

THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE, THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Fundamental and basic to the believer in Jesus is the cross of Christ. In fact, the atoning sacrifice of Christ at Golgotha undergirds every doctrine and practice of the church. For instance, what is the *church*? It is the body of those redeemed by Christ's blood shed on the cross. What is *salvation*? It is the effectual outworking of Christ's cross to mankind. Of what significance is the *Bible*? Herein lies the revealing of God's plan in the history of mankind to bring forth a Savior—a savior because of his redemptive offering for sin which was made upon the cross. Indeed, the Old Testament anticipates the coming Messiah and the establishment of his kingdom through a propitiatory sacrifice. The gospel narratives reveal Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and anticipate the ultimate consummation of his coming, the cross. In the epistles we find Holy Spirit guided men calling wayward saints back to the cross. The cross is the apex and center of the Christian religion. Anything (no matter how seemingly good) that distracts our attention from the cross of Christ is dangerous at best. Any system which attempts to reform man according to a secular basis is a denial of the cross. Man cannot reform himself out of sin. Man needs a radical transformation of nature. Man needs a rebirth or renewal of spirit. Man needs the life-giving power of the cross of Christ.

Let us avoid the error of the Liberals—that of attributing to the work of Christ on the cross mere moral influence and not a sacrifice for sin. On the other hand, let us avoid the error of the Pharisees—that of majoring in minor things and minoring in major things. Let us affirm with Paul, “God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the

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world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation” (Galatians 6:14-15).