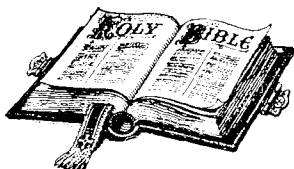


# THE INSTRUCTOR



*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16*

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Number 7

## The Church—A Sufficient Organization!

The local church (the congregation) is the only organization we can read about in the New Testament. We can read of **"the churches of God"** in 1 Cor. 11:16 and of **"the churches of Christ"** in Romans 16:16. The seven **"churches which are in Asia"** are mentioned in Rev. 1:4. There was a local church (Congregation) in Ephesus, one in Smyrna, one in Pergamos, one in Thyatira, one in Sardis, one in Philadelphia and one in Laodicea. Congregations are mentioned in other localities such as Corinth, Galatia, etc. We can not read of any organization any larger than the local church to which Christians belonged and through which they functioned in organized capacity to carry out the work assigned the church to do.

When fully organized, there was a plurality of elders in each church. We learn from Acts 14:23 that **elders** were ordained **"in every church."** Acts 20: 17 and 20:28 mention the **elders** of the church in Ephesus. We learn from Phil. 1:1 that there were also **deacons** in the church at Philippi. In order for men to qualify to be **"elders"** (i.e., bishops or pastors) they must meet the qualifications laid down by the Holy Spirit as recorded in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. In order for men to qualify to be **"deacons"** men must meet the qualifications laid down by the Holy Spirit as recorded in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Superintendents, General Overseers, etc.,

are **"officers"** that are unknown to the New Testament of Jesus Christ.

In giving instructions to **elders** the Apostle Peter said: **"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."** (1 Pet. 5:2-3). We can learn from this passage the attitude that should characterize elders. We can also learn what their work is and the scope of their oversight. They should not have to be forced to accept their responsibility but should do so willingly and their motives must be pure. Feeding the flock and taking the oversight thereof should be the primary concern of elders. They should also recognize that they are **limited** in oversight to **"the flock of God which is among you."**

In New Testament times, each congregation was independent, being a unit within itself. All congregations were equally related to Christ. They were not bound together under any earthly ecclesiastical or denominational authority in conferences, conventions, councils, synods, or the like. The organization of the church consisted simply of saints, with the **elders** as overseers and **deacons** as special servants in each congregation. There were no missionary or benevolent **"societies"** or **"sponsoring churches"** through which the local churches

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# THE INSTRUCTOR

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## *Editorial . . .*

### **WIVES: THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES!**

Man can have no greater physical blessing than a good wife. Solomon said: **"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord"** and **"... a prudent wife is from the Lord."** (See Prov. 18:22 & 19:14). A wife can and should be **"a crown to her husband."** She should never be **"as rottenness in his bones."** It is a high honor for a woman to be chosen from among other women to be the wife of a good and true man.

The wife has the blessing of her husband's love for her that will cause him to protect her from harm and to provide for her the comforts of a material home.

It is a great blessing to any wife to be the companion of a husband who so knows and appreciates her that he **gives honor to her** "as the weaker vessel." It is indeed a blessing for a wife to have a husband who is a Christian, whose primary concern is for the spiritual welfare of both himself and her. Thus they can be **"heirs together of the grace of life; that their prayers be not hindered."** (See 1 Peter 3:7).

The wife is lifted up to a crowned queen. Great power is placed in her hands and sacred destinies are reposed in her keeping. She holds in her hands precious interests and great responsibilities.

How will the wife wear her crown? Will she wear it beneficently? Or will she fail her holy trust? Only her married life can be the answer.

Three words, **"Love, honor and obey"** have a great significance to the wife who is a

Christian and to the unmarried woman who is a Christian as she contemplates the attitude she will have toward the man she marries.

Along with the blessings that a wife has, responsibilities come. The Scriptures teach us what the responsibilities of a wife are. Some wives desire the blessings, but they do not want to accept and fulfil their responsibilities. Let us study some of the responsibilities of wives.

### **SHOULD NOT DEPART**

The apostle Paul said: **"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: ..."** (1 Cor. 7:10). It is clearly stated in this passage that the wife is **NOT TO DEPART FROM HER HUSBAND**. This is not an optional matter, but it is **a command!** It is not a command given by human wisdom, but it is **a commanded by the Lord!** Departing from husbands is a common practice in our nation. Unless the wife considers marriage to be a permanent relationship, she may violate this command of the Lord by departing from her husband. Many husbands are left without a companion and many children grow up without maternal or paternal guidance because God's will for the wife not to leave her husband is rejected.

An idea exists among many people of the world and among some who claim to be Christians that a wife has the right to depart from her husband if she wants to depart. Some contend that a wife does not sin in departing from her husband so long as she does not marry some one else although the Lord **commanded: "Let not the wife depart from her husband."** After all the smoke of human reasoning and human wisdom has cleared away, God's word will still say: **"Let not the wife depart from her husband!"**

After commanding wives not to depart from their husbands the apostle says: **"but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: . . ."** (1 Cor. 7:11). Some have suggested that this passage justifies a wife leaving her husband because it says **"let her remain unmarried."** However, this is a perversion because this passage (7:10) says **"let not the wife depart from her husband."** If she does leave him, she has violated God's law! Furthermore, she has violated 1 Cor. 7:3-5 that teaches that she should render due benevolence to her husband. She cannot do this unless she

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### **WIVES: THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

cohabits with him. **QUESTION:** Does the expression "let him depart" in verse 15 justify the unbeliever in departing from the believer? If it doesn't, (and, of course, it doesn't), please explain how the expression "let her remain unmarried" in verse 11 justifies a wife in leaving her husband. The truth is that neither of them is justified.

The wife who departs from her husband also violates other passages of Scripture by failing her responsibilities as a wife as set forth in those passages.

There is no way that a wife can "submit" herself unto her husband, "as unto the Lord" as taught in Eph. 5:22 and be subject "to their own husband in every thing" as taught in Eph. 5:24 unless she cohabits with him. There is no way that a wife can be a daughter of Sarah, obeying her husband as taught in 1 Pet. 3:7 and "reverence her husband" as taught in Eph. 5:33 unless she lives with him.

There is no way that a wife can have the love that is taught in 1 Cor. 13:4-8 and manifest its characteristics unless she is willing to live with him.

### **NOT BE CONTENTIOUS**

A contentious spirit is one of wrangling and strife. A fool's lips will enter into contention. We should leave off wrangling and should put away strife. We learn from Prov. 19:13 that "the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping." and in Prov. 27:15 we read that "a continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike." Solomon also tells us that "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman" and that "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." (See Prov. 21:19 & 21:9).

A "contentious woman" aggravates and irritates her husband. She "rubs him the wrong way." He can have no peace. He does not enjoy being around her. A strain is placed on the marriage relationship. It may end in divorce. Even if it does not, neither party can really be happy.

Any woman who places much value on her marriage relationship will not be contentious. She will work for harmony and peace. She will strive to please her husband and make him happy.

A woman who either refuses to live with her husband or is contentious is a bad example.

(To be continued)

(CRS)

## *Infant Baptism*

**In view of the fact that a number of people advocate and practice "Infant baptism" I believe it can be profitable for us to consider some facts about "Infant baptism."**

1. **Infant baptism is not mentioned** in the word of God. Although this is the case, many people teach and practice it.

2. **Infant baptism is practiced without the will of the infant.** It can not be obedience to God on the part of the infant since it is without his will.

3. **Infant baptism is not preceded by teaching** although Jesus said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19).

4. **Infant baptism is not preceded by faith** although Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). See also Hebrews 11:6.

5. **Infant baptism is not preceded by repentance** although the Apostle Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38).

6. **Infant baptism is not preceded by a confession** with the mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God although Paul says "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (See Rom. 10:9-10). Before Philip baptized the Eunuch, the eunuch confessed his faith in Christ. (Acts 8:37).

7. **Infant baptism can not be done in the name of Jesus Christ** since Jesus Christ never authorized it. Col. 3:17 says: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..."

8. **Infant baptism can not be done by faith** since it is not taught in God's word since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17).

9. **Infant baptism is a doctrine of men** that will cause one's worship to be in vain since it is not taught in God's Word. (See Matthew 15: 7-9).

10. **Infant baptism is a transgression** of God's law since it is not in the doctrine of Christ, and those who teach and practice it are guilty of sin and do not have God. (See 2 John 9;; 1 John 3:4).

(CRS)

*YOU ARE INVITED to attend a series of meetings at the East Albertville Church building Sept. 2, 3, 4, 1977. R. J. Andrews will do the preaching. Tell others!*

(Continued from page 1)

## THE CHURCH—A

### SUFFICIENT ORGANIZATION

(congregations) functioned to carry out their mission. But each congregation, working independently and autonomously, did its own work. In case of there being a congregation in distress (needy saints among them), others helped by sending directly to the church in need, that there might be "equality." We learn this from Acts 11:27-30, 1 Cor. 16:1-3; Romans 15:25-32 and 2 Cor. 8 and 9.

In the first century, the needy saints were relieved and the whole world (i.e., "every creature under heaven") heard the gospel preached in about thirty years as a result of the churches functioning as God ordained.

As it was back then, today the local church functioning independently and autonomously, is sufficient to do all that God requires of his people in "organized capacity." The congregation is fully organized and competent to do all of its work. It matters not whether it is in the field of evangelism, edification or relief. A super-arrangement of congregations or human societies are both unnecessary and unauthorized, and therefore are sinful! Let us be content with **God's divine organization, the church!** To contend for the "sponsoring church" arrangement and for human organizations being built and supported by churches is to impeach God's Wisdom!

(CRS)

## SUTTON-SHARP DEBATE

The first of two debates between **Carrol R. Sutton** and **Tom Sharp** is scheduled to be conducted on October 24, 25, 27 & 28, 1977. It will be conducted in Moulton, Alabama in a building provided by the United Pentecostal Church. The time will be 7:30 each evening.

For two evenings, **Carrol R. Sutton will affirm** that "**The Scriptures teach that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, namely, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.**" Tom Sharp will deny that proposition.

The proposition that **Tom Sharp will affirm** for two evenings reads as follows: "**The Scriptures teach that the Son of God was the only person in the Godhead.**" Carrol R. Sutton will deny that proposition.

Please mark your calendar and make plans to be with us.

## THE HILL-SUTTON DEBATE

As of press time for this bulletin we have received no word from either **Albert Hill** or the **West Hobbs Street "elders"** as to the re-scheduling of the HILL-SUTTON DEBATE that was agreed on more than three years ago. If you know how to "prod" them into keeping their agreement, please help them. They need your help immediately.

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## Sentence Sermons

People who live right will not get left.

The marriage knot should not be a slip-knot.

Beware of the man who does not translate his words into deeds.

A lot of people have ability, but they lack stability.

The Devil has gone out of "fashion," but not out of business.

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