

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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THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Please carefully read and consider Luke 16:19-31. This text is often abused and misrepresented but an honest study of this text should enable one to better understand its true teaching.

NOT A PARABLE

In an effort to nullify some plain simple truths that are stated in this passage there are some people who contend that it is a parable. However, a consideration of this passage should convince every honest heart that this is **not** a parable. There is no statement that says this is a parable. There is no expression such as "is like . . ." that indicates it is a parable. Jesus simply said: "**There was a certain rich man. . . And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, . . .**"

In this text names of specific individuals involved are given — such as Lazarus, Abraham and Moses. This is not characteristic of parables.

Even if this were a parable it still teaches the truth.

Please consider the following facts that are taught in this text.

1. Both the rich man and the beggar existed after death. NOTE: Death was **not** an annihilation! Death did **not** cause either of them to cease to exist!

2. Both the rich man and Lazarus were conscious after death! NOTE: The fact that the rich man was "**tormented**" and Lazarus was "**comforted**" certainly proves that both were in existence and were conscious.

3. The rich man could see!

4. The rich man could speak!

5. The rich man could feel pain!

6. The rich man requested that Lazarus be sent from the dead to his (the rich man's) father's house in an effort to warn his five brothers.

7. If God's Word can not persuade a person to prepare to meet God, he would **not** be persuaded even if a loved one went unto him from the dead! (CRS)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

You are invited to attend a series of gospel meetings at EAST ALBERTVILLE June 15-21, 1992 with J. F. DANCER preaching. We will meet at 7:30 each evening except on Sunday.

THE INSTRUCTOR

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Editorial . . .

A BROTHER SEES A DANGER AND ASKS FOR AUTHORITY

Quite some time ago I received a letter from a brother in Christ who has been on our mailing list for some time in which he points out what he perceives to be a danger and asks where is the authority for the East Albertville church to send "The Instructor" to members of other congregations.

I appreciate receiving the letter from the brother for whom I have love and respect. The fact that he took time to write expressing his concern, pointing out a perceived danger, setting forth the reasons for his concern and asking for authority for what the church here in Albertville is doing indicates his interests in truth and the spiritual welfare of the people of God.

The following are the contents (excluding the salutation and the things of a personal nature and the name of the congregation) of the letter under discussion.

. . . I agree that it is the responsibility of any Christian to point out any danger sign he sees and that is the purpose of this letter.

I understand 'The Instructor' is being mailed to all members of the _____ congregation. It has bothered me for some time concerning the effort of the Albertville church to undertake, at least in part, the teaching of another congregation. Peter told elders to feed the flock which is among

them. 1 Pet. 5:1-2. I believe this specifies the territory of a congregation in its effort to teach members of the church. The territory specified is the flock among them or the flock of which the elders have the oversight. Is not the territory given by Peter just as all inclusive and exclusive as is the specified music for the church? I believe it is and I think I see a danger sign in the Albertville church going beyond that specified territory.

When this same practice has been introduced by some congregations in the past, the mailing list continued to grow until the originating congregation could no long totally absorb the cost of the program. Then came solicitations for donations from those receiving the paper. The next move was to solicit funds from other congregations. This practice may never happen during your lifetime or the lifetime of the present elders at Albertville, but it very well could be a possibility with future generations at Albertville. Even if the program goes no further than the mailing of the paper to members of one other congregation, where is the authority for the elders of one congregation to begin a program that assumes feeding the flocks of other congregations?"

OBSERVATIONS:

1. I do not know how many members of the congregation there are receiving THE INSTRUCTOR. However, I do know that someone requested that the names be added. I do not personally take care of our mailing list. It is on our computer and I do **not** operate the computer.

2. The church here in East Albertville has NOT undertaken, either in whole or in part, to do the work of teaching that belongs to or that is the responsibility of another congregation AS A CONGREGATION. We are simply endeavoring to teach God's truth to as many people (in or out of the Lord's church) as our resources and opportunities permit.

3. Since our brother says he agrees "that it is the responsibility of any Christian to point out any danger sign he sees" and "that is the purpose of" his letter, it would necessarily follow that any elder (since he is a Christian) could do the

(Continued on page 3)

A BROTHER SEES A DANGER AND ASKS FOR AUTHORITY

(Continued from page 2)

same thing? Would it not **also** follow that any congregation has the responsibility to point out any danger sign it sees? That is exactly what the church here is endeavoring to do — fulfil its responsibilities.

COMMENTS CONSIDERED:

1. Our brother wrote: *“Peter told the elders to feed the flock of God which is among them, 1 Pet. 5:1-2. I believe this specifies the territory for a congregation in its efforts to teach members of the church. The territory specified is the flock among them or the flock of which the elders have the oversight. Is not the territory given by Peter just as all inclusive and exclusive as is the specified music for the church? I believe it is and I think I see a danger sign in the Albertville church going beyond that specified territory.”*

REPLY:

1. Elders are told to **“feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, . . .”** (1 Pet. 5:2). This does show the **limits** of their oversight and of their responsibility to **“feed”** the flock. The word (**poimaino**) which is translated **“feed”** in the KJV is rendered **“tend”** in the ASV, RSV, NEB (and others) and **“shepherd”** in the NKJV and NASV. The idea involved in **tending** or **shepherding** or **feeding** the flock includes **teaching** God’s Word, **giving assistance**, **watching** and **ruling over them**. So, the idea of **pastoring**, i.e., taking care of as well as teaching them seems to be involved in **“feeding”** or **“tending”** the flock. NOTE: Teaching or instructing may be done **without** the idea of **pastoring** (which involves the idea of oversight).

2. No one (either individuals or congregations) other than the elders of a local church has the responsibility or the right to **“tend”** or **“shepherd”** that local flock. The elders have no right to **“tend”** or **“shepherd”** the members of another congregation.

3. The sending of a preacher, Bible, tract or paper to teach members of another congregation does NOT constitute **“tending”** or **“shepherding”** that flock.

4. The church in East Albertville does **not** go beyond its **“specified territory”** in sending out Bibles, tracts, or **THE INSTRUCTOR to teach others God’s Word. The elders of the flock at East Albertville do not “tend” or “shepherd” ANY flock (or any individual) anywhere except “the flock of God, which is among” them.** If such were the case it would be dangerous because it would be sinful!

II. In the third paragraph our beloved brother suggests that in the past some congregations sent out a paper, increasing the mailing list **“until the originating congregation could no longer absorb the cost of the program. Then came solicitations for donations from those receiving the paper. The next move was to solicit funds from other congregations.”** We are then warned that such could happen here.

REPLY:

1. In the above paragraph we see a congregation **going beyond what is authorized** (i.e., teaching God’s Word) and soliciting funds from individuals and churches to carry on a work of evangelism which is beyond their own ability (resources).

2. If a congregation **does** go beyond that which is authorized, as in the above case, that does **not** at all warrant an objection to that which is authorized.

3. The above **“objection”** may be lodged against ANY authorized work of ANY church or individual! There is **always** the possibility (or a **“perceived danger”**) that a Scriptural principle may be abused.

4. Paul specifically warned the elders at Ephesus saying: **“. . . Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them,”** but he did NOT say **“dissolve the eldership”** although this would happen

(Continued on page 4)

A BROTHER SEES A DANGER AND ASKS FOR AUTHORITY

(Continued from page 3)

and did happen! (See Acts 20:17, 20-32). It was **Scriptural** to have elders and they should continue to have elders, but they were warned to **"watch, and remember. . ."**

III. Our respected brother asked: **"Where is the authority for the elders of one congregation to begin a program that assumes feeding the flocks of other congregations?"**

REPLY:

1. If by **"feeding"** our brother means **"tending"** or **"shepherding"** or **"pastoring"** which obviously includes **taking care of** as well as **teaching** with the idea of having **oversight** of those fed, I do **not** know where such is authorized. However, the elders of the church in East Albertville did **not** **"begin a program that assumes feeding the flocks of other congregations."** The church at East Albertville is simply endeavoring

to teach God's truth to as many people as it can (whether they are saints or sinners). We use various methods and means in an effort to accomplish this. Presently, we are doing this by helping support various preachers, sending out tracts, tapes, correspondence courses, conducting a daily radio program, having Bible classes, conducting gospel meetings in our building and under a tent in various communities, providing a daily Bible message on the telephone and sending out **THE INSTRUCTOR**.

2. If by **"feeding"** our brother means **teaching God's Word** such as is done when the church sends out **THE INSTRUCTOR** to saints (including some of other congregations) as well as sinners, I believe that such is authorized in the New Testament as we will show in our next article.

(To be continued)

(CRS)

A CORRECTION: The title of the article on the front page of **THE INSTRUCTOR** dated May, 1991 should have read: **"How Can A Person Be Righteous?"**

NOTICE: The bound volumes of **THE INSTRUCTOR** from 1982 through 1990 (9 years) should be available soon.

— SENTENCE SERMONS —

What some people call the high cost of living is really the cost of high living.

* * * * *

Take responsibilities on your shoulder and it will leave no room for "chips."

* * * * *

Peace to a Christian is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of God.

* * * * *

Some people criticize the Scriptures like they do a restaurant; if they have no appetite, they think the food is no good.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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