

Seventy-one

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Theological Questions

On Gospel Topics

SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC

AND IN PARTICULAR TO

The Ministers of all Denominations

—BY—

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Seventy-one Theological Questions

To Biblical Students and Thinkers:—

Inasmuch as theologians of the present age have taken in hand to teach that the teachings of Christ and the apostles are not all essential to salvation, and that we have outgrown some of these by reason of superior attainments, the following queries are hereby submitted in all candor to the ministers of the various religious denominations for their perusal and answers:

1. Where in the Scriptures do we find that the Lord has taught and practiced non-essential doctrine?

2. If Christ and the apostles did not teach and practice non-essential doctrines, by what authority do the ministers of the various churches teach that there are doctrines non-essential?

3. If the gospel contains non-essential doctrines, and it claims to be the revealed will of God to men for their salvation, has not God revealed something unnecessary to man's salvation?

4. If the revealed will of God, called the gospel, was in its completeness the power of God unto salvation, would it not fail in the accomplishment of this object when not observed in its fullness?

5. If the gospel in its fullness was necessary to save men then, is it not necessary to save men now?

6. Is not the gospel in its fullness composed of all that is couched in the atonement, ordinances, doctrines, promises, gifts and blessings as established by Christ?

7. If men can now receive the benefit of the atonement without complying with these ordinances and doctrines, and enjoy the same gifts and blessings, is not God a partial God?

8. If God had given us "all things" that pertain unto life and godliness, that by these we might become partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:3, 4), how then can we obtain that divine nature without complying with and enjoying these "all things" which pertains unto life and salvation?

9. If the "all things" given through this divine power was necessary to a

life of godliness in order that we might be partakers of His divine nature, where does the non-essential part come in?

10. If the gospel was not in words only in the days of Paul, but was also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance (1 Thes. 1:5), would it be the same gospel now without the same power, the same Holy Ghost, and the same assurance?

11. If through this assurance they were made to know of the correctness of the teaching of Christ (John 7:16, 17), how can this same assurance be obtained now?

12. If to know God was eternal life (John 17:3) in the days of Christ, is it not eternal life now?

13. Can we know God without complying with his requirements, acknowledge his unchangeability and partake of his Spirit?

14. If eternal life depends upon this knowledge can salvation be secured without it?

15. Since no human agency can impart this knowledge but must come

through gifts from God (1 Cor. 12:1-12). why do you reject those gifts?

16. Since the Holy Ghost was the only agency through which God imparted these gifts, knowledge and power to men anciently, has he adopted any other means now?

17. If the Holy Ghost was to reveal secrets, teach us all things, bring things to our remembrance, testify of Christ, speak as the Father directed, reveal unto us things to come (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15), why don't he do so now, or has God, Christ and the Holy Spirit changed?

18. Where in the Scriptures do we find that the time would ever come when the Holy Spirit would cease to operate, as described in 1 Corinthians 12:1-12, in the various gifts as given to every man (in the church) for their benefit and spiritual development, such as healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues and their interpretation?

19. If through spiritual gifts the Saints in the days of Paul received the knowledge that Jesus was the Christ (1 Cor. 12:3), how is this same knowl-

edge to be obtained now without those gifts?

20. If the word of God was confirmed to the believers in the days of Christ by signs following (Mark 16:20), how are the believers to be confirmed now, or know of the truth of that which is taught without these signs following?

21. Is not the same assurance, the same knowledge and the same confirming power which the ancients enjoyed necessary to confirm us in the faith now? If not, why not?

22. Who are those mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:5, as having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof?

23. If by direct appointment by Christ (Mark 3:14), or by the Spirit of revelation (Acts 13: 2), Christ called and sent men to preach the gospel then, why should he not thus appoint, call and send men now?

24. If Christ committed the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:18; John 20: 21-23) to his apostles, that they might officiate authoritatively in the gospel ordinances, why should he not commit

these same keys^e to men now, that they might act with authority in the name of the Lord?

25. If God has set in the church apostles and prophets (1 Cor. 12: 28; Eph. 4: 11, 12), "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," how can this work now be accomplished without them, or where do we find that he has adopted some other method?

26. If apostles and prophets were given for the perfecting of the Saints, were they not a part of the "all things" given by which we might attain unto life and godliness and become partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1: 3, 4), how then can these results be brought about now without the means God did provide?

27. If by authority from God conferred upon those whom he sent, coupled with a belief in his word, mighty works were done, why could not similar works be done now by those who believe in God's promises and have received authority from God to preach the gospel? Or where do we find that miracles should ever cease?

28. If through faith in God's word and repentance of sins and baptism they received a remission of their sins, would the people not receive a remission of theirs now on the same condition? (Acts 2:38). Or has the plan of salvation changed?

29. Where in the Scriptures do we find that remission of sins is granted to those outside the body of Christ, upon any other condition than faith in God, repentance of sins and baptism for the remission of sins?

30. Does the blood of Christ or his atonement cleanse us from sin upon any other condition than walking in the light (God's word, Psalms 119:105; 1 John 1:7), and keeping his word who is the light of the world?

31. Where in the Scriptures do we find that forgiveness of sins is granted through prayers at the mourner's bench? And where is there any command for a mourner's bench?

32. If God's word is the standard for our faith, can the precepts, traditions and dogmas of men in any sense appease the wrath of God, bring about reconciliation between God and man,

and secure unto men the forgiveness of sins?

33. Where in the Scriptures do we find any commandment for the sprinkling of infants and the authority for calling it baptism?

34. If Christ has atoned for original sin (Rom. 5:16-20), what need is there of sprinkling infants who are not under sin, when the Bible teaches that baptism is for remission of sins, hence for sinners?

35. If by the laying on of hands of the apostles (Acts 8:17), Christ granted and bestowed the Holy Ghost, why will he not do the same now? Or has he changed?

36. Did the apostles have the power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, independent of God's willingness to grant it? If not, would it not be in harmony with the character of an unchangeable being to grant it in the same manner now, if he has those on earth who truly represent him?

37. To whom does Paul refer in Galatians 1: 7, 8, as perverting the gospel of Christ, and how far can this

perverting be carried on without coming under the curse pronounced by him?

38. If we now live under a perverted gospel, is it yet the power of God unto salvation? (Rom. 1:16). Or will a perverted (hence imperfect) gospel bring the comers thereunto unto perfection?

39. If God anciently ordained certain ordinances through which he intended to bless the people, can these same blessings be obtained now without these same ordinances, and without one divinely called to officiate in them? If so, has not God changed?

40. If God's law is perfect (James 1:25; Ps. 19:7), and that whatsoever God doeth he doeth it forever, and that nothing can be put to it nor anything can be taken from it (Ecc. 3:14), by what authority do the ministers of the various churches preach only a part of God's law as established for the comfort, blessings and spiritual development in this life, and salvation in the celestial kingdom of God in the life which is to come, and teach in lieu thereof their own opinions, dogmas and traditions, setting the teaching of Christ aside as non-essentials?

41. If God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:17), what reason have we for believing that he will fail in the accomplishment of this work?

42. If the Son of God came *not to destroy men's lives but to save them* (Luke 9:56; John 12:47), would he be fulfilling his mission if he does not save them?

43. If Christ came to save all men (1 Tim. 4:10), and cannot, is he then accomplishing that for which he was sent?

44. If some men and angels are fore-ordained unto everlasting death (See Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chapter 3, sections 3, 4), are they not placed then outside the reach of the saving power of Christ, and no efforts on their part can change that decree?

45. If the saving power of Christ cannot reach all, is God not partial, and a respecter of persons, which the Bible says that he is not? How are we to harmonize this?

46. If all things were created by and for Christ, and for his pleasure

they are created (Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11), are we to suppose then that he takes pleasure and delight in torturing humanity in everlasting hell fire?

47. If Christ takes delight and pleasure in punishing mankind forever when it is within his power to prevent it, wherein is his justice and mercy manifested?

48. If Christ can save all mankind and will not, is he infinite in goodness?

49. If Christ desires to save mankind but cannot, is he omnipotent in power?

50. If Christ will not or cannot save men from their fallen state, in what sense then is he fulfilling his mission?

51. Are we to suppose that Christ exercises more love, mercy, goodness and justice toward men in the flesh than toward the spirits of men when out of the flesh?

52. Are we to suppose that the spirit of man, the intelligent, thinking, reasoning part of man loses its power to think, reason and reflect

when out of the body? If not, is it not possible for them to repent?

53. If spirits can repent, but Christ will not pardon, is not partiality shown between the spirits in the body and spirits out of the body? Is he then infinite in mercy?

54. If Christ preached to the spirits of the dead that they might live according to the will of God in the spirit, and bring them to God (1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6), would not that be evidence of repentance in the spirit state, and that Christ was fulfilling the mission for which he was sent? (Isa. 42:7; 61:1; Zech. 9:11, 12; Heb. 2:14,15).

55. If Christ and the apostles preached repentance and remission of sins (Mark 1: 14, 15; 6: 12; Luke 24: 47) to the living, is not then repentance and remission of sins the object of the preaching of the gospel?

56. If the object of preaching the gospel to the living is repentance and remission of sins, would not the object of preaching the gospel to the dead (1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6), be the same?

57. If repentance and remission of sin is the object of the gospel, would

not Christ be accomplishing an unnecessary mission to the death state if the dead cannot repent nor receive forgiveness of sin?

58. Since all do not hear the gospel in this life, would God be just in condemning such without a chance to hear his law, repent and receive a remission of sins?

59. If Christ was not to judge every man according to their works (Rev. 20: 12, 13), would he be infinite in justice?

60. If God divides mankind into two classes only, how can he judge every man according to their works?

61. If God does not judge every man according to their works, would his judgments be just?

62. If his judgments are not just would he be infinite in justice?

63. If God only loves those who love him, is he infinite in love?

64. If his love is not infinite, how can his love appeal unto us, when not superior to that which we possess?

65. If his love is infinite, how can he torture millions of souls of his own creation in eternal torment?

66. How is it possible for a good man to love a being who will do this when he has the power to prevent it?

67. If Christ came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), has he fulfilled his mission so long as sin, death and hell (the works of the devil) remain, and hell holding within its grasp one single soul? (Rev. 20:13).

68. If Christ will bring forth in the resurrection all mankind, some in the glory of the sun, some in the glory of the moon, and some in the glory of the stars (1 Cor. 15:41,42), will he not then be rewarding every man according to their works and save them from the death state, from the grasp of the devil and the eternal torments of hell, after having received a just retribution for all their sins and transgressions of God's law? Or is mortal man more just than God? (Job 4:17).

69. By what authority do the clergy of the various churches limit the power of Christ to save and represent him different to what he is represented in his word, and thus detract from the honor, glory and admiration to which

he, as the Savior of the world, is entitled by all of his creation?

70. Since the ministers of the present age do not believe in direct revelation from God, and the Scripture does not inform us that God and his law would ever change, or that non-essential doctrines were ever taught, from where do those ministers receive the information that such is the case?

71. In conclusion, where in the word of God is God represented as a God without body, parts and passions and yet in this incorporeal being there are three persons of one *substance*?

The above seventy-one questions are candidly submitted for the careful consideration of the public, and in particular, of the clergy, written and prompted by a desire to vindicate the teachings of the Redeemer, and to hold in honor and admiration him who came to save the race, of which salvation all may, in a degree, be partakers (except the sons of perdition), but to those who believe and obey his commandments more abundantly (John 10: 10; 1 Tim. 4: 10). Thus showing that the designs and purposes of

the mission work of Christ cannot be frustrated by the artful and cunning devices of Satan, and why should not the desire and delight of all nations be properly represented in the atonement and the doctrine, in fine, in the whole plan of salvation, and the ultimate redemption of the human race and his final triumph over death, hell and the grave, by those who profess to be his representatives?

Respectfully submitted,

S. K. SORENSEN.

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