Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 3 No. 4

TAKE HEED

Kenneth Jarrett

It is not unusual for people to cast aside the message of hope or treat it with contempt. God, realizing the nature of man, has warned repeatedly to "pay attention" to sacred things. The apostle Peter said, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed ... " (II Peter 1:16-19). To take heed is to "fix the mind upon." Let us note some areas in which this admonition is applicable.

Take heed what ye hear (Mark 4:24). In all probability, the disciples were inclined to hear only that which corresponded with desires and notions which had already been formed. This is certainly the situation in our day. Many have swallowed "hook, line, and sinker" the fables of deceivers and religious racketeers because they have only heard what they wanted to hear. I often encounter people who have been misled and are unwilling to even consult the Bible to see what it really teaches on any given matter. The ancient Bereans were a noble people. Inspiration records, "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Some things should not be heard at all, some which are heard should be forgotten, but the great truths of God should be heard, treasured, and practiced. It was the weeping prophet who said, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord" (Jer. 22:29).

Take heed how ye hear (Luke 8:18). This statement by Jesus was made in connection with the parable of the sower. The parable illustrates four kinds of hearers. The first did not care to believe, the second was merely impulsive, the third became preoccupied, but the fourth heard well and remained true and steadfast. Indeed, the gospel affects people differently depending upon their attitude. Some listen half-heartedly and simply let things go in one ear and out the other. Many become angry and vent their wrath upon the proclaimer as though he originated the message. Others gladly receive it and thank God for it. The gospel will generally make people "mad, sad, or glad" depending upon how they hear. It is significant to note that the Holy Spirit, the revealer of truth, has repeatedly warned men to "pay attention." The Bible frequently states. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

Take heed that no man deceive you (Matt. 24:4). Throughout his ministry, Jesus taught that men could and would be led astray. He said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in

April 1992

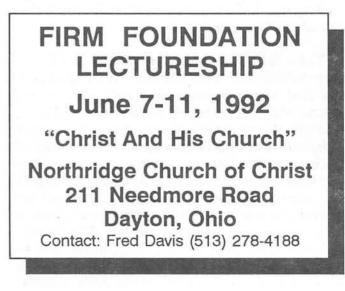
sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). History, both sacred and secular, reveals that deception has often been practiced by evil men disguised as saints. All men like to think of themselves as intelligent enough to avoid deception, but some of the greatest "scholars" of the world have been deceived. The apostle Paul said, "For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:14-15). A collar turned backward and a silver cross on a chain around the neck does not guarantee the truthfulness of a doctrine or the holiness of life.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men (Matt. 6:1). This statement by Jesus is a warning against wrong motives. Jesus taught that those who do their "good deeds" to be seen of men have no reward of their heavenly Father (Matt. 6:1-2). Men have always been prompted by wrong motives. Herod's commission to the wise men sounded good but he had the wrong motive and God knew his heart. He instructed the wise men to inform him of the location of Jesus that he might come and worship him, but in reality he desired to kill him (Matt. 2:8, 12-13). The kiss of Judas appeared to be an act of kindness but it was the means which he had devised to betray the Master (Matt. 26:48-49). Wrong motives are still prevalent. Do YOU have proper motives? Do you do good deeds to receive the applause of men? Do you work only so long as you are in the lead? Do you make a pretense of serving the Lord for earthly advantage? Dear friend, you may fool men but you will not fool God because he knows all things (Heb. 4:13).

Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. This statement by Jesus is recorded in Matthew 16:6. Leaven is the symbol of a penetrating influence. The leaven of these two religious groups was hypocrisy, vanity, and pride. Thus, Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the teachings and influence of these people. The Sadducees denied the reality of angels, spirits, or of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8). The Pharisees were selfrighteous. They had become scrupulously righteous in their own eyes while ignoring God's law. They loved the praise, glory, and honor of men. Jesus said of them, "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matt. 6:2). In reality, they possessed nothing but cold formality in worship and only extended lip service to God (Matt. 15:8-9).

Take heed how you build. This statement by the apostle Paul was made with reference to the Church of our Lord (1 Cor. 3:10-11). The only foundation upon which the church can be built is Christ. In order to properly build upon the foundation, we must adhere to apostolic doctrine. There is danger of false teaching or of applying improper methods, so we must follow the pattern outlined in the New Testament. Christ did not authorize different plans of worship for disagreeable people. Worship must be in "spirit and truth" (John 4:24). He did not give people the prerogative of creating their own system of congregational organization. The Lord does not have different plans of salvation; he has but one. Yet, diverse doctrines abound throughout so-called "Christendom." Today we are told that "doctrine" is unimportant. The word "doctrine" simply means "teaching." When people contend that doctrine is unimportant, they are simply saying that teaching is unimportant. Yet, the church is built up only through teaching. Hence, when we "take heed how we build", we must take heed how we teach.

The vast majority of this earth will be lost in a Devil's hell (Matt. 7:13-14). No sin will enter heaven (Rev. 21:27). Therefore, "take heed" to the ways of heaven. \blacklozenge



Summer Is Coming...

Vance Hutton

The spring season is here. Summer, Lord willing, will soon arrive. This wonderful time of the year reminds us of the Lord's existence and of his faithfulness. We will experience the changing of the seasons for as long as the earth remains (Gen. 8:22). Truly, God has been good to us all.

Although spring and summer are such wonderful times, it becomes imperative for us to be on guard and take heed lest we fall victim to some very strong temptations during this season. Notice the following dangers associated with spring and summer.

1) THE TEMPTATION TO SIN IN OUR RECREATION – Recreation is not sinful in itself (Mark 6:31). People often spend too much money on summer recreation. Money rightfully belonging to the family or the Lord's work should never be spent on recreation. Too much time is often given to recreation.

2) THE TEMPTATION TO DRESS IM-MODESTLY – Summer brings many folks to not remember the Lord's commands about decency and modesty (I Tim. 2). Let us practice care in this area.

3) THE TEMPTATION TO FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLIES – many will willfully choose activities over the worship assemblies. Let us remember this danger during the summer of reunions and decorations. Remember the dead and our families, but not at the expense of putting God in second place. Is the Lord and his kingdom most important to us?

4) THE TEMPTATION TO SHUN OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH – The spring and summer will be filled with opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship, worship, and encouragement. James 4:17 teaches that if we fail to take advantage of such we sin.

5) THE TEMPTATION TO FORSAKE THE FAMILY – Many will be so selfish in their summer pursuits that their families will be neglected. Our mates and children are so important. May we never neglect responsibilities toward them (I Tim. 5:8).

6) THE TEMPTATION TO PUT UNDUE EMPHASIS ON JOBS – Some will allow summer work to rob them of worship, study, evangelism, and doing good. Jesus teaches us to seek him and his kingdom first and promises our needs to be met (Matt. 6:33).

7) THE TEMPTATION TO FREQUENT PLACES UNBECOMING TO CHRISTIANS – Summer often brings the tendency for people catering to places unbecoming to Christians. Public swimming pools of mixed bathers and beaches for the same are no places for Christians to participate with such.

Let us enjoy the summer but not fall victim to Satan. We must be Christians all year long.

Can One Accidentally Become A Member Of The Lord's Church?

Charles A. Pledge

It has become very common for some among us to argue that one may become a member of the New Testament church quite by accident. Some teach that one may, in the process of joining a denomination, actually be added by the Lord to the church Christ purchased with his blood. They teach that the sinner, though ignorant of what is happening, because he is sincere, is accepted by the Lord at the point he honestly does what he thinks is right. Recently I sat for two hours and, for the most part, this was the emphasis of a discussion with an elder of a church of Christ. His argument fell into three points. (1) Sincerity makes a wrong right. (2) There is a great universal church of Christ which cannot be identified with any one religious group. (3) To argue that only what is revealed from God is that which God approves in religious actions is divisive and counter productive to godliness.

This elder had no new argument that hasn't been floating around among some in the church for many years. Many congregations of the Lord's people have received sectarians on the basis of their denominational baptism. This was done under the pretext that because the people were sincere when they were baptized with Baptist baptism, their sincerity made them acceptable to the Lord. My reply to this is the standard reply we have made against the sectarians outside the church all these years. Sincerity never changed an action from wrong to right. Look at the examples of sincerity acting sinfully. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 23:1); Simon (Acts 8) has never been proved insincere in his request that the apostles sell him the power to confer miraculous power; Jacob sincerely mourned over Joseph as being dead when all the time he was alive. Countless numbers of cases could be cited in which sincerity never changed the nature of an action. This elder argued that one could hear a lie, believe a lie, obey a lie, and still the Lord would add that one to the church as though truth was involved. If sincerity made obeying a lie acceptable. Eve didn't sin because she was deceived. Her sincerity is not impugned. Her action is condemned! This elder makes sincerity the basis of judgment. We read in John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." That word Jesus revealed is going to be the standard of judgment. People had better try to measure up to that word rather than thinking their sincerity will cover their sins.

This man tried to argue that the church Jesus purchased goes beyond local identity. It is the same response sectarians have made for decades. Sectarians are incensed by the use of the phrase church of Christ. They claim the use of this phrase by us is a travesty upon the universal church of Christ of which they claim to be members. We read in Acts 8:12: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus." Do you suppose what they heard remotely resembled what sectarians preach about the kingdom and the authority of Jesus? The people of Samaria who heard and believed were baptized. Why were they baptized? Because they believed. Why are people baptized into the denominations? Because they believe what they hear! They hear that one is saved by believing into Jesus and being added to that great universal church. They then are

baptized into a local denomination. There can be no parallel drawn between their action and the action of the Samaritans; only a contrast. We read in John 8:31-32: "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." Jesus declared that it is truth, his word, which shall make men free. Denominational preaching is not the truth. It never has been the truth. People never were nor ever shall be saved by denominational preaching.

A false analogy is often used to try to substantiate a false argument. Some will say, "Can't one take their Bible, read, believe it, and obey it? Won't the Lord add them to this church?" That is not what happens with denominational baptism. Try to get a Baptist preacher to baptize you in order to have remission of sins so that God will add you to his church. I have baptized at least fifty Baptists through private studies with them. In most instances I would have them call their preacher and ask him if he baptized them in order to receive forgiveness of past sins. This would convince them that they had not been scripturally baptized as they were alleging. All the false arguments in the world will never change the truth of our Lord.

If denominational preaching is not the truth (and it is not) how can they be part of the universal family of God? If what they believe and obey is error (and it is) they are not saved from their past sins when they obey what they believe. It is God who delivers one from the power of darkness and translates into the kingdom of his dear Son (Col. 1:12-13). Most denominational preachers don't even believe the kingdom is present. They look for it to come. How can they preach the truth about it?

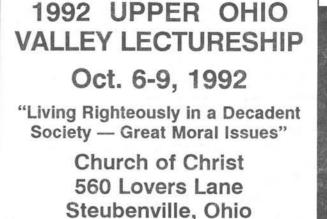
The elder's third argument centered around the allegation that to demand revealed, written authority for our religious actions is divisive. He stated that this view of authority is responsible for all the division that exists among the people of God. He alleges that this view of authority makes it impossible to be united except on human judgment. This is Leroy Garrett's (and while he was alive, Ketcherside's) view of authority. They have capitulated to the Martin Luther concept of authority. Luther argued that except it was specifically forbidden, we had the authority from God to act. He also argued that except it is specifically commanded, we have no obligation to act. The Christian Church accepts this position.

That is why they are so divided. This is why so many have become disillusioned and left them the past thirty years. There is no end to the apostasy that view entails. The very idea that God gives us a closed covenant (one that admits no addition. subtraction. or modification thereto) and allows us to do whatever is not specifically forbidden is repulsive. That is not the nature of a covenant. A covenant serves as a blueprint for action. A covenant authorizes only what it authorizes; no more, no less. If it isn't in the covenant, we have no authority to engage in it. The elder admitted he is in a covenant but denies the covenant has authority. He claims authority to do it with God's approval. He claims to bind what is revealed in the covenant is divisive. There you have the gist of his belief. If it is not written, we have God's approval to do it. If it is written, to bind it is to divide God's people. Belief in Jesus is commanded. But to bind that will divide. Thus, we have no authority to insist that what God commands be obeyed. This is irrational because it is self contradictory. To bind on the conscience of another that he cannot insist obedience to that which God reveals because it divides, is itself a divisive doctrine.

Our heart goes out to this deluded individual. Our heart bleeds for all the sincere, but mistaken, souls who believe the lie of denominationalism and obey that lie. The worst travesty worked against them is when some deluded individual posing as a member of the Lord's body assures those denominational people that their obedience of a lie is sufficient for God. At judgment, all those who have participated in such a cruel hoax will have to answer before Jesus Christ for their deeds. It is by his word we all shall be judged. It behooves us to hear, believe, and obey that word.

We plead with every person who left a denominational body behind and was accepted by the Lord's people on the basis of their sincerity of action to obey the gospel. If you are sincere, you will never want to leave any room for doubt. Sincere people strive with all their might to please God. Baptism into Christ is that baptism taught in the New Testament, not from some sectarian manual, creed, or confession of faith. Baptism into Christ is that baptism that is experienced in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament, for the purpose revealed in the New Testament.

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(Continued from back page, AUTHORITY)

revealed his will. It can be summed up by four different types of statements.

(1) A declarative statement. This is simply an announcement such as: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

(2) An imperative statement. This is simply a command or order such as: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6).

(3) An interrogative statement. This is making a statement by asking a question. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul" (I Cor. 1:13)? It is clear and obvious that Christ is "not" divided, Paul was "not" crucified for us, nor were we "baptized" in the name of Paul. God shows us this simple truth by asking a rhetorical question.

(4) A hortatory statement. This is a means of giving exhortation. "Let us go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1). "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10b).

2. APPROVED EXAMPLE (ACTION).

There are instances where God does not expressly tell us to do a thing, but gives us examples of Christians doing that thing with his approval. Notice the word "approved." There are examples of Christians doing things in the Bible but not always with God's approval. Therefore, all examples are not authorization for us to do that thing. They must be approved examples. They must be scripturally right.

Roy Deaver lists at least five kinds of action or examples in the New Testament:

(1) Action which was *sinful*: such as Peter denying the Lord and cursing (Matt. 26:69-74).

(2) Action which was optional and temporary: such as preaching to the Jews only (Acts 2–9).

(3) Action which was optional and permanent: such as traveling by boat (Acts 13:4).

(4) Action which was obligatory and temporary: such as confirming the spoken word with miracles (Acts 8:4).

(5) Action which was *obligatory* and *permanent*: such as baptism by immersion (Acts 8:26-39).

Obviously, the first of these examples provides no authority for us today. Of the other four, only those which were permanent (the third and fifth) have any relation to us.

A good rule to follow in determining which New Testament actions constitute an example for us to follow is: any action which has a stated underlying or implied command which requires specific action or attitudes of us today. The example of Philip baptizing the Eunuch is binding because of Matthew 28:18-20. The example of the Lord's Supper in Acts 20:7 upon the first day of the week is binding because of Matthew 26:26-29.

3. IMPLICATION or LOGICAL DEDUCTION

God may not have directly stated a certain truth, but it necessarily follows from what is stated. For example, we teach the truth when we say Lot went down into Egypt, even though the Bible does not specifically say he did. It does say he came up out of Egypt; therefore, we teach "by implication" that he went down into Egypt. It logically follows from what is said. Acts 22:16 says, "and now, why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." From this we learn Paul was still unforgiven of his sins when this statement was made, but the Bible nowhere explicitly says his sins were unforgiven. But the very purpose for which he was baptized "implies" this is true.

Everything the Bible teaches it teaches either explicitly or implicitly. Explicitly means: "externally visible, characterized by full clear expression." The Bible makes clear statements regarding a thing. *Implicitly* means: "implied, capable of being understood from something else though unexpressed." We use this means of understanding every day in our lives! Whatever the Bible teaches, it teaches by one or both of these two ways. Rest assured, whatever it teaches *implicitly* is just as true, factual, binding, and authoritative as that which is taught explicitly.

Also, there is a vast difference between an implication and an assumption. Many "assume" that infants were baptized by Paul and Silas when Lydia and her household were baptized. These people must assume: she was married, she had children, some of these children were infants and that they were baptized! That is a lot of assumption but no implication!

CONCLUSION

God's standard is his Word and is for the good of man. All of his word has been given to men for all time — nothing is missing from it (Matt. 5:18; II Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3). We can understand it (Eph. 3:4). We can rightly divide it (II Tim. 2:15). It directs our path (Psalm 119:105).

God does not want us to be hurt and when we follow his will, though we be weak, we shall be made strong. He would not leave us helpless. He does not want us to perish. He wants all men to come unto the knowledge of the truth and repent of their sins (II Peter 3:9). Dear friend, do you need to repent? \blacklozenge

James Woodroof's book, "The Church In Transition," is one of the most vicious attacks on the Lord's church to be put in print. Brother Wayne Coats has written a refutation of this book that needs to be read by every child of God. Its title is:

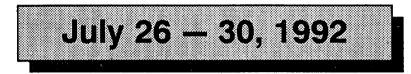
A REVIEW OF ANOTHER LIBERAL DIGRESSIVE EFFORT As Proposed By James Woodruff To Change The Church Of Christ

You may order these from brother Coats at: 705 Hillview Mt. Juliet, TN 37122.

The price is \$2.00; which basically covers brother Coats' publishing cost and the postage. This book is well worth buying!

Seventh Annual "SEEK THE OLD PATHS" LECTURESHIP

(Formerly the Annual Mississippi Lectureship)



(Always the 4th Sunday in July)

"Most Needed Lessons For Today"

Director: Garland Robinson

SUNDAY, JULY 26

9:45	The First and Great Commandment Allen Webster
10:35	Worship - A Solemn and Serious Privilege Wade Webster
7:00	The Basis, Boundary, and Benefits of Fellowship Charles Blair
8:00	The Distinctiveness of the Christian Life Ed White

MONDAY, JULY 27

9:00 God's Plan For Keeping The Church Pure Guy Heste
10:00 The Crisis of Qualified Leadership - I Jim Boyo
10:00 (Ladies Class) Titus 2:3-5 - Needed Instructions For Women
Dana Hal
11:00 The Effects of Humanism on the World and Church
1:30 Respecting the Silence of the Scriptures Billy Bland
2:30 The Church of Christ is the Kingdom of God Robert Lamber
3:30 Digression - Update '92 Wayne Coat
7:00 Destiny – Heaven or Hell Garland M. Robinson
8:00 The Work of the Church is not in Gimmicks, Gadgets
and Entertainment

TUESDAY, JULY 28

9:00	The Truth About Grace and Law W	Valter Pigg
10:00	The Crisis of Qualified Leadership – II Ja	ames Boyd
10:00	(Ladies Class) Teaching Children for the Home, Church,	
	Brenda l	Rutherford

11:00	How to Ascertain Bible Authority Gilbert Gough
1:30	What Bible Love Is and Is Not Paul Curless
2:30	The Work of the Holy Spirit Joe Nichols
3:30	Digression – Update '92 Wayne Coats
7:00	What Constitutes "Soundness" Ken Burleson
8:00	Am I Become Your Enemy Because I tell you the Truth?
	Melvin Sapp

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

9:00 Worship in Spirit and Truth in Jeopardy:

	Singing Groups, Instrumental Music, Plays, Skits Virgil Hale
10:00	Prayer, A Needed Study Howell Bigham
10:00	(Ladies Class) She Hath Done What She Could Peggy Leonard
11:00	The Role of Women in the Church Ed Casteel
1:30	Denominational Doctrines Affecting the Church Ronnie Hayes
2:30	Remaining Faithful in the Midst of Digression Kent Bailey
3:30	Digression – Update '92
7:00	The Great Commission Sidney White
8:00	What is Bible Repentance? Eddy Craft

THURSDAY, JULY 30

9:00	The Work of the Preacher Needs to be Better Understood	
	The Crisis of Leadership in the Home Melvin Sapp	
10:00	(Ladies Class) What the Christian Woman has to Offer to a	
	Modern and Materialistic World Tanya Bruce	
11:00	The New Hermeneutic and Pattern Theology Jimmy Bates	
	The Sin of Indifference Charles Leonard	
2:30	Dangers of Modern Versions Melvin Elliott	
	Digression – Update '92 Wayne Coats	
	The Distinctiveness of the Church Gilbert Gough	
	The Home that Pleases God Raymond Hagood	

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How To Establish Bible Authority

Garland M. Robinson

Christians are obligated to walk and please God. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). "But without faith it is impossible to please him..." (Heb. 11:6). "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The only way we can walk and please God is by following his divine directives! How then do we know what those directives are? How do we go about establishing what is binding on us and what is not? There are several rules of Bible interpretation.

Bible authority (divine authority) is essential in all matters. Col. 3:17 demands it: "and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...."

God has established a standard — a pattern we must follow. This has always been true. God instructed NOAH in regard to building the ark (Gen. 6). He specified the material out of which the ark was to be made and outlined in detail the dimensions of it. Instructions regarding the animals and food were given. "Thus did Noah according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). God instructed MOSES with reference to building the tabernacle (Exodus 25). A definite pattern-specifications-was given. God said, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount... thus did Moses according to all that the Lord commanded him" (Exodus 25:40; 40:16). In this age, God has given man a pattern for everything in life (II Peter 1:3), especially how he desires that he be worshipped. The pattern must be taken seriously, it cannot be changed or disregarded; it's conditions must be met.

GOD USES THREE METHODS TO EXPRESS HIS WILL IN THE BIBLE

1. DIRECT (EXPLICIT) STATEMENTS

This is the most obvious way in which God has (Continued on page 5, AUTHORITY)

TO OUR READERS

For the last few years I have had the honor and privilege of serving as one of the associate editors of "Seek The Old Paths," a work of the East Corinth church of Christ. As of March 15, I began working with the church in Crossville, Tennessee. Because of the distance involved it will be impossible to continue as an associate editor.

I felt, in view of criticism that such a paper often brings, the need to assure our readers that I wholeheartedly endorse the work of the East Corinth church. I appreciate tremendously the elders of that sound and faithful congregation. I support without reservation the work of the publication "Seek The Old Paths" and I am grateful for the support that the members of the East Corinth church give to their elders and preacher. The only reason for this change is due to the move to Crossville. I will continue to write for the paper as brother Robinson requests and will not for a moment fail to recommend the paper to anyone who appreciates soundness and those who uphold such. Our love and appreciation for the East Corinth congregation, her elders and preacher continues to grow daily. May God bless their efforts and may they be richly rewarded for their steadfastness in the faith. We would be delighted to hear from any of you at any time.

Sidney White P.O. Box 221 Crossville, TN 38555

