

GLAD TIDINGS

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

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“Their Fate There Determined”

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Barton W. Stone, David Purviance and four others published the “Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery” in 1804. This was a document, separating them from the Presbyterian Church and is credited as the beginning of the restoration movement in this country. At the end of their text they wrote to their weaker brethren who wished to remain Presbyterians and to continue in their fellowship with the Kentucky Synod. They asked them to consider the consequences of their actions, writing, “...finally we will, that all our sister bodies, read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is to late.”

What a poignant, sobering and powerful statement. These men, having read their Bibles and understanding the written word, had learned a truth. They realized their condition, and decided to become mere Christians, or Christians only. They understood the vast implication of their action, and proceeded to return to the basic fundamental ideas of New Testament Christians. Restoring New Testament Christianity was blossoming in other quar-

ters as well. In 1809, Thomas Campbell addressed a gathering in Abraham Altars’ house with these distinctive words: “*Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.*” Being led this closely by Scripture would guide restorers away from un-Scriptural practices entrenched in various denominations.

God’s written word is replete with instruction, and admonition concerning our actions or inactions. Redemption in Christ is its grand theme. The Bible was written to be understood, and the men in our recent past understood that we too should justify our actions by Biblical verse, and act accordingly.

In Matthew 14:31, our savior reacted to Peter’s uncertainty in his attempt to walk on the water by reaching out his hand and catching him. “*You of little faith, he said, why did you doubt?*” Perhaps we will always have doubts as to how or even if, we will join the Lord in heaven at the end of time. Jesus’ question was and still is; *why do you doubt?* Heaven, with all its splendor and grandeur, is promised by our Lord to those who will follow Him. All we

need to have is *faith*. Faith practically defined is belief in things unseen. Believing in the authenticity of the written word, our faith should never be in doubt.

In Acts 2:38 Peter said to those who had gathered; “*Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” Speaking where the Scriptures speak, should we not also follow these same precepts, and fulfill the requirements set forth to solidify our goal in joining our Lord in heaven in the after a while?

Brave men in the past were instrumental in returning men and women to the New Testament church. They felt so strongly about their fainthearted brethren that they added a warning to their document of independence from the Presbyterian Church, reminding them that they were responsible for their own souls. Jesus, in Mark 16:16, instructs us, “*whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*” We to need to read our Bibles, fathoming such clear statements and remembering that our fate is there determined.