

Questions for 'Down-Grade' Doubters (March, 1889)

by C.H. Spurgeon

This sermon presents seven questions to determine the theological beliefs of individuals, sermons, or books, and to detect error in Modern Thought.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "The Deity of Christ", "Faith Foundations"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon addresses the challenges posed by modern thought to foundational Christian beliefs, presenting seven critical questions that probe the integrity of faith in Scripture, the deity of Christ, the nature of sin, and the work of the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes the necessity of clear, unwavering answers to these questions to combat the subtle errors that threaten the gospel. Spurgeon expresses concern over the reluctance of some to adhere to creeds, highlighting the importance of maintaining a firm stance on essential doctrines to preserve true fellowship among believers.

Transcript

DEAR MR. EDITOR,--At the recent meeting of the London Baptist Association, in endeavoring to show the inutility of the "seven statements" which it was proposed should be attached to Rule I. of the Constitution, I submitted the following seven questions. To these questions, which touch the very foundations of that mysterious theology in which so-called "Modern Thought" delights, no distinct answer is given by the seven statements. But, probably, they may be useful to others beside myself in the detection of error. I venture, therefore, to offer them to your readers for that purpose. The first question needs no explanation or comment.

I. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be an infallible and sufficient guide in all matters of religious faith and practice?

II. Do you believe in the DEITY as well as divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, i.e., that he is himself God? Note that a man may acknowledge Christ to be divine, as he might acknowledge the Bible to be divine, without admitting that he is God.

III. Do you believe that Christ, in his death, endured the penalty due to divine justice for human guilt? Note--Many admit that he died for us, but exclude the idea of penalty from his death.

IV. Do you believe the Holy Spirit to be, not only a divine influence, but, in the true, real, and proper sense of the term, a divine person, and himself God?

V. Do you believe man to have become, by sin, a fallen creature, and to have lost, by his fall, his original peaceful, happy, and holy relations with his Maker?

Note--Schiller described the Fall as "a giant stride in the history of the human race."

VI. Do you believe that, by regeneration, man becomes possessed of a new and higher life, described as spiritual? that this life is only rendered possible by the mediatorial work of Christ? that it is only rendered actual by the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul? and that, apart from these means, it can never be enjoyed?

VII. Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead, as an event of the future, and not of continual recurrence? I think, Mr. Editor, that these questions may be made of great service in determining the whereabouts of many a man, sermon, or book.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN TUCKWELL.

Bayswater.

[We agree with our correspondent that there is a ready way of dodging round the seven statements; but even such questions as those which he suggests will not bring slippery gentlemen to book. We feel ashamed to have to draw up statements, and put questions to those who should be brethren. Methods which the subtlety of error renders necessary are, nevertheless, greatly distasteful to simple, trustful hearts. We prefer to quit the company of those who plead that creeds have no binding power: they only too plainly avow their own characters. When one has to weigh words with a person, fellowship is out of the question. The phrases adopted by the L. B. A. look right enough, but it is clear that they can be every one of them evaded. Knowing what we do know of some who are called ministers of Christ, and in their heart of hearts do not believe the old gospel, we are saddened in soul, and wonder what next will come.--ED.]

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