

# GOD'S ECONOMY IN FAITH

(Friday—First Morning Session)

## Message One

### The Governing and Controlling Vision of God's Economy in Faith

RK *Hymns*: 602

Scripture Reading: Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:18a; 1 Tim. 1:4; Gal. 2:16, 20

- Prov 29:18a Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; ...
- Acts 26:18a To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, ...
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- Gal 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

#### **I. We in the Lord's recovery must have a vision of God's economy—Acts 26:18a; Prov. 29:18a:**

- Acts 26:18a To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, ...
- Prov 29:18a Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; ...
- A. We need to be brought into another realm, not the so-called spiritual realm but the realm of God's economy—Rev. 21:9-10.
- Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.
- Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
- B. We need to be governed, controlled, and directed by this vision—Prov. 29:18a.
- Prov 29:18a Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; ...
- C. We must be strong and unshakable in the vision of God's economy, God's eternal will—Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:58.
- Rev 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.
- 1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.
- D. If we love the Lord and His recovery and if we mean business to practice the church life in the recovery, we need to endeavor to see all the visions concerning God's economy—Jer. 29:13; 33:3; Deut. 29:29.
- Jer 29:13 And you will seek Me and find Me if you search for Me with all your heart;
- Jer 33:3 Call unto Me, and I will answer you and tell you great and hidden things, which you do not know.
- Deut 29:29 The things that are hidden belong to Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed, to us and our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

#### **II. God's economy is God's household administration, which is to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen and redeemed people that He may have a house to express Himself, which house is the church, the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15:**

- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- A. God's economy, as His household administration, is to produce and constitute a Body for His Son—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 16; 5:30.
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Eph 2:16 And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.
- Eph 3:6 That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel,
- Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Eph 5:30 Because we are members of His Body.
- B. The central subject of the Bible is the economy of God, and the entire Bible is concerned with the economy of God—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10:
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
- Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
1. The governing and controlling vision in the Bible is the divine economy—Prov. 29:18a.  
Prov 29:18a Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; ...
  2. In our reading of the Bible, we need to focus our attention on the divine economy for the divine dispensing—Eph. 3:9.  
Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
  3. Unless we know God's economy, we will not understand the Bible—Luke 24:45.  
Luke 24:45 Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures;
- C. Christ is the element, sphere, means, goal, and aim of God's eternal economy; He is everything in God's economy—Matt. 17:5; Luke 24:44.
- Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!
- Luke 24:44 And He said to them, These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all the things written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me must be fulfilled.
- D. God's economy is to dispense Himself into our being that our being may be constituted with His being; this can be accomplished only by God dispensing Himself into us as the divine life—Eph. 3:16-17a; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11.
- Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph 3:17a That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, ...
- Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
- Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
- Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.
- Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
- E. The economy of God is that God became flesh, passed through human living, died, resurrected, and became the life-giving Spirit to enter into us as life and to dispense God

into us so that we may be transformed for the producing of the church, which is the Body of Christ, the house of God, the kingdom of God, and the counterpart of Christ, the ultimate aggregate of which is the New Jerusalem—John 1:14, 29; 12:24; 20:22; 14:2; 3:3, 5, 29-30; Rev. 21:2.

- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.
- John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
- John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.
- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
- Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

F. God's economy is God becoming man that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to produce the organic Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; 12:4-5; Rev. 21:10.

- Rom 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
- Rom 1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,
- Rom 1:4 Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;
- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

G. According to the desire of His heart, God's eternal economy is to make man the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead and to make Himself one with man and man one with Him, thus to be enlarged and expanded in His expression, that all His divine attributes may be expressed in human virtues—John 1:12-14; 1 John 3:1a, 2; 2 Pet. 1:4.

- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- 1 John 3:1a Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. ...
- 1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is.
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

H. The divine economy is to produce the new creation out of the chaotic old creation—Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17:

Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.

2 Cor 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

1. The history of the universe is a history of God's economy and Satan's chaos—Gen. 1:1-2, 26; Rev. 20:10—21:4.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen 1:2 But the earth became waste and emptiness, and darkness was on the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was brooding upon the surface of the waters.

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Rev 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also the beast and the false prophet were; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose face earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened; and another scroll was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by the things which were written in the scrolls, according to their works.

Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, each of them, according to their works.

Rev 20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

Rev 20:15 And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Rev 21:4 And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will be no more, nor will there be sorrow or crying or pain anymore; for the former things have passed away.

2. Both in the Bible and in our experience, the satanic chaos always goes along with the divine economy—Eph. 3:8-10; 4:14-16; 6:24.

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.

3. The Lord needs the overcomers, who will be one with Him to conquer the destructive satanic chaos and to triumph in the constructive divine economy—Rev. 2:7b, 11b, 17b, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21.

Rev 2:7b ... To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Rev 2:11b ... He who overcomes shall by no means be hurt of the second death.

Rev 2:17b ... To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except he who receives it.

Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;

Rev 2:27 And he will shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father;

Rev 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.

Rev 3:5 He who overcomes will be clothed thus, in white garments, and I shall by no means erase his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Rev 3:12 He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Rev 3:21 He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

- I. The Lord's recovery is for the carrying out of God's economy—Eph. 3:2.

Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

### III. God's economy is initiated and developed in the sphere of faith—1 Tim. 1:4:

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

- A. On the negative side, to exercise faith is to stop our work, our doing; on the positive side, to exercise faith is to trust in the Lord—Heb. 11:6.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- B. Faith is a proclamation that we are unable to fulfill God's requirements but that God has done everything for us and that we receive all God has planned for us, all God has done for us, and all God has given to us—John 1:16.

John 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

- C. God's economy is carried out not by our doing in ourselves but by our believing into Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God—3:15-16.

John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

- D. Faith is a matter of seeing a view of the contents of God's economy—Heb. 12:2:

Heb 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

1. Because we have seen a revelation regarding the contents of God's economy, we spontaneously believe in what we see—Eph. 3:9.

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

2. The ability within us to believe is a product, a result, of having a proper view of God's economy—Heb. 11:6, 9, 23-26; 12:2.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- Heb 11:9 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign land, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise;
- Heb 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw that the child was lovely, and they did not fear the king's decree.
- Heb 11:24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,
- Heb 11:25 Choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin,
- Heb 11:26 Considering the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked away to the reward.
- Heb 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

E. The Christian life is a life of faith, a life of believing—Gal. 3:2, 14:

Gal 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?

Gal 3:14 In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

1. We do not live according to what we see; we live according to what we believe—John 20:25-29.

John 20:25 The other disciples therefore said to him, We have seen the Lord! But he said to them, Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into His side, I will by no means believe.

John 20:26 And after eight days, His disciples were again within, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, though the doors were shut, and stood in the midst and said, Peace be to you.

John 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, Bring your finger here and see My hands, and bring your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God!

John 20:29 Jesus said to him, Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.

2. Our walk is by faith, not by sight—2 Cor. 5:7.

2 Cor 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by appearance)-

**IV. Faith is the unique requirement for us to contact God in His economy and the unique way for us to carry out His economy—Gal. 2:16, 20:**

Gal 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

A. Galatians 2:16 says that we are justified through faith in Jesus Christ, literally, faith of Jesus Christ:

Gal 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

1. Faith is related to the believers' appreciation of the person of the Son of God as the most precious One—1 Pet. 2:7.

1 Pet 2:7 To you therefore who believe is the preciousness; but to the unbelieving, "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner,"

2. Christ is infusing Himself into us to be the faith in us; He becomes in us the faith

by which we believe and the capacity to believe through our appreciation of Him—Gal. 2:16.

Gal 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

3. *Faith in Jesus Christ* denotes an organic union with Him through believing; in this organic union we and Christ are one—John 15:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17.

John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

4. When we believe in Christ, we enter into Him; we believe ourselves into Christ and thereby become one spirit with Him—John 3:15; 1 Cor. 6:17.

John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

B. In Galatians 2:20 the apostle Paul says, “I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God”:

1. *The faith of the Son of God* refers to the faith of Jesus Christ in us, which becomes the faith by which we believe in Him—vv. 16, 20; 3:22.

Gal 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Gal 3:22 But the Scripture has shut up all under sin in order that the promise out of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

2. As we treasure Him, He causes faith to be generated in us, enabling us to believe in Him—Matt. 17:5; Heb. 12:2.

Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!

Heb 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

3. According to our Christian experience, the genuine living faith that operates in us is not only *of* Christ but also *in* Christ—Rom. 3:22, 26; Gal. 2:16, 20:

Rom 3:22 Even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ to all those who believe, for there is no distinction;

Rom 3:26 With a view to the demonstrating of His righteousness in the present time, so that He might be righteous and the One who justifies him who is of the faith of Jesus.

Gal 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- a. Paul’s thought is that the faith is both of Christ and in Christ—vv. 16, 20.

Gal 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified.

- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- b. Faith is related not only to the Christ who has been infused into us but also to the Christ who is continually infusing Himself into us.
  - c. As Christ operates in us, He becomes our faith; this faith is of Him and also in Him.
4. A secret of experiencing Christ living in us is revealed in the words *in faith*—v. 20:
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- a. Paul lived by the faith that is both in and of the Son of God.
  - b. The faith that we need is not only faith in the Son of God but also faith of the Son of God; in and by this faith we can carry out God’s economy in faith—v. 20; 1 Tim. 1:4.
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God’s economy, which is in faith.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### THE DIVINE ECONOMY The Arrangement of the Eternal Plan of God’s Household Administration

#### *The Mystery of God’s Will, a Mystery Which from the Ages Has Been Hidden in God, Who Created All Things*

The divine economy is the arrangement of the eternal plan of God’s household administration (Eph. 1:9-10; 3:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:3-4). The divine economy is the mystery of God’s will, a mystery which from the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things (Eph. 1:9; 3:9). It was a mystery because it was not unveiled to any human being in past ages. Adam and Abraham were never told about God’s economy. It was hidden in God; therefore, it was a hidden mystery. Men could see the creation, but they could not understand the purpose of the creation. Today this mystery has been unveiled to us.

#### *According to God’s Eternal Purpose Made in Christ to Head Up All Things in Christ*

The divine economy is according to God’s eternal purpose (v. 11), which He made in Christ to head up all things in Christ (1:10). Today we still cannot see all things headed up in Christ, but we do see this heading up on a small scale. God is heading up the believers of Christ. God’s intention is to head up all Christians in Christ to be one. Satan’s intention, however, is to divide. Any division, regardless of the reason, must be condemned because division is against God’s heading up of all things in Christ.

### **To Have a Church to Be the Body of Christ as His Fullness for a Corporate Expression of the Processed Triune God**

God desires to have a church to be the Body of Christ as His fullness for a corporate expression of the processed Triune God (v. 23; 3:19b). This is not just a congregation composed of a number of believers. The Body of Christ is an organic Body of a great person— Christ. In order for Christ to have such a Body, He must dispense Himself into His chosen and redeemed people.

## THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE DIVINE ECONOMY

### **The Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity**

The accomplishment of the divine economy is by the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity. God is divine, and He is also triune. He is triune in order to complete the steps for the dispensing of Himself into us. To dispense Himself into us, He has taken three steps: the Father's choosing and predestinating, the Son's redeeming, and the Spirit's sealing. These three steps are for God's divine dispensing.

#### ***Through the Father's Choosing and Predestinating***

The first step of the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity was the Father's choosing and predestinating (1:4-5). The Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy. How can we common human beings be holy? We cannot be made holy by our outward actions. Neither can we be holy by being washed. To be washed makes us clean, but to be clean is not to be holy. The only way that we can be holy is by a holy element being dispensed into our being. Medical doctors know that our physical bodies need many minerals. If our blood is short of iron, the only way that iron can get into our blood is by the food that we eat or drink. In the same way, we become holy by receiving the holy God with His holy nature into our being. His holy element then becomes our element. The Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world so that we, the chosen ones, may have the Father's holy nature and thus may be sanctified through the dispensing of the Father's holy nature into us, His chosen ones.

The Father's predestinating through Christ is so that we the predestinated ones may have His life for our sonship through the dispensing of the Father's divine life into us (v. 5). To have the sonship implies that we must have God's life. The divine life generates us to be God's sons. As God's sons, we have God's life, so we have God's sonship. God the Father imparts Himself into our being as our holy nature to make us holy and as our divine life to make us His sons so that we may have the sonship. To be made holy and to receive the sonship are a matter of receiving the divine dispensing. The divine way for us to be made holy and to receive the sonship is by God dispensing Himself into us.

#### ***Through the Son's Redeeming***

The accomplishment of the divine economy by the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity is not only through the Father's choosing and predestinating but also through the Son's redeeming (v. 7). The Son's redeeming is not just outward and objective. It is not just a matter of Christ shedding His blood in order to redeem us and to cleanse us from our sins. The Son's redeeming is much deeper than this. Through the Son's redeeming, the redeemed are put into Christ. We were put into Christ so that we could be made an inheritance of God with Christ as the element and realm of the divine inheritance (v. 11). We were put into Christ and made an inheritance of God through the dispensing of Christ. It is as if God said, "I have redeemed you and put you into Christ. This Christ will become your element for you to be My inheritance. I do not have any intention to inherit you in your natural being. You are just a sinner. Even though you are redeemed, you are just cleansed. I want to inherit My Son in you. Now you have My Son in you as the element to constitute you into something precious. This will be counted as My inheritance." In order for God to gain such an inheritance, He had to dispense Himself in Christ into our being.

#### ***Through the Spirit's Sealing***

Ephesians 1 reveals the Father's choosing and predestinating, the Son's redeeming, and the Spirit's sealing (v. 13b). The sealing of the Spirit can be likened to a seal with ink being pressed upon a sheet of paper. The more the ink is applied, the more the paper is saturated and permeated with the ink. Eventually, the entire paper will be sealed, saturated, and permeated with the substance of the ink in the image of the seal. In the same way, the Spirit is saturating and permeating us. The last stanza of *Hymns*,

#501 says,

Thy Spirit will me saturate,  
Every part will God permeate...

This sealing, permeating, and saturating is going on constantly in the believers. As you are reading this chapter, the Spirit is permeating you. The Spirit as the sealing ink remains wet forever. It never dries. The Spirit's sealing saturates the sealed ones through the dispensing of the sealing ink unto, or for, the day of the redemption of their body (4:30). The redemption of our body is the transfiguration of our body (Phil. 3:21). Until the transfiguration of our body, the sealing of the Spirit will go on continually to saturate and permeate our entire being.

### **Issuing In the Church**

The issue of the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity through the Father's choosing and predestinating, the Son's redeeming, and the Spirit's sealing is the church (Eph. 1:22b).

#### ***Through the Transmission, the Dispensing, of the Resurrected and Ascended Christ***

The church as the issue of the divine dispensing is through the transmission, the dispensing, of the resurrected and ascended Christ (vv. 19-22). God's power operated in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies. Christ was raised from the dead in Hades to the throne of God in the third heaven. Everything was subjected under His feet, and He was made Head over all things to the church. The word *to* in verse 22 implies a transmission. Whatever God has caused to operate in Christ is transmitted and is being transmitted to the church.

#### ***That the Church May Be the Body of Christ for the Corporate Expression of the Processed Triune God***

This transmission is so that the church may be the Body of Christ, the fullness of the One who fills all in all, for the corporate expression of the processed Triune God (v. 23). (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1990, vol. 3, "The Divine Dispensing for the Divine Economy," pp. 222-226*)

### **EXPERIENCING AND ENJOYING CHRIST**

#### **As the Means of Justification**

Under God's New Testament economy we are not to keep the law. On the contrary, we are justified through faith in Christ (Gal. 2:16). Faith in Christ denotes an organic union through believing. The faith in Christ by which we are justified is related to our appreciation of the person of the Son of God. In our preaching of the gospel we must present Christ as a treasure. We need to present Christ as the most precious One to people. The more we describe Him and speak of His preciousness, the more something will be infused into the being of the listeners. This infusion will become their faith, and this faith will cause them to respond to our preaching. In this way they will appreciate the person we present to them. This appreciation is their faith in Christ. Out of their appreciation for the Lord Jesus, they will want to possess Him. The Christ who has been preached to them will become in them the faith by which they believe. Faith is Christ preached into them to become their capacity to believe through their appreciation of Him.

The genuine experiential definition of faith is the preciousness of Jesus infused into us. Through such an infusion, we spontaneously have faith in the Lord Jesus. This definition of faith matches our experience. The teaching of doctrine did not impress us with the preciousness of the person of the Son of God. But one day we heard a living message filled with the preciousness of Christ. When His preciousness was infused into us through the preaching of the gospel, we spontaneously began to appreciate the Lord Jesus and believe in Him. We said, "Lord Jesus, I love You. I treasure You." This is what it means to have faith in Christ.

This faith creates an organic union in which we and Christ are one. Therefore, the expression *out of faith in Christ* actually denotes an organic union accomplished by believing in Christ. The term *in Christ* refers to this organic union. Before we believed in Christ, there was a great separation between us and Christ. We were we, and Christ was Christ. But through believing we were joined to Christ and became one with Him. Now we are in Christ, and Christ is in us.

This is an organic union, a union in life. This union is illustrated by the grafting of a branch of one tree into another tree. Through faith in Christ we are grafted into Christ. Through this process of spiritual grafting, two lives are grafted and become one.

Many Christians have a shallow understanding of justification by faith. How could Christ be our righteousness if we were not organically united to Him? It is by means of our organic union with Christ that God can reckon Christ as our righteousness. Because we and Christ are one, whatever belongs to Him is ours. This is the basis upon which God counts Christ as our righteousness.

Just as a poor woman is united in marriage to a wealthy man and thus participates in the wealth of her husband, through our organic union with Christ, we share whatever Christ is and has. As soon as this union takes place, in the eyes of God Christ becomes us, and we become one with Him. Only in this way can we be justified before God.

Many Christians have a mere doctrinal understanding of justification by faith. According to their concept, Christ is the just One, the righteous One on the throne in the presence of God. When we believe in Christ, God reckons Christ to be our righteousness. This understanding of justification is very shallow. In order to be justified by faith in Christ, we need to believe in the Lord Jesus out of an appreciation of His preciousness. As Christ's preciousness is infused into us through the preaching of the gospel, we spontaneously appreciate the Lord and call on Him. This is genuine believing. Through such a believing, we and Christ become one. Therefore, God must reckon Him as our righteousness.

When we heard the gospel, we began to sense the Lord's preciousness. This gave rise to the living faith that joined us to Christ organically. From that time onward, Christ and we became one in life and in reality. Therefore, justification by faith is not merely a matter of position. It is also an organic matter, a matter in life. The organic union with Christ is accomplished spontaneously through the living faith produced by our appreciation of Him. This is to be justified through faith in Christ. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 3272-3274)

## **The One Who Has Given Himself Up for the Believers and Lives in Them**

### ***Through Their Faith in Him***

In Galatians 2:20 Paul declares, "I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God." Here the expression *the Son of God* denotes Christ's person, which is for the impartation of God's life into us. Hence, the faith in which we live God's life is in the Son of God, the life-imparting One. The Son of God loved us and purposely gave Himself up for us that He might impart the divine life into us. The life which we now live in the flesh is not *bios*, the physical life, or *psuche*, the soulish life, but *zoe*, the spiritual and divine life. In contrast to the way we live the physical and soulish life, we live the divine life not by sight or by feeling. The divine life, the spiritual life in our spirit, is lived by the exercise of faith, which is stimulated by the presence of the life-giving Spirit.

One secret of experiencing Christ living in us is revealed in a phrase in Galatians 2:20— *in faith*. Paul did not live by his own faith; he lived by the faith that is both in and of the Son of God. This indicates that we need to live by a certain kind of faith. However, this faith is not something that we ourselves have. Rather, it is the faith of the Son of God. What we need is not only faith that is in Christ but also faith that is of Christ. The faith is His, not ours, but we can be in this faith.

In speaking of faith, Paul refers to "the faith of the Son of God." This expression implies that the faith mentioned in this verse is the faith of the Son of God, the faith which He Himself possesses. However, this phrase also means faith *in* the Son of God.

Paul wrote the book of Galatians both according to truth and according to his experience.

According to our Christian experience, the genuine living faith which operates in us is not only *of* Christ but also *in* Christ. Hence, Paul's meaning here actually is "the faith of and in Christ." Paul's thought is that the faith is both of Christ and in Christ.

We have pointed out that faith is our appreciation of what the Lord is and what He has done for us and that genuine faith is Christ Himself infused into us to become our ability to believe in Him. After the Lord has been infused into us, He spontaneously becomes our faith. On the one hand, this faith is *of* Christ; on the other hand, it is *in* Christ. This faith is Christ revealed to us and infused into us. Faith is related not only to the Christ who has been infused into us but also to the Christ who is continually infusing Himself into us. As Christ operates in us, He becomes our faith. This faith is of Him and also in Him. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 3280-3281)