

A WIDE DIFFERENCE

Seeing that the Scriptures teach that all who shall be of the „body” of Christ must follow the example of the Head, and sacrifice—even unto death; all who think at all, must form some idea of what is meant by the command. And those who fail to get the Scriptural view of it, get an unscriptural one which must more or less becloud their views of the entire plan of God.

The Scriptural view of *our* sacrifice must harmonize fully with the Scriptural teaching regarding the nature and value of Jesus’ sacrifice. And therefore any view of *our* sacrifice which does not thus harmonize must be unscriptural.

The most common of these unscriptural views is set forth about as follows in an item which has been going the rounds of the religious press:—

„Not the death of the cross, but our death to sin reconciles us to God.—*Key to the Scriptures.*”

A more deceptive and hurtful little paragraph could scarcely be constructed. It certainly is not of God, and was not indicted by any one under the control of the holy spirit, for it is in direct conflict with the Scriptures. Its claim to be a „*Key to the Scriptures*” is the bait upon Satan’s hook, to make it attractive and easily swallowed. To the vast majority the Scripture is a sealed book (Isa. 29:11,) and that in great measure because of unwillingness to sacrifice needful time and effort in its careful study; yet to such, the thought of finding condensed into one sentence a „key” by which the whole Bible would at once and without labor and study become plain to them, is a temptation somewhat similar to the one with which the same adversary beguiled Eve. And „I fear lest by any means, as the Serpent *beguiled* Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the *simplicity* that is in Christ”—to „another gospel.” (?) 2 Cor. 11:3, and Gal. 1:6-9.

The temptation put before Eve, was an easy acquirement of knowledge, and to all intelligent people this must ever remain one of Satan’s most successful temptations, until he is bound. One of our duties is to resist this temptation and to try and prove every doctrine by the Word of God. And this remark applies as much to popular Creeds and Catechisms which claim to be keys to the Scriptures, as to the little clip referred to. The only God-given key to Scripture, is within itself. The harmonizing of its various statements open to us its treasures. It has a „Combination Time Lock,” and cannot be opened by any other key.

But let us examine the clipping in question. Dividing its statement and critically examining its

parts, we may all see what it means, viz.: Jesus' death on the cross did not reconcile us to God; but when we put away sin and become dead in the sense of having no desires for sin, we thereby commend ourselves to God, and He receives us into fellowship, communion, etc. Ah yes, such a doctrine quickly commends itself to all the morally disposed people of the world. In a word, though false, it is the WORLD'S HOPE, and is the basis of the achings of all the great heathen philosophers and the core and centre of the most prominent religions of the *world*.—*Brahminism and Buddhism*.

The substance of this theory is—away with the cross of Calvary, away with ideas of a ransom, of a Redeemer, on whose account men are made *at one* with God. Let in the more modern light* of reason and let us wash ourselves from sin-filthiness, and then come thus to God in our own righteousness. Alas! they lose sight of the fact that they are so tainted with sin that they cannot put it away. But their theory causes them to lose sight of real righteousness and absolute perfection of thought, word and deed, so that thus self-deluded, some in every age, have attempted to come before God in what He declares are the „filthy rags” of their own righteousness.

*Really as old as Cain, who brought the sacrifice of his *own labor* as a ground of acceptance and communion with God, instead of the typical, slain lamb. Gen. 4:3-5.

But let us compare this suggested „key” with the Scripture which it pretends to unlock. We read, Rom. 5:8-11. „We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” That „key” don't fit this lock—it is not the true key; it is a false one. The foregoing statement of the apostle is the centre shaft of the true key, and nothing short of the recognition of „The death of His Son” as the centre and handle can possibly turn the combination and open the Scriptures.

Let us compare carefully: not only does Paul not say we were reconciled to God by *our death* to sin, but he asserts that the reconciliation he refers to was accomplished „*while we were enemies*,”—“while we were YET SINNERS”; hence the reconciliation is not the result of our „*slaying the enmity* in us,” but as here stated the enmity or condemnation resting upon mankind through sin was destroyed, and the condemned ones while „enemies”, „reconciled to God by the death of His Son”—“justified by His blood.”

But is not deadness to sin, or a ceasing to live any longer therein enjoined in Scripture?

It assuredly is enjoined, but not as the ground of „forgiveness of sins that are past”: not as the

basis for restored communion with God, at-one-ment: Not as the *reconciling act* which gives the sinner access to God: Not as taking the place of Christ's *sacrifice* for sins when he offered up himself without spot unto God.

When enjoining *deadness to sin* the apostle Paul addresses those who already believe in the ransom, and through it accept the forgiveness of sins; he addresses those, who, while they „were enemies were reconciled to God by the *death of His Son*,„—“by whom we have now received the atonement.” His argument is, we were enemies, „but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” He then asks, „Shall we [toward whom, as sinners, God's grace abounded through Jesus] continue in sin?” Not only so, but *we*, who have now received the atonement through Christ, have received with it the call or invitation to join our justified selves with Christ, and by becoming joint-sacrificers to become joint-heirs of divine nature and glory, with Him. What does our joint-sacrifice imply? It implies that as His was a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, *our sacrifice* being joined to his must be reckoned as for the sin of the world and not in any sense for our own sins. (See Tabernacle Teachings, pages 37-39.) And now the apostle's inquiry is: If *we* were honest in our consecration when we professed to be so much opposed to sin, and so sorry for its baneful results that we would join with Jesus to redeem the world and to wipe out sin—if we really meant all this: „How shall *we*, that are dead [consecrated to death] to sin [*by*, or on account of sin—see Diaglott] live any longer therein?” (Rom. 5:10-20; and 6:2.) Knowing this: that our old man [human nature] is crucified with [Christ] that the body of sin [or of the sin-offering] might be destroyed.” Hence, we should no longer be enslaved by the sin

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we died [consecrated] to abolish. „For he who died has been justified from sin.”—*Diaglott*. That is to say, any who thus died or consecrated themselves to death with Christ, *must first* have been *justified* freely from all things by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. „Now if *we* be dead *with* Christ, we believe that *we* shall also live with him.” „In that he died, he died *BY* sin [or on account of sin, see Diaglott] once: but in that he liveth, he liveth *by* God”—because of God's promise and resurrection power. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed *BY* sin [or on account of sin, as sacrifices; see Diaglott,] but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Rom. 6:6-11.

Hence, the statement that, Not the death of the Cross, but our death to sin, reconciles us to God, is the very opposite of the truth. The truth, as stated by the apostle is: Not our death to sin nor any works of the Law which we can do, could reconcile to God, but being reconciled by the death of His Son, while we were yet sinners and enemies, we love Him who first loved us, so that we detest and put away sin, and so far as possible cease to live any longer therein, but the *rather* now present our members as servants of righteousness unto *sacrifice* with Jesus, the Redeemer.

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