

Seeking the Truth

by Barney Keith

As tragic as it is, *"Many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). One of the most discouraging things to people through the ages has been the prevalence of all sorts of religious doctrines. Every sincere person needs to recognize the existence of error, but at the same time realize that **TRUTH** can be sought and known. Jesus promised that *"the truth will make you free"* (John 8:32). Truth is the only antidote for error.

Truth is accessible to all men alike. God is no respecter of persons, and *"would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:4). Yet there are certain basic considerations which are essential for the sincere truth seeker. Let us notice some of them:

1. The initial battle is with YOUR OWN WILL. If you really want truth you can find it (John 7:17). The desire of the Holy Spirit is that you *"be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is"* (Eph. 5:17). But you must make up your mind that you **desire** to know. Then you will be ready to begin the search. A *"good and honest heart"* must come first.

2. You must have a wholesome, respectful attitude toward the truth. To search for truth will be a waste of your time if you do not plan to accept it —whatever it may be. Paul declared to the Thessalonian brethren that certain people perish *"because they received not the love of the truth"* (2 Thess. 2:10). He stated also that they all will be *"judged who believed not the truth"* (2 Thess. 2:12). Hence, one must **love** the truth and **believe** the truth to avoid God's condemnation.

3. Be SURE that your SOURCE of information is reliable. God's revealed word is the only infallible source of religious truth (John 17:17). In the production of the Bible *"holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Pet. 1:21). They could not err, therefore, in what they spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately there are many people who are not concerned about the **source** of their religious faith. Perhaps it has been inherited from parents. It may be that they have accepted what is popular in the community, or have acted wholly upon their feelings. Man needs a **perfect** guide. He cannot direct his own steps. (Jer. 10:23.) He **cannot** simply take it for granted that anything he happens to believe and do will be acceptable to God. Let no one substitute human wisdom and reasoning for divine revelation, but depend entirely upon what God has spoken. He has spoken in the Scriptures.

Paul enumerates certain characteristics and powers of the scriptures *"given by inspiration of God"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). They are God-breathed; they are profitable; they equip one perfectly; they are all-sufficient as a guide for man in his search for forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. To find out whether any doctrine is true, one must *"search the scriptures"* (Acts 17:11), with the understanding that whatever cannot be established by the word of God is not the truth.

4. Recognize that it does not lie within your province to *change* that which the word of God teaches. Be content with what you find in the Bible. Remember, too, that even those men who are called "preachers," "priests," "rabbis," and "theologians" have **no authority at all** to bind upon you any tradition or commandment of men. In fact, **no** man has any binding authority whatsoever. Preachers — and all others — are just men. Nothing more! But the Author of the Bible is God. The Holy Spirit

continued on page 323603