

BELIEFS THAT BELONG TO THE ECCLESIA OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Perhaps our new readers will wish to know our creed, or, rather, what distinguishes our belief from others. Our position is briefly summed up in a single passage of scripture, one of the simplest, yet by far the most comprehensive in the Word of God. It is this:

"*All* is *out* of Him and *through* Him and *for* Him . . ."
(Rom.11:36).

We find the *source* of everything in God; the *course* of everything is according to His intention; and He is the *goal* of all. The realization of this sublime truth gives comfort and stability and satisfaction, but, above all it glorifies God and His Christ. All Scripture (when properly translated) is in full accord with this majestic summary of God's course with His creatures. While this truth is so simple, it solves almost all of those knotty problems of theology which make the Bible so hard to understand for many people. We use this key in explaining such difficult problems as the origin of evil and sin, as well as their future. If those new to these things will have a little patient perseverance they will be rewarded with such a grand and glorious conception of God and His purpose and grace as will turn their theological gropings into the brightness of the noonday sun, and will not only illumine the glory of God, but the lives of those who step out of the shadows into His marvelous light.

Concerning the Sacred Scriptures:

All scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness . . . (2 Tim.3:16; 1 Thess.2:13). The pattern of sound words must be preserved as given in the Originals (2 Tim.1:13). The word of truth must be correctly cut (2 Tim.2:15), and each part applied to those to whom it was written: our Lord's ministry (Rom. 15:8) and the twelve apostles to the Circumcision, and Paul to the nations (Eph.3:8; 1 Tim.2:7). All scripture is *for* us, but it is not all *about* us.

Concerning the Deity:

. . . there is no other God except One . . . God, the Father, *out of* Whom all is . . . and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *through* Whom all is . . . (1 Cor.8:4-6; Gal.3:20). All is out of Him, through and for Him (Rom.11:36). God creates evil (Isa.45:7), but never sins, and gives the experience of evil to humanity to humble them (Ecc.1:13). Even when contrary to His *will*, evil carries out His *intention* (Rom.9:19) to publish His name in the earth (Rom.9:17), and to reveal His love to His creatures. Apart from evil and sin God could not unveil His heart. These are justified from His standpoint, for they will bring untold blessing to His creatures, through the sacrifice of Christ.

Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ:

He is the Son of the Most High, generated by His holy spirit (Luke 1:32-35), and in Him the

entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily (Col.2:9). He is the Effulgence of His glory and Emblem of His assumption (Heb.1:3), the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature (Col.1:15; Rev.3:14), Who, inhering in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal to God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil.2:6-8). He was apart from sin (Heb.4:15), does no sin (1 Peter 2:22), could not be exposed concerning sin (John 8:46), nevertheless He was made sin that we might become the righteousness of God, in Him (2 Cor.5:21). . . . There is one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, the One giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (1 Tim.2:5,6).

Concerning God's Eonian Purpose:

The Scriptures speak of God's wisdom, in a secret, designated *before* the eons (1 Cor.2:7), His own purpose and grace *before* eonian times (2 Tim.1:9), and life promised *before* eonian times (Titus 1:2). Each eon (*aiōn*) has its own world (*cosmos*, system), and they synchronize (Eph.2:2). God is King of the eons (1 Tim.1:17), and made them through Christ (Heb.1:2). Five epochal eons can be found. The first two eons are not mentioned, but their corresponding worlds are. Two eons are impending (Eph.2:7), and we are living in the present wicked eon (Gal.1:4). They have consummations (1 Cor.10:11) and a conclusion (Heb.9:26). God is the Saviour of all mankind at the consummation, but especially of believers during the eons (1 Tim.2:4; 4:10). At the consummation, we find all saved, justified (Rom.5:18), vivified (1 Cor.15:22; 1 Tim, 6:13), and all the estranged reconciled (Col, 1:20). Death will be abolished (2 Tim.1:10; 1 Cor.15:26), sin having been repudiated (*cf* Heb.9:26), and God will be All in all (1 Cor.15:28).

Concerning the Circumcision and the Nations:

God, before Israel was cast away (Rom.11:15), had the Circumcision near while the nations were far off (Eph.2:12). But now, in Christ Jesus, He is conciliated and friendly toward them and the world. God has conciliated the world to Himself, and is not reckoning their offenses to them (2 Cor.5:18,19). The entreaty of the evangel for today is "*Be conciliated to God*" (2 Cor.5:20), that we might become, practically, what we already are, positionally. Then we become *reconciled*. We are no longer at enmity with Him, and there is mutual *reconciliation*. Through the blood of Christ's cross, all the estranged on earth and in heaven shall be reconciled, at the consummation. The blood of the cross is for *all* creation (Col.1:16-20), for creation and reconciliation have the same scope.

Concerning the Human Body:

We believe that the spirit of God makes its home in the body of believers (1 Cor. 3-16), and therefore it is an affront to the holy spirit to inject foreign substances into it.