



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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RICK ATCHLEY'S CHAIRS

William Boyd

About four years ago someone posted an excerpt from a sermon preached by **Rick Atchley** about the “*divisions in the kingdom*.” In the excerpt Rick set up eight chairs, left to right, to represent “the people in our movement” that: 1) worship with the instrument; 2) that sing with praise teams; 3) that sing without praise teams; 4) that have no Bible Schools; 5) that oppose supporting orphan’s homes out of the church budget; 6) that use one cup; 7) that oppose salaried preachers; and 8) that reject church buildings. He did this to show that “the way we read the Bible can only produce division.” He is talking about the way we use the Bible to evaluate innovations and how we reject those innovations for which we find no Bible authority. Rick laments, “...our movement has split over every single chair.” I lament those divisions also. I am glad some of those factions are very small.

According to Rick it is “*narrow minded*” to oppose innovations about which the Bible is silent. He says this goes back to “*two of our greatest preachers*,” Moses Lard and J. W. McGarvey. He says they opposed instrumental music in the church and when asked why they said, “*Because the Bible is silent; therefore it’s wrong*,” but he says they supported the “*missionary society*” and when asked why, they said, “*Because the Bible is silent about it, therefore it’s okay*.” He shrugged his shoulders when he said that and everyone thought it was funny.

Of course to make his joke, he

oversimplified their reasoning. He did not discuss the difference in *generic* and *specific* authority, or the difference in *additions* and *expedients*, or the difference in *inference* and *implication*. Lard and McGarvey held to the rule that God’s “*commands*” imply everything “*expedient*” (helpful) to obey the command. God said “*preach*,” and to them the missionary society was an expedient to preaching. God said “*sing*,” and to them the instrument added playing to the singing. To them there was a difference. I am not defending their positions; I’m showing they were not shallow.

The misapplication of a rule does not invalidate the rule. Jacob Creath Jr. opposed the missionary society as a first step back into an unauthorized ecclesiastical organization that would evolve into an inherently divisive denominational structure of the kind they had left and condemned. “*Tall oaks from little acorns grow*,” he warned. Rick Atchley mocks the “*slippery slope*,” but history vindicates Creath.

Rick said, “*We could have a lot more chairs*.” Let me suggest a few. Opposition to unauthorized innovations is older than McGarvey and Lard. Years earlier, Thomas Campbell had said in the house of Abraham Altars, “*Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent*.” To which Andrew Munro said, “*Mr. Campbell, if we adopt that as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism*.” To which Campbell replied, “*Of course, if infant baptism*

be not found in the scriptures, we can have nothing to do with it.”

Place a chair to the left of the chair that represents “*the people in our movement that worship with the instrument*” and let it represent those who *sprinkle infants*. The Bible is silent about infant sprinkling. James O’Kelly championed a restoration plea in Virginia and North Carolina, but he continued to practice and defend infant sprinkling. He broke with the Methodist over church organization. According to O’Kelly, “*The scriptures gave no basis for episcopacy.... Not a word was said about a superior order of bishops.... Prelates who claim pre-eminence should show scriptural authority.*”

Place another chair to the left of O’Kelly for John Wesley and Francis Ashbury. Wesley pleaded for a return to primitive Christianity and said it was “*their one desire and design to be downright Bible-Christians; taking the Bible, as interpreted by the primitive Church and our own, for their whole and sole rule*,” but he still sanctioned Anglican bishops. The American Methodist broke with the Church of England.

Place a chair to the left of the Wesleyans for King Henry and the Anglicans; and, since King Henry broke with Rome over the Pope’s claim of power over Englishmen, set a chair to the left of the Episcopalians for the Pope. The Bible is silent about the Pope you know, and

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Rick Atchley’s Chairs...



Editorial...

BACK TO THE BIBLE #1

Garland M. Robinson

***Seeking the counsel of the world does not please God.
The Bible is God's RULE BOOK. The faithful love it.
The digressives hate it.***

Back to the Bible. Who in the world could possibly disagree with that simple statement? For God-loving and Bible-honoring people, that's the answer to the problem of sin. It's heaven's answer. As we communicate to God through prayer, God communicates to us through his holy inspired word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). He does not reveal his will through dreams, visions, or feelings.

However, there are many who are now saying: Times are changing, People are different today, We've got to keep up with what people are looking for. They say we are answering questions people are not asking. I beg your pardon, if there's a problem in this area, it's in the fact that people are asking the wrong questions, not that we're answering the wrong questions! The answers are ALWAYS the same — "thus saith the Lord." Some are now going so far as to hire outside consultants who assess the church and community and make recommendations on how to grow and meet the "felt-needs" of the people.

There's a very simple answer to this "so-called" complex question of today's world. REPENT! Come down off your high-horse of the doctrines and commandments of men (Matt. 15:8-9) and get back to the Bible. Forsake man's wisdom and seek God's wisdom. Take a sober look at God's counsel. Worldly minded men seek advice from the wrong source(s). Rehoboam sought the counsel of the young men his own age and foolishly chose to follow their advice (1 Kings 12:6-15). We can see the wisdom of God when he requires that elders (shepherds, overseers) be older men, not younger (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-14).

What many churches are doing today is the same thing Rehoboam did. They are forsaking God's counsel

(His all-inspired Word) and following the counsel of the world (the devil). They go to great lengths to avoid the Bible. They are no friend of the Lord because Jesus said, "*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*" (John 15:14). You can't be a friend of the Lord and not do what he says. Jesus said himself, "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say*" (Luke 6:46)?

We do not find out what pleases God by seeking the counsel of the world. Many despise appealing to the Scriptures. They do not see the Bible as God's rule book. They hate that concept — with emphasis on the word hate. They hate what they call "proof-texting." They don't want to appeal to the Bible — giving book, chapter and verse for everything we say and do. But that is exactly what Colossians 3:17 demands. "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*"

There's ONLY ONE WAY a person KNOWS if he is acceptable to God. Will the liberal-minded and progressive accept it? No, they hate it. They despise it. But, let the Bible (God) tell us the answer as to how we know if we're approved in his sight: "*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked*" (1 John 2:3-6).

In 1 John 4:21 we are commanded that if we love God, we also love our brethren in Christ. But what is

the proof that we love one another? First John 5:2-3 tells us: "*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*" Jesus made abundantly clear that "*By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*" (John 13:35).

Love does not excuse and ignore error. Instead, it seeks to help the wayward learn of their error and exhort them to repent of it. Faithful Gospel preachers reprove, rebuke and exhort (2 Tim. 4:2). And, when those in error will not repent, Romans 16:17-18 tells us what to do: "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*" (Rom. 16:17-18). Paul wrote concerning those who were perverting the Gospel in the region of Galatia: "*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*" (Gal. 1:8-9).

These very points weighed heavily on the apostle Paul's mind. We read in 2 Corinthians 11:28, "*Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*" He was greatly troubled by false teachers who led saints away from the truth. He spoke of such when he said, "*...their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some*" (2 Tim. 2:16-17). How sad it is that we have preachers today teaching the same thing! Philippians 3:18 says, "*(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ.*"

The Bible clearly reveals there would be a falling away — a depart-

ture, an apostasy from the truth. Paul tells the church at Thessalonica, there will “*come a falling away*” (2 Thess. 2:3). To Timothy he wrote, “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*” (1 Tim. 4:1). “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). To the elders of the church at Ephesus he said, “*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them*” (Acts 20:29-30).

The apostasy was in progress even before Paul’s death. “*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work*” (2 Thess. 2:7). It has continued through the centuries and is alive and continuing in today’s world as well. It is so sad and tragic that the tribe of those who are championing apostasy among churches of Christ are some of its own members. Men (and women) are drinking from the cesspools of theological cemeteries (I did not misspell the word). The Lord did not dig these pools nor plant these plants. But, he will certainly root them up (Matt. 15:13). Jesus has been provided no place in their teaching and practice. Oh, they claim he is preeminent in their hearts and schools/cathedrals, but he is absent because his word is not welcome nor respected there.

Jesus said, “*Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh*” (Matt. 18:7)! Paul wrote a very similar message in 1 Corinthians 11:19, “*For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*” Error separates the unfaithful from the faithful and distinguishes between the wayward and the obedient — those who hate God and those who love God.

The modernists, liberals and progressives stand reproved and rebuked. Will they (you) heed it?

SAD, MAD OR GLAD

When the Truth is proclaimed (2 Tim. 4:2-4) the hearer will respond in one of three ways: sad, mad or glad. The obedient people on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 responded with *gladness* (Acts 2:41) while the rich young ruler was sad when he heard the Truth (Matt. 19:16-22). In Acts 7:51-60, some became so *mad* at what Stephen preached they stoned him to death. False accusations were made against Jesus (Matt. 11:19; John 10:20) and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:24) out of anger over the Truth that was proclaimed.

Do people generally respond in the same way today? Yes! We are thankful that some are glad to hear the Truth and obey it. But how tragic it is when people respond in a sad or mad way and continue to do so.

Why are people sad or mad when Truth is proclaimed? Let’s notice three reasons.

1) People are sad or mad when they hear what is **NEEDED**, not necessarily what is wanted. Some want their ears tickled with fables and foolishness (2 Tim. 4:3-4). They want to hear that which is smooth and not right (Isa. 30:10). Too many want to hear what pleases them rather than what God demands that must be preached.

2) People are sad or mad when they hear **NEGATIVE** preaching. It is amazing how some believe there is

no place for negative preaching. One cannot read and understand 2 Timothy 4:2-4 and not understand that negative preaching is a part of “God pleasing preaching.” The very words “reproving” and “rebuking” demonstrate that. Of course, there must always be the preaching of both the positive and negative.

3) People are sad or mad when they hear **NAMES** called or mentioned. Is it wrong to identify those who are making havoc of the Truth and/or who are false teachers? Of course not. Fulfilling Romans 16:17-18 demands that it be done. Paul did it in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 and 4:14-15. He was not wrong for doing so. Some will become mad when a false teacher is identified but will not say one thing when that false teacher (by his teaching) causes others to lose their souls. Indeed, isn’t that strange. Such is a demonstration of the wrong attitude toward God, His Word and the church.

We must not become **mad** with the **message** nor **messenger** of Truth. “*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31-32).

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WAR ON DRUGS

The world of substance abuse affects every facet of our lives: physically, emotionally, socially, financially and spiritually. Few have been immune from it’s evil clutches. More attention needs to be given to this imposing plague. The Bible addresses the issue plainly (Gal. 5).



Fri: *The Lighter Substances: Tobacco, Marijuana & Alcohol*
Sat: *The Hard Drugs*
Sun. am: *Unspotted From The World Of Substance Abuse*
Sun. pm: *Be Not Conformed To The World*

November 7-9, 2014

Leoni Church of Christ | 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190
TOM HOUSE, Gospel Preacher, Commissioned Deputy Sheriff

WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #9

Nathan Franson

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” To see our ongoing examination of these “Articles,” go to seektheoldpaths.com/stop2014.htm.

The ninth Article of Faith proclaims, **“We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”**

Setting aside the obvious error that exists with Mormonism truly believing all that God has revealed, it is apparent through careful examination that if one really believes all that God has revealed in the past, then there would be no reason or need to believe that God is still revealing things now or in the future.

In his second letter to the early Christians, Peter writes, *“...to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”* (2 Peter 1:1-4).

Notice how Peter readily accepts and teaches that God has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness. In the same letter, Peter emphasizes the characteristics one must possess in order to obtain that life and live in a godly way. The recipients of his letter were members of the Lord’s church and understood that it was the Lord who added them to the church (Acts 2:47). They had been baptized, after having repented of sins and confessed Christ, and thus added to the Kingdom of God. Now that they were in Christ, they were given instruction on how to continuously live faithful to the Lord.

The same message was to be applied for all disciples for all time. In other words, if we do what they did, we will be what they were, faithful Christians.

Jude writes that additional revelation was no longer needed since the “faith” (Gospel) had been delivered. *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). The tense of the words “once delivered” shows it was delivered “for all time.” There was always just one faith which was/is synonymous with the Gospel. Once it was revealed how one is added to the church of Christ and how to remain faithful, there would be no new revealed information (other than the examples of those who followed the Scriptures). Once the Scriptures were completely revealed (2 Tim. 3:16-17), there would be no need for anything more to be revealed in how to behave. The New Testament Scriptures furnish us completely unto every good work.

One of the most prominent arguments made by the **Mormon Church** in teaching that God is still revealing his will, comes by way of their belief and teaching of their “Great Apostasy.” This is the teaching that after the death of Christ and His apostles, His church and doctrine was wiped from earth by man. The LDS website (www.lds.org) contends, “After the deaths of the Savior and His Apostles, men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes in Church organization and priesthood ordinances (unknown).” As a result, Joseph Smith claimed he was visited by God the Father and Jesus the Son in fleshly tangible forms to instruct him to re-establish the true church.

Joseph Smith wrote, “I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not:

and it shall be given him.’ Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. ... I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did.”

Smith wanted people to believe how God had given him revelation pertaining to the Church and that he would be the one to “restore” it. His downfall comes by way of the very source he was trying to use to lure so many people into this heresy. Smith quoted the Bible, which was obviously in existence at the time the Mormon Church was established. As such, **God’s word never left, and His kingdom was never in jeopardy of being removed.**

Since Joseph Smith had the word of God in his possession, why would he need any further revelation of how to restore the church of the New Testament? By his own actions he acknowledges that the word of God and “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” were never lost. Thus, he condemns himself. He would later pen the *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price* in which his so-called revelations would not only contradict previous “revelations,” but habitually change as time goes on. This is one of the dangers in accepting new revelations. They not only get tangled with what has been already truthfully written, but they can change with the seasons to entertain new ideas not prescribed in the Bible.

Peter assures us, *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you”* (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Peter did not say the word of the Lord will continue to be revealed, but that what has been written will endure forever. God has said everything He needs to say about living godly lives and going to heaven. His

word does not need changing. It does not need updating. Certainly it does not need to be revealed in any new way, especially with Scripture that contradicts the Bible.

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MORE ON BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Tom Wacaster

I do not want a Bible that is “easy to read,” or one wherein the so-called translators tell me what they think the original means. I want one that tells me what the original says, and let me determine what it means; even if the translation is somewhat awkward and difficult to read.

When God created man, He did not leave man to flounder in the waters of ignorance and superstition insofar as his knowledge of God is concerned. God has communicated with man “from the beginning” (Matt. 19:4), albeit the different means of communications has changed from dispensation to dispensation (Heb. 1:1-2). God “left not himself without witness” (Acts 14:17), and “...the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20).

When our Savior ascended back to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into ALL TRUTH (John 16:13). That truth is made available to us through a combination of factors which include *revelation, inspiration, transmission, and translation*. We will touch on each of these as we proceed.

Unfortunately, most folks are completely unaware of the processes that have produced what we refer to as the “Holy Bible.” This lack of understanding has contributed to a complete disrespect for the Bible, and consequently, to a rather loose handling of the word of God when it comes to providing a reliable translation of God’s word in one’s native language. In order to understand the importance of selecting a good translation, it is important to understand the process involved in the communication of God’s word to us. Please consider the following.

First, think about the **ORIGI-**

NATION of the message to be communicated to man the creature by God the Creator. What we sometimes refer to as “the scheme of redemption,” or what God refers to as the “mystery,” was purposed and planned in Christ Jesus, “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:11). God’s word is settled in heaven (Psa. 119:89). That word will endure forever (1 Peter 1:24-25). God’s plan for the church, man’s salvation, our heavenly home — all these things were in the mind of God long before He ever communicated these things to man. On one hand you have God, on the other man. The great task facing our Creator was to make the “things” known only to the Divine mind, and in some way communicate them to the feeble mind of man. Paul addressed this very point: “*We speak wisdom, however; among them that are fullgrown...in a mystery,...which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him*” (1 Cor. 2:6-9, ASV).

Speaking of the “natural man” (the uninspired man as opposed to the inspired man), Paul informed the Corinthians that “...we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:12, ASV). How was this accomplished? “Which

things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words” (1 Cor. 2:13, ASV). There are two important truths that emerge from this passage. First, God has made His “mind” known to man. That in and of itself is a most astonishing truth. Second, God has selected, so far as the means for making His will known to mankind, the use of words! In order to make His will known, He selected to “combine spiritual things with spiritual words” and then reveal that Divine message to mankind.

Second, **REVELATION** is the process of making these “things of God” available to men. Revelation means simply, “to make known.” Before these things were made known it remained a “mystery” as to how God would save man (Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 2:7). Throughout the history of man, God has used “divers manners” (or different manners or means) for making His will known to man. During the Patriarchal age God spoke to the oldest male member of a family and that “patriarch” would then teach his family (Heb. 1:1). As the world became increasingly wicked, God found it necessary to preserve the “seed” from which the Messiah, the Savior of the world, would eventually come; hence, the call of Abram (Gen. 12:1-3). Time and space does not allow us to trace the development of that “nation” that would produce the man-child, the One Who was from everlasting to everlasting (Micah 5:2), He Who is called “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,

The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). When Israel had developed into a great nation, God gave them “living oracles” (Acts 7:38) through Moses, and from that time until the coming of the Christ, the nation of Israel was under the Law of Moses. But when the “fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal. 4:4), and through His Son, God “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (1 Tim. 1:10).

After Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at God’s right hand (Acts 2:33), the Holy Spirit was sent to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13), thereby completing the process of revelation and giving to man that which is “...profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is this third dispensation, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to which all men are amenable.

The third word we want to concentrate on is **INSPIRATION**. Inspiration is closely associated with revelation, for without revelation there can be no inspiration. Inspiration is the process by which God assured the accurate transmission of His word to others. As the apostles and prophets received the revelation they were “moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21) to record the message of God. They were guarded from error by the careful “watch care” of the Holy Spirit over these men who spoke and wrote that divine revelation. Inspiration is the means by which human agency was used to communicate the things of God to a lost and dying world. Those documents, written by the pen of Paul, Peter, John, Matthew, Mark, etc. were the “original” documents. God in His divine providence saw to it that none of the “original” letters survived to our day and age. Those letters were evidently passed from one congregation to the next (Col. 4:16), while at the same time copies would be made from the originals to facilitate the spread of the Gospel. This leads us to our next point.

Fourth, **TRANSITION** is the process by which those inspired letters were copied and distributed. Care was exercised to make sure that

accurate copies were made. Meanwhile, uninspired men would quote from these letters, and much of what was written in that first century by inspired apostles and prophets, has been preserved through the quotes, copies, and manuscripts. The sheer number of manuscripts, quotes, and fragments of manuscripts astounds the imagination.

Our last word for consideration is **TRANSLATION**. In order for God’s word to reach the masses it is essential that the Greek manuscripts be “translated” into a specific “target language.” In our case, the “target language” is English. For just a moment, please consider the role of a translator. In 1968, the late Allan Bloom completed a translation of Plato’s work, and in the introduction Bloom pointed out that his translation was intended to be a “literal translation.” He made a most significant observation: “He [speaking of the student, TW] must be emancipated from the tyranny of the translator, given the means of transcending the limitations of the translators interpretation. The only way to provide the reader with this independence is by a slavish, even if sometimes cumbersome, literalness.” Herein we see the importance of a good “translation” — one that gets as close to the meaning of the original as is humanly possible.

I do not want a Bible that is “easy to read,” or one wherein the so-called translators tell me what they think the original means. I want one that tells me what the original says, and let me determine what it means; even if the translation is somewhat awkward and difficult to read.

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We welcome many new readers to *Seek The Old Paths* who once received the *Banner Of Truth* journal edited by Walter W. Pigg, Jr. The goal of S.T.O.P. is to be faithful to the Lord. This can only be done by being faithful to His Word. It is by His word we know the Truth (John 8:31-32) and it is by obeying His word we are saved (1 Peter 1:22; 2 Tim. 4:2).

Rick Atchley’s Chairs...

(Continued from page 65)

Rick must surely know that we will never achieve unity with the Catholics as long as we oppose the Pope. Rick said, “Unity is getting harder and harder, isn’t it?” It is.

Religious division goes back further than the Pope. We find it just outside the Garden of Eden. “The LORD had respect unto Able and his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect” (Gen. 4:4-5). Cain was his mother’s pride. “I have gotten a man of the LORD,” she said. Perhaps it went to his head. He had trouble receiving instruction and taking criticism.

Cain was “wroth” when he learned that some things done for worship is not respected by God. Hebrews 11:4 says, “By faith Able offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” The implication is that Cain did not offer his sacrifice by faith. Abel offered his sacrifice by faith because he had God’s word for what he offered. The only way to do anything by faith is to do it by God’s word (Rom. 10:16-17).

Cain’s offering was not respected because it was not authorized. So here we have the first religious division and it was over an unauthorized innovation in the worship. The first religious debate followed; “Cain talked with Abel,” and the first religious persecution, “Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him” (Gen. 4:8). In the New Testament, Jude called our unity “the common salvation” and warned of those departing from “the faith once delivered” saying, “Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain” (Jude 11).

In criticizing the restoration plea, Rick misstated it. According to Rick the plea had been, “You give up what I do not approve of and we will have unity,” and that unity is “only to be achieved by surrendering to the conclusions of the most narrow minded of us.” I do not like that plea either. The restoration plea is not about surrendering to any man, broad or narrow. The restoration plea is for unity in truth. It is about coming together in Christ “...that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the

enmity thereby” (Gal. 2:16).

Here is how Alexander Campbell described the restoration plea in 1811.

The present partyism is a disgrace to our profession.... We commence our career as a church under the banner of ‘The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible,’ as the standard for our religious faith and practice.... In Jerusalem the church began. To Jerusalem we must then look for a fair beginning. Whatever we have got in our faith and practice which they had not, we shall return to the rightful owners. What they had and we have not, we shall append to our inventory of Christian duties and Christian excellencies. Meanwhile, we shall assist each other in getting rid of our prejudices and errors as soon as we can, and ‘whereunto we have already attained, we shall walk by the same rule and mind the same thing;’ and if we live in peace, the God of love and peace shall be with us: for he has promised it.

You may want to read that again and reflect that Alexander Campbell was only twenty-two years old when he said that. It is a profound statement for a young preacher. David Lipscomb used to teach that *unity in truth will necessarily result in division with error*. So also taught the Lord Jesus Christ, “*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword... He that is not with me is against me*” (Matt. 13:34; 12:30).

The use of the instrument in worship can neither be justified nor hidden. That is why its use is always inherently divisive. We cannot worship together with it and without it at the same time. I may worship with those who would have no problem with adding the instrument to the worship, and I probably do on occasion. I am not required to know the thoughts of all in the assembly when we worship together. However, if they start playing the instrument, I have to leave. I would not ask them to sur-

render to me for unity and they should not ask me to surrender to them. Unity in truth can only come when we both surrender to God.

Rick said, “*The truth of the matter is, our motto has been, ‘Where the Bible speaks we speak and where the Bible is silent we’re silent.’ That’s not true. Our real motto is, ‘Where the Bible speaks we speak, and where the Bible is silent we have a lot more to say.’*” His audience thought that was funny but I missed the joke.

“Silence” is biblical. “*For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood*” (Heb. 7:14). The law that God gave Moses did not explicitly forbid a priest from Judah; it specified Levi, and therefore Judah was excluded by the implication of its silence concerning Judah. It was because of this that the priests opposed Uzziah’s attempt to burn incense unto the LORD. “*Thou hast trespassed,*” they said, “*neither shall it be for thine honor from the LORD God*” (2 Chron. 26:18). The next verse says, “*Then Uzziah was wroth....*” Uzziah was in way of Cain, and he was “*wroth*” for the same reason. Those in the way of Cain do not like people talking about “silence,” but we have a lot to say about it because “silence” is not simplistic. It excludes additions to what is specified (like playing instruments), but it does not exclude expedients which are logically implied (like a meeting place), and it does not exclude opposition to unauthorized innovations (like the office of the Pope).

Unity in truth is difficult. It has always been difficult. It was difficult in the New Testament. Much of the New Testament is written to confront errors that were threatening unity in truth. Paul wrote “*some things hard to understand*” (2 Peter 3:16); “hard,” but not impossible; difficult, but not too difficult. “**Unity in diversity” is the easier path but it does not lead to Biblical unity.** Biblical unity requires study, disciplined thought, self-examination, overcoming prejudices, laying aside human traditions, foregoing personal preferences, humility, courage, and total submission of self to God. There are no short cuts. God is gracious and patient with us and we must be gracious and patient with one another. We do not all come to the truth at the

same pace or at the same time.

There is a world of difference between honest erring seekers of truth and scheming self-willed dreamers. God knows the difference. He will judge us individually and righteously. That last call is his. But the standard for truth is unchanged and an error is an error none the less.

Rick asked, “*Who gets to decide what is unauthorized and what is expedient?*” The answer is that God decides and he has given us everything we need to discern his decisions (cf. 2 Peter 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Having created us in his own image he expects us to think it through. A rejection of objective truth will not bring us to unity in truth.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"I wanted to drop a note to you to warn you about a new book that's making the rounds online. It's called *'Escaping Self Idolatry: How churches of Christ are Finding their Way into the Future.'* It's pro-denomination, pro-instruments, anti-every Sunday Lord's Supper and anti-baptism. It calls out faithful men...while praising **Rubel Shelly, Randy Harris, and John Mark Hicks**. The worst thing about this is that the writer claims to be from rural West Virginia and writes to people in sound churches, trying to get them to leave their first love. Please warn people about this book" ...**Jake Wrightson**. "Brother Robinson, An overwhelming majority of Tennessee voters (1.4 million, 81%) amended the Tennessee Constitution in 2006. The amendment we passed banned same-sex marriage in our state. On Wednesday, August 6, 2014, one court, consisting of three federal judges and having jurisdiction over four states (Tennessee, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan), heard arguments about whether Tennessee's state constitution violates the U.S. constitution (factn.org). The justices of the U.S. 6th Federal Circuit Court of Appeals are currently writing their opinion, and I am unsure how they will rule. Personally, I'm not ready for Tennessee's K-12 kids to hear about how Heather has two mommies or Jake has two daddies. Why should children be the subjects of such social experiments? I am not ready for them to read, 'King and King,' a book given to 2nd graders in Lexington, Massachusetts about two men who fall in love and marry, and ends with a picture of them kissing. I am not ready for Tennessee parents to spend time in jail, as David Parker, a Massachusetts dad did, when he objected to similar material being taught to his six year old. What I am ready for is the opportunity to show love to homosexuals by introducing them to the blessings that come from a life of repentance from past sins (including homosexuality) and the joy that comes from being forgiven through Christ and His church. The church of Christ at Corinth included former homosexuals. So do churches of Christ today. But the Lord's church in America may not always have the freedom to teach the truth regarding the proper role of human sexuality and marriage. That's why my prayer is, 'Father, grant these three 6th Circuit Court judges the ability to see Thy wisdom in creating marriage as the union of one man and one woman, for life. In Jesus' name, amen.' For our nation to stand, marriage must stand. Homosexuality and same-sex marriage is wrong. Scripture is clear in this matter. What is less clear is, who in the brotherhood is leading the way in helping congregations prepare for the legal onslaught of pro-homosexual activists and lawyers? Who can I look to for practical wisdom in preparing my home congregation for the legal battles that may occur because of our stand against homosexuality and same-sex marriage? What congregation, eldership, preacher, or brother (or sister) in Christ can I go to for such advice? Can any readers of *Seek The Old Paths* offer some advice to me and other readers of STOP? I would be very appreciative for any information in this regard" ...**Michael Gilbert, Martin, TN**. "Here is our contribution to help with your expense. Keep up the good work and may the Lord bless you" ...**Name withheld by request**. "I would like to sign up three of our members for STOP. Two are incarcerated and one is at a rehabilitation facility. All three are expecting your periodical. Thanks for the work you do!" ...**Jonathan Love-day**. "I appreciate the good work you do, especially on the paper. I know that it is quite an endeavor to bring to fruition each month. Thanks" ...**Victor Eskew, Springville, TN**. "Jesse Whitlock is no longer a resident of Beeville TX, so we would like to redirect the *Seek The Old Paths* newsletter mailing to me. Thank you" ...**David Cave, Skidmore, TX**. "Please send month-

ly publication, *Seek The Old Paths*. The best I've ever read!" ...**Mary Brown, Georgetown, SC**. "I would like to change my address" ...**Clarence Batman, Niles, MI**. "Would you send me *Seek The Old Paths*? Thank you" ...**Alta McAteer, Greenbrier, AR**. "Thank you for continuing to send me *Seek The Old Paths*" ...**Bill & Sue Trees, Austin, TX**. "Thank you so much for your publication *Seek The Old Paths*. I am grateful to be on the mailing list. I am also grateful for your stand for the truth at a time when so many are preaching a soft social message that is becoming the norm of our day in so many of our Lord's churches and leaving our young people unfilled and unsatisfied. I am sending a check to support the work and also ask that you begin sending STOP to a new convert who desires to grow spiritually. Again, thank you for your commitment" ...**Bob Swindell, Sparta, TN**. "Thank you for sending STOP. Keep up the good fight of faith (Jude 3)" ...**M. Brown, Broadway C/C, Rockford, IL**. "Please accept the enclosed contribution toward *Seek The Old Paths* expenses. It is an excellent publication" ...**Nashville, TN**. "In an effort to save expenses, please remove me from your mailing list. I am able to access your publication through the internet" ...**Gary Fowler, Franklin, TN**. "I really appreciated the July issue of STOP...was much needed!" ...**Roger Scully**. "Please remove the following addresses from your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths* newsletter" ...**P. D. Davis, William Davis, Sr., Jacksonville, FL**. "Could you add me to your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*? Thank you" ...**MS**. "Hubert Morris has passed away" ...**Baxter, TN**. "Thanks for STOP. Here is a small donation to help with the work" ...**G. & L. Sydnor, McKenzie, TN**.

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