

## BELIEF AND UNBELIEF—THE SPIRITUAL WAR

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1. Man, created in the image of God, is fallen. Left to oneself, no one seeks God, no one understands, and no one does what is right, not even one. Man's chief end is to glorify God, yet all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:10-11, 23; 1:21).
2. Unbelief arises from the failure to understand and accept the principle of clarity and inexcusability. General revelation concerning the divine nature and the moral law is clear so that unbelief is without excuse (Romans 1:20; 2:14-15).
3. The failure to seek and to understand what is clear is sin. This root of sin is the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness remaining in the human heart and must be repented of as long as sin remains (Romans 1:21-32; 3:12-15).
4. Not seeking and not understanding result in skepticism in the unbeliever and fideism in the believer. Skepticism claims that knowledge is not possible. Fideism is a profession of belief without understanding the meaning or the grounds for belief.
5. Those who fail to use reason to see what is clear cannot understand those who do. The natural man (skeptic or fideist) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually (that is, rationally) discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14).
6. In failing to see the intellectual roots of belief and of unbelief, the skeptic-fideist becomes anti-intellectual in separating doctrine from life, the prophetic from the priestly and the kingly, the intellectual from the psychological and the practical.
7. Separating doctrine (belief about Truth) from life by not discussing doctrinal differences divides the triune nature of man. It dehumanizes man and gives rise to all forms of divisions, strife and wars.
8. True faith is the substance (underlying support/reality/*upostasis*) of things hoped for, the evidence (proof/*elegchos*) of things not seen. By faith we understand. Belief without understanding is fideism, not faith. Those who understand what is clear can show (prove) what is clear (Hebrews 11:1-3).
9. Faith as understanding is pleasing to God; lack of faith is not pleasing to God. Fideism and skepticism avoid the light of rational discourse about basic things. Lack of common ground in reason makes dialogue impossible (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16-21).
10. The life of the Logos, the eternal Word of God, is in all men as light (reason). The light shines in the darkness (of unbelief) and the darkness cannot overcome it or withstand it. The light of reason cannot be extinguished in oneself (by spiritual suicide) or in others (by spiritual murder). Fallen man is still man. The demand of human nature for meaning is inextinguishable (John 1:1, 4-5).