

# 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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Volume 3

OCTOBER, 1966

Number 10

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## "DOES GOD WANT BUT ONE BODY?"

There are more than 250 different religious bodies in America alone, each claiming to be the church of Christ. Is Christ the author of all these different churches? Did he establish them? Is there a church of divine origin in existence today? If so, is it possible to properly identify it amid the conflicting voices of these religious bodies about us?

Since every counterfeit is an imitation of something genuine, somewhere there must be a body which men have perverted in making their counterfeit bodies. Paul discusses this question, "DOES GOD WANT BUT ONE BODY?" in many of his letters to the churches of our Lord. Let us consider this matter seriously. "For as we have many members in ONE BODY, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are ONE BODY in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Rom. 12:4-5). "But now are they many members, yet but ONE BODY." (1 Cor. 12:20). "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22-23). "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in ONE BODY; and be ye thankful." (Col. 3:15).

When Paul writes concerning this ONE BODY to brethren at Ephesus he gives the only cure for religious di-

sion. "Endeavoring," he said, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is ONE BODY, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all." (Eph. 4:3-6). Thus Paul has given the divine standard of unity. God's plan for unity is effected in this ONE BODY. Whatever unity might be effected outside of the body of Christ is a failure. In the ONE BODY we have unity in organization. One Spirit, unity in life. One faith, unity in message. One baptism, unity in practice. One God, unity in worship. One must recognize that these are essentials in the ONE BODY.

Christ is the head of His Spiritual Body. (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:23). His domination over the church is complete — "Head over all things to the church which is his body." He must control every action of the body. Jesus has provided direction for every step which the church is to take. His directions are contained in His Will — the New Testament. Any action taken by the body which is not authorized by the head is taken in defiance of the supreme authority the Lord possesses and is a "rejection of the counsel of God." (Lk. 7:30; Eph. 1:11; John 12: 48).

Just as the members of one's physical  
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## **THE INSTRUCTOR**

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting at 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Alabama.

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## **Editorial . . .**

### **IT CANNOT BE WRONG**

There are some things that we know are wrong. We must abstain from them and encourage others to do likewise. The way to life is strait and narrow. Wrong ways may seem right to those who do not know nor believe the truth. The Scriptures reveal a way which is right and cannot be wrong.

IT CANNOT BE WRONG to accept the Scriptures as an infallible and all-sufficient standard of authority in all matters of a spiritual nature. The Scriptures are "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16-17.) We learn from James that "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein" shall be blessed in his deed. (James 1:25). We learn from 2 Pet. 1:3 that we have "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." Man-made creeds such as the Catholic Catechism, the Baptist Manual, the Methodist Discipline, the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, the Book of Mormon, the Watchtower publications, etc., are NOT inspired of God! They do NOT constitute the will of God! Those who follow them worship in vain and are destined to be rooted up! (See Matt. 15:8-9, 13). We beseech you to turn from these Satan-inspired books to the Holy Scriptures that are inspired of God!

IT CANNOT BE WRONG to believe that God is and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In Heb. 11:6 we are told that it is impossible to please God without faith. Jesus said, "for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (See John 8:24). Some of the signs and wonders performed by Jesus have been recorded by inspiration in order to produce genuine faith in the deity of Jesus.

IT CANNOT BE WRONG for alien sinners to "repent and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," because this is exactly what Peter commanded some in Acts 2:38. To further show the essentiality of water baptism in God's plan of salvation, your attention is called to Mark 16: 16 where Jesus Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Peter asserts in 1 Pet. 3:21 that "baptism doth also now save us." Friends, be not deceived into thinking that baptism is not essential to salvation.

IT CANNOT BE WRONG for a child of God to wear the name "Christian". Consider God's Word. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (See Acts 11:26). The apostle Paul endeavored to persuade men to be CHRISTIANS. (See Acts 26: 28). According to Peter's statement in 1 Pet. 4: 16 we should be willing to suffer as a Christian and thus glorify God in this name. Denominational names such as Mormons, Catholic, Baptist, Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist, etc., are NOT authorized in God's Book and should NOT be worn by children of God! Yes, there is definitely something in a name!

IT CANNOT BE WRONG to sing praises unto God in our worship without mechanical instruments of music such as organs, pianos, guitars, violins, banjos, etc. We are commanded in the New Testament to sing. (See Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Heb. 2:12; 13:15). Nowhere are we authorized to play in worship. We must not add to God's commands.

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### IT CANNOT BE WRONG

To play in worship is to add. This is sinful!

IT CANNOT BE WRONG for a local church to have elders to oversee the flock that is among them and to have deacons to serve as special servants. (See Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). To add either another organization or other "officers" is sinful!

IT CANNOT BE WRONG for a local church to engage in the works of evangelism and relief. (See 1 Tim. 3:14-15; 1 Thess. 1:8; Acts. 13:1-5; Phil. 4:14-16; Acts 6:1-16; 1 Tim. 5:16). There is no authority for a church to build or maintain either missionary organizations or benevolent organizations. Such constitutes lawlessness or iniquity! Calling a society a "church" or a "home" does NOT authorize such! It is sinful! (See 2 John 9; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 4:6).

IT CANNOT BE WRONG to be pure in heart and clean in life. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8). We learn from Tit. 2:11-12 that we should deny ourselves of ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. James tells us to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world." (Jas. 1:27). We are not to conform to the world, but be transformed. It is imperative that we abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. Christians should not participate in such things as drinking strong drink, dancing, gambling, cursing, swearing, smoking, wearing immodest clothing, telling filthy jokes, etc.

It is never wrong to follow God's instructions and it is never right to do wrong! Let us earnestly endeavor to do that which cannot be wrong!

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### "DOES GOD WANT BUT ONE BODY"

body must be subject to his mind, so we must be subject to Christ in everything as members of His body. (Eph. 5:24). What the head commands we can and must do. What he does not command and teach we must not do. (2 John 9). From the head comes the impulses that strengthen and move the members of the body in the performance of their work. (Eph. 4:15-16). This is true of the physical body. Paul makes the comparison in his letter to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 12:14-27). Yes, God wants but ONE BODY. His Word teaches it. It is forever settled in heaven. (Psa. 119: 89).

It is just as absurd to assert that Christ has a plurality of spiritual bodies over which He is head as it would be to say that He had a plurality of physical bodies.

Denominationalism accepts the following essentials: One God. One Christ. One Spirit. One hope. But disregards other essentials in God's plan by the same writer in the same chapter. One faith (not just any faith). One baptism (not three modes). One body (not 250). No man has any more right to thus nullify God's plan for unity in the ONE BODY, than to worship more than one God. The same apostle who said, "there is ONE BODY", also said, "there is one God." (Eph. 4:6). What would you think of a person if he should ask you what God you worshipped? It would be just as Scriptural to believe in more than one God, as to say He is pleased with the many religious bodies about us today.

To learn the marks that identify the various denominations one must consult the respective creeds, manuals, disciplines, catechisms, and articles of faith which describe them. But to learn of the ONE BODY, one must consult the New Testament. That book has plainly de-

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**"DOES GOD WANT BUT  
ONE BODY"**

scribed the church which existed in the first century, as any modern denomination is described in its creed or manual.

For a church today to be of divine origin it must possess the characteristics of the church revealed in the Scriptures. To identify the ONE BODY, one must become familiar with its marks as outlined in the Bible. One who knows nothing of the description of this organization cannot recognize it even though it exists in his community.

—Aubrey Phelps in BIBLE HERALD

**STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP,  
MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION**

1. Date of filing: 10-21-66. 2. Title of Publication: "The Instructor." 3. Frequency of issue: Monthly. 4. Location of Known Office of Publication: 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Ala. 35950. 5. Location of the Headquarters or General Business offices of the publishers: Same as above. \* Names and addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor. Publisher: Church of Christ, 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Ala. 35950. Editor: Carroll R. Sutton, Rt. 3, Box 413, Albertville, Ala. 35950. Managing Editor: Same as above. 7. Owner: Church of Christ, 1003 Baltimore Ave., Albertville, Ala. 35950. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Signed By: Carroll R. Sutton.

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## Sentence Sermons

It is better to be great in your littleness than little in your greatness.

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Life's gold mine is a pure heart and a clean life.

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Be sure you understand your opponent before you answer him.

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He who has no inclination to learn more will be very apt to think that he knows enough

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It is better to be despised for doing right than praised for doing wrong.

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Entered as second-class matter at  
Albertville, Alabama