisma* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Hence all those who are “in Christ” are charismatic: receivers of God’s grace-act in Christ. This foundational *charisma* is also called “the gift of God” (Acts 2:39). This word “gift” (Greek, *dorea*) occurs in the New Testament regularly for either Christ or the Holy Spirit as themselves personally God’s gift.

THE MEANING OF ‘GRACE’

The meanings of the classical Greek word *charis* range from “thanks” to “unmerited favour.” Central to its use in the New Testament, however, is that it is equivalent to the Old Testament Hebrew word *chesed*, meaning “merciful faithfulness.” The Revised Standard Version normally translates this *chesed* as “steadfast love.”

It is perhaps best understood, when applied to God, as “His utter faithfulness in fulfilling His covenant promises, although to do so He needs to forgive the recipient of the promises who had forfeited through sin all right to demand the promised fulfilment.” Law existed before Moses and God’s grace before the arrival of Christ, but the fully expressed law was given through Moses, and the final expression of God’s grace (Hebrew, *chesed*) was displayed in Christ (John 1:17). Christ’s appearance was grace heaped upon grace.

The divine promises are ultimately directed to God's intention to share Himself in love with the one forgiven. Eternal life is not simply an extension of life in time, nor merely a change in the nature of man. It is basically God sharing His own intrinsic life with the man who receives Him in Christ.

This intrinsic life is inseparable from the personal presence of the Eternal One. Paul declared: *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."* (Galatians 2:20). Christ's presence through the Spirit **IS** eternal life. It is through the Spirit that God is personally present in power to fulfil in love all of God's promises and programme. The Spirit brings Christ's presence and nature (Romans 8:9).

THE SPECIFIC CHARISMATA

Within the charisma of eternal life there are also special *charismata* (plural of *charisma*). These are distributed by God as specific acts of grace for the purpose of upbuilding Christ's church. *"But to each one of us grace has been given (dorea) as Christ apportioned it."* (Ephesians 4:7). These *charismata* are listed in Ephesians 4:11 as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers. Their purpose is the equipping of the saints for their work in ministry. For the whole church must minister through all of its individual members (verses 12-13). Something of those "people" ministries are also listed in Romans 12:5-8.

THE CHARISMATA IN FIRST CORINTHIANS, CHAPTERS 12-14

This section commences in a Trinitarian presentation (12:4-6). There are a variety of ministries, a variety of energising acts – all involving the Spirit, the Son, and the Father. (c/f Ephesians 4:4-6). These all have the divine purpose of upbuilding the church (14:12)

and each member should seek to excel in the fulfilment of this purpose. See also 12:7, 25, 14:4, 5, 26. The above passages do not suggest that the Spirit is the originator of the *charismata* but rather the energiser of them according as it pleases Him (12:11). The word “*gift*” added frequently in our English translations is perhaps unfortunate. The *charismata* are functional, and are bestowed in grace for the benefit of the church as a whole.

THE FUNCTIONING OF THE CHARISMATA

We note the following factors:

- (1) **The various listings.** Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians list the *charismata* differently, and no one list is exhaustive. The Spirit is sovereign in their operation. Consequently, we cannot assume that all the listed operations will or should be present and operative in every church of every age.
- (2) **There is a hierarchy of *charismata*.** 1 Corinthians 12:27-28 clearly sets out an order of importance while 14:1 underscores the priority of top-ranking prophecy in the common all-embracing pursuit of *agape*-love. Tongues are not to be sought but, **if given by the Spirit**, should not be forbidden (14:39).
- (3) **Two aspects of life-in-fellowship are envisaged.** Firstly, there is the spontaneous spiritual function in the worship of the fellowship and open to all to participate. Secondly, there is the care of the church by officially recognised charismatic personnel. The twofold division is of course fluid. The New Testament speaks basically in terms of function, not office.
- (4) **The control of the spontaneous *charismata* must be**

- governed by the needs of decency and orderliness (14:40).** The responsibility for order rests primarily upon the Christian participants (verse 32).
- (5) The motivation in every charismatic act must not be personal benefit but church building (14:26).**
- (6) The most important *charismata* are to be rated the most desirable.** Prophecy, above all others, is a church builder. The Greek word in the Corinthian lists usually translated “*seek*” really means “to be zealous for, rate highly” – so 12:31, 13:4, 14:1, 39. Prophecy here, as normally, means the God-given function of delivering a message from the Lord directed to the moral and spiritual needs of the listeners.
- (7) There needs to be a deliberate cultivation of love.** “*Follow the way of love*” (14:1); “*Love must be sincere*” (Romans 12:9); “*the whole body grows and builds itself up in love*” (Ephesians 4:16). There is a certain spontaneity in love, yet if we are to pursue it, we can only do so by deliberate cultivation.
- (8) The purpose of the official functions is to equip the saints for their service (Ephesians 4:12).** This service (*diakonia*) is to be taken as the full exercise of their respective *charismata* within the fellowship, and in respect to the outsider, an efficient outreach with the proclamation of the Gospel. Peter urged his readers: “*Each of you should use whatever charisma you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms*” (1 Peter 4:10).

THE SPIRIT AND FREEDOM FROM SELF

Romans 8:2 leaves us in no doubt – I’m FREE. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me FREE from the law of sin and of death. There is no hindrance to the exercise of that freedom as long as I place myself under the direction of the Spirit. They that are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. Let us look at this possibility.

SIN IS LAWLESSNESS (1 John 3:4)

Sin is not a thing but an attitude of a person to a person. Sin is failure to trust God (John 16:9) – a refusal to accept my creatureliness of complete dependence on the Creator. Sin is the irrational assertion of my own self-sufficiency in the presence of God. Sin is the outcome of the consent of the will. A desire becoming a motivation leads on to an act (James 1:14).

Faith is the opposite to sin. Faith is the act of man, a rational creature, who, on being aware of his dependence on God, gladly assents thereto and submits himself without reserve to God. Faith was a basic requirement of Adam before the Fall, and was a basic requirement for the life of Jesus, the last Adam. Saving faith for sinful man occurs when he, on being aware of his spiritual bankruptcy and his intrinsic dependence on God, submits himself without reserve to God, who has promised to save him on repentance. Thus both faith (trust) and sin have their roots in the will, and in fact represent the two choices that lie before the human will.

THE SPIRIT AND THE OLD MAN

Three times Paul speaks of *“the old man.”* Romans 6:6 shows that the possibility of victory over sin is based upon the fact that for Christians at Rome the *“old man”* was crucified with Christ in order that the body of sin might be rendered powerless. In Colossians 3:9 the plea for effective Christian living is grounded on the fact that at Colosse they had put off the *“old man.”* In Ephesians 4:22 the Authorised Version reads *“that ye put off ... the old man.”* Are we to assume that the Roman and Colossian Christians were in advance of those at Ephesus in this regard? Surely the three passages would be consistent! Yes, of course. In fact the Greek of Ephesians 4:22 is not the mood of command. This verse is an enlargement of, or explanation of, the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus we should read verses 22-24, *“If you have heard him and have been taught by him, even as is the truth in Jesus, namely, that you have put off the old man ... and that you are being renewed ... and that you have put on the new man.”*

What then is the *“old man”*? It is what we were out of Christ – what we were naturally from Adam. It is not referring to our nature as some part of us. It is the unregenerated ego and its ramifications throughout the whole of life. The other expression, *“new man,”* also refers to an accomplished fact – Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10. There is no in-between position. One is put off, the other put on at the same point. This is in line with Galatians 2:20, 2 Corinthians 5:17. The *“new man”* is the regenerated self in Christ Jesus. The will of the ego is the essential point always. The self-love of the *“old man”* passes at the point of choice of Christ as Saviour to the Spirit-directed ego of the *“new man.”* The Bible does not talk about man’s higher and lower natures, the former dominated by the mind and the latter by the body.

PUTTING TO DEATH BY THE SPIRIT, THE HANGOVER (Romans 8:13)

What has to be put to death or cancelled out is not the *“old man”* – this was done by God when we became *“in Christ.”* We are to put to death the practices or habits ingrained within the body cells by the *“old man.”* These are to be deliberately replaced by the practices (habits) of the *“new man.”* This all requires the activity of the will.

There develop habits of reaction to stimuli by the growing child. These reactions are in physical things, in emotional matters, in mental states. These were produced by the reaction of a sinful self-centred ego. Thus the patterns of reaction created in the body cells are the patterns of the *“old man”* – from putting on a jumper to reacting to a punch in the nose. Some habits like putting on a jumper are morally neutral, but the mass of our reactions is impregnated by the moral lack of the *“old man.”* When a person becomes a Christian his ego is changed. The Spirit regenerates and lives in the regenerated ego. But the paths of the patterns created in the body cells remain and have to be replaced by new paths and new patterns (as required) to confirm with the required reactions of the *“new man.”*

The introduction of the *“new man”* is associated immediately with pattern changing – much of the old life instantly disappears in the upsurge of new life. However, there are areas of living in which the new patterns need to be deliberately created. Growth in grace is associated with increasing awareness of what the Spirit desires to alter, and increasing fixity of faith’s patterns in our behaviour.

THE CONSENTING WILL

The Christian's will is not an achieving will but a consenting will. Saving faith occurs when the sinner, recognising his undoneness, consents to the Saviour saving him. So consent is required in the Christian walking with Christ (Colossians 2:6). The law of the Spirit of life is based on a consenting will allowing the divine achievement – walk in the Spirit and the impulses associated with the flesh will not be fulfilled but negated (Galatians 5:16). Through the Spirit the practices of the body are put to death. The Spirit shows me through the Word what He desires to do in my life (e.g. remove jealousy). He does this upon my consent and submission to Him.

I cannot will jealousy away by human effort. As the "*new man*" replaces the "*old man*," so the principle of replacement is basic to the Spirit's law of life in Christ. Negative defects (e.g. jealousy) are dealt with by the Spirit replacing them with a new pattern as indicated in Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:12.

12

THE SPIRIT IN CO-OPERATION AND SUBMISSION

Paul urges us to preserve the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3). This unity is given by the Spirit, not achieved by us. Our responsibility is to maintain it. Failure to do so grieves the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Love co-operates.

CHRISTIANS: COPIES OF GOD (Ephesians 5:1)

In Christ we are born walkers. The human baby takes many months to walk. When we are born again as new creatures in Christ we immediately walk and should reflect our parentage by living like Christ. Thus our Christian lifestyle should be as follows:

- (1) Walk in love (Ephesians 5:2).** Family love is based on mutual identification within the family. Friendship love is the mutual give and take of kindred souls. Sexual love is rooted in mutual desire. But "*agape*" love (as here used) is self-giving to meet need without demand for return.

- (2) Walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8).** That is, repudiate all evil practices produced by ungodly men, and continually discover what is pleasing to the Lord.

(3) Walk carefully (Ephesians 5:15). That is, one's lifestyle should be balanced and fully integrated, resting on the discovered will of God. This balance comes about through the full control of the Spirit (5:18).

ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE

The Ark of the Covenant of the Hebrew tabernacle (Hebrews 9:4) contained three things: manna (Exodus 16:33), tablets of the covenant (Deuteronomy 10:2), Aaron's budded-rod (Numbers 17:10). Manna stands for food and sustenance, both physical and spiritual. The tablets indicate moral and spiritual requirements between man and God, and between man and man. Aaron's rod reflects the fact of divinely-given orders with societal and ecclesiastical aspects.

When Paul refers to the need of continuously co-ordinated response to the Spirit's control (Ephesians 5:18), he contrasts this with the case of a drunken man who has loss of control and inability to co-ordinate his behaviour.

The Christian lifestyle has an undercurrent of joy displayed in song, a giving of thanks in every passing situation, and above all, an attitude of submission to one another according to the divine pattern of authority.

Strictly speaking, God does not delegate authority. But in certain matters He exercises His authority through co-operating media. For a Christian, Christ is Head and Lord (Colossians 1:18), and Christ exercises His lordship through the operation of the Spirit in our lives. The Spirit's main medium is the Word of God expressed in the Scriptures, and on the revelational side is our

final court of appeal. Hence we must ask: What are the human societal media defined for Christians in the Bible? It is only in so far as an individual is functioning as a member of a group that the question of delegated authority or submission arises.

SUBMISSION THROUGH THE SPIRIT

Two fundamental factors are present in every situation. Firstly, our obedience is primarily and finally to God (Acts 5:29). God is present in each situation to order it and to receive our freewill obedience in it. Secondly, man as made by God in love possesses as a person powers of personality that demand expression. Each human situation must allow the full display of that personality. This display is essentially required in specifically spiritual situations when each person should stand in the dignity of his redeemed personality (Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 4:13, Colossians 3:11, 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Paul in Ephesians 5:22 – 6:9 and Colossians 3:18-25 outlines how submission occurs under the direction of the Spirit in the primary groups: child-parent, wife-husband, servant-master. Whereas a child is required to obey parents, a wife submits to her husband. That a husband bosses his wife or that women submit themselves to men are ideas not in view. The submission of wife to husband is in respect to unresolved decision-making, not to life generally, nor to sexual relations.

SPIRITUAL SUBMISSION IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIPS

The failure in our churches is frequently because Christian submission is not understood or not practised. The following aspects are applicable.

- (1) **Recognition of constituted authorities.** Almost all groups have three kinds of authorities – constitution and by-laws, board, or diaconate, which work within the constitution, local group situations where there are field or group leaders.
- (2) **Recognition of human personality.** Each Christian has the right to private judgment in private matters. But in group matters he voluntarily by joining the group laid aside this right in matters falling under the recognised authorities previously mentioned.
- (3) **Recognition that authority accepted alone conveys authority.** This is clearly stated by the centurion with Christ's warm approval (Matthew 8:9, Luke 7:8).
- (4) **The recognition that my reaction of submission is the only clearly-defined right thing in a given situation.** So long as I fail to submit I am "off side," whatever else is happening (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5, 1 Corinthians 16:16).
- (5) **The recognition that another's wrong does not exempt me from the requirement of submission.** As a wife must submit to her husband "*in all things*" (Colossians 3:20), and servants to their masters "*in all things*" (Colossians 3:22), so a person must submit "*in all things*" to the one over him.

- (6) The recognition that all authority moves downwards from the comprehensive authority to the smaller groupings.** Hence submission moves upwards and cannot bypass the level immediately above it.
- (7) The recognition that it is God, who, in response to my real submission, rectifies the errors of those above me and converts the situation in which I am submissive into a stepping stone for spiritual advance.** I can never take the law into my own hands.

Thus submission is THE sign of the fullness of the Spirit and hence of spiritual maturity (1 Corinthians 3:3). Submission is not merely giving in. It is not a shrug of the shoulders but an active acceptance of the divine will being expressed through the God-given authority over me. This never rules out discussion by all those involved in the situation. Hence submission is my response to Christ who is actively present in the happening.



13

THE SPIRIT AND OUR RESURRECTION

It is His resurrection life that Christ shares with us. Paul said that he cancelled out his glorious heritage to accept Christ and know Him in his resurrection and death – to die to sin, and be alive to God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:8-10, Romans 6:11).

THE SPIRIT'S OWNERSHIP SEAL

In the New Testament “*to believe*” is followed by a preposition of motion. You believe *into*, you commit yourself to. The result is – you are “*in Christ*.” This “faith position” is also expressed as “*in the Spirit*.” He who does not so have the Spirit does not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9). “Belonging” is also expressed as “*sealing*” (Ephesians 1:13, 2 Corinthians 1:22). As the owner’s seal on the felled logs floating in the harbour, and as the wax seal on official documents, indicated ownership, so the presence in our hearts of the Holy Spirit, God’s seal, proclaims the divine possession. We are His.

THE SPIRIT'S POWER IN RESURRECTION

Being born again of the Spirit moves to living by the Spirit. He applies the resurrection life to us. This requires on our part living by faith, seeking the things above not below (Colossians 3:1-3). The “*things above*” is not referring to locality but to source. They are

the things that belong to Christ – the mind of the Spirit as distinct from the mind of the flesh, which are matters belonging to mere human existence. You have died, your life now is a new dimension – that of the Spirit.

Those in the flesh set their minds upon the things of the flesh – the things below – but those living according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit – the things above (Romans 8:5). The imagination or thought patterns of the Christian need to be given by and consummated by the Spirit.

The idea of **holiness** in the Old Testament had two sides – priestly and ethical. The priestly emphasised relation. God was related to His people in covenant. All that belonged – temple, priest, people – were holy because they belonged to God, because set apart for His specific purposes and relationship. The ethical side stressed character and personal qualities. God expected His holy people to reflect in their behaviour His own character and righteousness. Man’s holiness could only be a sharing in God’s holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16). The word “*holy*” in the New Testament is almost always equivalent to “set apart for God,” or belonging to God.”

THE SPIRIT SANCTIFIES

Paul states that Christ was raised from the dead “*according to the Spirit of holiness*” (Romans 1:4). It is the Spirit who fulfils the divine purposes. He fulfilled God’s dynamic plan in raising Christ from the dead and so endorsed Christ’s own righteous life, which was the achievement of the Spirit in the fully surrendered person, Christ. The Spirit sanctifies (renders holy) by separating unto God and by reproducing God’s character in us. “*For God did not call us to be*

impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸ *Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.”* (1 Thessalonians 4:7-8).

And it is the Spirit particularly who empowers us to be Christlike in a proper orientation of the sex drive (verses 3-4). In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 the human and the divine sides of sanctification are related. On the human side it is *“faith”* (belief) in the truth, that is, counting on the truth as it is in Christ (Ephesians 4:21). On the divine side, God’s election involves an operation of the Spirit who reproduces in the believer the very life of Christ through residential possession. And the purpose is – conformed to the image of the Son (Romans 8:29).

THE SPIRIT AND THE CONSUMMATION

The believer is not only sealed by the Spirit to indicate ownership, but to guarantee the Christian’s final resurrection (Ephesians 1:13-14). The word *“pledge”* is a commercial Hebrew word transliterated into Greek. It was used as a *“deposit”* off a total debt, or *“earnest”* money ratifying a contract. Thus the immediate presence of the Spirit in the heart is the guarantee of all the promises of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:4-5), and in particular the promise of final deliverance from mortality in the resurrection of the body. The expression *“first fruits of the Spirit”* (Romans 8:23) has the same emphasis and refers to the Spirit’s operation in the wider context of humanity as a whole.

The Spirit culminates the development of Christ’s Church, and also fulfils the promises to Israel. By the Spirit’s activity the Abrahamic covenant is fulfilled in its final drama. Christ is victor. Christians in Christ’s name assert effectively that victory in

individual situations. Satan must always yield (James 4:7). There will, however, be a final consummation of Christ's victory in the resurrection of believers into Christ's present bodily likeness. We shall be just like Him (1 John 3:2).

THE SPIRIT AND ETERNAL FELICITY

Revelation chapters 21-22 portray the New Jerusalem, the City of God. The presence of God Almighty and the Lamb as the temple of that eternal city indicates the eternal goal as fellowship (Revelation 21:22). No symbol here, but God in his fullness. The tabernacle of God is with men.

It is a city of divine fellowship. The groans of the first creation will cease, and full access to the tree of life (Christ) will be ever open. God will have given Himself in absolute self-giving in love. Death and the curse will be no more. The Spirit, who is God personally present in power to perform in love all God's dynamic purposes, will achieve all this. The felicity and fellowship of that final day will far surpass the anticipation engendered by its revelational portrayal. In the light of this promised fellowship of love through the Spirit, God's message of invitation rings out clearly. *"Let him who desires, take the water of life without price."* The Spirit and Christ's Bride say – COME (Revelation 22:17).

ASPECTS OF THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

A Month of Daily Readings

Selected quotes from the ministry of Dr Ted Gibson
(Prayer response by Mark Ingram)

The only letter that I have ever received from my theological Principal, Dr Ted Gibson (1915-1991), was as a result of a phone call he made to confirm my enrolment at the Baptist Theological College of Queensland (now Malyon College) in 1980. He wrote to me on 17th January 1980 confirming the details and answering my requests about accommodation as I was living in Perth. In the letter he states "At the moment all our available flats are taken. You have taken the leap of faith. Though the college never guarantees to find accommodation consistently the Lord leads the students or ourselves to something helpful. We walk by faith and not by sight. So be prayerful about the matter and watch to see what the Lord will do."

He was a man of faith encouraging me in my formative years to "**watch and see what the Lord will do**" as we live a life of faith.

May these selections from his lecture notes, taken from his Principalship ministry commencing in 1949 to his retirement years, help develop your life of faith filled dependence upon the living God.

- **1. Faith / Fruit of the Spirit**

Faith, meekness, self-control. Here 'faith' is thought of in relation to the continuing of the Christian life. Having begun in the Spirit we cannot be made perfect through human effort. Faith thus includes meekness, or submissiveness to God. This 'meekness' is not some weak, feeble, give in to everything attitude. It is a positive acceptance of God's directives with genuine contentment and delight. It involves self-control, the holding of oneself in readiness to respond to that Divine Control.

PRAYER

Lord, assist me in my daily thoughts to recall that all my life since coming to know you is to be lived in the atmosphere of continuous authentic faith. May I delight myself in your directives and discover afresh a true contentment. AMEN

- **2. Spirit's Presence**

The evidence of the Spirit's presence and control in my life is to be found not in the emotional experiences outwardly expressed (though these may or may not occur), but rather in the obvious display (often unconscious) of a continuing attitude of faith, in the moment by moment witness of His Spirit within ours, in the enjoyment of a release from the bondage to the self and its aim. Such Holy Spirit work in us provides the soil for His production of fruit. Here is the positive side to the deliverance from bondage. The Spirit destroys the weeds that the real fruit may appear.

PRAYER

My Lord, thank you for your Spirit's witness to my spirit. Continue to turn over the soil of my life, that I might be increasingly freed from a self-focused way of living. May the Spirit's weeding work in my heart eventually yield a genuine spiritual harvest. All praise and glory to you. AMEN

▪ 3. Creature Man – Living By Faith

Because man is a dependent creature, he can only live effectively by the reality of this creature/Creator relationship. This relationship is called "faith". It is defined as: my glad acceptance of my absolute dependence on my Creator for life and destiny, coupled with my response in glad obedience to His declared intentions. The three elements of this basic faith are:

(i) Awareness of God and our Godward relation - the knowing aspect;

(ii) Commitment to the God who cares and provides - the trusting aspect;

(iii) Obedience in the areas of God's declared intentions – the obeying aspect.

Not only did the Spirit of God produce Adam, so that he might work under these conditions, but it is the Spirit who enables man to fulfil God's purposes for him as man continues to live by faith in his Creator.

PRAYER

My Creator and Redeemer God, By your grace you have brought me your creature into a rich relationship whereby the Creator/creature dynamic is present with thankfulness and elevated to Father/son intimacy. May joy and gladness be ever present and operative as I continue to grow in awareness, commitment and obedience to you. AMEN

▪ 4. Believer's Response Rom 8:13

The Christian's will is not an achieving will but a consenting will. Faith always includes awareness of truth, submission to God in respect of that truth, and obedience to God in the consequences. The Spirit shows us through His Word what belongs to the Old Man and what is true of the New Man. Faith then is a consent of that truth coupled with a submission to the Spirit for Him to achieve the necessary replacement. The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes me free in that respect from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:2).

PRAYER

My Lord, the battle of the wills is always present. I experience so much blessing and contentment when I actively submit myself to your will and ways. I desire all that is true of the New Man to be true experientially for me. I yield myself to the Spirit's power, consenting to your full operation in accomplishing my Heavenly Father's plans and purposes for my life. AMEN

- **5. Jesus – The Man**

All creatures are dependent on the Creator. Man is a creature. Faith in God is a willing acceptance by a man of this dependence on God. Man, as a sinner, exhibits saving faith when he accepts his dependence on God for his salvation. Thus when Jesus came as a man, the outstanding characteristic of man – this willing dependence on God – was true of Him (Heb 5:8). The old covenant required Israel's obedience (Ex 19:8,24:3). God's requirement of Jesus is the same – perfect obedience (Jn 8:29; Phil 2:8). The obedience must also be life- long.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you are the True Man par excellence. Living by faith in total dependence upon your Heavenly Father was the way of all your life. May something of this faith-filled living be my experience also. For you my Lord it meant death on a cross. May there be many little dyings each day as I take up my cross and follow you. AMEN

- **6. Prayer and Faith**

Matt 21:18-22. Our Lord..applied His act as an example of faith, vs 21,22. Believing prayer always brings an answer. It does not mean, however, that an answer will come simply because you are expecting it. The prayer of faith always involves a knowledge of God's will. Faith is the foundation of prayer : prayer is the language of faith. It is not simply, because we believe in prayer we ask, that we have the answer. Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing (what?) – involves knowledge of the Word of God – sincerity of the prayer does not determine the final answer.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as I immerse myself in your Word may I grow in an increasing knowledge of your will and sensitivity in the language of faith, that my requests might have less to do with what I want and more to do with your desired outcomes. AMEN

- **7. Prayer and Faith**

Matt 7:7. Three present imperatives state the essentials of the prayers of Christians. Ask continually, seek continually, knock continually. These 3 represent a progression of faith. They indicate 3 different areas of life in which prayer is essential: Asking for those things specifically promised; Seeking to know the will of God in areas of life not clearly defined; Knocking on doors where we seem to be at a standstill and progress is impeded.

PRAYER

My Lord, I ask that the shaping of my life of faith might be chiselled out with continuous asking, seeking and knocking. Deepen my intimacy and insight with you. May the peace of God continue to be my day to day experience. AMEN

- **8. Requirement of Faith**

Matt 17:14-21. The requirement of faith is not merely the absence of doubt **but** the presence of a willing submission of the heart to God in respect to the situation requiring faith.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the grace you extend to me in wrestling with my doubts from time to time. On bended knee I ask that you submit my willing heart to the very heart of God that all my actions and askings are the overflow of a faith filled disposition. AMEN

- **9. Faith and the Spirit.**

As at the beginning faith is an active attitude. The Greek, Pisteuo, is regularly followed by the active preposition (epi or eis) before the person. We believe into, we commit ourselves to, we again assume in other words, our dependence upon God in Christ. Let that be done and all the creative operations of God abound in our lives. The Spirit enters and recreates.

PRAYER

My Lord, what a wonder it is that I can commit myself and believe into the very person of Christ. It is not just your word alone, but your very person that I freely stake myself upon. The life of active faith whereby the recreative operations of your Spirit are manifested in my entire person are welcomed with joy and gladness. AMEN

- **10. Barnabas' Faith.**

Acts 11:24. Barnabas' "faith" was a Spirit-given ability to see the ongoing purpose of God and to give direction to the Church's desire to know and follow her Lord. Luke, thus in speaking of the Spirits fullness, has always specifically in mind the advancement of the Kingdom of God through the witnessing program.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, it's not by accident that I'm a part of my local church. May my involvement with the outreach and missionary endeavours of the church be marked by a Barnabas faith quality. May the sight of the purposeful advancement of your kingdom with my Fellowship be the programmes initiated and sustained by your Spirit. Assist me to be whole - hearted in my involvement. AMEN

▪ 11. Faith and Sanctification in Practice.

1 Pet 3:15; 1 Thess 4:3; 1 Cor 6:19. God has set apart the believing saints unto holiness and His fellowship. But we must not forget the co-operative requirement of faith on man's part. Willingly I must let go all sin and my own cherished wants: not gradually, but by a definite act of release and then trust in Christ that on the positive side He will make and keep me in holiness of life, thought and act. The Holy Spirit will do this if we believe and trust Him for that very thing. Abandon self and sin and launch out in faith upon the holiness of the Holy Spirit – this is experimental sanctification. This IS for YOU the will of God.

PRAYER

Lord, assist me to rest in you, knowing that the process of holiness is your expressed will for me and in the end will always be more beneficial and wondrous than I could ever imagine. I echo Robert Murray McCheyne's prayer "Lord, make me as holy as it is possible for a redeemed sinner to be." AMEN

- **12. Faith in God**

Faith in God is never simply faith in a person but always has reference to that person's promise and declared intentions.

PRAYER

Thank you Lord that your truthfulness is inseparately tied up with your unchanging character. What you promise you will perform for you alone have the power to accomplish all your divine will in salvation and providence. May I learn more of your promises and continue as Abraham did to stake myself in you. AMEN

- **13. Faith and Obedience**

Obedience and faith are two sides of the one coin. And both require for proper operation a knowledge of God's will. Faith always includes a pre-disposition to obedience – a readiness to gladly respond to God when He speaks.

PRAYER

My Lord, keep me from ever acting or thinking that faith and obedience can ever be separated. Strengthen and enrich my faith through the reading and reflection upon your Word. May every promise and precept be responded to with glad submission and wholehearted prompt obedience. AMEN

- **14. Faith and the Will of God**

We must practice the Will of God. 1Jn 2:17. The Christian life is an exciting one of discovery. Just what does the Lord want us to do? His callings are His enablings. Faith is the disposition to do the Will of the Lord as he reveals it. We must sell out to God. This involves me in a life-long study of the Scriptures not so much to know correct theology but to know God's purpose for my life and how at this moment I am related to His ongoing programme for this day.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, take my life, all of it, nothing do I hold back. I belong to you and whatever challenge, adventure or discovery of your person and how I am related today to your ongoing missional purposes - may it be accomplished in the power of your Spirit for your glory. Let this be my constant passion till the day I die. AMEN

- **15. Faith and Whole of Life.**

Faith is not merely an act of the sinner coming to Christ for salvation. Faith also for the Christian is a continuing necessity and is to affect the whole of his life - Col 2.6. "Faith" is my complete dependence as a creature upon my Creator and a glad acceptance of this position in my day-to-day living. Now as a saved person my trust in my saviour must be continuous – a trust that is a submission

to the full will of God and a development in me of the very character of Jesus Christ. Christian faith is to be love in action.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, If it wasn't for your grace and mercy there would not be saving faith uniting me inseparately with yourself. May my day-to-day living demonstrate the realities of my faith as love in action with full submission and increasing conformity to the character of Christ Jesus. AMEN

▪ 16. The Crossing of Jordan Josh 3:13

Faith acts in the absence of outward appearance but depending upon the truth of God's promises. The Israelites did not wait till God stopped the Jordan flowing. They obeyed and walked towards the water overflowing the banks. The water did not get less and less as they approached. God acted **at the moment** the walking feet of the leading priests touched the water, not before. So with us.

PRAYER

My Father, grant that I might never stop dreaming, planning and hoping. Grant that fear or past disappointments may not hold me back from embarking on new dreams and plans. Assist me to put my feet into the water which stretches before me, fully convinced by faith of the truth of your promises. AMEN

- **17. Faith's Vision Rom 8.14**

God, in creating man gave him a commission.(Gen 1.28). Man under God was to rule the universe (Heb 2.8). If we are to live by faith then we are always to be committed to the dynamic ongoing programme of God. Faith is not simply that I sit in the presence of God. You can't stay with God very long before you are sharing in what He is doing. You are given a vision of the current programme of the Lord.

PRAYER

O Lord God, help me to overcome my narrow concerns, and grant me a vision of your concern for the world motivated by a sight of the majestic splendour of your character. May Henry Martyn's observation be true of me "The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Missions, and the nearer we get to Him the more intensely missionary we must become." AMEN

- **18. Faith and the Voice of the Spirit**

We need to hear the voice of the Spirit, and without so hearing any action of ours is not faith but presumption. It is only a thin edge between faith and presumption. Faith listens. Faith puts oneself in the position to hear by seeking to know the will of God by meditating upon the Word of God, daily and in concentrated searches when possible. The Word of God needs to be studied. Christ said "Search the Scriptures." Jesus said of the Spirit: "He will lead you into all truth." John 16:13. His leading involves my readiness to be lead, and says nothing about "how." He would do the leading. His ways with us are so wonderfully varied and past finding out.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I need your help to carefully listen to the voice of your Spirit through the sacred pages of your inspired Scriptures. I desire to have a readiness to be lead through your word whereby I discover those parts of my life that I need to be moving into greater wholeness, integration and intentional service. May all my actions be born of genuine faith – how marvellous are your ways! AMEN

▪ 19. Man's Faith

Faith (willing trust) in God has always been the bond that tied man to God. Sinful man is tied to God in salvation when he submits himself to God for God to justify him in mercy. Thus two things are to be distinguished :

- (1) The unalterable requirement of every age that sinful man depends upon God to justify him. (Rom 1:17; 2:6 ; 3:24).
- (2) The means by which God justifies the sinner. This is progressively revealed and finally seen to be Christ on Calvary. Man does not have to know **how** God will save him, as long as he trusts God to do so.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for the reminder that every person who is united to you has depended upon you alone to be justified. How this is done will always be a matter of wonder and praise for me. Take all my family as I recall them by name and may each one experience saving faith that will tie them as individuals to you the living God. AMEN

- **20. Spirit of God Leading Heb 11**

The Christian life is a life of faith. It is trusting in Christ, for God has come into focus in the person of Jesus Christ. Christian faith as a life style has an essential element in it called “vision” or “hope” or “expectation”. Faith always has a forward looking aspect.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I ask for a clearer focus upon your Son. As I see with the eye of faith your beauty reflected in Christ, may this encourage me to look up and be forward looking in my Christian life. May heavenly realities be even clearer and more precious to me than anything that this earthly life offers. AMEN

- **21. Forward – Looking Faith**

Heb 11:1 defines this expectant element. Faith always operates in the area of tomorrow which will become today. God works according to a pre-determined goal. His acts are eschatological. This is to be characteristic of His people. Our major problem is to know what is the God given goal. And that’s not easy. Sometimes it comes in flashes, sometimes it comes easily, sometimes after patiently waiting upon God. There is no one road to His revelation. But a Spirit-given vision is a **must**.

PRAYER

O Lord, I confess that there is too much of me in all I do. I want to wait and act upon a truly God given goal. Mould and shape my heart's desires so that the energy expended through your Spirit is rightly directed and not a "spiritualising" of my own agenda. I need your patience to help me wait and the conviction of the still small voice "this is the way." AMEN

▪ 22. Forward – Looking Faith (Cont)

It is quite difficult to distinguish between personal ambition and the purpose of God. God puts you into a place for the purposes of growth...(and) growth was written within the very fibre of biblical faith. Spiritual growth within ourself, growth of souls, growth in the work of God are his order. And self can be wrapped in that anticipated growth. Therein lies our problem.

PRAYER

My Lord, how searching is your Word and gracious is your convicting work. Thank you for those people in my community of faith that speak courageously to me when the need arises. Just as the Apostle Paul was comforted by the coming of Titus, may I receive the admonition and challenge from others as coming from You yourself. I want to grow. Sometimes the process is painful and humbling, but I welcome it. AMEN

- **23. Forward – Looking Faith (Cont)**

Habakkuk reminds us, “The just shall live by his faith (faithfulness).” It’s wider than just the initial act of faith. The life of faith is continuing faithfulness. “I have been crucified with Christ,” said Paul, “nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”(Galatians 2:20). That’s a marvellous start for a Christian but the verse goes on “and the life which I now live I live by the faith **of** the Son of God.” Now it does not say “by faith **in** Christ” but **of** Christ. By all that is wrapped up in the wonderful person called Jesus. I just live in Him and with Him and for Him.

PRAYER

Lord, I ask that you would teach me what it means to live “by the faith of the Son of God”. I desire to know this experientially in the depths of my being and live it out in its fullness in all spheres of my life. Surely this cannot involve a qualitative shift in my Christology, but a growing richness of heart acquaintance with you. AMEN

- **24. Prayer of Faith James 5 :15**

This is not just a general belief in God but trust in God to fulfil His revealed will in the specific situation under consideration. The “prayer of faith” (Jam 5:14) of the elders for healing was not a psychological intensity of belief in God’s goodness but a prayer based upon the revealed will of God in the specific case. The group praying needs to wait upon God till He shows His hand. Then the expectant faith becomes the prayer of faith.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I cannot honestly remember ever calling the elders to anoint and pray for healing. I do not know anyone recently from my church who has availed themselves of this ministry either. Is this common across the board? Have we become so dependent upon the health professionals that it doesn't even enter our consciousness? Oh Lord may the healing potential of our churches be increased and some clear teaching be given on the subject. AMEN

- **25. Faith – Committing Ourselves to God for His Performance**

God has no pleasure in our self- abnegation unless it leads to faith, that is, laying hold of the adequacy of the Lord. Knowing the will of the Lord, when followed by the recognition of our own inability to achieve it, should lead to our committal to the Spirit to perform it.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, In my heart of hearts I know what your word says but I struggle to lay my life down and prove afresh the sufficiency of you, Lord. Help me by your Spirit's power to put to death all fleshly reliance, and to acknowledge the imperative and absolute necessity of divine assistance. May you perform your good through me for in and of myself I can do nothing. AMEN

- **26. Faith and Redemption**

The interpretation of Christ's coming is announced by Himself in Mark 10:45 as coming to be a ransom for many. Faith then must listen, but the listening must be the voice of God and this voice is heard best in Christ's activity – an activity of redemption. The centre of faith is a cross, that stands to separate the old life from the new, to be the touchstone of all God's dealings with us. The Cross was a Divine Drama giving in Christ's sacrifice, the last word on a New Covenant, sin, judgement and Divine love.

PRAYER

My Redeemer God, take the centrality of the Cross and the glory of Christ's person – the highest expression of your self-giving love to me, and help me to listen. Sadly my attention is often distracted with other things. May my faith grow and mature as I contemplate the amazing activity of God in my redemption. AMEN

- **27. Growing in Grace and Faith: 2 Peter 1:8-11.**

To be fruitful is the natural result of growing. We produce. Life must reproduce life. We are the branches on which the fruit grows. The power to develop fruit comes from the vine itself. See John 15.

The appearance of the fruit on the vine is evidence of the life in the tree. The assurance of our union with Christ is not a mere inner conviction but the fruitfulness of life.

An abundant entrance to the eternal kingdom of Christ is thus guaranteed. Heaven will be so much experienced on earth that our translation to heaven itself will not surprise us nor alarm us. We are the Lord's and we are happy for it.

PRAYER

My Lord, you are the true vine. Growth that comes from you is often slow and hidden, but real and life giving. Just as I didn't notice all the maturing of my children as they lived each day in my presence, there came a day where I was able to recognise a true growth and abandonment of childish ways. May I press on to maturity and enjoy a foretaste of heaven on earth. AMEN

- **28. Faith and Spiritual Warfare Ephesians 6.**

The wise general chooses the place where he can fight, if he can. For the successful warfare we must choose our battleground. Eph 6:10,13; Gal 5:1. We take our stand "in Christ". We bring into captivity to Jesus Christ every thought. In other words we take the position of His victory. This means that we do not have to fight a battle to gain victory but to claim by faith the victory that is already ours in Christ. As long as we abide in Him the enjoyment of the victory is certain.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you alone perfectly took your stand against the devil. You were victorious every time, staking yourself upon the Word of God and indeed upon the unsurpassed power of your Father. Yet it still cost you and you received the comforting ministry of angels. Help me to take my stand in Christ and know experientially that the victory has already been won. Strengthen and comfort me as your servant. AMEN

- **29. Renewing of Faith Attitude Isa 63:7-19**

To have faith requires the knowledge of the will of God. Faith is a submission to God for Him to perform in you or by you what He has promised.... Holiness is based on the promises of God and takes place only in so far as the fear of God is operating in our lives....Reference is made in Isaiah 63:7-19 to the Spirit of His Holiness in vs 10,11. The steadfastness of God is again seen against the inconsistency of Israel whose rebellion provoked God's Spirit causing His withdrawal. The prophet expresses the cry of the remnant who are given the name "the people of thy holiness"vs18, as they plead for God's activity in renewing in their hearts the fundamental faith-attitude described as "Thy fear"v17.

PRAYER

*Holy Father, I praise you for your Spirit of Holiness which is at work in your Church. Let there be a renewal of true faith in my heart enabling me to submit to you for the performance of whatever is required of me that your promises might be fulfilled. I'm a part of your plan and programme – how marvellous is that!. May my worshipful response be dominated with reverence and holy fear.
AMEN*

- **30. God's Essential Character and Our Response in Worship.**

In worship man's knowledge about God must become knowledge of God – intimate mutual sharing...Love in God is his self-giving, initially choosing to make man so that he could give himself to man. But we need revelation to tell us of the characteristics of this distinctive love. Love is displayed as: compassionate, bestowing favours, long

suffering, and abundant in reliableness and constancy (Exod 34:6) But all this is always in the context of greatness, overwhelmingness, uniqueness. The human response in worship is called in O.T. “ the fear of the Lord”. Psa 19:9; 111:10; Isa 11:3. This fear is an awareness of my littleness in the presence of his bigness. So in worship, we adore God’s splendour and fling ourselves and all that we have at His feet in glad acknowledgement of our total dependence on the free action of the God who is both immanent and transcendent.

PRAYER

O Lord, I want to know you like this. Increase the fear of you Lord in my daily life. Increase the receptivity of my soul to enjoy the intimate mutual sharing of your very own self-giving love to me. You kept nothing back from me, grant me grace to give my whole self to you. May your greatness and my littleness and all the contrasts between you as Creator and I as creature lead to adoring worship and endless praise. AMEN

- **31. Continuance of Faith : Going Right Through with the Lord**

The Children of Israel crossed the Jordan. (Josh 5). Joshua is the O.T. form of “Jesus”. Jesus takes us into Canaan the land of Rest (Heb 4). By obedient faith they crossed the river Jordan and conquered Jericho. At this point they passed from the manna to the new corn of the land of Canaan. But within the land itself there had to be a continuing contest. Victory was guaranteed should faith continue. The snare of the Israelites was their compromise

with the local inhabitants. They adopted the local deities and intermarried. Thus idolatry developed. The blessing of the Lord only continues to the one who goes right through with the Lord. Crossing Jordan does not end the experience. The King must come upon the throne. (1 Sam 8)

PRAYER

My Lord and God, I want to acknowledge your Kingly reign as a reality in my life. Teach me to enter into your rest and experience victory in my life over my ever present remaining sin. I desire to go right through with you Lord, and encourage others to do the same. I notice that spiders work for themselves but bees work for others. May my life be an inspiration and blessing to others in the journey of faith. AMEN



