

*The
Economy
and
Dispensing
of
God*

Witness Lee

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

THE ECONOMY AND DISPENSING OF GOD

by Witness Lee

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PREFACE

This book is composed of messages given by Brother Witness Lee in San Francisco, San Jose, and Berkeley, California, on August 24 through September 2, 1990. Chapters 1 through 4 and 6 were spoken in Chinese.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ECONOMY OF GOD

Scripture Reading: Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:14; Gen. 12:3b; Gal. 3:8; Isa. 12:3;
Mark 16:15; 1 Tim. 2:4; Num. 6:24-27; Exo. 20:12; Deut. 28:3-6; 2 Cor.
13:14; Eph. 6:2-3; 1 Cor. 3:21-22; 3 John 2; Eph. 1:9-11; 3:9-11; Rev. 4:11;
Gen. 1:26-27; John 1:14, 18; Eph. 2:21-22; 3:17-19; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; Rev.
21:1—22:5

Prayer: Lord, every time we gather together, we are full of thanksgiving, praise, and worship. The present age is a dark and corrupted age, but You have saved us and have rescued us from all the preoccupations and ensnaring things and have gathered us into Your name. Lord, we believe that You are with us. You chose us before the foundation of the world, and You created us and called us. You have also redeemed us and have dispensed Yourself into us. Tonight we are meeting in Your name. You are in our midst. You are not only in our midst; You are in us as well. We do thank You for all Your provisions. We have Your precious blood, we have Your Spirit, and we have Your church. Lord, cleanse us, anoint us, enlighten us, and be with all of us. Help us to realize that Your work today is to make home in our heart and to saturate us with Yourself so that our whole being can be filled with You and so that the whole church can be filled unto the fullness of God.

Lord, may Your presence be with us in this meeting. Cleanse every one of us with Your precious blood. Cleanse even this meeting hall. May You pour out Your Spirit from on high. May He fill us within and without so that we can feel Your presence with us. We pray that You would not only speak to us but also dispense Yourself into us through Your rich word. We may forget the message that we hear, or we may not even understand it; but through this meeting we want to gain You and have Your element added into us. Lord, be gracious to all of us, that we would touch Your presence in one spirit and that we would be headed up in You even before all things are headed up so that You would gain the glory. Amen.

The general subject of the ten chapters in this book is “The Economy and Dispensing of God.” What is the meaning of the term *economy*, and what is

God's economy? What is God's dispensing? The word *economy* in Greek is *oikonomia*. It means "household law, household administration, or household government." It is used to denote a dispensation, a plan, or an economy in an administration. Hence, it is a household management. The Bible is composed of sixty-six books, and it includes many teachings. If we have the spiritual discernment and would study the Bible finely and carefully, we will see that God's economy is the plan whereby He dispenses Himself into humanity. The focus of God's accomplishments in His economy is His dispensing.

The Divine Trinity is for God's dispensing. The matter of dispensing is revealed in Ephesians 3:2 and Colossians 1:25-27. In these verses the word *stewardship* has the sense of dispensing. God's stewardship is the dispensing of the processed Triune God in Christ into His chosen, redeemed, and regenerated people that He may be their life and everything, to produce the unique Body of Christ in the universe to be His corporate expression. This Body is the church in this age and the New Jerusalem in eternity.

In 1964 I released twenty-four messages during the summer training in Los Angeles. The general subject was "The Economy of God." In 1983 and 1984 I released fifty-one messages on "God's New Testament Economy" in Stuttgart, Germany, and in various places in the United States. Both series of messages speak of God's dispensing in His economy. (The messages on these two subjects have been published by Living Stream Ministry in books under these two titles.) Later, in the fall of 1984 the Lord led us to pay our attention to the practice of the "new way." I went to Taiwan in October of that year, and was prepared to stay there for a considerable time to study the new way with the brothers and sisters. I felt at that time that although we had seen God's economy and His dispensing, we were still short in the matter of practice. Hence, I spent four years in Taiwan to study the way of practice according to the Bible in an attempt to find out the way to put into practice the dispensing in God's economy. In spite of the fact that during this period there were many interruptions, today, according to my inner realization and feeling, the new way has become very clear. The new way that the Lord has led us to practice, that is, the God-ordained way, is a scriptural way. I believe that the Lord will gradually lead the churches on in this way. At present, the Lord has given me the burden to make a clear presentation to the brothers and sisters of the matter of God's economy and dispensing. This chapter is on God's economy.

THREE LAYERS IN THE DIVINE REVELATION OF THE BIBLE

There are three layers in the divine revelation of the Bible. We all know that anything that is noble and valuable is not simple but has more than one layer. Tsingtao in China produces a kind of crystal rock. If a person digs in the shallow places, he will be able to find only the coarse crystal. If he wants the precious crystal, he must dig in the deep places. There are three layers in the divine revelation of the Bible, and the kind of person we are determines what we receive when we read the Bible. The level at which we are determines the level of revelation we will find in the Bible. For example, there was a top philosopher in modern China called Hu Shih. According to his realization, the Bible is a superb literary work of the modern Chinese language. Some people who look for filial piety from their children find the Bible to be a book on honoring one's parents. The sisters who want their husbands to love them find the Bible to be a book about husbands loving their wives. Those who expect their wives to submit to them find the Bible to be a book on wives' submission to their husbands. Hence, the kind of person we are determines the kind of revelation we will find in the Bible.

If we read the Bible without prejudice, and study it again and again with a heart that fears God, we will see that the Bible is not simple and shallow. John 1:1-2 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." Verse 4 says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The wording of these verses is very simple, but the meaning is very profound. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (8:12). Which world ruler, sage, or wise man could say such a thing? Who can understand this word? In John 14—17 we have the Lord's word of farewell to His disciples and His prayer on the night of His betrayal. This passage is even more profound and difficult to understand. I have been studying these four chapters for decades. Even today I still cannot say that I have exhausted the mystery in these chapters. After years of study and research on the Bible, I have arrived at the conclusion that the Bible is not simple; it is a book of three layers.

The First Layer— the Gospel and Salvation of God

In the Bible the first layer of the divine revelation is the gospel and salvation of God. When Adam fell, God came to preach the gospel to him, saying, “Her [the woman’s] seed...will bruise you [Satan] on the head” (Gen. 3:15). After Adam fell, he both hated and feared the serpent. God promised Adam that the seed of the woman, Christ, who would be born of a virgin, would bruise the head of the serpent, Satan. At the fullness of time Christ Himself took on a body of flesh and blood to destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14).

Later, God preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, “In you [in your seed] all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Gen. 12:3b; Gal. 3:8). The promise God gave to Abraham was the gospel He preached to him. God preached the gospel not only to the patriarchs but to the Old Testament saints as well, saying, “Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing / From the springs of salvation” (Isa. 12:3).

In the New Testament we see the same thing. The redemption that Christ accomplished through His death and resurrection is not only for man, the chief object among all of God’s creation, but also for the entire creation. This is the reason that the Lord charged the disciples to “go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all the creation” (Mark 16:15) because our Savior God “desires all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4).

The Second Layer— the Blessing and Prosperity of God

The second layer of the divine revelation in the Bible is the blessing and prosperity of God. God is a God of blessing. He continually blesses His people. In the Old Testament, God’s blessing to the people of Israel was threefold. Numbers 6:24-26 says, “Jehovah bless you and keep you; Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.” Here we have the threefold blessing of the Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The first is the blessing of the Father: the Father blesses us and keeps us. The second is the blessing of the Son: the Lord Jesus makes His face shine upon us and is gracious to us; He is light and grace to us. The third is the blessing of the Spirit: the Spirit lifts up His countenance upon us and gives us peace; the Spirit is the presence of God with us, bringing with Him peace. This blessing of the Divine Trinity is

not related mainly to material things; it is related mainly to the Triune God being gracious to us, appearing to us, and being seen by us.

In the Old Testament, God promised blessing to those who honor their parents, saying, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be extended upon the land which Jehovah your God is giving you.” (Exo. 20:12). In Deuteronomy 28:3-6 we see the blessing promised by God to the children of Israel: “Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your animals, the offspring of your cattle and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.”

When we come to the New Testament, we see another threefold blessing of the Divine Trinity given by God to the believers. Second Corinthians 13:14 says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” The love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit speak of the Triune God being with us as our blessing. The grace of the Lord is the Lord Himself as our life for our enjoyment. The love of God is God Himself as the source of the Lord’s grace, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit Himself as the transmission of the Lord’s grace with the love of God to be our portion. When we partake of, experience, enjoy, and receive this processed Triune God, we have the blessing.

In the New Testament also, God promises blessing and longevity to those who honor their parents: “Honor your father and mother...that it may be well with you [that you may receive the blessing] and that you may live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:2-3). In 1 Corinthians 3:21-22 God promises blessing to the believers, saying, “All things are yours, whether...the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all are yours.” Third John 2 says, “Concerning all things I wish that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.”

The Third Layer— the Economy and Dispensing of God

The third layer of the divine revelation in the Bible is the economy and dispensing of God. Most Christians can readily understand and accept the

first layer, God's gospel and salvation, and the second layer, God's blessing and prosperity. In preaching the gospel, most people tell others that if they believe in Jesus, their sins will be forgiven, and they will enjoy blessing and peace in this life and eternal bliss in the life to come. Most believers remain in the second layer, but God does not want us to remain there.

After we believe in the Lord, we may experience blessing and peace initially. But gradually, the situation will change. All those who have believed in the Lord can testify that the Lord is indeed with us and is keeping us. But at the same time we also experience many trials, sicknesses, and sufferings. With every blessing there is also some amount of vexation. Without the blessing there would be no vexation. Having children is a blessing; however, it is also a vexation. Does anyone continually enjoy blessing, prosperity, and peace? If a man desires only blessing without desiring God, in the end all the blessings will become bitter. We must turn from God's blessing and prosperity to God Himself. We are not here for blessing and prosperity but for God Himself and for His economy and dispensing. Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." *All things* here refers to all men, all events, and all matters. It includes the good things as well as the adverse things. It includes the good children as well as the bad children. All things work together for good to those who love God. *Good* here, according to the context, does not refer to physical people, events, or things. Rather, it refers to the increase of Christ within us, with the result that we experience a metabolic change and are conformed, ultimately, to the image of the firstborn Son of God, which is the entrance into the full sonship.

The first two layers, whether the gospel, salvation, blessing, or prosperity, are superficial. The deepest layer is God Himself, and not merely God alone but the economy and dispensing of God. The economy of God is His plan and arrangement out of His desire and purpose. The dispensing of God is His dispensing and distributing according to this plan and arrangement.

THE ECONOMY (ARRANGEMENT) OF GOD

In Ephesians 1:9-11 and 3:9-11 God's economy is mentioned. In eternity God had a good pleasure, a heart's desire. According to this desire, He has a purpose. This purpose was hidden in Him; thus, it was a hidden purpose. This hidden purpose became His economy. Hence, there is the dispensation (the

economy) of the mystery. This mystery was hidden in God throughout the ages but has now been brought to light for us.

God's economy (arrangement) is according to God's good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself (1:9). It is also according to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ (3:11). It makes known to us the mystery of God's will, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things (1:9a; 3:9). Its end is to head up all things in Christ at the fullness of the times (1:10) so that the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies (3:10).

Today we have not yet seen all things headed up under Christ. There is no oneness among men, between the races, and among the nations. But, praise the Lord, we who have been saved in the Body of Christ, through our willingness to be headed up in the church life, and by our growing in life and living in His light, are made to participate in this heading up.

For the accomplishing of God's economy and His dispensing, first God became flesh to be a man. This wonderful God-man lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years. Then He accomplished redemption for us on the cross. Through His death and resurrection He became the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. Now He will enter into all those who call on His name, and He will become their life. This all-inclusive Spirit is the ultimate consummation of the Triune God. As such, He contains all the riches of divinity and all the virtues of humanity. The more we call on Him and experience Him, the more we will receive His element. Spontaneously, we will live out a life of love, light, holiness, and righteousness and will be rescued from the heap of the universal collapse in death and darkness, which was caused by the rebellion of the angels and the rebellion of man, and will be able to participate in everything of Christ, the Head.

According to Paul's teaching, Christians do not need to pay attention to outward blessings and peace. Instead, they should pay attention to the God who is within them. God has already put Himself into us. In addition, daily He is dispensing Himself within us. However, sometimes we are not willing to give Him the opportunity to do this. Although He is willing to dispense Himself, He cannot get through within us. If this is the case, we will not grow and will become a backsliding Christian. Eventually, when trying circumstances come upon us, we may be revived again. But we should not

wait for trying circumstances to come before being revived. We should live a revived life every day. A Christian should have a dawning, a revival, and a new beginning once every twenty-four hours. God put into the laws of nature a dawning once every twenty-four hours. Dawn brings in a new beginning and new sunshine to all living creatures. This should be the way with our Christian life. Every morning we should have a rising up and a dawning. When we rise up early every morning to contact the Lord and to experience a certain amount of reviving, we allow the Lord to dispense Himself into us.

The Economy (Arrangement) of God in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament we see that God created all things. God's creation has to do with His will. God created all things according to His will (Rev. 4:11). Genesis 1:26-27 tells us that God created man in His image so that man may express Him and represent Him. At the end of Genesis, God gained Jacob, with Joseph, as His expression and representation. Jacob was a crafty person and a person who held on to everything. But after years of God's dealing and transformation, in his old age Jacob became Israel, the prince of God. At the end of Exodus, God gained the people of Israel, who were built up to be His moving habitation, the tabernacle on earth, for the expression of His glory.

At the time of David and Solomon, God gained His permanent habitation on earth, the temple, for the full expression of His glory. The temple was filled with God within, and it expressed God without. Later, the temple was destroyed by the enemy of God, but at the end of the Old Testament it was rebuilt and continued to be God's habitation for the expression of His glory on earth until the beginning of the New Testament.

The Economy (Arrangement) of God in the New Testament

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus came. He was the embodiment of God and was God's tabernacle on earth. Through Him God was able to dwell on earth to express Himself (John 1:14, 18). He lived a human life on earth for thirty-three and a half years. Then He was crucified in His flesh and was resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit. After His resurrection He charged His disciples to disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), that is, to bring the believers into the Triune God and into an organic union with the processed God. Through this, God dispenses Himself into His believers to form the

church. This church is the house of God, which is the habitation of God, and the tabernacle of God, the temple of God, as the expression of God's fullness, to make known to His enemy the multifarious wisdom of God (Eph. 2:21-22; 3:17-19; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; Eph. 3:10).

However, today we have not yet arrived at such a condition. Many people are not living in the spirit to allow God to carry out His dispensing; instead, they are still living in the soul and still have themselves as the center and the lord. For this reason we must help the brothers and sisters to allow the element of Christ to increase in them day by day. Eventually, we the redeemed, regenerated, and transformed saints will be prepared to be the bride and counterpart of Christ through partaking of the riches of Christ's life and nature, and will become the New Jerusalem as the ultimate consummation of Christ and the church. The New Jerusalem will be the tabernacle for God's dwelling and the temple for the saints' dwelling in eternity and will be the ultimate and full expression of the processed Triune God, who is joined and mingled with His regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite saints (Rev. 21:1—22:5). At that time all things will be headed up under Christ, and there will be full peace and harmony.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DISPENSING OF GOD

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:10; 3:9; John 1:14, 29; 3:14; 12:31, 24; 1 Cor. 15:45, 44; Rom. 8:16, 11; John 3:5-6; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Rom. 8:17, 23; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:2, 10, 6b, 13, 4

Prayer: Lord, we worship You. We look to You as the wonderful One to open up Your mysterious word to us. Lead every one of us into Yourself. May we learn to experience You and Your dispensing, and may we experience all the riches that are in this dispensing so that these riches can become our element within and our expression without. Lord, we look to You for the cleansing of Your blood and the anointing of Your holy ointment once again. May we have Your flow within and Your word without so that we can have the proper expression and the utterance to speak You forth. Lord, water us. Apart from You, we are just dead people. Although we can plant, water, and speak, we cannot give others life, much less give others the growth. Lord, the One who can give people life and growth is You, the Lord of life and the all-inclusive Christ. We look to You to come down among us from heaven. We feel that the heaven above us is open, that our spirits are shining, and that Your word is clear. Lord, grant us a deep impression. May we touch You and gain You. You are the One whom we can never exhaust in our experience. You are also the One whom we will always remember in eternity. Amen.

THREE LAYERS IN THE DIVINE REVELATION

In the previous chapter we saw that there are three layers in the divine revelation of the Bible. The first layer is God's gospel and salvation, the second is God's blessing and prosperity, and the third is God's economy and dispensing. Before a person believes in the Lord, he is dead in trespasses and sins. He lives according to the lusts of the flesh and carries out the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts (Eph. 2:1-3). After he hears the gospel and receives God's salvation, he is made alive, and he enters into the first layer of the divine revelation. Later, he may experience the Lord's blessing and prosperity and may enter into the second layer of the divine revelation. Perhaps after a long time, he will begin to realize that his experience is too low. I myself have had this kind of experience. It was a long time after I began

to serve the Lord that I realized that there is a third layer, which is God's economy and dispensing. This layer is not related to salvation or to blessing and peace. Rather, it concerns God's economy and dispensing. God is the unique noble One in the universe. Can such a noble and great One be without any endeavor? Did God save us, the sinners, just to make us happy and peaceful so that we would behave properly and would one day be brought to heaven to pass through the pearly gates, walk on the golden streets, and enjoy eternal bliss forever?

If we have not seen God's economy and dispensing, even if we were to abandon everything of the world for the Lord, He would still ask us one day, "For what purpose do you want Me?" Perhaps we would say that we want Him because we want to enjoy Him. But if we remain in the first two layers, we may enjoy the Lord, but the Lord cannot have His enjoyment. If we remain only in the first two layers, even if we love the Lord, enjoy Him, are revived every morning, and overcome every day, and even if we love the church and are for the church, when the crucial moment comes, we will be exposed and will be shown to be only for ourselves and not for the Lord or His church. If we see God's economy and dispensing, we will not care for our own achievements and gains. God's economy is not for our achievement but for us, the chosen and regenerated ones, to be filled by the Spirit to the extent that the Lord becomes everything in us so that we may be delivered from the old man and may be built up with all the saints to be God's habitation (*Hymns*, #501). This is a matter of God's habitation; it has nothing to do with our personal gain or loss. In the church we must have the discernment and the insight to see God's economy and dispensing. Never listen to or talk about right and wrong. All rights and wrongs are based on personal profit and loss. Those things that are profitable to a person will be considered by him as right, and the things that are disadvantageous to a person will be considered by him as wrong. How terrible this is!

NOT A MATTER OF RIGHT OR WRONG

BUT A MATTER OF GOD'S ECONOMY AND DISPENSING

Here we need to see God's economy and dispensing. What is the goal of God's economy? The goal of God's economy is a corporate expression. For this reason, in the Old Testament God created man in His image and according to His likeness (Gen. 1:26) so that He might put Himself into man and be man's

life, that man might become one with Him and express and represent Him. In Genesis, first God gained one man, Jacob. After being dealt with and transformed by the Lord, Jacob became God's Israel. By the end of Exodus, God had gained the descendants of Jacob as the nation of Israel, and the tabernacle was erected to be God's moving habitation on earth for the expression of His glory. At the time of David and Solomon, the temple was built as God's permanent and expanded habitation on earth to express His glory in a full way. Later, because of the fall of the Israelites, the temple was destroyed. At the end of the Old Testament, the temple was rebuilt and continued to be God's habitation on earth for the expression of His glory. This lasted until the beginning of the New Testament.

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus, who is God Himself, came as a man to be God's tabernacle on earth so that God might dwell on earth and express Himself (John 1:14, 18). The Lord Jesus lived a human life for thirty-three and a half years. Then He passed through death and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit, and He entered into His believers (20:22). This tabernacle expanded to become the church, becoming God's habitation on earth as God's full expression. Finally, the New Jerusalem will be the ultimate consummation of Christ and the church. As such, it will be the tabernacle for God's dwelling and the temple for the saints' dwelling in eternity (Rev. 21:3, 22). The New Jerusalem will be the eternal and corporate expression of God.

This is what God is after. God saves us for this. He regenerates us, transforms us, makes us spiritual, and causes us to be seeking, all for this. We are not saved, regenerated, transformed, spiritual, or seeking, for ourselves. Rather, we become such in order that we may be delivered from the natural life and the self so that we can be built up with all the saints into God's habitation. This is God's economy and dispensing. It is not a matter of right or wrong, gain or loss.

If it were a matter of right and wrong, then even Paul could be condemned by the Corinthians. They accused Paul of being crafty and taking them by guile, saying that he indemnified himself by sending Titus to receive the collection for the poor Jewish saints (2 Cor. 12:16). But Paul said that he would not examine himself by the standard of right and wrong. He said that though he was conscious of nothing against himself, he was not justified in this. He would not judge anything before the time but would wait until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and

make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then there will be praise to each from God (1 Cor. 4:3-5). Paul did not care if others judged him as right or wrong; he was a person who was for God's economy. He suffered his whole life and was even martyred. In Colossians 1:24 he says, "I...fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church."

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He too was condemned and criticized. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes criticized Him much. No matter what the Lord Jesus did, and no matter where He went, they voiced their objections. It seemed to them that the Lord Jesus was wrong in everything and that only they were right. Hence, today in the church we should not speak of right and wrong. Rather, we should know what God's economy is and what His dispensing is. Even our taking the new way must be with a goal, which is to arrive at and enter into God's economy. We should not merely pursue after spirituality. We should pursue spirituality for the sake of God's economy. When we truly pursue spirituality for the sake of God's economy, we will be delivered from right and wrong and from any personal gain or loss.

GOD'S DISPENSING BEING FOR GOD'S ECONOMY

God's economy, that is, His plan and arrangement, is God's goal (Eph. 1:10; 3:9). God's dispensing, that is, His apportioning and distributing, is His means. In order to accomplish the economy of working Himself into man, God has to pass through the means of dispensing. Hence, God's dispensing is for God's economy.

To Dispense God Himself to Men

The First Step—Becoming Flesh

In order to dispense Himself to man, the first step God took was to become flesh to be a man (John 1:14). When He was in the flesh, on the one hand, He was the Lamb of God who took away man's sin (v. 29). On the other hand, He was the bronze serpent, which shows that He became flesh, that is, He was sent in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3). As the bronze serpent, He had only the form of a serpent; He did not have a serpent's poison. While the Lord was in the flesh, He was lifted up on the cross and destroyed Satan, the old serpent (John 3:14; 12:31). Furthermore, He was also a grain of wheat that

fell into the ground and died. Through His death He released God's life (v. 24).

The Second Step—Becoming the Life-giving Spirit

The second step God took in order to dispense Himself to man was to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). These two steps contain two "becomes." The Lord first became flesh, and then He became the life-giving Spirit. His becoming flesh was for the accomplishing of redemption and the releasing of God's life. His becoming the life-giving Spirit was for the dispensing of Himself as the Spirit into man to be man's life.

Christ became the life-giving Spirit in resurrection (v. 45). As such a Spirit, He is prepared to be received by those who believe into Him. As soon as we believe into Him, the Spirit of life in resurrection enters into our spirit (Rom. 8:16) and abides in our spirit (v. 11).

Regenerating, Transforming, and Glorifying the Believers

As the life-giving Spirit, Christ first regenerated our spirit (John 3:5-6) so that, in addition to our natural life, we might receive the eternal life of God as the new source and the new element of the new man. After this, Christ as the life-giving Spirit spreads out from our spirit to transform our soul. If we set our mind, the main part of our soul, on the spirit and cooperate with the operation and work of the Lord Spirit within us, our mind will be renewed (Rom. 12:2). When our mind is renewed, our will and our emotion as the other parts of our soul will spontaneously be renewed also. In this way God's life and nature will be added into us, and we will be metabolically transformed into His image to express Him (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

Finally, He will transfigure our body so that our body may be redeemed to enter into His glory, and our entire being may be like Him in every way (Rom. 8:17, 23; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2). This is the ultimate consummation of God's salvation. In His salvation God first regenerated our spirit. Now He is transforming our soul. In the end He will transfigure our body so that our three parts will be saturated with the Spirit and will be like Christ in every way. All these steps are part of the divine dispensing in us.

THE BELIEVERS' EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S DISPENSING

The Dispensing of the Divine Trinity

Becoming the Law of the Spirit of Life in the Believers

The Triune God, who has been processed and is dispensed into us, has Himself become the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2). This law of the Spirit of life is the automatic and spontaneous capacity of the Triune God as life in the believers. In nature there are the physical laws. Moreover, every life has its own law. A law denotes a natural power with certain inclinations and activities. As living beings, we exist by definite laws. For example, we breathe because we are living. Our breathing is not a conscious activity. Rather, there is a law of breathing. It is an unconscious law that operates in our body spontaneously. As long as we have life, the law of life will enable us to breathe. We may take digestion as another example. After we eat, we do not need to make a conscious effort to digest the food we have eaten. Digestion is a law. As long as we eat the food, a biological law will function to digest the food.

Praise the Lord, another law has been put into us. This law is the Triune God as the law of the Spirit of life. The processed Triune God has been put into us; He is now operating in us according to a law and not according to an activity. Today He is a law operating within us. He is not operating in us merely as the almighty God, but He is operating in us spontaneously as a law that is transforming us. Our need today is to cooperate with the life function of the Triune God in our spirit.

The Believers' Experience

of the Dispensing of the Divine Trinity

Our experience of the dispensing of the Divine Trinity begins with regeneration in our spirit. Regeneration makes our spirit life (v. 10). Next, our experience continues by our setting our mind on the spirit; this makes the mind in our soul life (v. 6b). Then, by the indwelling Spirit we put to death the practices of the body, making our mortal body also life (vv. 13, 11). Furthermore, we walk only according to the spirit (v. 4). In this way our whole being will be saturated by the Spirit, and we will fully experience the dispensing of the Divine Trinity in our tripartite being. We will daily experience the increase of the Triune God in us. This is the growth in life, which continues until we are mature in life. At that time we will enjoy all the blessings of God's presence.

CHAPTER THREE

GOD'S DISPENSING AS THE SUPPLY TO THE BELIEVERS IN THEIR GROWTH IN LIFE

Scripture Reading: Col. 2:19; 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 6:57b; 1 Cor. 10:3-4; 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14; John 6:31-35, 48-51, 63; Eph. 6:17-18a; Psa. 55:17; 119:147-148; 143:8; Lam. 3:22-26; Eph. 5:13-14; Rom. 8:13

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for opening Your word to us. In Your word we have seen the light, we have been reproved, and we have also received the life supply. Your word is light, and it is Spirit and life. Now we look to You from the depth of our being once more. You have gathered us into Your precious name, that is, into Yourself. We believe that You are here with us. We are all before You and are gathered into You. Touch us so that we can also touch You. Gain us so that we can also gain You.

Lord, grant us again the living word, the fresh word, the high word, and the word of life and light. Bring us to the realm of heaven so that we can walk with You and live with You. Lord, although the condition of each one of us is different, may You grant each one of us a special word through the same message. As long as we can have one word from You, we will be healed, supplied, enlightened, and encouraged. O Lord Jesus, feed us and give us to drink. Satisfy our hunger and quench our thirst. Touch the deepest part of our being. We give ourselves to You and desire to be immersed in You. Amen.

In the two previous chapters we have seen that God's economy is the processed Triune God dispensing Himself in His Divine Trinity into the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated believers to be their life so that they may become the corporate expression of the Triune God. God's economy, God's plan, is His will and goal. God's dispensing, God's distributing, is the process and the means whereby He accomplishes His economy. For this reason God's dispensing is for God's economy. From this chapter on, we will carefully study God's dispensing, that is, His means to accomplish His economy.

THE DIVINE DISPENSING IN EPHESIANS 1

The Father's Choosing and Predestination

First, we must have a bird's-eye view and a general understanding of God's dispensing. Ephesians 1 can be divided into three sections. These sections speak of the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Verses 1 through 6 speak of the Father's choosing and predestination. Before the foundation of the world, God the Father chose us (v. 4). This is something that happened in eternity past. According to God's counsel and foreknowledge, He chose us before the foundation of the world.

God's choosing was not accomplished in time but in eternity past. Before the foundation of the world God chose us. Among millions of people and even before we were born, God saw us and chose us. This is God's predestination. This means that we were marked out ahead of time. God marked us out beforehand and ordained us to receive the sonship (v. 5) so that we may not only have life to become the sons of God but also may have the position to inherit everything of God.

The Son's Redemption

Verses 7 through 12 speak of the Son's redemption. Although God loves us and chose and predestinated us to be the objects of His grace, we became fallen soon after we were created. Because of this we needed redemption, which was accomplished for us by God in Christ through His blood (v. 7).

The redemption of the Son is through the blood that He shed for our sins on the cross (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Because the all-inclusive death of the Son on the cross has satisfied God's righteous requirement, His blood has become the means for our redemption.

The Spirit's Sealing and Pledging

Ephesians 1:13-23 speaks of the sealing and pledging of the Spirit. The Father is the source, the Son is the expression, and the Spirit is the reaching forth. The Father as the source chose and predestinated us in eternity according to His plan. The Son as the expression accomplished redemption in time according to the Father's plan, and the Spirit as the reaching forth becomes our seal and pledge to apply what the Son has accomplished of the Father's plan.

Today we have heard the word of the truth, which is the gospel of our salvation, and have believed into Christ and have been sealed in Him by the promised Spirit (v. 13). Once we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, the seal will never fade away and will never be lost. But the sealing of the Spirit, which is the anointing of the Spirit in us, is not something that happens once for all. On the contrary, the sealing work is going on continually. The seal was put into us at the time we believed, but the sealing has continued from that time until now. It will continue until the day of the redemption of our body (v. 14). The Holy Spirit is the seal, and He is also sealing. He continues to do the work of sealing in us.

This sealing will spread from our spirit to our mind, emotion, and will. We have to admit that our soul has not been fully saturated. Even if our soul is saturated, our body has not been sealed. We need to be sealed continually, until our whole being is saturated. We are like a piece of paper or a cotton ball. When we received the seal of the Spirit, this piece of paper or cotton ball began to be saturated and permeated. Today the sealing Spirit as the seal is sealing everything of the all-inclusive Christ, all that He has attained and obtained, into us (vv. 19-22). The result is that we all become one. This is the church, the Body of Christ, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (vv. 22b-23).

The Sealing of the Holy Spirit

Being the Divine Dispensing

Actually, the sealing of the Holy Spirit is the divine dispensing. The sealing of the Holy Spirit is a saturation, and a saturation is a dispensing. Wherever there is saturation, there is dispensing. This Spirit is the last Adam who has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Today this all-inclusive life-giving Spirit has accomplished redemption and has washed away our sins. Now He is living within us and is continually sealing us. This sealing dispenses the divine life into us. First, through regeneration He becomes the life in our spirit (Rom. 8:10). Then this life saturates our mind through our spirit so that the soul to whom the mind belongs may be transformed until there is life in the soul (v. 6). Finally, this life saturates our body to become the life in our body (v. 11). The ultimate result is that our body will be transfigured. This is the redemption of our body (v. 23).

THE BELIEVERS' GROWTH IN LIFE BEING THE INCREASE OF THE ELEMENT OF GOD IN THE BELIEVERS

First Corinthians 12:4-11 shows us that all the gifts in the Body of Christ are produced by the operation of the Spirit in the believers and are distributed to each of the believers according to His will. These gifts, and especially the gifts that are for the building up of the church, require the growth in life and even the maturity in life. The growth in life of the believers is a matter of the increase of the element of God in the believers (Col. 2:19b). God is perfect; in Himself He is eternally perfect. But as far as we are concerned, what we have received is only a small amount of God. For this reason we need to grow. If we desire to grow, we must have the increase of the element of God in us. This is not a matter of whether God is complete or incomplete. This is a matter of how much we have gained of God. The reason that many Christians have not grown today is that they have not given God the ground. They are not holding the Head, Christ. This being the case, God has no way to dispense more of Himself into them.

In His position Christ is the Head, but in our experience He is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). The Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). He is now with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). When we enjoy Him in the spirit, we are holding the Head. Then something will come out from the Head that will enable God to grow in us. This means that more of God's element will be dispensed into us. Through the joints the whole Body will then receive the rich supply, which is the rich dispensing of the life of Christ as the Spirit (Col. 2:19a; Eph. 4:16a). The more we receive the supply, the more we will have the dispensing. Without the dispensing, there will not be any supply. The way we receive the supply and the dispensing is through eating, drinking, and enjoying Christ (John 6:57b; 1 Cor. 10:3-4).

Growing in Life through Eating, Drinking, and Enjoying God

Almost the entire Bible speaks of eating, drinking, and enjoying God. After God created man, He did not give many commandments and regulations for man to keep. Instead, God put man before the tree of life (Gen. 2:9) that man might enjoy the fruit of that tree. The tree of life is a type of God Himself.

After man was created, the first impression that God gave to man was that he should eat, drink, and enjoy God.

In Exodus the Israelites ate the passover lamb, which is a type of Christ (12:21-28). By doing so, they received the strength to walk out of Egypt. While journeying through the wilderness, they became weary, and there was no food. At that time God sent manna from heaven as their daily supply (16:4, 14-15, 35). When they were thirsty, God gave them water from the riven rock (17:6). In the New Testament the Lord Jesus came. He too spoke of eating and drinking. The Lord Jesus said that He is the bread of life and that he who eats Him will live because of Him (John 6:35, 51, 57b). He also said that He is the fountain of living water and that those who drink of this water will not thirst (4:14). Then in Revelation He said that the overcomers will eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God (2:7), and of the hidden manna (2:17). At the end of the Bible the Spirit and the bride are still calling the thirsty sinners to drink of and be satisfied by the water of life (22:17).

Man's problem before God is not a problem of behavior but a problem of eating. If man does not eat, drink, and enjoy God Himself, he will eat and drink things other than God. Through man's eating, drinking, and enjoying of God, God is dispensed into man to be his constituent and element. God does not expect man to do anything. He desires only to become man's food by dispensing Himself into man. For this reason we must eat, drink, and enjoy God, and we must absorb Him into us so that He becomes our life and everything.

In Luke 14 the Lord spoke a parable in which He likened God to a man who made a great dinner. When the time came, the man sent out the invitation through his slaves: "Come, for all things are now ready" (v. 17). God has been processed to become our everything. Today all we need to do is to come to the feast and eat, drink, and enjoy all that He has prepared for us. We know that a few hours after we eat, the food will be digested and assimilated and will become our nutrients. These nutrients will in turn become our blood and our cells; they will become our constituents and elements. That is why nutritionists say that we are what we eat. Those who eat the Lord will have the Lord mingled and digested within them to become their constituent, supply, and nutrients, and they will be able to live by the Lord.

First Peter 2:2 says, “As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation.” Through regeneration the believers are born as babes (1:3, 23). Then they grow in life through the nourishment in the milk of the word. The Bible is like a milk cow. It is also like a fattened calf that has been slaughtered. We not only need to drink the “cow’s milk”; we need to eat the “calf’s meat” as well. Milk is mainly for babies, whereas meat, which is solid food, is for grown-up persons. Milk refers to the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God (Heb. 5:12-13), which is the good word of God and the word of the beginning of the Christ. We have all tasted these good words. The eternal life spoken of in John 3:16 and Romans 6:23, and the words of comfort spoken in Matthew 11:28, are examples of the good word of God. The solid food, on the other hand, is the word of righteousness in the Bible. This word speaks explicitly of God’s righteous dealing with His people in His government and administration. In other words, it is the word of God’s economy and dispensing. Most Christians do not pay attention to this word. Many people like only the words that comfort and soothe their hearts like candy. We must learn to digest not only milk but solid food as well so that we can be delivered from the stage of being babes and can grow and mature in life.

THE BELIEVERS’ RECEIVING AND ENJOYING OF CHRIST

Every living creature needs to grow and to mature. An inorganic object does not have life; hence, it does not need to grow. The human life is the highest life in God’s creation. Today, in addition to our human life, we have God within us as life. The divine life needs to grow all the more. The growth in life depends on the increase of the life supply. We need to receive the supply in the milk of the word. We also need to receive nourishment through the solid food. Many Christians do not grow. They are like a person with an ulcer: although they may eat a lot, they do not assimilate the food. When they come to listen to a message, they may criticize the speaker. Of course, this kind of person cannot receive the supply of life and cannot grow in life.

There are conditions to the growth in life. For a plant to grow, first, there is the need of sunlight; second, there is the need of air; and third, there is the need of water. After these things, there is still the need of nutrients and the soil. If they have these five things, plants can grow well. When we read the Bible, we see that Christ is the real soil; He is the good land (Col. 2:6-7). He is

also the light, the air, and the water (John 8:12; 20:22; 7:37-39). At the same time, Christ is the food (6:27, 33). This food is our nutrient.

Christ as Daily Food to the Believers

Christ is all the elements for our growth. But how can we receive and enjoy all these items of Christ? First, we must know the Bible. The Bible is not a book for the increase of our knowledge. No doubt the Bible is a book of teaching. However, it is not merely a book for our mental knowledge but one that supplies us with food through its teachings. The Bible is a heavenly, spiritual, and mysterious book. It is full of symbols. It says that Christ is the unleavened bread (1 Cor. 5:8), the Lamb of God (John 1:29), and the living water (4:10; 7:38-39). All these are symbols that speak of spiritual realities.

When we read the Bible, we must come before the Lord to have a quiet time to take in His word as food. We not only need to read the Bible, but we also need to pray with what we read. We must turn the words that we read into prayer. Through this kind of pray-reading, we bring the words that we read into the Holy Spirit, and the words will become spirit. When we read the Bible, we receive the Lord's word. When we pray, the words that we receive become the Spirit. The word and the Spirit are one. When we receive the word, this word becomes the Spirit within us. When we speak it out to others, it becomes the word again, and when others receive this word, it again becomes the Spirit in them. This is why the Lord Jesus said in John 6:63, "The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." This is the supply of life, and it is also the dispensing of life.

Christ is the bread of life based on His being the word, which is spirit and life (v. 63). When we the believers receive the word of Christ, we receive and enjoy Christ Himself in spirit. By receiving the Lord's word in reading the Bible and by contacting the Lord's Spirit in prayer, we receive and enjoy Christ (Eph. 6:17-18a).

Just as we need to take our meals daily at set times, so we need to come to the Lord at set times every day (cf. Ps. 55:17) to feast on and be filled with God through His word and His Spirit. It is not healthy to stuff ourselves with food for three days and then go without food for the next three days. All healthy people eat at set times and eat a fixed amount of food; they eat frequently but in moderation.

Christ is our daily manna; He is our food (John 6:31-35, 48-51). The most important time to receive Christ as food is the time of morning revival (Psa. 119:147-148; 143:8; Lam. 3:22-26). We need to spend twenty to thirty minutes every day to pray-read three to five verses. When we pray-read in this way, we are eating, drinking, and enjoying God. The word is the embodiment of the Triune God. When we eat, drink, and enjoy God's word, we eat, drink, enjoy, and assimilate God. In this way we receive God's rich supply and His bountiful dispensing.

In addition to the above, during our morning break, our lunch hour, our afternoon break, and when we return home in the evening, we can take out the Lord's Word and enjoy it in this way. If we do this, we will become one who enjoys and receives the Lord through His word, and our spiritual life will surely be healthy and living.

Furthermore, when we pray-read the Lord's word, we not only need to receive and enjoy the sweet supply in the Lord's word, but we also must receive the enlightening and rebuking of the Lord's word and the killing function of the Spirit in the Lord's word (Eph. 5:13-14; Rom. 8:13). The Lord's word always enlightens. With this enlightening, there is a rebuking. In our daily life we often offend the Lord and are defiled by the filth of the world. We often walk by the flesh and make mistakes. Through His word the Lord enlightens us, rebukes us, and points out our shortcomings. We do not need improvement. Our only need is to hand over our transgressions to the cross through the Spirit in our spirit and to allow the effectiveness of Christ's all-inclusive death to do the killing work. In this way we will not only receive the supply and dispensing of all the riches of the Triune God, but we will also be washed and rescued through the water in His word.

CHAPTER FOUR

GOD'S DISPENSING AS THE SUPPLY TO THE BELIEVERS IN THEIR LIVING

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:19-21a; Col. 3:4a; Gal. 2:20; John 14:19-20; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; 5:14; 1 John 1:3; John 15:5; Rom. 8:6b; 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 6:17-18; John 6:63; 1 Thes. 5:19; Eph. 5:18b; Rom. 8:4

We have seen that God has an economy, which is to have the Divine Trinity worked into us so that we, the chosen ones who have His life, may become His corporate expression. We have also seen that in order to accomplish this eternal economy, the Triune God must go through a procedure, which is to dispense the Divine Trinity step by step into us so that He might become our life and we might become His living, that God and man may be mingled and joined as one. This procedure is His dispensing, and it is for the purpose of arriving at God's goal, which is His economy. After this, we saw that the first supply in this dispensing is the supply to the believers in their growth in life. When God dispenses Himself into us and His element is daily added into us, we the believers grow in life. In this chapter we must see another aspect of the supply in God's dispensing. God's dispensing is not only our supply in our growth in life, but it is also our supply in our daily living. This is something very practical and precious.

Since my youth I have heard many teachings and doctrines from Christianity. In general, these teachings and doctrines all teach Christians to live a moral life and to be proper and upright in their conduct so that they may glorify God through their good works. This is not very different from the ethical teaching and philosophy taught by the Chinese. The first few sentences in Confucius's book *The Great Learning* are quite profound. He says, "The way of the great learning is in the developing of the bright virtue, in the renewing of the person, and it ends with supreme goodness." This means that the highest teaching is one that develops the "bright virtue" that is already within man so that man may be renewed day by day until he reaches perfection. If the Bible taught only morality and ethics, then the classical books of the Chinese would be just as good as the Bible. If this were the case,

why would the Chinese have needed the missionaries to teach them? For this reason I began to reject Christianity at the age of sixteen or seventeen.

Through the mercy of the Lord, I heard the genuine gospel at the age of nineteen. A young lady from Shanghai came to my hometown to preach the gospel. Her preaching was full of power; it was very uncommon and was different from what I had heard before. She spoke of the Egyptian ruler Pharaoh's enslaving of the Israelites; furthermore, she said that this Pharaoh was a figure of Satan and that Egypt was a figure of the world. Today Satan as the prince of this world is enslaving men, especially God's chosen people. When I heard this, I was deeply touched. I said in my heart to the Lord, "Lord, I do not want to be deceived by Satan anymore. Although I am still living in the world, I do not want the world anymore. I just want You." On that day I was clearly saved.

After I was saved, I began to love to read the Bible. I desired very much to know the Bible and wanted to know what the Bible was all about. Although I was still a poor student, I tried my best to secure spiritual books and books on Bible exposition. Not long after that, I obtained some books by Brother Watchman Nee. His books opened my understanding of the Bible. He pointed out again and again that those who have believed in Christ have been crucified with Christ. The cross of Christ has terminated us. God has no intention for us to sin; neither does God have any intention for us to do good. Based on the Bible he said that both good and evil belong to the same tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil bears four kinds of fruit: knowledge, good, evil, and death. But there is another tree that is in opposition to this tree—the tree of life. This tree, being of life, has nothing to do with knowledge, good, evil, or death. Brother Nee also pointed out that today man seeks only after knowledge. When he has knowledge, he tries his best to do good and to be moral. But in the end, the result is evil and death.

After this, Brother Nee pointed out that in the New Testament the Lord Jesus came. The Lord did not ask man to labor for Him. Instead, He placed Himself before man as man's food. He said, "I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Not only is the Lord Jesus life, but He came that man may have life and have it abundantly. He is also the bread of life to be man's food. He said, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no

means ever thirst” (6:35). Furthermore, He said, “I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever...As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me” (vv. 51, 57). Brother Nee told us that this is what God is after. God does not want us to sin and to commit evil; neither does He want us to do good and to be moral. God wants to be man’s life, to satisfy man’s hunger and quench his thirst. These words of Brother Nee’s rendered me great help in my spiritual life and in the knowledge of the Bible.

THE BELIEVERS’ LIVING

BEING TO LIVE CHRIST AND TO MAGNIFY CHRIST

Some may ask, does not the Bible also teach man to have all kinds of virtues? How can we say that God does not want us to do good? Should we not be meek and yielding? Should we not love our wives and submit to our husbands? Surely the Bible talks about all these things. But we must ask, what is the source of these expressions in life? What is the essence? Gold is yellow, and so is bronze. Superficially, they look alike. But actually, their essences are very different. Man’s highest morality is like bronze; it is not genuine. It is superficial and is like a tree without roots or water without a source. A Christian’s virtues are not superficial; they are not without root. The root of the Christian virtues is Christ. He is the Lord of heaven and earth and the God of all creation. He died for our sins and has resurrected. When we believe in Him with our heart and call on Him with our mouth, He enters into our spirit and enlivens our spirit. In this way we are regenerated. In addition to our human life, we have received the eternal and uncreated life of God. Thus, we share the same life that Christ has and have the same living that He has. Now, this all-inclusive Christ lives in us. When we live Christ and magnify Him, all His human virtues are expressed in our living. Only such virtues are genuine, high, and noble, like gold.

May our eyes be opened to see that what God truly desires is for Christ to be life in us and to be lived out of us. The Christian living is one that lives Christ and magnifies Christ. Paul says in Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” Through the death of Christ we have died in Him. Now, through His resurrection Christ is living in us. God wants the “I” to be crucified in the death of Christ so that in

His resurrection Christ may live in us and be the source and everything in our living. This is why Paul says, “As always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. For to me, to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:20b-21a).

A Christian’s living is one that lives Christ. It is not a matter of work, nor is it a matter of doing good. Christ is not only our life but also our living. We live Christ because Christ lives in us (Col. 3:4a; Gal. 2:20; John 14:19-20). Christ lives in us to be our life; we live Christ to be Christ’s living. The proper experience of Christ is to live Him. To live Christ is to magnify Christ in whatever circumstances we may be in. This is not a doctrine or a theory but a reality.

THE BOUNTIFUL SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST

By ourselves we can never live out all the virtues of Christ. In our daily living we need the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19). In order to save fallen man, God became flesh to be a man in the Son and through the Spirit. He passed through thirty-three and a half years of human life. At the end of His life He was crucified on the cross and was resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit. Such a Spirit is not merely the Spirit of God as He was before the Lord became flesh but is the Spirit of God after the Lord’s resurrection, being produced as a mingling of the Holy Spirit, who has divinity, with the Lord’s incarnation (His humanity), His human living under the cross, His crucifixion, and His resurrection. This Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He includes all the rich ingredients of Christ’s divinity, humanity, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. He is the compound, all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit of the Triune God. Hence, with Him there is the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He Himself even is the bountiful supply. Now He is living in us, daily supplying us and dispensing Himself into us as our food. He is whatever we need.

God created man according to His image. God’s image is all that God is. God is love, light, holiness, and righteousness. Love, light, holiness, and righteousness are what God is; hence, they are the image of God. Since man was created in the image of God, within man there are human virtues, such as love, light, holiness, and righteousness. But these human virtues are not the reality; they are merely the image of the reality. Man’s virtues are a picture of

God's image. A picture is not the reality of a man; it is not the man himself. When we believe in Christ and receive this pneumatic Christ, He enters into us to be our life within, and He lives Himself out from us. By this we will have the reality of all the virtues of God's attributes, and we can live out the real love, light, holiness, and righteousness, which are the expressions of Christ in us.

When the Lord Jesus lives in us, we can love others in a genuine way. We do not love by our own love; rather, we love by the Christ who is living in us and who is our bountiful supply. This Christ who is living in us is the Spirit with the bountiful supply. He has become one with us. We do not need to do good or to be moral by ourselves. Everything we do and all our living should come about by the bountiful supply of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of Jesus Christ is the Christ who is the life-dispensing Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17). The supply of this pneumatic Christ is His dispensing in life. The supply and dispensing of His life cause us to be saved in our living of Christ so that we may not be put to shame because we have not lived Christ and may not lose the testimony that we ought to bear for Christ because of our failure to magnify Christ. On the contrary, with all boldness, as always, even now, daily, Christ will be magnified in our body, whether through life or through death.

THE WAY TO RECEIVE AND TO ENJOY THE BOUNTIFUL SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST

If we want to receive and to enjoy the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, first we must love the Lord with all our heart. We must fellowship with Him all the time and must abide in Him unceasingly (2 Cor. 5:14; 1 John 1:3; John 15:5). Actually, it is not we who love the Lord first. Rather, it is the Lord who first loved us. This love was manifested through His death for us on the cross. The love of Christ constrains us on all sides. It focuses us on one goal, that is, that we would no longer live to ourselves but to Him. In such a condition we live in the fellowship of the eternal life of Christ and enjoy the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

How can we abide constantly in the Lord? Today the Lord is not only in heaven but also in our spirit. When we set our mind on the spirit (Rom. 8:6b), we are abiding in the Lord. To set the mind on the spirit is actually to abide. Every day and every moment we need to set our mind, which represents our whole person, on the spirit. The more we set our mind on the spirit, the more we will abide in the Lord, and the more the Lord will live Himself through us. First Corinthians 6:17 says, “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” We can abide in the Lord because of the fact that we are one spirit with Him.

At the same time, the Spirit with whom we have been joined as one is also the word. The Lord Jesus said in John 6:63, “The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” In the Christian experience, the word and the Spirit must forever be one. If we want to receive the Spirit, we must receive the word. Without receiving the word, it is impossible for us to have the Spirit. Since God is both the Spirit and the word, He created for us a mind to understand and also a spirit to receive. When we touch the Bible, we need to exercise our mind and our spirit. We need to read with our mind and pray with our spirit; that is, we need to pray-read the word of the Lord. We must pray-read daily at set times to receive the word of God, which is the embodiment of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17; John 6:63).

We not only need to pray with our spirit, but we also must pray at every time in spirit (Eph. 6:18) and must not quench the Spirit (1 Thes. 5:19) but must be filled in spirit by the Triune God (Eph. 5:18b).

Finally, if we desire to receive and enjoy the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we must also walk only according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4). Our walk, our speaking, our actions, and our attitudes must be conducted according to the spirit and not according to the flesh. In this way we will daily receive and enjoy the dispensing of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Under this dispensing, we will spontaneously receive the supply of Christ within and will live a life that expresses Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE
GOD'S DISPENSING AS THE SUPPLY
TO THE BELIEVERS IN THEIR GOSPEL PREACHING
AND WORK FOR THE LORD

Scripture Reading: John 1:14, 16-17, 29; 12:31; Heb. 2:14; John 12:24;
19:34; 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 20:22; 1 John 2:20, 27; Phil. 1:19; John 3:5-6;
15:1, 4-5; 4:10, 14; 6:49-51, 63; 7:38-39; 15:16; 21:15; 1 Pet. 2:2; John 15:7;
6:27, 57-58; Exo. 16:13b-15, 21; Eph. 6:17-18a

In the previous chapters we have seen that God's economy is to dispense Himself as the unlimited and untraceable supply to the believers for their growth in life and for their living. In this chapter we will see God's dispensing as the supply to the believers in their preaching of the gospel and in their work for the Lord.

During the past few years we have been speaking quite much about preaching the gospel through door-knocking. Door-knocking is not for door-knocking itself but for the spreading of the gospel. This spreading and preaching of the gospel is simply to dispense Christ to others. Since we have Christ, we can go to others and dispense Christ into them. Through our speaking, gradually, word by word and sentence by sentence, we dispense Christ into others. Our door-knocking is different from that of the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses; our door-knocking is for the ministering, dispensing, and distributing of Christ into others. In order to carry out such a dispensing work, we need the rich supply of the Divine Trinity. The Divine Trinity, the very Triune God, is the source of our supply.

God is divinely triune. He as the unique God needs to be triune in order to dispense Himself into us. For His dispensing work He is the Father as the source, the Son as the course, and the Spirit as the flow. As the Spirit, He is the flow that brings the source with the course into us so that the riches of the Divine Trinity will become our supply. These riches are the very source of His dispensing. Day by day for us as Christians, it is altogether a matter of dispensing.

This matter of dispensing can be illustrated by our natural life. As living creatures, every day we eat and we drink. Our living consists mainly of eating and drinking. Both eating and drinking are a dispensing. The groceries that we buy are dispensed first into our stomach. Then the spontaneous law of digestion works within us to digest the food. After digestion there is the process of assimilation, in which the food that has been dispensed into our stomach is assimilated into our tissues to become our fibers. Eventually, the food even becomes us.

Every day of our life a dispensing is going on. It is by dispensing that we receive nourishment. It is by dispensing that plants and human beings grow. It is by dispensing that a small seed becomes a large squash. I know some brothers who were teenagers a number of years ago. Now they are married and have children. Some of their children are over ten years of age. Their growth as well as the growth of their children is the issue and the result of dispensing. We may say that this is due to life; however, to say this is too general. In a particular sense, this is due to dispensing. Dispensing issues in growth. Without dispensing we cannot live very long. Our survival depends on a marvelous, God-ordained dispensing.

God's ordained way is that we eat and drink every day. The most important thing in our daily life is eating and drinking. Every day we should eat at least three meals and one snack. By this dispensing we can work, walk, and be strengthened to speak. I can stand and speak for two hours because while I am speaking, some dispensing is going on within me.

**THROUGH INCARNATION CHRIST AS THE WORD OF GOD
COMING TO BE A MAN WITH GOD AS GRACE AND REALITY
FOR THE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY
THAT MEN MAY RECEIVE THE FULLNESS
OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD**

In John's Gospel the matter of dispensing is very striking. Although we cannot find the word *dispensing* there, the matter of dispensing is implied very much in this book. John 1:14 tells us that the Word became flesh. The Word is God Himself. The Word became flesh to dispense God into us. Incarnation is for dispensing. If God had never become incarnated, He would have remained in His divinity, and there would have been no way for Him to

dispense Himself into us. Incarnation was the initiation of the divine dispensing; it was the first step of God's dispensing of Himself into us. When God was incarnated, He came full of grace and reality (v. 14). He did not come empty-handed. In incarnation God came in fullness; He came full of grace and reality.

Grace is God enjoyed by us. It is nothing less than God as our portion for our enjoyment. When we enjoy God, that is grace. Grace is not an expensive car or a big house; these things Paul counted as refuse (Phil. 3:8). Grace is the very God Himself subjectively enjoyed by us.

Reality is God gained by us. In the entire universe nothing is real. Solomon told us that everything is vanity (Eccl. 1:2). Houses and cars are vanity; they are not reality. Only God gained by us is reality. In His incarnation God came to us full of grace and reality for us to receive. John 1:16 says, "Of His fullness we have all received." God's fullness is His rich grace plus His rich reality.

When we go to the kitchen at dinner time, we can see a fullness there. The fullness may include beef, fish, melons, and many other kinds of food. This is the fullness of the kitchen. When we come to Jesus and call upon His name, within His name there is a fullness; this fullness is grace and reality. The Lord Jesus did not come empty-handed; He came with the fullness of the riches of the Triune God. The riches of the Triune God are just Himself as grace and reality. Now we all can receive Him.

However, without dispensing we cannot receive Him, because receiving is based on dispensing. If I do not speak, how can others hear? If God does not dispense, how can we receive Him? As the incarnated God, He is ready to dispense all that He is into us. He is dispensing Himself as grace and reality to His believers so that all His believers can receive Him again and again every day. The time of morning revival is a time for receiving. It is a time to eat Christ and drink Christ. When we come to the Lord's table, we come to eat and drink.

When we pray, we are actually breathing in the Lord, and this again is a receiving. It may seem as if we are merely praying, but actually we are receiving the living Lord as our water, food, air, and everything we need. On God's side He is dispensing and distributing Himself; on our side we are receiving. Every day our Christian life is one of receiving the dispensing from

God. If I did not receive anything from God, I would have nothing to speak. While I am speaking, I am also receiving. This is a kind of transmission. On the one hand, while I am speaking, I am dispensing; on the other hand, while I am speaking, I am also receiving. My dispensing comes from my receiving of His dispensing.

The Christian work is a dispensing. When we preach the gospel by knocking on doors, we should not trust in ourselves. Rather, we should pray that when we open our mouth, while we are speaking, the Lord would supply us. Then, between us and the Lord there will be a transmission, that transmission will enter into others, and they will receive Christ.

THROUGH CRUCIFIXION

After His incarnation Christ lived on this earth for more than thirty years. Then He went to the cross and was crucified there. This was the second step of God's dispensing.

Christ as the Lamb of God Taking Away Men's Sin

In His crucifixion Christ as the Lamb of God first took away our sin (1:29).

Christ as the Bronze Serpent Destroying Satan, the Ruler of this World

Second, as the bronze serpent, Christ destroyed Satan, the source of death and the ruler of this world (12:31; Heb. 2:14).

Christ as the Grain of Wheat Releasing the Divine Life for the Producing of Many Believers by Imparting (Dispensing) the Divine Life into Them

Third, as the grain of wheat, Christ released the divine life within Him for the producing of the many believers by imparting, that is, dispensing, the divine life into them (John 12:24). By this He made all the believers His members and the many grains of wheat.

Many Christians do not realize that Christ's death, like His incarnation, was for His dispensing. He died on the cross to release His divine life for His dispensing.

The Blood That Came out of Christ at His Crucifixion

Symbolizing the Redeeming Aspect

of Christ's All-inclusive Death,

and the Water That Came out of Christ

Symbolizing the Life-imparting Aspect

of Christ's All-inclusive Death

At the cross, when the soldier pierced the side of Christ, blood and water came out (19:34). The blood symbolizes the redeeming aspect of Christ's all-inclusive death, and the water that came out of Christ symbolizes the life-imparting aspect of Christ's all-inclusive death. This one death did two works: it redeemed us from our sins, and it released the divine life of God into the believers.

IN RESURRECTION CHRIST AS THE LAST ADAM

BECOMING THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

AND ENTERING INTO HIS BELIEVERS AS THE HOLY SPIRIT

Chapter 1 of the Gospel of John tells us that Christ was God in eternity past (v. 1). This very God who was the Word became incarnated to be a man (v. 14). Then chapter 20 tells us that after His death this Christ entered into resurrection, and in resurrection He changed His form and became a life-giving Spirit (vv. 19-22). In incarnation He changed His form from the form of God to the form of man. In resurrection He as the last Adam changed His form again, from the form of the human flesh to a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b).

The word *life-giving* implies dispensing, because to give is to dispense. The British call a drugstore a dispensary. This means that the store dispenses different kinds of medicines and drugs. Christ as the life-giving Spirit is dispensing life as food to His believers. Within our physical food there is medicine; the nourishment in the food kills the germs. Within Christ as the food there is the real "medicine" that kills all the spiritual germs.

In Greek the word for *spirit* is *pneuma*. This word can also be translated “breath.” On the night of His resurrection the Lord came back to visit His believers. He did not give them a message or any teaching or instruction. He did only one thing: He breathed into them (John 20:22). By breathing into them, He breathed Himself into them. At that time Christ was the life-giving Spirit. Thus, by Christ’s breathing, all the disciples received Him as the life-giving Spirit.

**CHRIST AS THE COMPOUND SPIRIT
BECOMING THE ANOINTING OINTMENT
AND AS THE CONSUMMATION
OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD
BECOMING THE BOUNTIFUL SUPPLY
OF THE DIVINE TRINITY FOR HIS DISPENSING**

Christ is not only the life-giving Spirit; He is the compound Spirit as well. The compound Spirit is the Spirit of God compounded with Christ’s humanity, death, and resurrection. In this way He became the anointing (dispensing) ointment (1 John 2:20, 27). Even the anointing is a dispensing. This compound Spirit as the anointing ointment is the consummation of the processed Triune God.

In eternity past God had only divinity; He did not have humanity, and He did not have the elements of death and resurrection. By His passing through incarnation, death, and resurrection, a number of elements were added to Him. In His incarnation He added humanity; in His crucifixion He added the element and effectiveness of death; and in His resurrection He added the divine power of resurrection. With all these elements He became the life-giving Spirit. As such a Spirit, He is compounded with the elements of divinity, humanity, the all-inclusive death, and the powerful resurrection. All these elements were compounded with the Spirit of God as the base, as the oil, to produce the compound Spirit.

In Exodus 30 we can see the record of the compounding of the anointing ointment (vv. 22-25). In this record the Spirit of God is signified by the olive oil, which is the base for the ointment. Into this base were added four kinds of spices, which, when compounded with the oil, became an ointment for

anointing. When this ointment was used for anointing, all the elements of the compound ointment were applied to the objects that were anointed.

Anointing is like painting. In painting, one layer of paint is painted upon another until the painted article is covered with all the elements of the paint. This is the dispensing of the paint into the painted article. Today the Triune God as a compound Spirit is painting Himself into us. As such a compound Spirit, He is the consummation, or completion, of the Triune God. In eternity past God was perfect, but He was not complete. He needed humanity, the wonderful death, and the powerful resurrection to make Himself complete. By passing through all the processes, God is now not only perfect but also complete. This completion is the consummation of the Triune God.

Today our consummated, processed Triune God is the very compound Spirit. The very Christ in whom we believe today is a life-giving Spirit. This life-giving Spirit is the compound Spirit, and the compound Spirit is the completed, consummated God, the consummation of the processed Triune God. This is our Christ and our Savior. When we speak to others about Christ, we do not have to talk so much. As long as people believe in Him and call on His name, the compound ointment as a “paint” will anoint them. This will give them one coat of paint. However, this coat may not be very thick. We need to go back to them and sing, pray, read the Word, and call on the Lord with them again. This will give them some thicker coats of paint. Day by day and moment by moment, as they are under this anointing, they will experience the “painting,” layer upon layer and coat upon coat.

As such a compound Spirit, Christ became the bountiful supply of the Divine Trinity for His dispensing. Philippians 1:19 uses the term *the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*. The Spirit today is no longer merely the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God has been compounded with the elements of Christ’s humanity, death, and resurrection to become the Spirit of Jesus Christ. As such a compound Spirit, He has the bountiful supply.

Today the Pentecostal people seek to be filled with the Spirit. But many of them do not realize that to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the compound Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who is the bountiful supply. To have the bountiful supply is to be supplied with whatever we need. In Greek, the word for *bountiful supply* denotes the supplying of all

the needs of a musical group by the leader of the group. Whatever the group needed, whether it was musical instruments, clothing, uniforms, food, or medicine, was supplied by the leader.

Today Christ is such a Leader. As the life-giving Spirit, who is the compound Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, He has the bountiful supply to meet all our needs. Paul was able to do such a marvelous work for Christ because within him there was such a bountiful supply. This bountiful supply comes from the source of the consummation of the processed Triune God. This consummation is the compound Spirit, and this compound Spirit is Jesus Christ.

We should not say that we are weak. Instead, we should be strengthened and encouraged because the very Spirit within us is the compound Spirit. We can go out to preach the gospel by being supplied with Him. When we knock on others' doors, we should do so by exercising our spirit and our faith, with much assurance. We should not go according to our feeling but according to the revelation of the Bible. If we go in this way, our way of preaching the gospel will be transformed. The old way is to speak to people without power, but the new way is to speak with Christ in us. The new way is not merely to knock on the doors of people's houses; it is to knock on the door of their heart and to touch their spirit. To do this we must speak with faith and assurance. The Lord Jesus told the disciples that He had received all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Therefore, we can go with Him as our authority. When we speak to people with this Christ, who is God who passed through incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to be the compound Spirit with the bountiful supply, our preaching will become very different from what it was in the past.

Some people do not believe that a person can be saved within a short time. But painting does not take a long time. If someone comes to you with a can of paint, he can put the paint on you without saying too many words. There is no need to speak too much. Some have been in the church for many years. They may know many things, but they may not have the faith, the power, the authority, or the bountiful supply. The old way is to beseech people in a weak way, but the new way is to go to people with Christ in us.

It is not a small thing to have Christ within us. As the Spirit within us, He has passed through the great processes of incarnation, crucifixion,

resurrection, and ascension. Now, as the compounded One, He is within us. We have Him, and we are one with Him; therefore, we have the assurance. We should not merely preach to others; we should give them with assurance the command and the order to believe and be baptized.

**IN REGENERATION
CHRIST DISPENSING HIMSELF
AS THE SPIRIT OF THE DIVINE LIFE
INTO OUR SPIRIT AS THE INITIATION
OF THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY,
MAKING US THE BRANCHES OF HIM AS THE TRUE VINE**

In regeneration Christ dispenses Himself into our spirit (John 3:5-6). This is the initiation of the divine dispensing, making us branches of Christ as the true vine. We were wild olive branches (Rom. 11:17), but now we have become the branches of the cultivated vine (John 15:1, 5). As the branches of the resurrected Christ, we live with Him, grow with Him, and work with Him. This is the result of regeneration.

**IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
CHRIST AS THE LIVING WATER
WATERING THE BELIEVERS,
AS THE LIVING BREAD FEEDING THE BELIEVERS,
AND AS THE CONSUMMATION
OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD FLOWING
FROM THE INWARD PARTS OF THE BELIEVERS**

As the consummated Spirit of the divine life, Christ is the living water (4:10, 14). He is now watering the believers with Himself. As the living bread, which is the real manna from heaven, He is feeding the believers (6:49-51, 63). Furthermore, as the consummation of the processed Triune God, that is, as the consummated, all-inclusive, compound Spirit, He is flowing from the inward parts of the believers (7:38-39). In the Christian life, from the day we are regenerated, He waters us, feeds us, and flows out from within us every

day. This is the process of dispensing. Watering is a dispensing, feeding is a dispensing, and flowing also is a dispensing.

**IN THEIR GOSPEL PREACHING AND
WORK FOR THE LORD
THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY
BEING THE SUPPLY TO THE BELIEVERS**

In Fruit-bearing

This divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity becomes the supply to the believers in their gospel preaching and work for the Lord. The first item of the gospel work is fruit-bearing, that we may dispense the riches of the divine life to others. To bear fruit is to preach the gospel by dispensing the riches of Christ into others (15:4-5, 16).

In Lamb-feeding

In feeding the lambs, we dispense further the riches of the divine life to the new believers for their growth in life (21:15; 1 Pet. 2:2). In the Gospel of John we are charged to do two things: in chapter 15 we are charged to bear remaining fruit (v. 16), and in chapter 21 we are charged to feed the lambs, the new believers (v. 15). Both the bearing of fruit and the feeding of lambs are a dispensing of life into others. The way to carry out the gospel work and the feeding work is to dispense the life of Christ into the unbelievers and the believers.

**THE WAY TO RECEIVE THE FULLNESS
OF THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD
AS GRACE AND REALITY TO THE BELIEVERS**

Today the processed and consummated Triune God has a fullness, which is His grace as our enjoyment and His reality as our gain. John says that of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace (1:16). We need to consider the way to receive this fullness.

Abiding in Christ That Christ May Abide in Us

to Carry Out the Divine Dispensing in Us

First, we must abide in Christ. To abide in Christ is to remain all the time in our spirit. As tripartite beings, we have a body, a soul, and a spirit (1 Thes. 5:23). The place where we should remain is the spirit. If we stay in our thoughts or our temperament, we remain in our soul. Christ is not in our soul but in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). At other times we may remain in our body by engaging in sports or fighting with one another. But what we should do is remain always in our spirit? When we remain in the spirit, we abide in Christ, and Christ has the ground to abide in us to carry out His divine dispensing in us (John 15:4-5).

Abiding in Christ That His Words May Abide in Us to Dispense All His Riches Embodied in His Words

Second, we must abide in Christ that His words may abide in us (v. 7). Every morning we should abide in Christ by getting into His Word. In the morning we need to abide in Christ, enter into His word, and even dwell in His word. In this way His word will enter into us, abide in us, and dispense all the riches of Christ into our being. Every word in the Bible is the embodiment of the living Christ. Christ is mysterious and somewhat abstract, but He is embodied and made real in the word. This is why we must exercise our spirit to read the Word and to pray, that is, to pray-read.

Drinking of Christ as the Living Water

Third, we need to drink of Christ as the living water (4:10, 14). This water is the water of the eternal life, which is the consummated Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God. Our Christ today is the water. We need to drink of Him. The way to drink of Him is to pray, to call on Him, and to talk to Him. This kind of praying is also a breathing and inhaling of Christ into us.

Eating Christ as the Living Bread

Fourth, we need to eat Christ as the living bread. This bread is the bread of the eternal life embodied in His words, which are Spirit and life (6:27, 51, 57-58, 63). Eventually, God, Christ, the Spirit, life, and the word are all one thing. God is Spirit (4:24), and the Spirit is Christ (2 Cor. 3:17). This Spirit, as

Christ, is life (Rom. 8:2; Col. 3:4) and is embodied in the words of the Bible. Thus, when we come to the Bible, we must realize that we are coming to the living God, the living Christ, the living Spirit, and His life.

We need to eat Christ daily at the appointed times. We should especially eat Him early in the morning as our daily manna (Exo. 16:13b-15, 21). We should also eat Christ with the drinking of Him; that is, we should receive His word by prayer (Eph. 6:17-18a), by pray-reading His Word. This is the way to receive His gracious dispensing. In this way all the rich elements of the Divine Trinity will be dispensed into our being. This will enable us to grow in life, to live Christ, to preach the gospel, and to do the divine work for the Lord. We do not do these things by ourselves but by the One who lives in us and who is now dispensing His riches into us all the time.

**Flowing Christ in All the Aspects of His Riches
as Rivers of Living Water
from within Our Every Inward Part**

If we cooperate with the Lord by abiding in Him, by allowing His words to abide in us, and by eating Him as the living bread, drinking Him as the living water, and breathing Him as the heavenly air, Christ will flow from within our every inward part in all the aspects of His riches as rivers of living water (John 7:38-39). He will have a way to dispense Himself into our spirit and from our spirit into all the parts of our being. Then we will be supplied and will be able to grow in life, live Christ, preach the gospel with authority, and do the divine work. This is the revelation of the Gospel of John concerning the dispensing of the processed Triune God within us as our bountiful supply, beginning with incarnation and ending with fruit-bearing and lamb-feeding.

CHAPTER SIX
GOD'S DISPENSING
AS THE SUPPLY TO THE BELIEVERS
IN THEIR MEETINGS AND SERVICE

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 24, 30; Rom. 5:18b; John 3:6b; Rom. 6:19, 22; 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:17b, 30; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; 15:45b; 6:17; 9:24; 10:1-6a; 12:4-11, 13; 11:3a; 12:12; Heb. 10:24-25; Eph. 4:16, 11-12; 1 Cor. 14:3-5, 23a, 1, 39a, 31; John 15:5, 7; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:14; 1 Cor. 2:15a, 16b

In the previous chapter we saw from the Gospel of John God's dispensing as the supply to the believers in their preaching of the gospel and in their work for the Lord. The Gospel of John is a book on life. It tells us that God wants us not only to have life but also, after receiving life, to be supplied by this life day by day and hour by hour. For this reason the Gospel of John pays much attention to eating, drinking, and breathing the Lord. To eat, drink, and breathe is to take food, drink, and air into us and have them dispensed into the different parts of our being. These nutrients then become the constituents of our body. When we eat and drink the Lord in this way, we are joined to Him and abide in Him, and He in turn abides in us. This is similar to branches abiding in a tree. In such an abiding, the riches of the tree are transmitted to the branches, and eventually, the branches bear much fruit.

The other three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—also contain records of the Lord's commissioning us to preach the gospel. But in the Gospel of John this matter is presented in the way of life. John 15:16 says, "I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain." When the branches receive the supply of the life sap, this issues in the abundant overflow of life. This abundant overflow of life is fruit-bearing. When we go out today to preach the gospel by knocking on doors, outwardly it seems that this is a gospel activity and work, but inwardly it is an overflow of the inner life. In John 21 the Lord told us that if we love Him, we must feed His lambs. Strictly speaking, the feeding of the lambs is not an outward work;

it is to dispense food into the lambs that they may receive the abundant supply and grow thereby.

In John 1 we see that the Triune God became flesh in the Son for the purpose of dispensing Himself into man as grace and reality. Then He was crucified on the cross, thus accomplishing redemption, removing our sins, destroying Satan, and releasing the divine life that was within Him. All these are for the dispensing of life. After He resurrected, He became a life-giving Spirit in resurrection. Hence, the Lord's incarnation, birth, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension are all for the dispensing of the Triune God as life into us. John 3:16 says, "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." The giving mentioned here is a dispensing. Our Lord today is not merely the Redeemer; He is also the life-giving Spirit. He is not far from us but is in our mouth and in our heart (Rom. 10:8). He is like the air and like breath; we can receive Him into us in a most available and intimate way.

In John 4 we see that the Lord as the life-giving Spirit is the living water (vv. 7-15) for the believers to enjoy and to drink that He may become their satisfaction and inward reality. John 6 shows us that the Lord is the bread of life from heaven (vv. 35, 48, 51). Everyone who eats of this bread will receive the Lord as his life and life supply. John 7 says that out of the innermost being of those who drink of the living water from Him will flow rivers of living water (v. 38). After this we see in John 14 that the Lord is the Spirit of reality. Not only is He present among us, but He also will abide with us (v. 17). Furthermore, He said that He is in the Father, we are in Him, and He is in us (v. 20). This shows that the Triune God not only is living in us and is joined to us but also is mingled with us. This is the story of our salvation. When we were saved, not only were our sins forgiven, and not only did we receive peace and joy, but we even believed into the Lord, and the Lord entered into us so that we are mingled with the Lord as one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). The result of this mingling and mutual abiding is the fruit-bearing in John 15 (v. 5). Then we can feed the Lord's lambs. This is the Gospel of John. Everything in our work and in our preaching of the gospel has to do with God's dispensing.

In this chapter we will see, from the book of 1 Corinthians, God's dispensing as the supply to the believers in their meetings and service. Some Bible teachers have said that 1 Corinthians was written with the purpose of solving

many serious problems in the church. But in that book Paul was dispensing to the Corinthian believers the rich, all-inclusive One for their enjoyment. If they would concentrate on Him, focus on Him, and take Him as their center to enjoy all His riches, all the problems among them would spontaneously be solved. This is similar to the way in which we solve the problems of a physically sick person; the best way is to supply him with rich and nutritious food.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST AS THE BELIEVERS' PORTION

First Corinthians 1:2 says that Christ is “theirs and ours.” This kind of identification is not objective but subjective. It is an identification in life. For example, when we buy a book, we may put a seal on it. The book then becomes our book. But the relationship between the book and us is merely objective. There is no union in life between the two things. Christ is ours. This means that when we receive this all-inclusive Christ into us as our enjoyment, He becomes our portion and our supply. This supply is the dispensing of God within us. It dispenses Christ into us as our portion. Since Christ is our portion, He also has become the portion of all the believers.

THE BELIEVERS HAVING BEEN CALLED BY THE FAITHFUL GOD INTO THE PARTICIPATION OF CHRIST

First Corinthians 1:9 says, “God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” In the original language, the word *fellowship* here has the meaning of participation and enjoyment. The more fellowship we have with Christ, the more we partake of Him and the more we enjoy Him. When we attend a feast, on the one hand, we have fellowship with others; on the other hand, we have enjoyment. This kind of feasting is a joint participation and enjoyment. This kind of enjoyment is not only an individual enjoyment but a corporate enjoyment and a mutual participation with all those attending the feast. We have been called by the faithful God into the fellowship of His Son for the purpose of participating in and enjoying Him.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST

BEING THE POWER AND WISDOM DISPENSED BY GOD TO THE BELIEVERS

First Corinthians 1:24 says, “To those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Here Paul tells us that to the called ones, that is, those who have been chosen by God in eternity and have believed into Christ, Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom. The all-inclusive Christ has become God’s power and God’s wisdom to us, not in an outward way but in the way of dispensing and transmitting within us. This is like the turning of an electric fan: it is turned not by the hand of man but by the transmission of electric power through a union with the power plant.

Christ’s being God’s power and God’s wisdom to us is based on His being life within us. We know that every kind of life has its own kind of power and skill, which is its wisdom. Through regeneration we have become the children of God. Within us we have God’s life. Because of this, we have the power and wisdom that God gave to us in Christ. This is not something outward but something inward. Furthermore, it is not a once-for-all matter; it does not cease being transmitted once it has been received. Rather, it is being transmitted to us continually. Today, all day long our Christian life is the story of a transmission from God to us. However, many Christians are closed to God. They are like an electric fan that has been cut off from the power source. Because of this, the fan will not turn. We must be open to the Lord so that He can transmit to us continuously. In this way Christ will become our power and our wisdom.

After this, Paul continues in 1:30, “Of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” Paul points out that Christ is both theirs and ours. At the same time, we have been called into His fellowship, that is, into the mutual participation in Christ. He has become our portion. In the second half of chapter 1, from verse 24 on, Paul shows us the different aspects of the enjoyment of Christ as our all-inclusive portion. Christ as the wisdom of God includes (1) righteousness, for the believers’ past, that they may be justified and regenerated in their spirit (Rom. 5:18b; John 3:6b); (2) sanctification, for the believers’ present, that they may be sanctified and transformed in their soul (Rom. 6:19, 22; 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18); and (3) redemption, for the believers’ future, that their body may be redeemed, transformed, and their whole being

may enter into the glory of the Triune God (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:17b, 30).

CHRIST BECOMING THE PASSEOVER LAMB AND THE UNLEAVENED BREAD OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD TO THE BELIEVERS

In 1 Corinthians 5, although Paul was dealing with the problem of an evil brother, he was exercising his spirit to point out some additional crucial things. Verses 7 and 8 say, “Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened; for our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed. So then let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” We who have been chosen by God have passed through the Passover. In the Passover feast Christ is the Passover lamb. He is even the whole Passover feast. Christ as the Passover lamb dispenses to the believers the life of the lamb, to be their initial (Passover) supply of life and power.

We must not only eat Christ as our Passover lamb but must also go on to eat the unleavened bread of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a continuation of the Passover. It lasted for seven days, which signifies a complete period of time. This feast typifies the entire period of our Christian life, from the day we repented to the day we will be raptured. During the period of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we should eat the unleavened bread. To be unleavened means to be sinless. The bread signifies Christ coming down from heaven to be our nutritious food. Christ as the unleavened bread of the Feast of Unleavened Bread dispenses His sinless life to the believers that they may become a new lump to live a sinless life and to keep such a sinless feast all the days of their life.

CHRIST ALSO BECOMING THE SPIRITUAL ROCK SMITTEN BY GOD AND RIVEN

In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul tells us that after the Israelites left Egypt, they “all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ” (vv. 3-4). After we enjoy Christ as the Passover, we enter into a race (9:24). In order to run the race, we need to eat the same spiritual food and drink the

same spiritual drink as our daily life supply. The spiritual food and drink that we eat and drink in our Christian race come from the spiritual rock that was smitten by God and riven and out of which flows the living water for the quenching of our thirst. This rock is Christ (John 19:34). The living water of life is the Holy Spirit, who flows out to be our life supply.

According to the principle of Revelation 22, the water of life is always with the tree of life. We not only have the spiritual water as our drink, but we also have the tree of life as our spiritual food. The water of life that flows out from Christ as the riven rock carries with it the tree of life, which is Christ as our life. On the one hand, as water, Christ waters us, nourishes us, and quenches our thirst. On the other hand, as the fruit of the tree of life, He feeds us, supplies us, and satisfies us. The Christ in whom we believe is God's portion for us. He has come into us already and is dispensing the spiritual food and the spiritual drink to us all the time, thus becoming the life supply to us who follow Him in the race.

CHRIST BEING THE HEAD TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY AND ALSO BEING THE WHOLE BODY

First Corinthians 11 says that Christ is the head of every man (v. 3a). Here Christ's being the head of every man refers to Christ's being the Head of the members of His Body. On the other hand, chapter 12 says that Christ is also the entire Body (v. 12). As far as the human body is concerned, the head supplies all the riches to the body and meets the needs of the body. It is the head that leads the body and not the body that supports the head. Christ is the Head of all the members of His Body. He is also the whole Body. He supplies His divine life and element to every member that they may have the life capacity to be the many gifts in His Body (12:4-11). These gifts in the Body of Christ are dispensed by the Spirit. The gifts dispensed by the Spirit are present in order to realize the ministries dispensed by the Lord, and the ministries dispensed by the Lord are present to perfect the operations dispensed by God in the many members.

ALL THE BELIEVERS BEING BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY IN THE PNEUMATIC CHRIST

Christ has baptized in Himself, the pneumatic Christ, all the believers into one Body in order that the believers may be enabled to drink of Him as the all-inclusive Spirit. In this way He becomes their life supply, and they enjoy His life dispensing (v. 13). Baptism ushers us into an organic union with Christ and the Triune God, making us living members of the Body of Christ. Whatever race or nationality we belong to and whatever social status we may have, we should all be part of this Body. Christ is the life and constituent of this Body, and the Spirit is the reality of Christ. In one Spirit we have all been baptized into this living Body to express Christ.

CHRIST BECOMING THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT IN RESURRECTION

First, in incarnation Christ became flesh for the accomplishing of redemption (John 1:14, 29). This is the first “becoming.” Then in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) for the dispensing of life (John 10:10). This is the second “becoming.” Today the Christ in whom we believe is the life-giving Spirit. He is dispensing to us the divine life of the processed Triune God so that we may become one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17) and may enjoy the divine dispensing of all the riches of the Triune God in Him.

THE DISPENSING OF GOD AS THE SUPPLY TO THE BELIEVERS IN THEIR MEETINGS AND SERVICE

We have seen from 1 Corinthians 1—15 that the Christ into whom we have been called is an all-inclusive One. He is the portion given to us by God. He is God’s power and God’s wisdom, becoming our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He is our Passover lamb and the unleavened bread of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He is the spiritual food, the spiritual drink, and the spiritual rock. He is the Head of all the members of the Body and is also the whole Body. As such a One, He is the life-giving Spirit that we may receive Him into us as our all. God has dispensed such a One to us to be our enjoyment. We should pay our attention only to Him and should not pay attention to any person, event, or thing apart from Him.

When all the members of the Body of Christ eat, drink, and enjoy Christ in this way, and when they love Him and set their eyes solely on Him, out of the

members different kinds of gifts will be produced. These gifts are the different manifestations of the Spirit. Some will have words of wisdom. Some will have words of knowledge. Others will be prophets who prophesy or teachers who teach. Still others will render help and administration. Though the gifts are varied, they all issue from the operation of the Spirit and are distributed to each one individually as He purposes (12:11).

When we love the Lord, fellowship with Him, and walk according to Him, the indwelling Spirit will spontaneously distribute gifts to us through the inner life. These gifts are spiritual capacities, and they are developed out of life. At the time a baby is born, he may be complete in all his organs, but his feet cannot walk, his hands cannot work, and his mouth cannot talk. He needs the continual feeding of his mother before he will gradually learn to walk, jump, and talk. We who are saved have the life of God. Hence, we also have the life capacity of God. If we eat, drink, enjoy the Lord, and grow in life, this life capacity will be developed into gifts. From the time that we are saved and regenerated, this life capacity is in us. But if we do not receive the nourishment and the supply, we will not grow, the life capacity will not develop, and the gifts will not be manifested. Many Christians have been listening to sermons for decades, but they cannot speak with clarity concerning a truth as basic as justification. This is why we must practice the new way according to the revelation of the Bible. This will allow the brothers and sisters to have some practical training through the dispensing of God and will enable everyone to manifest his organic function in the matter of meetings and service.

First Corinthians 12 unveils to us the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. After this, Paul shows us in chapter 13 that love is the most excellent way to exercise the gifts. If we pay attention only to the outward gifts and do not have love, the gifts will be empty and without life. But if we have love and we add to it faith and hope, we have something that abides. Actually, faith is the Triune God. Hope also is the Triune God, and love also is the Triune God. God is love. We are not love. Our love is in the flesh, and it fluctuates constantly. Christ is faith. We do not have faith. We are saved in the faith of Christ, and we receive Him into us also in the faith of Christ. Christ is also our hope of glory. We should fellowship with Christ, abide in Him, eat, drink, and enjoy Him, and allow Him to do the transmitting work in us, communicating into us His divine element. Then, if we need love, hope, or faith, Christ as our supply will spontaneously be expressed from us as love, hope, and faith.

When we come to 1 Corinthians 14, Paul begins by saying, “Pursue love, and desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.” To pursue love is to pursue the growth in life so that we may develop the gifts in life. Hence, the pursuing of love must be accompanied by an earnest desire for the most profitable gift, the gift of prophecy. Hence, prophecy does not come merely from teaching but from God being in man and man cooperating with God. Without God there is no prophesying, but neither can there be prophesying if there is only God without man. Prophesying is words spoken as a result of a cooperation and coordination between God and man. It is God’s speaking in and through man.

This is what the book of 1 Corinthians shows us. Today Christ has come into us and has become our life and eternal portion. He is our everything and has become our constituent. Now we are joined to Him as one spirit. By this, the capacity of His life is manifested in us and becomes the gifts in our meetings and service. Nothing we do is done by ourselves; everything is done by faith. The result of everything we do is hope. We do not do anything that is not in hope. The result of everything we do is also love. In such a situation we will spontaneously be able to prophesy, to speak for the Lord, to speak forth the Lord, and to speak the Lord into others. These are the factors of our meetings and service as described in 1 Corinthians. When we come to the meetings or to serve, we do not come alone or empty-handed. Rather, we come with Christ. Christ is the content of our meetings. Whether we sing, pray, or speak, we are full of Christ. Christ is also the content of our service. Whatever we do in the church must have Christ as its element.

When we enjoy this all-inclusive Christ every day, He will become our inward supply in everything. He will become the dispensing within us. Eventually, He will be manifested in our meetings and service, in our gifts, and in all our activities. This is the dispensing of God as our supply in our meetings and service.

**THE WAY TO SUPPLY AND APPLY
THIS LIFE DISPENSING OF CHRIST
IN THE BELIEVERS’ MEETINGS AND SERVICE**

Perfecting the Saints

To practice the new way today is to apply this life dispensing of Christ practically to our meetings and service. For this we must perfect the saints through the group meetings (Heb. 10:24-25) so that all the saints will be the same as we are, enjoying the life dispensing of Christ to become members who are the supplying joints in the Body of Christ for the perfecting of the other members (Eph. 4:16, 11-12a), that every member in the Body of Christ may be able to do the work of the New Testament ministry, which is the building up of the Body of Christ (v. 12b).

Prophecy to Build Up the Church

Next, we need to learn and to practice prophesying. Prophesying in the church meetings (1 Cor. 14:23a) is the most excelling gift for the building up of the church (vv. 3-5). That is why Paul charges us to pursue and to desire earnestly the prophesying (vv. 1, 39a) and to learn to prophesy (v. 31). How can we reach the stage where we can speak for the Lord in the meetings? It is by opening to the Lord to fellowship with Him constantly in our daily life and to abide in Him unceasingly (John 15:5, 7). We also need to be soaked in the Lord's word, to receive Him as the living water and the spiritual food, so that we receive His rich dispensing daily through His word. In this way we will have a deposit, a saving, of the Lord's word (1 Tim. 6:20 and footnote 1, Recovery Version; 2 Tim 1:14) and will have the spiritual sight to discern all things (1 Cor. 2:15a, 16b).

This is the dispensing of God in us as described in 1 Corinthians. This dispensing will uphold us in our meetings and service. The result is that we will have the divine dispensing within and the organic activities without. It is by this way that our meetings and service can be one with our inner life and can have Christ as their content and reality.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE DIVINE DISPENSING
OF THE DIVINE TRINITY IN RELATION
TO THE ORGANIC BUILDING
OF THE CHURCH OF GOD
AS THE ORGANIC BODY OF CHRIST (1)

Scripture Reading: John 3:14-16, 5-6; 1:42; 14:7-11, 16-20; 1 Cor. 3:6-12;
Eph. 1:3-23

The general subject of these messages is “The Economy and Dispensing of God.” The words *economy* and *dispensing* are somewhat unfamiliar and even peculiar terms to some of us. According to the New Testament revelation, *economy* is a particular term used by God to unveil His eternal plan. In Greek this word is *oikonomia*, composed of two words, *oikos* and *nomos*. The word *oikos* means “house, family, or household,” and the word *nomos* means “law.” When we put the two words together, the result, *oikonomia*, means “a household regulation, household government, or household administration.” Within a household administration there are some plans and arrangements, and there is the exercise of some kind of skill for the dispensing of the riches of the household to the family members.

The word *dispensing* carries the denotation of distributing. In a love feast we may have an abundance of food, but there is the need for some “dispensers” to distribute the food to everyone. This distributing of food is the dispensing of food. Furthermore, when the food gets into us, it begins to dispense itself within us. Our digestion of the food is our cooperation with the dispensing of the food. After digestion there is also the process of assimilation, through which we assimilate what has been received through digestion. This is a further cooperation with the dispensing of the food. In this way the food will be in us, and everything we have eaten will become part of us. This is the denotation and the connotation of the word *dispensing*.

The entire economy of God, and especially that in the New Testament age, is a matter of dispensing. I do not say that it is a matter of *dispensation*. The word *dispensation* conveys a different notion. I like to use the word *dispensing* as a noun in expressions such as *God's dispensing* or *the divine dispensing*. In the New Testament, God is carrying out His economy, His household administration, which He made in eternity past, before the foundation of the world. God's intention in His economy, His household government, is just to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into His chosen people.

Many matters are covered in the New Testament, but if we dive into the depth of the New Testament as the divine revelation, we will see that God surely has an economy, a household administration, to carry out His eternal purpose. This economy is just God's universal operation. If you would ask me what God is doing today, I would answer that God is operating in one thing and for one thing: He is spending much time to patiently dispense Himself into all His chosen people. Everything that is mentioned in the New Testament concerning God has to do with His dispensing for His economy.

Many people are familiar with John 3:16, which says, "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." In this verse three things are taking place: first, God gave and is still giving; second, we believe; and third, we will have eternal life. In these three points we can see God's dispensing. God's giving is a kind of dispensing. Suppose I have a lot of money, and I give each of you some of this money. My giving is my dispensing. I unload my money to you by the way of dispensing. God so loved the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son. This means that God is dispensing His Son to us. What God dispenses is not money but His only begotten Son.

When we receive God's Son, God is dispensed into us. After putting a dollar bill in my pocket, I may lose it. However, through God's dispensing I have a living person in my spirit. Because I have received this person, I can never throw Him away, and I cannot even chase Him away. What I have is not just a piece of paper or a piece of sugar but the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. This is why I am so happy and so strong.

Quite often some dear saints have written letters to comfort me. They have encouraged me not to care for all the troubles. But these troubles have never

bothered me. I am always happy. My wife can testify that every night I sleep well. I also eat well. The secret to my happiness is that I have received, and am still receiving, the marvelous, unlimited, unsearchable, and untraceably rich Christ. I have received what God has dispensed to mankind. Every day I receive more of Him. I have a living, rich, happy, and joyful One within me. That is why I am a happy, living, active, and aggressive person. When He laughs, I laugh also. I am one with Him.

Not only do we have John 3:16; we also have another wonderful verse, John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us...full of grace and reality.” The incarnation of God is just the coming of God to us. For God to be incarnated means that God came to us. When Jesus came as God, He did not come empty-handed. He came as God full of grace and reality. Verse 16 speaks of His fullness: “Of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.” Grace and reality are just God’s fullness. We all have received of God’s fullness, which is composed of God’s grace and reality. Of this fullness we all have received, and grace upon grace. There is no ending to this grace. It is grace upon grace for eternity. I have been a Christian for over sixty-five years, yet this grace is still coming upon me. Every day there is grace upon grace.

When your wife gives you a long face, you should simply receive grace upon grace. She may give you a long face, but you can give her a round face. This is grace upon grace.

Incarnation is a kind of dispensing. Through incarnation God dispenses Himself to us as grace and reality. On our part, all we need to do every day is to receive the Lord Jesus. When we pray, we are receiving, and when we praise the Lord, we are receiving. Every time before I speak, I must pray. If I do not pray, my receiving will not be full, and I will not have that much to dispense to the saints.

**THE DIVINE DISPENSING
OF THE DIVINE TRINITY
IN PRODUCING THE MATERIALS
FOR THE DIVINE BUILDING**

God’s dispensing is to dispense the Divine Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into us. He is not dispensing to us blessings, such as a good house,

a good car, or a good daughter-in-law. Paul considered all such things as refuse (Phil. 3:8). They are not God's dispensing. God's dispensing is simply to dispense Himself in His three persons into us.

Our God is rich in His three persons. He is rich in the person of the Father, He is rich in the person of the Son, and He is rich in the person of the Spirit. The Divine Trinity is God's unsearchable riches. It is true that God is rich in light, power, life, love, holiness, righteousness, and thousands of other items. But in totality, God is rich in His Divine Trinity.

The divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity is for the producing of the materials for the divine building. The divine building is just the church of God as the Body of Christ. God has only one work today, that is, to build up the church as the Body of Christ. For any building, there is the need of material. In the divine building, we are the material. In order for us to be the proper material for God's building, we must be processed; we must pass through a number of steps.

God the Father So Loving the World (Fallen Mankind) That He Gave the Son to Mankind

First, God the Father so loved the world that He gave the Son to mankind (John 3:16). This is the Father's dispensing. When the Father gave His Son to us, He gave Himself to us in the Son. If I give you a purse that contains twelve checks, it seems that you receive only a purse. Actually, you receive the twelve checks with the purse. Jesus Christ is the "purse." He is the embodiment of the riches of God. By Himself, Jesus seems to be merely a small purse. But in this "purse" there are many "checks." This is the Father's giving, and this giving is His dispensing.

God the Son Redeeming Fallen Men That Everyone Who Believes into Him May Have Eternal Life

God the Son redeemed fallen men so that everyone who believes into the Son may have eternal life (vv. 14-15). The Son is the eternal life (11:25; 14:6). He is given by God the Father for His dispensing. Now the Son has accomplished redemption so that we may receive Him. When we receive Him, He becomes eternal life to us. The Father's giving is the Son, and the Son's giving is the eternal life.

God the Spirit Regenerating the Believing Sinners

God the Spirit is the One whom the Son has given to us. When God is given to us, He becomes the Spirit in us. This Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. As the totality of the Triune God, this Spirit is dwelling in us as the life-giving Spirit.

When this Spirit enters into us, He regenerates us (3:5-6). Through regeneration the Spirit comes into us to make us another person. This same Spirit, after regenerating us, becomes life in us. Now we are persons who are mingled with God. Wherever we go, we are persons who are one with God. If we realize this, we will never say that we are weak.

The above three passages speak of the three steps taken by the three persons of the Trinity. They speak of the Father's dispensing, the Son's dispensing, and the Spirit's dispensing. Eventually, when the Spirit comes, He becomes the very life in our regenerated being. This regenerated being is the mingling of the Triune God with us.

Making Men of Dust Stones for the Divine Building

The result of this dispensing is to make men of dust stones for the divine building (1:42).

THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY IN GOD'S ENTERING INTO THE MATERIALS FOR HIS DIVINE BUILDING

God the Father Being Expressed in the Son

God the Father is expressed in the Son. This is fully revealed in John 14:7-11. There the Son said that if we have seen Him we have seen the Father (v. 9). The Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son (vv. 10-11). The two are one (10:30). This is for the expression of the Father in the Son.

God the Son Being Realized as the Spirit

In John 14:16-17a the Lord Jesus told us that the Spirit as the third person of the Godhead is the reality of the second. The first person, God the Father, is

expressed in the second, God the Son. Now the third person, the Spirit, is realized as the reality of the Son. Hence, the third person is the reality of the second. The Father is expressed in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. When the Spirit comes, the Son is here, and when the Son is here, the Father is here also. As long as we have the Spirit, we have all three.

**God the Spirit Entering into the Believers
That They May Be Mingled with the Triune God
for Their Transformation**

We need to realize that every day and all the time the three divine persons as the Divine Trinity are right within us. This is why we Christians are very different from all the people of the world: we have the Triune God within us. Outwardly speaking, we are the same as they are, but inwardly, we have the Triune God, and they do not.

This Triune God is working within us to transform us. Transformation is not merely a change in form. It is to impart some element into our being. This divine element changes us metabolically. It is not like putting cosmetics on our face, which adds no element into us. Rather, it is a work in which some element is added into us. Every day and every hour God is adding Himself as an element into us. This element is transforming us metabolically; something old is being discharged, and something new is being imparted. This is not just an outward change but a transformation from within.

The dispensing of the Triune God has only one goal, which is to transform us, to change us metabolically with His divine element. In this way we have not only the human element but the divine element as well. We are now a God-man, a person with both humanity and divinity, both the human nature and the divine nature. We are divinely human. A turtle can never become one with a human being; neither can the angels become one with man. But God has become one with us. Hallelujah, we are not “turtlely human” or “angelically human”; we are divinely human! We need to be bold to tell every creature that we are divinely human.

**THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY
IN TRANSFORMING THE BELIEVERS INTO**

PRECIOUS MATERIALS FOR THE DIVINE BUILDING

Through the Growth in Life of the Believers as the Materials for the Divine Building

Through the growth in life the believers become the materials for the divine building (1 Cor. 3:6-7). First Corinthians 3 tells us that we are God's plants. God has planted us on His cultivated land, His farm (v. 9). Every plant needs growth. Within us God is giving us the growth in life every day.

In God the Father's Life and Nature as Gold, in God the Son's Redemption as Silver, and in God the Spirit's Transformation as Precious Stones

In God the Father we have His life and nature as the gold, in God the Son we have His redemption as the silver, and in God the Spirit we have transformation as the precious stones (v. 12). Day by day three things are growing within us. God's nature is growing. Christ's redemption also is growing. When we believed in Christ, we did not know anything about His redemption. But after we are saved, the knowledge and realization of Christ's redemption increase within us day by day. This means that the silver is increasing within us. Moreover, the Spirit's transformation also is growing within us. All the three things are going on and advancing within us every day until we are fully redeemed, transformed, and even transfigured to have a glorious body.

The growth that Christians need is the growth in the nature of God the Father, the redemption of God the Son, and the transformation of God the Spirit. This growth makes us precious like gold, silver, and precious stones, which are the proper materials for us to be built up together as the church of God. The church of God is not a group of so-called Christians gathering together in a fleshly, worldly, or soulish way. That is not the proper church. The proper church must be one that is not only composed together but also constituted together. All the believers must be built up together as gold, silver, and precious stones, which are produced through the divine nature of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the transformation of the Spirit. These three things should go on in us all day long.

**Having Christ, the Embodiment
of the Processed Triune God,
as the Foundation to Hold and Support
the Divine Building, with All His Riches
Dispensed into Its Every Part**

The hall where we are meeting has a strong foundation. That foundation holds and supports the entire building. In the same way, Christ as a living foundation holds and supports the entire church. While He is holding and supporting, He is dispensing and imparting His divine element of life into all the members. The physical foundation of a building cannot impart anything, but Christ as the living foundation is imparting while He is holding and supporting all of us.

An electric blanket dispenses when the electrical power is turned on. When the electric current passes through the blanket, heat and warmth are dispensed. Christ is the “electric” foundation. This “electric” foundation holds and supports the whole building. While He is holding and supporting, He is also dispensing. He does not dispense heat and warmth; rather, He dispenses the element of life. This foundation also grows. When it grows, it imparts His growth into us.

We should say to the Lord every day, “Lord Jesus, I thank You that You are my foundation. You are the living foundation.” Whenever we say, “Lord Jesus” with a purpose, we have the feeling that He is imparting something to us and that a dispensing is going on. As we call, He imparts to us the “heat” and the “warmth.” As one hymn says, we should say His sacred name a thousand times a day (*Hymns*, #208). This will make us overcomers. We will experience the Lord as the real foundation that holds and supports us with His impartation. This kind of dispensing of Himself as the element of life into our being will transform us into precious materials.

**THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY
IN CONSTITUTING THE CHURCH
AS THE ORGANIC BODY OF CHRIST**

The church is not something organized or composed together. The church is something that is constituted. The church is the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Our body is not a number of bones composed together. It is not organized together as a carpenter would put pieces of wood together to make a table. Our body is not a composition; neither is it an organization. Our body is a constitution. In this body there is life, and there is the circulation of blood. This circulation of blood flows within our entire body. Wherever it flows, it constitutes. All the members of our body are constituted together through the circulation of the blood. This is not a matter of organization or composition but a matter of organic constitution. This is what the church should be.

**God the Father's Choosing and Predestinating
the Believers to Participate in His Holy Nature
and Sonship through His Dispensing**

God has chosen us to participate in His holy nature (Eph. 1:4). This means that if we are going to have God's divine nature imparted into us, we must have a union with God. When we are united to God, His nature will be ours organically. Furthermore, we the believers have been predestinated to have the sonship of God (v. 5). Holiness refers to God's nature, and sonship refers to God's life. Both God's nature and God's life indicate that we the believers should be organically one with God. As God's children, we have His life, and we have His nature because we have His life. The nature goes along with the life. When we have the human life, we also have the human nature. In the same way, when we have the divine life, we also have the divine nature. Because we have the divine nature, we can be holy, as He is holy. This is according to the Father's selection and predestination, and it is accomplished through God's dispensing. Through His dispensing, God comes into us to be our life and our nature.

**God the Son's Redeeming,
Making Us the Inheritance of God
through His Dispensing of the Divine Life and Element
into Our Tripartite Being, That He May Head Up
All Things in Himself at the Fullness of the Times,**

the Completion of God's Eternal Economy (Dispensation)

Through the Son's redemption we become God's inheritance (vv. 7, 11). The word *inheritance* indicates that something of God Himself has been wrought into our being. Otherwise, we, the natural man, can never be God's inheritance. We were just a heap of dust, and as such, we had no value. But since Christ's redemption has imparted something of God into our being, we have something of God Himself within us. The redemption of Christ has worked something of God into our tripartite being through the dispensing of the divine life and element into us. Some divine "gold" has been imparted into our spirit. Something precious has been spreading into our soul. Eventually, the glory of the divine person will permeate our entire body. Then our whole being will become precious. This will make us an inheritance, something precious for God to inherit. God is expecting to inherit such a precious inheritance. God the Son's redeeming to make us the inheritance of God is so that He may head up all things in Himself at the fullness of the times for the completion of God's eternal economy (v. 10).

**God the Spirit's Sealing and Pledging of the Triune God
as Our Inheritance for Our Enjoyment
through His All-inclusive Dispensing
of the Processed Triune God into Us
until We Are Redeemed in Our Body,
Which Will Be Transfigured into a Glorious Body,
Saturated with the Glory of the Triune God
through His Ultimate Dispensing**

Although God is precious, we may not have the assurance that He will be our inheritance. The sealing of the Spirit (v. 13b) assures us that this precious God will surely become our inheritance. Furthermore, He has given us a pledge to guarantee that this will happen. This pledge is the Spirit (v. 14a). The Spirit is kept within us as the guarantee.

This sealing and pledging is for our enjoyment through the divine, all-inclusive dispensing of the processed Triune God. This dispensing is unto the redemption of our body (v. 14b), which will be transfigured into a glorious

body (Phil. 3:21), saturated with the glory of the Triune God through His ultimate dispensing.

**The Divine Transmission in the Surpassing Greatness
of the Divine Power toward the Believers,
Which the Father Caused to Operate in Christ the Son
in Raising Him from the Dead,
Seating Him at the Father's Right Hand in the Heavens,
Subjecting All Things under His Feet,
and Giving Him to Be Head over All Things
to the Church through His Excelling Dispensing,
Making the Church the Organic Body of Christ,
the Fullness of the One Who Fills All in All,
for His Corporate Expression in the Universe**

We have not only the transformation and the dispensing but a transmission as well. Electricity is transmitted from a power plant to a particular building. Once the transmission of electricity stops, the lights in the building will go out, and all the electrical appliances will cease to function. God in the heavens is our power plant. We are the object of His transmission. Between Him and us there is a "transmission line," and a transmission is going on.

According to Ephesians 1:19-23, this transmission is in the surpassing greatness of the divine power toward the believers, which the Father caused to operate in the Son in raising Him from the dead, seating Him at the Father's right hand in the heavens, subjecting all things under His feet, and giving Him to be the Head over all things to the church. God has wrought something in Christ, and all this work is to the church. The word *to* (v. 22) indicates a transmission. This transmission is transmitting all the great power that God wrought in Christ into us, the church, with the result that through His excelling dispensing, the church becomes the organic Body of Christ. The church becomes organic through the transmission that is taking place between God and us. This organic Body of Christ is the very fullness of Christ, the One who fills all in all, for His corporate expression in the universe.

The existence of the church comes out of the dispensing of the Divine Trinity. Eventually, the church is the issue of this divine transmission. For this we need to experience the divine dispensing plus the divine transmission continually.

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE DIVINE DISPENSING
OF THE DIVINE TRINITY IN RELATION
TO THE ORGANIC BUILDING
OF THE CHURCH OF GOD
AS THE ORGANIC BODY OF CHRIST (2)

Scripture Reading: Eph. 2:1-22; 3:1-12, 14-19

In this chapter we will see the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity in the producing, the building up, and the existence of the church. We will also see the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity in Christ's making His home in the believers' hearts that they would be filled unto all the fullness of God.

THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY
IN PRODUCING THE CHURCH
AS GOD'S MASTERPIECE (POEM)
AND IN BUILDING UP THE CHURCH,
WHICH IS THE NEW MAN AND THE BODY,
AS GOD'S DWELLING PLACE IN OUR SPIRIT

First, I would like to call your attention to a few terms that are used in Ephesians to describe the church. The church is the Body of Christ (1:22-23). It is also the new man (2:15) and the dwelling place, or habitation, of God (v. 22). The church has at least these three functions: to be the Body of Christ, to be the new man, and to be the dwelling place of God.

The church is not merely a gathering of the called ones. It is not just a congregation. The church is something organic. It is the organic Body of Christ. Every person needs a body. Christ is a great person; thus, He needs a great Body. Christ is so great that He fills all in all. He fills the whole universe, including all the galaxies. He is great to such an extent that He becomes the dimensions of the universe. The breadth, the length, the height, and the depth

of the universe are just Christ (3:18). Such an unlimited and immeasurable Christ needs a Body, and this Body is the church. Today this Body is everywhere. There are parts of this Body in England, in Brazil, in Iceland, in China, in Mongolia, in India, in Tibet, and in all other parts of the earth. We all are the organic members of this vast Body of Christ.

On the one hand, the church is the Body. This is its function in relation to Christ. On the other hand, the church is the new man. This is its function in relation to God. In this whole universe God is moving. He is working for the accomplishing of His great economy. The word *economy* means “a household administration or plan.” God has a great household plan, and God’s household, which is the Body of Christ, is unlimitedly great. In God’s household plan, the entire universe is a large room in which God’s household lives. In order to carry out His eternal plan, which is the economy of the ages, God needs a man. He does not need more than one man; He needs only one man. This one man is the new man.

In the eyes of God, we the believers are considered to be one new man. As the Body of Christ, our function is to express Christ, and as the new man, our function is to move, work, act, and do things to accomplish God’s great plan. This new man is a corporate and vast man, comprising all of God’s chosen people. We should not consider ourselves as individuals. We must consider ourselves as part of this new man, which is the church.

In addition to being the Body and the new man, the church is the habitation of Christ and of God. A habitation is a dwelling place. It is like a person’s house. God has only one house—the church. In this house God dwells together with us.

The church is a Body to Christ, a new man to God, and a dwelling place to the Spirit, who is the consummation and the aggregate of the Triune God. This means that the church is the dwelling place of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—who is now consummated as the Spirit.

The way to produce this church, which is the Body of Christ, the new man to accomplish God’s eternal economy, and the dwelling place of the Triune God, is by the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity. For the church to become the organic Body to Christ, a living man to God, and a marvelous, living, and organic dwelling place to the Triune God, there is no way other

than the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity into all the believers. This divine dispensing dispenses nothing else but God Himself as the Divine Trinity.

The way God dispenses Himself into us is by the Divine Trinity as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Father dispenses Himself through the many works that He has done. The Son dispensed Himself first through incarnation. Through incarnation He came down from heaven to reach man by being born of a virgin. However, in His incarnation He could only be near His believers, such as Peter and John; He could not enter into them. Therefore, He took a further step by passing through the process of crucifixion. Through His all-inclusive death He was released from the shell of His humanity, and whatever was in that shell flowed out. Blood came out for redemption, and water also came out for life imparting (John 19:34). In the Old Testament type, the living water flowed out of the smitten rock to quench the thirst of the people of Israel (Exo. 17:6). In the same way, through His death Christ released Himself for the dispensing of His life into His people. In the third step of His process, Christ was resurrected. In His mysterious resurrection He, as the last Adam, a genuine man, became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). As a man, Christ accomplished redemption for us; now, as the life-giving Spirit, He is giving, or dispensing, Himself as the divine life to all His believers. When we hear the gospel and call on Him, His life is dispensed into us.

In preaching the gospel we must not speak according to the old way. The old way is to sit down and talk with people about God for a long time with no authority, power, or presence of Christ. Every time we go out to preach the gospel, we should pray to be filled with Christ. We must go by being one with Christ and with the realization that Christ has sent us and is one with us. In this way our going will be with the power and the authority of Christ. Instead of talking in a vain way, we will be able to give others the command to believe and be baptized. Actually, most of us did not know very much when we were baptized. What we need to do is to baptize people with the authority of Christ. After they are baptized, we can go back to feed them at a later time. When they are fed, they will grow and will begin to understand the spiritual and divine things concerning God and Christ. Through this way of preaching, the Divine Trinity is dispensed to others, and the church is produced.

A preacher of the gospel is actually a branch of the vine (John 15:5). His work is to bear fruit through the dispensing of life. Fruit-bearing is a dispensing; it is not a matter of preaching or teaching. When the life of Christ grows within a person, this life will issue in a blossoming, and the blossoming will issue in fruit-bearing. If we want to bear fruit, we must learn to be continually filled with the divine life. When we are filled, the life within us will grow and will flow out and issue in the producing of fruit. This is the way to produce the believers and the way to build them up into the Body of Christ. It is altogether a matter of the divine dispensing of life.

In Producing the Church

Through the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity, the church is produced as God's masterpiece. In Greek the word for *masterpiece* is *poema*, which means "a poem." It is used in reference to a piece of work that expresses one's wisdom and skill to the uttermost. In this sense, even a woodcarving can be considered a poem. In God's eyes the church is His marvelous masterpiece. Before we were saved, we all were "naughty" ones. No one could change us. But one day someone came to us and charged us to believe in the Lord Jesus. At that time we did not understand very well who the Lord Jesus is, but we believed in the Lord, called on His name, and were baptized. Through such an experience we all were changed. This is a mystery; no one can explain it. All we can say is that we became God's masterpiece, a new man in the new creation.

The church is a new man in the new creation. Nothing other than the divine dispensing of the divine life can make us new. The dispensing of the divine life in the preaching of the gospel is like the giving of an injection to a patient. A nurse does not need to explain very much to a patient; she only needs to inject the medicine into the patient's arm. In the same way, the divine life is not dispensed to others through their understanding of Bible teachings but through the injection of the divine life in our speaking. By such a dispensing, something is infused into others.

***By Enlivening Us, the Sinners Who Were Dead in Sins,
and Raising Us Up
through Christ's Life-imparting Resurrection,
Dispensing His Life and Element into Our Being***

The church is produced by the enlivening of sinners through this divine dispensing (Eph. 2:1-6a). Whenever a person is baptized, he is put into Christ, and at that moment Christ comes into such a one to enliven him. Although he may not understand very much, he is enlivened by this living Christ. Through the preaching of the gospel, Christ is infused into his being, and he is made alive together with Christ. This is altogether a mystery.

***By Seating Us in the Heavenlies
through Christ's Ascension,
in Our Organic Union with Him
in the Dispensing of His Divine Life***

In Ephesians 2 we are told that the believers are first enlivened and then seated with Christ in the heavenlies (v. 6b). After a person is enlivened by Christ in His resurrection, he may have the realization that he is in the heavens with Christ. In Christ's resurrection we are lifted up to the heavenlies. This is the real experience of Christ's resurrection with His ascension. All of these are the results of the dispensing of His enlivening life.

***Making Us the Living Members of Christ,
the Organic Constituents of the Church,
as the Masterpiece, a Poem, of God,
through the Dispensing of the Divine Grace,
Which is the Triune God as a Gift Given to Us***

It is through the dispensing of the divine grace, which is the Triune God as a gift given to us, that we become the living members of the Body of Christ and are made the organic constituents of the church as the divine and heavenly poem (vv. 7-10). Such a change in the believers does not come about through the old way of preaching but through the divine dispensing of the living Christ into them.

***In Building Up the Church,
Which is the New Man and the Body,
as God's Dwelling Place in Our Spirit***

***By Creating, through Christ's Redemption on the Cross,
the Jewish and Gentile Believers into One New Man
in Himself as the Creating Life and Element
Dispensed into His Redeemed
out from His Divine Riches***

***By Reconciling Both the Jewish and Gentile Believers
to God through the Cross in One Body,
Which Is Constituted with the Divine Life and Element
Released through the Death of Christ
and Dispensed into the Believers
in the Resurrection of Christ,
through Whom (the Son) We Both
(the Jewish and Gentile Believers)
Have Access in One Spirit unto the Father
in the Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity All the Way***

***By Being Built upon the Foundation
of the Apostles and Prophets,
with Christ as the Cornerstone
Dispensing His Divine Life and Element
for the Joining and Holding
of the Different Parts of the Divine Building,
in Whom All the Believers Are Being Built Together
in the Divine Dispensing of the Divine Trinity
into a Dwelling Place of God in Their Spirit***

After the church is produced, it needs to be built up (vv. 11-22). The church as a man needs only to be born. But this man has a body, and the body needs to be built up. A mother needs only to give birth to a baby. The baby as a person does not need any building up. But this baby has a body, and the body needs building up because when the baby is born, his body is too small.

According to the Bible, the growth of the Body is its building up (4:16). The way to build up a baby's body is by feeding it through drinking. After we baptize a person, we need to go back to that person to build him up by feeding him with spiritual milk (1 Thes. 2:7; 1 Cor. 3:2a; 1 Pet. 2:2).

All mothers know that the feeding of a child cannot be done too quickly. If we feed a baby too much at one time, we will harm him. We should feed him gradually, little by little. A child needs to be fed under his mother's care for many years before he can grow up fully. The mother's feeding is her dispensing. Every day she dispenses milk, beef, apples, eggs, chicken, and many other kinds of food into her child. In this way the child's body is built up.

From the day we were saved, the Lord has been feeding us. Every time we come to a meeting, we are fed. When we have our morning watch, we contact Him by reading and pray-reading His Word. This also is a feeding. This feeding is the Lord's dispensing. The Christian life is a life of dispensing day by day. Whether or not we realize it, this dispensing is going on all the time in a mysterious way. We may say that we do not know what is going on, but all the time much dispensing and spiritual feeding is taking place within us. Every day and every hour, our Christian life is a life under God's divine dispensing. We may have no sensation regarding this, but we should not trust in our feelings; we should trust in our dispensing God.

God has begotten us and has become our very life. Any kind of life is a matter of dispensing. With the vegetable life, the animal life, and even the human life, dispensing produces growth. A little tree grows by the dispensing of its life. As long as it has life within, there will be a dispensing, and this dispensing is the growth.

The church is both the new man and the Body of Christ. As a man, it does not need to be built up. The Bible does not say that the new man needs to be built up, but it tells us repeatedly that the Body of Christ needs to be built up (Eph. 4:12, 16). All the saints need to be perfected and to learn to build up the Body of Christ. The way to be built up is by the dispensing of life through feeding.

THE DIVINE DISPENSING

**IN THE APOSTLE'S STEWARDSHIP OF GRACE
FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE CHURCH**

**The Apostle's Stewardship of Grace
Being to Minister the Grace of God to the Believers,
Who Are the Constituents of the Church,
That Is, the Mystery of Christ,
Which Was Not Made Known to Men in Other Generations
Such a Ministry Being to Dispense
the Unsearchable Riches of Christ as the Divine Grace
for the Existence of the Church
This Being the Divine Economy
of God's Mystery to Show through the Church
the Multifarious Wisdom of God to His Enemies,
according to the Purpose of the Ages,
Which God Made in Christ**

First, the church must be produced, and second, the church must be built up. Third, the church must exist. For the church to exist and to stand properly in a living way, there is the need for the apostle's stewardship (3:1-12). The apostle's ministry first ministers Christ into sinners to produce the believers. Then it builds up the church by feeding the believers. At the same time, through the ministering of the rich word, it distributes the untraceable and immeasurable riches of Christ to the church. This distribution is the dispensing that enables the church to have a proper existence.

For the church to exist properly and to stand for the Lord's testimony adequately, there is the need of the rich ministry to convey the riches of Christ to the saints as their timely supply. The more the saints receive the riches of Christ embodied in the word, the more they will enjoy the riches of this Christ, and the more they will be able to stand properly for the Lord's testimony in an adequate way.

Many times there is the need for the churches to come together for conferences. These conferences are times for the riches of the ministry to be dispensed to the saints. Even when there is no one who can come to be the speaker, the saints can still dispense the riches of the ministry by mutually speaking one to another. Recently, in Columbia, South Carolina, and in London, England, the churches came together to have conferences in mutuality. They took the outlines and the verses of the messages given at the end of the 1990 summer training (see *A Brief Presentation of the Lord's Recovery*) and spoke to one another in a living way. The result was very enjoyable; many of the attendants shared, and everyone was fed. Since we all have the rich “groceries” prepared in the written publications, it would be easy for us to come together and serve each other with these riches. This kind of speaking will stir us up and will dispense something new, fresh, and refreshing into all the saints.

**THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY
IN CHRIST'S MAKING HIS HOME
IN THE BELIEVERS' HEARTS THAT THEY MAY BE FILLED
UNTO ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD**

**The Dispensing of the Father as the Source
of Every Family in the Heavens and on Earth,
to Grant the Believers to Be Strengthened
according to the Riches of His Glory**

**The Spirit as the Means
Strengthening the Believers with Power
into Their Inner Man in the Dispensing
of the Divine Trinity**

**Christ Making His Home in the Believers' Hearts
to Carry Out the Dispensing of the Divine Trinity,
That the Believers May Be Strong to Apprehend
with All the Saints the Dimensions of Christ**

**and to Know the Knowledge-surpassing Love of Christ,
That They May Be Filled unto All the Fullness of God
to Be the Corporate Expression of God in the Universe**

In the church there is also the need for Christ to make His home in the believers' hearts (vv. 14-19). Christ is now in us, but He is not yet settled in us. There may be some "rooms" within us for Christ, but He may still not be able to make His home in us. In my traveling I am often received into peoples' homes, but I can never settle down in these homes. My desire is always to go back to my own home. While I am staying in others' homes, I do not have the liberty to touch many things. But when I am in my own home, I am free to touch everything.

Christ earnestly desires to make His home in us. Paul prayed purposely for this. He bowed his knees to the Father, who is the source of all the families in this universe, and offered a very proper and complete prayer. He prayed that the Father would strengthen us with power through the Spirit according to the riches of His glory, that Christ may make His home in our hearts. Christ is in our spirit already, but He must spread from our spirit into our heart.

Our spirit is in the center of our being. This is where Christ is today (2 Tim. 4:22). This spirit is surrounded by our heart, which is composed of our mind, emotion, and will, plus our conscience. Many times Christ tries to spread from our spirit to our mind, but we will not allow Him to do it. Eventually, He is confined to our spirit; our spirit becomes His guest house. He is not yet able to make His home in our heart.

Sometimes the Lord may try to stretch out and take a part of our emotion, but we will not give Him permission. As a result, He cannot get through in us. In the meeting or during morning watch, we may be excited. But immediately after the meeting or morning watch, Christ is forced to shrink back. We allow Him to stay in our mind only for a while. Eventually, He is forced back to His guest house, which is our spirit.

Because we are weak, Paul prayed that we would be strengthened. We need to be strengthened into our spirit. This means that all our inward parts, including our mind, emotion, will, and conscience, must be gathered together into our spirit and come under the control of our spirit. In this way Christ will

have the freedom to spread into all the parts of our heart. He will fill and take over every part and will settle down in our inner man, making our inner man His home. The result of this is that we will be filled unto all the fullness of the Triune God. We will then have the capacity to apprehend with all the saints the dimensions of Christ, which are His breadth, His length, His height, and His depth. We will also be able to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ. This means that we will be saturated with Christ. The riches of Christ will be dispensed into every part of our entire being. The result of this total dispensing of Christ is His settling down in our entire being, making our entire being His home. This kind of divine dispensing will make the church the actual, real, and full habitation of the Triune God.

CHAPTER NINE

THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY IN BUILDING UP THE CHURCH OF GOD AS THE ORGANIC BODY OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:4-16; Col. 1:27; Eph. 1:18; 1 Cor. 1:30;

In the previous two chapters we covered the first half of the book of Ephesians, from chapter 1 through chapter 3. In this chapter we will cover the first half of chapter 4. This is one of the deepest and most mysterious portions of the New Testament.

THE MINGLING OF THE TRIUNE GOD WITH THE BODY OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4:4 begins, “One Body and one Spirit.” We all know that this one Body refers to the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is something mysterious. No one can clearly understand it. Even with our physical body, there are many things that medical doctors cannot explain. Our physical body has its outward appearance, and it also has its inward and intrinsic parts. But within this wonderful body there is something even more mysterious; it is an abstract, invisible, and untouchable matter called life. No one can define life. Life is within the body, yet if we try to cut up the body to find this life, life is gone.

Although we cannot see life, every life has its expression. The plants and flowers in the Amazon River region of South America have many beautiful colors, shapes, and designs. Yet all of them come from small seeds. When the life in the seeds grows and blossoms, there are the marvelous expressions of life.

In the Body of Christ there is the divine life. This life is a life that is one with the Spirit. Hence, in Romans 8:2 Paul calls the Spirit “the Spirit of life.” Life, the Spirit, and God are one. On the one hand, life is the Spirit, and the Spirit is God. On the other hand, God is Spirit, and God is also life. This mysterious life as the Spirit is the intrinsic content of the Body of Christ.

When this life is expressed, we have the oneness of the Body. Oneness is something that is altogether impossible in human society. The United Nations was formed to help the human race to be united, but it has not accomplished its purpose. In the Body of Christ we may be of different colors and races, but we all are one. We are not merely united as in a union; we are one as the Body of Christ. In a credit union the members are united together by money. But in the Body of Christ we are made one through the one Spirit.

As human beings, we all tend to love some people and dislike others. The Chinese may not like the Japanese, and the Texans may not like the New Yorkers. Even among the Chinese, the southerners may not like the northerners. But in the Body of Christ we all have become one. We love all the saints. The Spirit is the unique factor that unites us. Christ as the Spirit is the very oneness among us. We can have such a oneness because we have the Spirit. This is why Ephesians 4:3 calls this oneness “the oneness of the Spirit.”

The Spirit's Mingling with the Body of Christ in the Dispensing of the Divine Trinity

In this oneness there is the mingling of the Spirit with the Body of Christ. In this mingling there is a divine dispensing. Whether we realize it or not, this dispensing is going on all the time. It is like the digestion and assimilation of food in our human body. Every day digestion goes on without us realizing it. It is only when our stomach is sick that we have any feeling. When our digestive system is working properly, we do not feel anything.

The Spirit is dispensing, moving, anointing, and operating within us all the time in a smooth way. When He is dispensing, we may not feel anything. But if we do not go along with Him, He will be grieved. This is why Ephesians 4:30 says that we should not grieve the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit is grieved, it means that He is frustrated from working within us. The Pentecostal Christians consider the experience of the Spirit as something extraordinary, but actually, the dispensing of the Spirit works in a very normal way.

The Spirit Being the Essence of the Body of Christ

This Spirit is the intrinsic essence of the Body of Christ. As such an essence, He is sealing us day by day (1:13; 4:30). We are not only sealed by the Spirit but are, even more, sealed with the Spirit. The Spirit is the sealing ink. He is

not only the One who seals but also the ink with which we are sealed. This sealing ink never dries. It remains wet within us all the time. As it is sealing, it is also saturating and permeating. We are like a piece of paper. Day by day the Spirit as the essence is saturating us. His saturating is His dispensing. This dispensing continues quietly within us until we are fully permeated by the Spirit.

***The Spirit Bringing In the Hope of Glory,
Which is Christ in the Believers
as the Hope of God's Calling***

This kind of dispensing of the Spirit brings in a hope (Col. 1:27; Eph. 1:18). This hope is the redemption of our body, in which our entire body will be soaked and permeated with the glory of God. Today Christ is hidden within us as our life. But in that day the hidden Christ will become manifested as our glory (Col. 3:4). He will permeate from our spirit, through our soul, and to our body. That will be the aggregate and the totality of God's divine dispensing in us.

***The Son's (the Lord's) Mingling with His Body
in the Dispensing of the Divine Trinity***

Ephesians 4:5 says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." This verse shows us the Son's mingling with His Body in the dispensing of the Divine Trinity.

Christ Being the Element of His Body

The Spirit is the essence of the Body, and Christ is the element of the Body. There is a difference between essence and element. For example, wood is a kind of substance. This substance is actually an element. A wooden stand has wood as its substance. Wood is the element of the stand. But within this element there is an essence. This essence is the "spirit" of the wood. Christ is the element, the substance, and the sphere of the Body of Christ. Within this Christ there is the Spirit, who is the essence of the Body.

We can illustrate this matter with a watermelon. The entire melon is the substance of a watermelon. When we cut up the melon into slices, we can see the element of the melon. When these slices are pressed, we have melon juice,

which is the essence of the melon. Christ is the element of the Body of Christ, and the Spirit is the essence. To have only Christ without the Spirit is like having only the melon without the juice. We need the melon with the juice. When we have the juice, we have the essence of the melon. Christ is the element of His Body, and the Spirit is the essence of His Body.

***Through the One Faith of the Believers,
Which Unites Them with the Son Organically***

When we hear the gospel and exercise faith to believe in the Lord, the Spirit enters into us. At that time an organic union takes place between us and Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). The result is that we become an organism. This is why when Christians come together, regardless of their nationality, race, and color, something within them responds to each other. Through faith in Christ, we the believers are organically united with the Son and with one another to become a living organism.

***Through the One Baptism of the Lord,
Which Separates the Believers
from Adam and the Adamic World***

Formerly, we were linked to our old ancestor Adam. But through baptism our connection with Adam was cut. Baptism also cut us away from the world. After we rise from the water of baptism, our taste for the world is gone. Formerly, we might have been a person who loved dancing, going to nightclubs, dressing up, and wearing makeup. But through the one baptism we no longer have a taste for these things. Now we love only Christ. We love to call on His name. Whenever we go to the meetings, our spirit rejoices and leaps. Baptism is something we cannot explain, but it is a fact in our experience.

When we baptize people, we do not need to preach or to explain very much to them. Instead, we need to exercise our spirit and our faith to give others the command to believe in Christ and to be baptized. We should tell them that it is Christ who has sent us. While we are speaking in this way, the living Christ who is within us will honor our words. If we say that Confucius or Abraham Lincoln has sent us, no one will respond. This is because these men are dead and buried in tombs. But the Christ who has sent us is a living person who has

come out of the tomb and is now in resurrection and even in ascension with all authority. When we mention His name, He is with us and honors our words.

**God the Father's Mingling with the Body of Christ
in the Dispensing of the Divine Trinity**

In Ephesians 4 we have first the Spirit's dispensing in verse 4, then we have the Son's dispensing in verse 5, and finally we have the Father's dispensing in verse 6. This threefold dispensing is like a three-way lamp, which has a threefold intensification.

***The Father Being over All the Believers
to Overshadow Them as the Father,
the Source of the Divine Dispensing***

***The Father Being through All the Believers
to Take Care of Them as the Son,
the Course of the Divine Dispensing***

***The Father Being in All the Believers to Indwell Them
as the Spirit, the Reaching of the Divine Dispensing***

With the Father also we have a threefold dispensing (v. 6). First, He is over all the believers to overshadow them; then He is through all of them to take care of them; and last, He is in all of them to indwell them. As the One who is over all the believers, He is the Father as the source of the divine dispensing; as the One who is through all the believers, He is the Son as the course of the divine dispensing; and as the One who is in all the believers, He is the Spirit as the reaching of the divine dispensing.

Every day this threefold dispensing is going on within us. The dispensing Triune God will never leave us or allow us to take a leave from Him. We may leave Him, but He will never leave us. Our God is a God full of patience. To Him a thousand years are like one day. Even if we forget about Him for a time, eventually He will still cause us to turn back to Him. It is impossible for a real Christian to give the Lord up, because he has the threefold dispensing of the

Triune God, with the Father overshadowing him, the Son taking care of him, and the Spirit indwelling him all the time.

FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE ORGANIC BODY OF CHRIST

Today many Christian workers talk about the building up of the church. Some say that Christ is the One who directly builds up the church. Others say that He builds up the church through ministers and preachers. But this is all human talk. The real way to build up the church is revealed in Ephesians 4:7-16.

**By the Giving, the Dispensing, of the Divine Grace
according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ**

*The Gift of Christ Being a Person
Constituted with Christ's Life and Element,
Dispensed into Him by the Divine Trinity*

*Each Gifted Person Having a Measure,
and the Divine Grace Being Given, Dispensed,
to Him according to That Measure*

The way Christ builds up the church is by the giving, or dispensing, of the divine grace according to the measures of the gifts of Christ, who are the persons constituted with Christ's life and element through the dispensing of the Divine Trinity (v. 7). Each gifted person has a measure, and the divine grace is given, or dispensed, to him according to that measure.

**By the Giving of the Gifted Persons,
Such as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and
Shepherds and Teachers, Who Are Constituted
in the Dispensing of the Divine Trinity,
by Christ as the Head in His Ascension
(Including His Resurrection), to the Body of Christ**

The short portion of the holy Word from verse 8 to verse 11 shows us that the Lord first accomplished incarnation, and then He went into death. Through His death He went down to Hades, to the lower parts of the earth, and rose again from that place (Acts 2:24, 27). Then He ascended to the heavens (1:9). Through this wonderful journey He captured us, the sons of Adam, taking us out of Satan's hand. We were fallen and were the captives of Satan. Christ died on the cross not merely to take away our sins but also to destroy Satan and to capture us, the captives of Satan. Then in His ascension He brought this train of redeemed captives to the Father and gave them as a present to Him. The Father accepted them and returned them as gifts to Christ (Psa. 68:18). Christ in turn passed on these gifts to His Body. These gifts then became the gifted persons in the churches.

Today in the Body there are gifted persons. Some are apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers. Although we may not realize it, the Lord is working unceasingly to produce many gifts for His church. He, as the Head in His ascension, is still giving the church these many gifts, who exercise their ability and capacity to perfect all the saints.

**By the Gifted Persons' Perfecting
of the Saints in the Divine Dispensing,
That All the Saints May Be Able to Do
the Work of the New Testament Ministry,
That Is, to Build Up the Organic Body of Christ**

All the saints who have been perfected become the able members of the Body. Before being perfected they were not able, but they are made able through the perfecting of the gifted persons. All the able members can do the work of the New Testament ministry, which is to build up the Body of Christ. For example, through the summer school for the young people, many have been perfected to do the work of the New Testament ministry. My speaking of these messages is also a perfecting that enables the saints to build up the Body of Christ directly.

***Until All the Members of the Body of Christ
Arrive at the Oneness of the Faith
and of the Full Knowledge of the Son of God,***

***at a Full-grown Man, and
at the Measure of the Stature
of the Fullness of Christ***

***That They 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***

The result of this perfecting is that we will all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, and at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This will cause us to 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. 4:13-14).

***By the Members' Direct Building
of the Organic Body of Christ***

***Holding to Truth in Love,
Growing Up into the Head, Christ, in All Things***

The perfecting by the gifted persons is for the direct building of the organic Body of Christ by the members of the Body. In order to be built up, first we must grow into the Head, Christ, in all things (v. 15). Although some of us may love the Lord very much, we may still hold on to many things that the Lord does not want. As we are being perfected and while we contact the Lord day after day, He will require that we give up some of these things. It may be a certain pair of shoes, a certain haircut, or makeup that He requires us to give up. If we want to have a part in the work of the New Testament ministry, we must grow up into Him in these things. Before we go to the barbershop, put on a dress, make any decision, or do anything, we need to pray to the Lord first. In this way we will grow into Christ in all things.

***Out from the Head, in the Divine Dispensing,
All the Body Joined Closely Together***

***through Every Joint of the Rich Supply,
and Knit Together, Interwoven, through the Operation
in the Measure of Each One Part,
in the Divine Dispensing***

After we have grown up into Christ, something out from Him will be produced. This rich supply out from Him will be dispensed into us and will make us either a joint of the rich supply or a particular functioning part in the Body (v. 16). Our human body needs many joints. We can stretch our arms and legs in a flexible way because of the many joints in our arms, hands, fingers, legs, feet, and toes. In addition, there are the many parts between the joints to function together according to their own measure. Although the arm may have a large measure and the little finger may have a small measure, every member functions according to its own measure. In the same way, in the Body of Christ there are many joints of the rich supply who are joined closely together. There are also many operating parts who are knit and interwoven together.

***Causing the Growth of the Body,
in the Dispensing of the Divine Trinity,
unto the Building Up of the Body Itself
in the Divine Love***

While the joints are supplying and the different parts are functioning, there will be the growth of the Body. This growth of the Body equals the building up of the Body directly by itself. The Body is not built up directly by the Head, nor is it built up directly by the gifted persons. It is built up directly by the perfected and functioning members. The work of the Head and the work of the gifted persons are indirect; the direct work is done by the members. As these members function, the Body grows, and this growth is the building up.

It is by the way of dispensing that the church as the organic Body of Christ is built up. The Father is dispensing, the Son is dispensing, and the Spirit is dispensing. Furthermore, all the gifted ones are dispensing, and all the perfected ones also are dispensing. It is through this dispensing of the divine life that the Body grows and builds itself up.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY IN THE BELIEVERS' LIVING FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE ORGANIC BODY OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:17-32

In the previous three chapters we covered the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity in the producing, the building up, and the existence of the church. We also saw how all the saints, all the constituents of the church, should be in a condition that permits Christ to make His home in their hearts. For this Paul prayed purposely, bowing to the Father and asking Him to strengthen all the saints into their inner man through the Holy Spirit with power according to the riches of God's glory (Eph. 3:14-16). Our inner man is our regenerated spirit. When we return from all the distracting things to our spirit, Christ will have the opportunity to settle Himself in our heart. By this the Lord will saturate us through the divine dispensing from our spirit into our mind, emotion, will, and conscience until our entire being becomes a wonderful home to the Lord.

We have also seen from the previous chapter that the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—is mingled with the church as the Body of Christ. In the Old Testament there is the type of the meal offering, in which fine flour is mingled with oil (Lev. 2:4). Oil signifies God the Spirit, and fine flour signifies humanity. The mingling of these two elements signifies that the Triune God is mingled with His redeemed people. The result of this mingling is the Body of Christ, in which, out of Christ the Head, the entire Body grows through the joints of the rich supply and through each functioning member unto the building up of itself in love (Eph. 4:16).

THE DIVINE DISPENSING OF THE DIVINE TRINITY

Although this revelation is wonderful, the book of Ephesians does not stop here. In 4:17-32 it shows us in a very detailed way the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity in the believers' living. This living is related to matters such as not stealing from others and not letting the sun go down on our anger (vv. 28,

26). Although we are a group of people who have been mingled and blended with God, there is still the need for this kind of exhortation concerning our living. It is not easy to have a kind of living that matches, backs, supports, and affords all the needed elements, factors, and essences for the building up of the organic Body of Christ. Merely to have wonderful and exciting conferences is not enough. There is the need to take care of our living in a proper way.

**The Life of God for Supplying His Children
with His Divine Riches in His Divine Dispensing**

In Ephesians 4:17-32 there are three significant verses that show the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity. From these three verses we see that the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity is the base for our daily living. The first is verse 18, which mentions being alienated from the life of God. To be alienated, or separated, from the divine life is a serious matter. The life of God is for the supplying of His children with His riches in His divine dispensing.

**The Reality in Jesus for Infusing His Believers
with His Godly Living in His Humanity,
in His Divine Dispensing**

The second verse related to the divine dispensing is verse 21, which speaks of the reality in Jesus. The reality in Jesus is just the practicality of the life of God, that is, the practicing of the life of God that took place in Jesus while He lived on earth. In the daily life of Jesus, as recorded in the four Gospels, there was something very real, and that real thing was just God's divine life realized and practiced as the reality in Jesus' humanity. This reality in Jesus is for infusing the believers with Christ's godly living in His humanity.

**The Sealing of the Holy Spirit
for Saturating the Members of Christ
with the Divine Element in the Divine Dispensing
of the Divine Trinity**

The third verse concerning the divine dispensing is verse 30, which admonishes us not to grieve the Holy Spirit, in whom we were sealed. This Spirit is the sealing Spirit; He is even the sealing ink with which we have all

been sealed. The contents, the elements, and the essence of the sealing ink are the divine life plus Jesus' practical humanity. This sealing can never become dry; it remains wet forever. While it is wet, it saturates, permeates, and soaks us with the Triune God.

The life of God, the reality in Jesus, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit are the three sources of the divine dispensing. Seemingly, Paul was writing something quite ordinary, but within those ordinary words he put in the wonderful elements and factors of the Divine Trinity—the Father's life, the Son's living in His humanity, and the Spirit's sealing. Life is of the Father. This life must become the reality in our daily living, which reality is in Jesus. This reality as the practicality of the life of the Father becomes the sealing ink, which is the Holy Spirit. While the sealing ink seals, it saturates, permeates, and soaks us with the divine life in the practicality of Jesus' daily life, making us a "xerox copy" of Jesus' life, which is the practicality of the Father's life.

We have the life of the Father in us. We also have a model and an example, which is Jesus' life in His humanity. This life in His humanity is just the practicality of the divine life seen in the four Gospels. Furthermore, we have the sealing ink, which is constituted with the divine life and with the human living of Jesus. This sealing is wet all the time; it seals, saturates, and permeates us, enabling us to have a daily life that is suitable for the building up of the Body of Christ.

THE BELIEVERS' LIVING FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE ORGANIC BODY OF CHRIST

The Basic Principles

In order to live such a life, there are a number of principles and details that we need to pay attention to.

Not Walking as the Gentiles Walk in the Vanity of Their Mind

The first principle is that we should not walk as the Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind (v. 17). Everyone in the world, both young and old, male and female, lingers in his or her mind. Even while they are sleeping, they remain in their mind. This is why so many people have dreams. If someone

thinks about having a big house or a good car, he will dream about these things at night. This is to walk in the vanity of the mind. Whatever is in the mind is vanity. The wise King Solomon said that everything under the sun is vanity of vanities (Eccl. 1:2). As a saved person, we should never walk in the vanity of our mind.

***Not Being Alienated from the Life of God,
Which Is for the Divine Dispensing***

The second principle is that we should not be alienated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18). We the believers have the life of God within us. But even we are quite often alienated from the life of God. We do not keep ourselves linked, connected, and joined to the divine life. We have this life, but we do not use it or depend on it. Instead, we put it aside. It is a serious thing to be alienated from the life of God.

Electricity may be installed in a building, but if even a thin piece of paper is inserted between the wires, the electricity will be stopped. It is easy to stop the electrical current. If we stop the electrical current, electricity will still be here, but there will be no way to apply it to us. In such a case, we will be alienated from electricity. It is the same with the life of God. Although we have the life of God, we can easily be alienated from it.

***Not Ceasing from Caring for
the Feeling of Their Conscience***

The third principle is that we must not cease from caring for the feeling of our conscience (v. 19). Our conscience must be very keen. It must be in a good condition. Whenever we sense condemnation in our conscience, we need to take care of it immediately (Acts 24:16). It is a dangerous thing to ignore the conscience.

***Learning Christ in the Divine Dispensing
as the Reality (versus Vanity) Is in Jesus***

The fourth principle is that we need to learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus (Eph. 4:20-21). The Bible is not a book of vain teaching. It teaches us something real. In particular, it teaches us a person, Jesus Christ, who is

divine as well as human. He is the complete God and the perfect man. In Him we can see the wonderful, excellent, divine attributes, such as the divine love, light, and patience, lived out through the human virtues. We need to learn of this reality. Jesus is humble, kind, and patient. This is the reality in Jesus. To have the reality that is in Jesus is just to have God the Father as the reality living through our own humanity. Our love is like a glove, and Christ's love is like the hand. Without the hand the glove is empty and has no reality. But when the hand with the fingers enters into and fills the glove, the glove is filled with reality.

In order to learn of this truth in Jesus, we need to adjust our own humanity. We should not remain in our Chinese or American disposition, taking it as an excuse. We should adjust our humanity to that of Jesus. Jesus lived the Father's life. In the same way, we need to live His life. Some brothers may be slow, whereas their wives may be quick. Both need to adjust themselves according to the humanity of Jesus. If we live out our old humanity, there will always be arguments. Among couples today, divorce does not come mainly from big things but from an accumulation of small things. If we live a life according to the reality as it is in Jesus, there will be no divorce.

***Putting Off, as regards the Former Manner of Life,
the Old Man, Which Is Being Corrupted
according to the Lusts of the Deceit
(the Personification of Satan),
and Being Renewed in the Spirit of the Mind,
Putting On, in the Divine Dispensing, the New Man,
Which Was Created according to God
in Righteousness and Holiness of the Reality
(the Personification of God)***

The fifth principle is that we must put off, as regards our former manner of life, the old man (v. 22). We have lived in our former manner of life for many years. Today we must cease and put it off. To put off the old man is just to put off our old habits. We need to put off this old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit. Paul refers to deceit here as a personified thing, which is just Satan. Satan is the totality of deceit in the entire universe.

Whatever he proposes is a deceit. The Lord Jesus said that Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). He is the aggregate of deceit. This deceit is fully related to the old manner of life, which in its totality is a deceit. Hence, to put off the old man is to put off Satan.

After this, we need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind (Eph. 4:23). This means that our mind should be filled with, saturated by, and under the control and direction of the spirit. In this way our spirit will become the spirit of our mind. It is by this spirit, which controls our mind, that we are being renewed.

Finally, we need to put on the new man (v. 24). The way to put on the new man is in the divine dispensing. We should not live according to the old habits and the old manner of life but should live according to the present, up-to-date divine dispensing. This is to put on the new man. This new man was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality. Reality here also is personified. Deceit is Satan, and reality is the Triune God.

The Details

As Members of the Body, Speaking Truth One with Another

Now we come to the details of the believers' living. The first point is that as members of the Body, we need to speak truth one with another (v. 25). We should never lie to our fellow members. To lie is absolutely wrong. Any kind of lie, whether wild or cultured, is wrong. Often the highly educated people lie in a cultured way. They hide their lies in a nice cloak. But this is wrong. We should speak only truth with one another.

Being Angry but Not Sinning;

Not Letting the Sun Go Down on Our Indignation,

Neither Giving Place to the Devil

We should not let the sun go down on our indignation (v. 26). We should not "lose" to the sunset but should "beat" the sunset by letting our indignation go before the sun sets. Furthermore, we should never give place to the devil (v. 27). If we do not let our anger go but rather keep our anger, we will give the devil a place. In our marriage a little anger is like a little kindling. If we do not quench it, it will bring in a big fire that can burn our entire marriage.

The same thing is true in the church life. As Christians, we meet together often. It is very easy for us to offend one another. We need to let these offenses go. Anger that is due to offenses is very damaging to us. It is even damaging to our stomach; we may develop an ulcer because of it. If we let go of our anger before the sun goes down, we will be free and will be able to sing and praise the Lord.

***Not Stealing but Laboring,
Working with Our Own Hands***

The third point is that we should not steal (v. 28). We may think that we have never stolen, but actually, everyone steals. Whether we are a gentleman or a lady, a boy or a girl, in God's eyes we have all stolen from others. A teacher may bring home a piece of chalk from school, and a worker may bring home some things from his office. We may say that this is not stealing, but in God's eyes this is stealing. All young girls have stolen from their mothers. If we check with ourselves, we will find that there are many different kinds of stealings in us. But we should steal no more.

***Letting No Corrupt Word Proceed out of Our Mouth,
but Only That Which Is Good for Needful Building Up,
That It May Give Grace, in the Dispensing
of the Divine Life, to the Hearers***

The fourth point is that we should let no corrupt word proceed out of our mouth (v. 29). Today, because of the turmoil, many times we hear corrupt words, that is, words that bring death to us. When we hear these words, we should not consider whether they are right or wrong. Rather, we should check whether they enliven us or kill us. As long as a word kills us, it is a corrupt word. We should not allow this kind of word to proceed out of our mouth. Instead, we should speak only words that are good for needful building up. If we do this, we will give grace, another form of what God is, in the dispensing of the divine life, to the hearers.

***Not Grieving the Holy Spirit, in Whom We Were Sealed,
for the Dispensing of the Divine Trinity,
unto (or, for) the Day of the Redemption of Our Body***

The fifth point is that we should not grieve the Holy Spirit (v. 30). If the Holy Spirit is grieved, we will not be happy. If we are not happy, that is a sign that the Holy Spirit within us is not happy. This Holy Spirit is sealing us. This sealing is the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, and it is unto the day of the redemption of our body. In Greek the word *unto* can also mean “for.” We are sealed not merely unto the day of redemption but also for the day of redemption. This means that through the soaking and saturating of the sealing, we will be qualified to be redeemed on that day. The sealing is for that day. If we are not sealed and permeated by the sealing ink of the Holy Spirit today, we cannot expect to be redeemed on that day. Our daily sealing today is to qualify us for the redemption on that day.

***Abstaining, in the Divine Dispensing,
from All Bitterness, Anger, Wrath, Clamor,
and Evil Speaking, with All Malice***

The sixth point is that we must abstain from all bitterness, anger, wrath, clamor, and evil speaking, with all malice (v. 31). The word *all* modifies all the succeeding items. This means that we should abstain not only from all bitterness but also from all anger, all wrath, all clamor, all evil speaking, and all malice. In other words, we need to keep ourselves pure from all these dirty things.

***Being Kind to One Another,
Tenderhearted, Forgiving One Another,
as God in Christ Forgave Us***

Last, we should be kind to one another (v. 32). We must learn to always give in. In Taipei, more than thirty years ago, we made benches that could seat four or five persons. Sometimes two husky persons would occupy so much space that it became impossible for the other three to sit comfortably. This is not being kind. In the church life, on the one hand, we should treat others kindly, and on the other hand, we should not fight with others but should always give in. We should also be tenderhearted, forgiving one another.

Brother Nee once wrote a proverb for married couples. Among the many items that he mentioned, he told the husbands and the wives that from the

day of the wedding they needed to learn to say two words: “I’m sorry” and “forgive me.” If we say these two words every day, there will be no divorce or separation. Separation and divorce come because people are too proud to say “I’m sorry” or “forgive me” to their spouse.

In the church life we are close to each other every day. Often we say things or do things that offend others. We all need to learn to say “I’m sorry” and “forgive me” to each other. But we must not say these words from our lips only; we must first pray, confess to the Lord, and deal with the Lord properly concerning the offenses. Then we can go to the ones whom we have wronged and make restitution. If we do this, there will be no friction between the saints. There will be peace, and we will have a proper church life that is good for the building up of the Body of Christ.