

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Have You Lost The Sense Of Restoration?

(Jerry Fite)

Don't we admire the spirit of those who restore old houses to their original architectural design? They are diligent in researching the materials used, considering particulars, like shape and color of paint, and then expend the energy to restore the house to its original glory.

Our English word “restore” comes from the Latin word “*restaurare*,” *re* (again) and *staurare* (make strong). One who restores things desires to strengthen again that which is broken down.

In the early nineteenth century, our country witnessed a spiritual rebuilding which was known as the Restoration Movement. Such men as James O'Kelly, Walter Scott, Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone saw the need to go back to the Bible, instead of man's creeds, and restore New Testament Christianity. The first investigative step led them to see that some denominational beliefs and practices had no Scriptural basis. They studied God's Word to return men to the ancient order revealed by God.

There are some today who fear that we have now lost this

“sense of restorationism.” One has defined this loss in our day by saying that we “*just assume that we have everything figured out, and all our doctrines here are right, and now it is a matter of preserving the conclusions that our spiritual ancestors have already determined.*” He thinks this describes many of us in the church today.

What can we do to help eliminate this brother's fears? If we continue to appeal only to the Scriptures for our guide, using them to review and restudy the doctrines we currently believe; if we make sure they are authorized by, and are not contrary to the teachings of God's Word; then, we will continue to manifest the spirit of restoration regarding God's order of things.

This constant examination of beliefs should not lead us to think we cannot know God's absolute truth. Walter Scott came to the conviction that baptism was for the remission of sins. I am convicted of the same truth, not because but because Acts 2:38 declares it. Surely, I have not lost the sense of restoration if after thorough study, I, like Walter Scott, believe baptism is for the

remission of sins, and diligently hold this fact as absolute truth.

Jesus said, “...if ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (*John 8:31-32*). The key to knowing the truth, is abiding in God's word. Some today are directing our attention to theories of man outside of God's Word. Appealing to man's wisdom, some have suggested that the days of creation were not literal days, the serpent in the garden was not literal, and the flood was not universal. Surely, we have not lost the sense of restoration if we notice that these teachings do not have any Scriptural basis and are willing to expose them as man's wisdom.

Keep examining your beliefs, while abiding in God's Word. Preserve the absolute truth you find, even though others may have found it before you. Be able to establish your faith upon the foundation of the revealed Scriptures, not upon what man says. Then, you will maintain the true sense of restoration, establishing God's true ways in your own time.