

OPEN TO QUESTIONS

Our Lord wasn't like the modern-day cult leaders. He did not isolate His disciples from other influences in order to program their minds to accept His teachings. Neither did He attempt to conceal His teachings from "outsiders. What He taught the disciples was not in contradiction to what He taught the multitudes. In fact, Jesus affirmed as He stood before the high priest at the close of His ministry, "I spake openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort: and in secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20).

Everything was open and aboveboard with Jesus. It will be that way with us if we are true disciples. As we read the first four books of our New Testaments, which give an account of the life and teachings of our Lord, we realize that as Jesus was often questioned, his answers were always forthright. The word of God requires the same of us as His disciples. Truth does not hide in a dark corner. Truth does not fear scrutiny.

In the first place, true disciples will be open to truth, even if it conflicts with previous opinions and traditions. Jesus summoned disciples with the plea, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me" (Matthew 11:29a). Denominational and sectarian creedism imposes human judgments as being on a par with divine revelation. It is a grievous error that all should avoid. As the noble Bereans, are we willing to receive with "readiness of mind," while at the same time to "(search) the scriptures...to see whether those things (are) so"? (Acts 17:11) Paul also urged, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

If we have tested what we believe by the divinely inspired scriptures (1 Timothy 3:16-17), we should likewise invite questions, and encourage others to investigate for themselves. We must speak the truth openly, as Peter urged: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). If what we teach and practice will not stand the test of investigation in the light of the Bible, it does not deserve to be accepted.

—Ron