
UNBELIEF

The editors

Faith is indeed a very great thing and precious not only to God but also to those who believe. In reviewing the preceding articles, we are in awe at God's wisdom to make faith the characteristic of His New Testament economy. Our hearts genuinely overflow in praise to Him that He has made the way of faith, both objective and subjective, the way for the ultimate accomplishment of the great mystery of His will. And it is our faith that causes us to praise Him, because faith always points us to who He is and what He does and not to what we are and what we do.

Retrospective and Further Reflection on Faith

In a way of retrospection and even further reflection, we should say here that faith is not merely the ability to believe in who God is and what He has done; more intrinsically it is a God-infused function to lay hold of the reality of who God is and what He is doing in His economy to carry out His will. Faith is a genuine substantiating of the things that we hope for, the actual grasping inwardly of the things that we hear about in the proclamation of God's Word. As such, faith, in this subjective sense, does not lay hold of mere doctrines or teachings; rather, it makes real within the believers all that God has planned in Christ for the accomplishment of the good pleasure of His will. Thus, faith brings the believers into an organic union with the Christ of God's economy and makes Christ and God's economy their inward reality and experience. The content of that economy, which is focused on Christ and carried out in Christ, is "the faith" in the objective sense. Thus, the objective faith is not simply a set of teachings or doctrines that we must believe in order to be saved, even though, viewed independently, it may be said to be so. More intrinsically, the objective faith is coequal with the full process of God's economy in Christ for the fulfillment of His will *as it is substantiated by the*

subjective faith infused into His believers. Of course, the full process of God's economy is objectively and independently real and does not rely on subjective faith to be real in itself; but to be the objective faith that saves, God's economy must be that which is made real by faith infused into the believers through the hearing of God's Word. What subjective faith substantiates is objective faith, not the varied and divisive plethora of secondary Christian teachings, regardless of how proper, correct, and biblical they are. The objective faith, as the contents of God's economy in Christ, concerns Christ's person and work for the complete salvation of human beings in the fullest sense of that salvation, that is, not simply salvation from sin and perdition but salvation unto glorifying God eternally. To be brought into that salvation fully, human beings must experience subjective faith inwardly substantiating the following: Christ as God incarnate, His death for their redemption, His resurrection for their regeneration, His ascension as Lord of all and Head of His Body, His return to the believers as the Spirit who resides within them and makes the Triune God real to them inwardly, and His constituting them in the church to be the very members of His Body today and to be His bride for His return. Ultimately, through His person and work, Christ will glorify God through the Spirit in His believers and build them up to be His corporate expression for eternity, that is, the New Jerusalem. The items of this objective faith, substantiated by the subjective faith infused into the believers through the hearing of God's Word, are not merely the map, nor merely the signposts, but the journey itself for the proper Christian walk and genuine church life. This objective faith is the apostles' teaching as the word of the Bible, and it is not only what we believe but more importantly what we grasp subjectively as reality through faith. Indeed, as the apostle says, "God's economy... is in faith" (1 Tim. 1:4)!

We may think that the experience of faith concerns mainly our initial salvation. But every believer