

## **Dispensational Truth and the Fundamentals**

“The advocates of what is called Dispensational Truth confine themselves to the four prison epistles of Paul, cut themselves off from the rest of Scripture, and have little or no regard for the Fundamentals”.

Those who adversely criticise what is known as Dispensational Truth speak somewhat on the foregoing lines, but in the monthly magazine entitled The Berean Expositor (which has recently been termed by a hostile critic as “the official organ of this teaching” in the British Isles) the following studies have appeared:

<b>Studies.</b>	<b>Over a period of -</b>
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.....	TWELVE YEARS.
REVELATION.....	TWELVE YEARS.
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.....	FIVE YEARS.
SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF THE O. T.....	FOURTEEN YEARS.
PARABLES OF THE N.T. ....	FOUR YEARS

How then can such a criticism be maintained when the Index of the first twenty volumes of this Magazine contains such evidence of concentrated, patient and lengthy study of so many books of the Bible other than “the four prison epistles”? Then as to the Fundamentals, the same Index reveals several series dealing with such vital doctrines as:

THE DEITY OF CHRIST.  
SIN.  
REDEMPTION.  
RESURRECTION.  
SANCTIFICATION.  
INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.  
THE TYPICAL TEACHING OF THE TABERNACLE.  
THE OFFERINGS OF LEVITICUS, and  
THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

We suggest that such critics of dispensational truth are guilty, maybe unwittingly, of misrepresentation, and we believe that all readers with a sense of fairness will not allow such statements to warp their judgment. The limitation of space in a pamphlet of these dimensions will not permit a lengthy treatment of the subject, but an endeavour will be made to set forth Scriptural evidence to prove that they who hold closely to the teaching of “the four prison epistles”, will, of necessity, hold the fundamentals of the faith.

Most evangelical believers will agree that, whatever else is omitted, the following fundamentals must be included if we are to be considered sound in the faith:

- (1) THE INSPIRATION OF ALL SCRIPTURE.
- (2) THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SACRIFICIAL WORK OF CHRIST.
- (3) SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH, AND NOT OF WORKS.
- (4) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.
- (5) THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

We submit that any difference there may be between believers who hold the above fundamentals cannot arise from Christian love or faithfulness, but must be attributed to sectarian or other motives.

(1) THE INSPIRATION OF ALL SCRIPTURE.- There is one verse in the New Testament that is supreme in the fulness of its testimony to this fundamental, and it is in the prison epistle 2 Timothy:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable” (2 Tim. 3:16).

With this passage ever before the mind, what fear is there that the reader who has discovered the secrets of the prison epistles will be lax regarding his conception of the truth of all Scripture, or will be neglectful in this respect when this very epistle declares that the whole Scriptures are profitable? If he reads the context of 2 Timothy 3:16 he will learn that these same Scriptures make wise unto salvation, and equip the man of God. Should therefore we be advised that those who follow the teaching of The Berean Expositor will, with the exception of four epistles, be cut off from the Scriptures, we must remember that prejudice is blinding, and act accordingly.

(2) THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE SACRIFICIAL WORK OF CHRIST.- Let us take the testimony of Ephesians and Colossians.

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us” (Eph. 1:7,8).

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

“Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph. 5:2).

“Having made peace through the blood of His cross ... You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight” (Col. 1:20-22).

These passages cover a tremendous ground. Redemption is declared to be by blood, and essential to forgiveness. Peace and access is by the cross, and the presentation of the believer “holy and unblameable” is so wonderful as to surpass all understanding. Who with these testimonies before them would not study the whole of the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures in order to gather all that has been revealed concerning this fundamental of our faith?

(3) SALVATION BY GRACE.- Do we insist that, however much we may progress in the knowledge of the Word, there should be a clear testimony maintained concerning the way of salvation? Then no passage of Scripture presents the terms of salvation so clearly and in so small a compass as does Ephesians 2:8-10 :

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

Here we have not only the emphasis placed upon grace without works, but the balance is preserved by the closing statement that salvation, though not arising out of works, is nevertheless unto good works, a characteristic of the epistle to the Ephesians which balances doctrine with practice throughout its six chapters.

(4) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.- What an important epistle is that to the Romans. Every believer who has any knowledge of truth realizes the fundamental nature of its testimony to righteousness. How many of us could write a synopsis of its teaching with such certainty and such brevity as does the apostle in one verse of the epistle to the Philippians? :

“And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:9).

Here are five separate items, which practically cover the teaching of Romans on the subject of justification:

(i) IT IS “IN HIM” for as Romans 8:1 says: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are IN Christ Jesus”, and Romans 8 is in direct contrast with Romans 5, where condemnation is found in Adam.

(ii) IT IS NOT OF THE LAW (see Rom. 3:20,21,28; 8:3; 10:4).

(iii) IT IS THROUGH THE FAITH of CHRIST. “Which is by faith OF Jesus Christ” (Rom. 3:22).

(iv) IT IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD (see Rom. 1:16,17; 3:21,26). (v) IT IS BY FAITH. “We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28). He who believes Philippians 3:9 will rejoice in the fuller exposition of the epistle to the Romans.

(5) THE DEITY OF CHRIST.- The person of the ascended Christ is the glory of the prison ministry of Paul. How can anyone who believes Philippians or Colossians ever again tolerate the language of those who so often speak of the Lord as “The carpenter’s Son”, or “The man of Galilee”? They will even refrain from using the holy name “Jesus”, for they are taught in these epistles to own Him as “Lord”. He is set forth as “The Form of God, Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God”, and Who will one day be acknowledged as Jehovah, bearing “the name that is above every name” (Phil. 2:6-11). They will acknowledge that He is the Image of the Invisible God, that all creation visible and invisible is the work of His hands, that He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, and that in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 1:15-19; 2:9).

If these fundamentals find their exposition in the four prison epistles, then the more they are studied and valued the stronger will be the testimony to the fundamentals of our faith. No space remains in which to explain why these four epistles are so precious to us, but the interested reader is referred to Berean Messages No. 9, in which we hope to make our reason plain.