

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word!" (II Timothy 4:2)

"Feed the Flock!" (I Peter 5:2)

"IS ONE CHURCH AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?"

By Malburt M. Prater
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• "And Jesus knew their thoughts and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."

--MATTHEW 12:25



I NEED NOT inform you, as an observing and informed people, that there are hundreds of religious denominations in our world today. They are designated classes, having distinguishing names. The exact number is unimportant as the number grows from year to year. Each group formulates its own creed and church government. The entrance requirements, dues, character discipline, officials and their qualifications, vary to great degrees in multiplicity of denominations. Inter-marriage of members, membership transfer, heretical teachings, and social background all present a problem to every group. These problems have come to be so great, that every interested person, every Christian interested in the cause of Christ and the evangelization of the world is faced to take a stand. Many believe one is as good as another. If this is true, it should be spread abroad and driven home. If it be false, it should be unmasked and thrown aside. If true, it is a blessing. If false, it is a curse to all who hold this view.

So here is the question: Will you promote denominationalism, will you be a pacifist, or will you oppose it? We are a Bible people, and in our minds we may think this or that; but being a Bible people, we must surely counsel with the Word to see if there is any message from the Lord. For where the Bible speaks we speak, and where it is silent, we are silent. We have accepted its teaching on faith, on repentance, on confession, and in baptism. Believing it to be our rule of faith and practice, shall we try with open minds to ascertain the will of God about denominations?

First, we are familiar with the reasons why the many groups exist. Either somebody had a new idea or somebody got mad, or somebody could not find what they liked, so they started a new class and it was designated by a different name.

So, as it is written over and over again that Samuel, the Judges, and the prophets inquired of the Lord--so, may we go to His throne for our answers.

There undoubtedly are many lessons in the Old Testament that would be shadows of life and religion today, but shall we begin with the teachings of Jesus? For it is written that "never a man so spake like this man." He said that his words were imperishable: "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away." "If a man love me he will keep my words and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Let us inquire of him concerning this perplexing problem.

Jesus, do you advocate all these denominations, is it a good thing for us to have hundreds of sects? Should we as followers of you promote them or remain indifferent to them? Oh, Son of God, what is the answer? I hear him answer as He did the Pharisees one time: "Every kingdom that is divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself cannot stand." Do you mean, Jesus, that it really is not a good thing to have friendly competition among our denominational friends? He replies that what he has spoken he has spoken, then he says something about one fold and one shepherd.

Surely such questions as we have asked bore heavily upon the breast of the Savior for He prayed that they might all be one in John 17:21--(1) One even as we are; (2) One as, thou Father, art in Me and I in thee; (3) One in us; (4) One as even we are one; (5)

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The SWORD and STAFF
Post Office Box 681
Galax, Va. 24333

Subscription rates: \$1.50 per year; next 5 additional subscriptions, \$1.00 per subscription; any number sent above this, 50¢ per subscription; other arrangements.

The Sword and Staff is published monthly by the Locust Grove church, Galax, Virginia. James E. Gibbons is editor. Second class postage paid at Galax, Virginia.

Proverbs of Today
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Beware of any religious "movement" that caters to compromisers.

"Truth precise, unaccommodating, abandons nothing that belongs to itself, admits nothing that is inconsistent with it."

We must control our children until they learn to control themselves.

"The diamond cannot be polished without friction, nor the man perfected without trials"

Is your life a reflection OF or ON Christ?

"Daniel chose rather to spend a night in a lion's den than to go through a day without prayer."

Men are made elders in the Lord's church by SELECTION rather than by ELECTION.

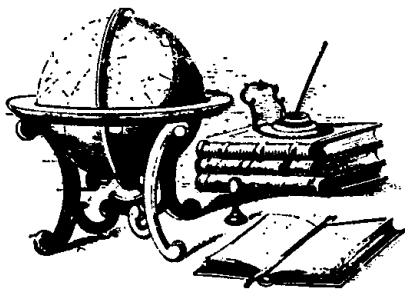
"Men respect holiness off at a distance, but dispise it up close."

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EDITORIAL
COMMENTS...

SETTING THE CHURCH IN ORDER

"For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5).

GOD'S PLAN for world evangelism calls for the evangelists to spearhead this work as they are sent out from the local church. The evangelists (*messengers of the good news*) proclaim the gospel, convert people to Christ, instruct them in the way of the Lord, and organize them into a collective local body called the church. They teach and edify the local group, setting things in order to finally ordain local leadership. The evangelist may go on to new fields or spend an indefinite period of time with a local church in evangelizing and training other workers. The book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament Scriptures bear these things out. It is a shame today that this procedure has been replaced by the traditions of men. Evangelists are only thought of as men preaching protracted "revival" meetings, whereas in the New Testament every preacher is called an evangelist. Another class of preachers has arisen which men call "ministers" or "pastors," whereas in the New Testament the elders were called "pastors." We are living in the era of the "pastorized" preacher and the exterminated elder (who Scripturally should be the pastors). We could go on and on, but the object of this writing is to emphasize "setting the church in order." The evangelist is to take the initiative in doing this (although others are to do their part).

The work of the evangelist in "setting the church in order" is very much needed in the following situations.

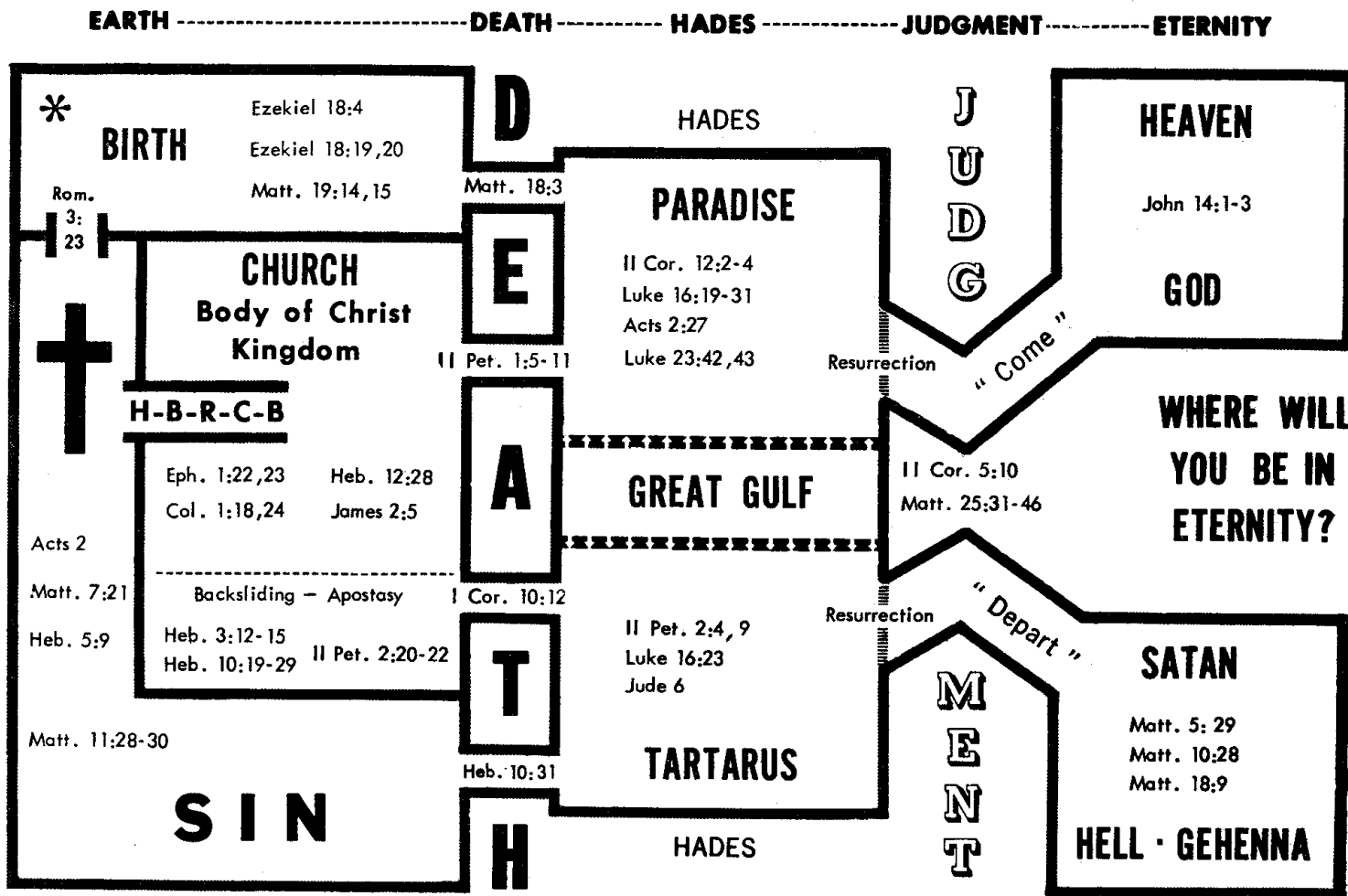
(1) *New churches.* This seems to be the situation with Titus on the island of Crete. As an associate worker with Paul he was left there to finish the work of setting the church in order. This involved teaching them and ordaining elders (Titus 1:5; 2:15; Acts 14:21-21; etc.). New churches today need to recognize the work and the authority of the faithful evangelist in this realm.

(2) *Worldly and traditional churches.* The carnal church at Corinth got into a terrible mess as well as others. Paul as an evangelist of the gospel with his associates strived to get the situation straightened out (I Cor. 4:17; 11:34; II Cor 13:5, 10; etc.). The book of Galatians shows Paul's efforts to set the Galatian churches aright, for they were going back under the traditionalism of the Law of Moses.

In our day and time we have many churches that profess to be "New Testament" churches, but their works deny it. They are full of the world and have developed their own set of traditions while at the same time saying they are not a denomination. The work of a faithful evangelist is needed here, but it will take the best

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God's Plan For You



HOW TO UNDERSTAND AND USE THE CHART

God's Plan for You

By Harold Buckles

God does have a plan for YOU. That plan is revealed in the Bible. God was willing that you should be born. He sent Christ to die on the cross for the salvation of your soul. Everything essential from EARTH to ETERNITY has been provided. By studying this chart you will be able to grasp God's overall plan for YOU in a better way.

EARTH At the upper left hand corner of the chart an asterisk (*) was placed. This shows where to begin in studying the chart. Your entrance into the world or EARTH was by physical BIRTH. Anyone who will follow Christ's plan for him and be obedient to the Word of God will be glad that he was born.

You were born into this world without sin (Matt. 19:14,15). You could not inherit the guilt of sin from your father, or ever-so-great-grandfather Adam (Ezek. 18:4 and 19:20). Man commits sin by choice. If a baby dies before it reaches the age of responsibility, it goes directly to paradise. After one reaches the age of responsibility, sin must be atoned for. It is God's plan that every guilty sinner is to come face to face with the demands of

Christ. This is represented on the chart by a cross. Christ died on the cross in order that guilty sinners might not have to be in hell in eternity.

In Acts 2 the first sermon preached after Christ arose from the dead is recorded. The letters **H-B-R-C-B** on the chart stand for Hearing, Believing, Repentance, Confession, and Baptism. If you want to be saved from your sins you must believe the gospel, repent of your sins, confess Christ as your Savior and be baptized for the remission of your sins. On this basis you enter the Church of Christ, which is the Body of Christ or the Kingdom.

The devil will never give up on you as long as you are upon this EARTH. Once you are a part of the Church, he will try to get you to backslide and apostatize. Anyone who thinks he stands should take heed lest he fall (I Cor. 10:12).

DEATH "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9:27). There are only four conditions in which a person may die. These are: (1) As an innocent baby who has never sinned (Matt. 18:3); (2) As a faithful Christian (II Pet. 1:5-11); (3) As a backslidden apostate (I Cor. 10:12); or (4) As a lost sinner who has never surrendered himself fully to Christ (II Thess. 1:7-9). The important thing for you to do is to be ready to die. God would have all men to be saved (Ezek. 33:11).

HADES There are only two places for anyone between death and the judgment: PARADISE and TARTARUS. The word "HADES" literally means the place where they cannot be seen. It is never used to signify the grave nor any permanent condition of the lost. Hades occupies the intermediate time between death and the resurrection.

PARADISE and HEAVEN are not the same place. Jesus told the thief on the cross that "today" he would be with Him in Paradise (Luke 23:43). Three days later He told Mary Magdalene that He had not yet ascended to His Father. It follows that Heaven and Paradise are not the same place.

Likewise TARTARUS and GEHENNA or HELL are not the same place. Peter reported that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus [hell- King James Trans.], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (II Pet. 2:4). Tartarus and Gehenna cannot be the same, for these angels mentioned have not yet reached the judgment.

JUDGMENT Immediately after the resurrection (John 5:28,29), all of mankind will be gathered before the judgment throne of Christ. The lost will be con-

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CHART • • •

(Continued from Page 3)

demned and the Christians will be invited to receive their reward (Rev. 20:11-15 & II Cor. 5:10).

ETERNITY It is impossible for us to grasp the span of eternity. Suffice it to say that it will last as long as God will. The important thing for you to determine is where you will be in eternity-- **HEAVEN** or **HELL**. You are preparing for one or the other at this very moment!

Where Are The Dead?

This teaching on death is included, not that you might speculate, but that you may have comfort when some Christian dies.

Whenever the word death or its equivalent occurs in the Bible it always means a separation. Physical death is separation of life from the body. Spiritual death means separation from God.

Such verses as Ps. 139:8 and Phil. 1:23 could not be true if there were such a thing as "soul-sleeping". Neither are there any souls in purgatory, nor have there ever been. The doctrine of purgatory is completely foreign to the Bible.

The dead are now in Hades. Their condition is forever and eternally settled. This is represented by a "great gulf" which Jesus mentioned in Luke 16:26.

Use this chart to fix God's plan for you firmly in your mind. Use it in teaching others the wonderful truths of God. You will find that **IT PAYS TO SERVE JESUS!**

JUNIOR, BY THE BOOK

*Junior bit the meter man,
Junior hit the cook,
Junior's anti-social now,
According to the book.*

*Junior smashed the clock and laughed,
Junior hacked the tree,
Destructive trends are treated in
chapters two and three.*

*Junior threw his milk at mom,
Junior screamed for more,
Notes on self-assertiveness are
found in chapter four.*

*Junior tossed his shoes and socks
out into the rain,
Mischievous! That's normal--disregard
the stains.*

*Junior set Dad's shirt on fire;
He whittled Grandpa's cane,
That's to gain attention! See
page 89.*

*Grandpa seized the slipper and
Yanked Junior across his knee,
He's read nothing but the Bible
since 1893.*

SELECTED

EDITORIAL COMMENTS (Continued from page 2) • • •

in a man to ride the rough waters and set these churches in order. Many under such circumstances compromise and take the easy road, but Paul charged young Timothy "therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:3).

(3) *Denominations.* This land is flooded with religious denominations. Obviously something is amiss. The sad story is that the simple plan of salvation from sin is not generally preached; men are not made Christians after the New Testament order. The doctrines and traditions of men are followed, formulated in humanly devised creeds. The simple organization of the church with its with its specified offices is seldom found. That which is supposed to be the church of Christ is dubbed by names which give glory to men, some over-emphasized religious doctrine, some system of church government, or what-have-you. In the midst of this division unbelief, materialism and worldliness thrives and grows.

There is much "setting in order" that needs to be done. First, we must make sure that we are born-again Christians; then divest ourselves of all traces of denominationalism to emerge and merge into the one undenominational church already established in the first century. If we cannot bring this about where we are, getting the people to forsake human traditions, we must follow the command and example of the inspired apostle (Romans 16:17; I Tim. 6:3-5; Acts 19:9). There is too much at stake to do otherwise.

It is the great burden of *THE SWORD AND STAFF* to help set churches in order. We profess allegiance to no religious denomination; this paper is not the voice of any denomination or religious faction. It is our conviction that a religious journal ceases to serve its usefulness when it becomes the organ of a denomination (officially or unofficially). Our mission simply is to call your attention anew to the Word of God. Let us examine all things anew and remove the cobwebs of traditionalism from our minds. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). If we present you the truth, follow it; if we don't, forget it. We believe there is a new and better day in store for the church as we sincerely endeavor to "set the church in order."

A TRAGIC AND SAD STORY

THERE IS a story that a father once took his little girl out into a meadow. It was a hot day, and he lay down under a beautiful tree. The little child ran about gathering flowers and brought them to her father saying, "Pretty, pretty!" Soon the father fell asleep, and the child wandered away. When he awoke, his first thought was, "Where is my child?!" He shouted at the top of his voice, but all he heard was his voice echoing back. Running to a nearby hill, he looked around but she was not to be seen. Then, he looked over a nearby cliff, and there upon the

rocks and bushes below he saw his beloved little girl. Ever after, he accused himself of being the killer of his little child, because while he was asleep, his child wandered over the precipice.

How many fathers and mothers are now sleeping while their children wander over cliffs and fall headlong into sin or even spiritual indifference? Now is the time to train children in Christian principles; next year may be way too late. What a tragic day it will be for you, if you should awaken from your spiritual slumber called indifference to find that while you were asleep your child wandered far away!

--Adapted

"Preacher, Let's Get Ready Now, Then Go."

By Paul Crist
Winnigan, Mo. 63566

• "And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:8-10).

UPON EXAMINATION of this text, it takes but a few moments to determine that Paul and his co-workers were ready to go anywhere at anytime that God called them. Their only purpose in going was to preach the gospel of Christ that souls might be won to our blessed Saviour.

Let each one of us do some deep soul searching, and answer vital questions in respect to our willingness to go anywhere for Jesus.

I. HOW WILLING AM I TO GO ANY PLACE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH?

I mean any place. God knows our hearts, our purposes and motives.

Even as I write these words, the beauties of fall in Missouri are before me. Balmy weather; the western sky ablaze in golden sunset, the crispness of night closing in, the warmth of a comfortable living room, the children home from school; yes, happiness as a family, and in Christ. Praise God for these blessings, and may before Him we show and express at least a portion of the gratitude He so richly deserves.

I've lived in mountain country, prairies, hills, smoky cities, villages, and spent time in semi-tropical and tropical areas. By personal preference the country



of the Midwest, and it's changing seasons appeal to me. God has caused me to search my heart, and realize that *I must be willing* to go any where He leads me; whether smoky crime ridden city, or steaming snake infested jungle. This must I do, at His leading, with joy and anticipation. *Every soul* is important. How about you, preacher friend, preacher's wife, young person, elder, teacher and whoever you might be?--People will sacrifice and save to travel and see the world, or for some business venture. Christian friend, congregations; how about really sacrificing and giving to the work of God? How about surprising the preacher and say: "We'll push the work at home; teach, preach, soul win, and we'll send you to some other area of the world to evangelize." Yes, surprise him; tell him we will break the home ties and even go with you for a while. Let's expect *BIG* things from God, and do them. I know someone may say: "Oh, we couldn't do it." Not with that attitude you couldn't for sure. Neither did they believe David could kill Goliath, but David knew it. *Let's wake up!*---The depreciation on a new car the first year would provide round trip tickets to Europe and back for the preacher and his wife, better still, one way tickets for the whole family. Nobody can convince me that God's people

don't have the money. It's the *WILL* that is lacking.

II. AM I DOING AND IMPROVING MY BEST AT HOME?

There's probably not many of us but could improve upon what we consider our best. Our best is more than just filling the hours of the day. Multitudes of activities will do this. Let our activities be filled with dilligent study, prayer, and talking to others about Jesus. As Paul our beloved brother said: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." What is our first love?

III. AM I MAKING PREPARATIONS TO GO?

One thing certain, it isn't likely that too many preachers will leave this land to "go into all the world"--as Jesus commanded. If thousands were ready right now, it wouldn't be too many. I'm sure God won't want every true gospel preacher to leave American soil (no danger). I am sure He wants each one of us to make honest examination of our hearts, saying: "Lord, is it me you want?" If so: "Here am I send me."

We need to make spiritual preparation. First on this list is a thorough knowledge of God's Word and how to use it. Succesively, would probably be an improvement in English, history, geography, and the customs of the area to which you plan to go. English is spoken by many people in much of the world, so this affords a real opening for the gospel. I feel it also imperative that we learn the language of the area. This is a necessity to contact the millions who don't speak English; also it is obvious it would give us the needed closeness to them. It is normally true everywhere, but it's sure that among people of

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Perfect in one. He was in the very shadow of the cross when He prayed this prayer and six times he comes over these things. Surely He was in earnest about what He prayed for them.

This is the answer of Christ! However Christ died before the church was actually established, and we might be of an opinion that the Spirit is greater than the Law, that had Christ actually experienced the troubles and the whims that later arose He would have given different words.

But the apostles proved without doubt that they were revealing the Word and will of Christ and the Father as the church was being established, and as it was nurtured in later years. Hear the great preacher Paul proclaiming, "All Scripture is inspired of God and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness." II Timothy 3:16. Could we not then rely as much upon the words of Paul and Peter as we would Jesus Christ himself.

Paul, you were familiar with this denominational spirit. Some tried to start denominations in your time. Did you promote them, or remain indifferent to them? Tell us that we might have an actual example from the "New Testament" church. Paul says in I Cor. 1:10, "I beseech you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you--but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment." Then to paraphrase the rest: "For it has been declared unto me that there is a denomination saying, I am of Paul; other denominations saying, We are of Appollos and Cephus. You are carnal (worldly); let no man glory in men."

Peter, also a great preacher of the apostolic era, informed us of the coming denominational world. "And there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies--and

many shall follow their pernicious ways--and the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." II Peter 2:1,2.

In the booklet, "Is one church as good as another?" by John B. Harney, I quote from pages 3 and 4. "Many people are of the opinion that all religions are good; that all are useful; that there is room and need for all, and that all find equal favor in the sight of God...that it makes no difference what one believes; God does not care what religious opinions one holds, but only that one lead an honest, sober, clean and upright life. This theory that one religion or church is as good as another is well worth a careful examination. If it be sound and true, it should be spread abroad and driven home into the minds of men; if it be unreasonable and false, it should be unmasked and thrown aside. If true, it is a blessing: if false, it is a curse to all who hold it, and shape their religious course by its plain teaching. Among the logical inferences from the principle are the following: vice is as good as virtue; idolatry is as good as right worship of the true God; falsehood is as good as truth."

Now, as Solomon said, let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. To endorse or promote denominationalism is not in keeping with the teaching, prayers, or spirit of Christ. Denominationalism is division. It takes authority and glory away from Christ and gives it to man or a human organization. Go to the home of a man who belongs to a denomination and ask him what he is religiously. He will call the name of the denomination to which he belongs instead of saying, "I am a Christian." Christ is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn of the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18). There is no other name given in heaven or on earth whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

"Jesus, Oh how sweet the Name;
Jesus, everyday the same;

Jesus, let all saints proclaim,
The Blessed Name of Jesus!"

Paul and Peter both tell us that divisions are worldly, and that false teachings are damnable, and in any case sinful. Therefore we are not to sanction, promote, endorse or even remain indifferent to denominationalism. If you conscientiously follow your New Testament, you will mark those that cause divisions and avoid them (Romans 16:17,18). There are only two ways in which one church is as good as another and that is when both churches are denominational or both simple churches of

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PREACHER, LET'S GET • • •
(Continued from Page 5)

a different country, customs, etc., their friendship must be gained before there would be much opening for the gospel. Remember, Jesus mingled among the common people of His day.

Many language courses can be purchased on long-play records. With a burden for souls, dilligent study, and God's blessing, they can be learned in a relatively short time. This can be done as a family, groups of preachers, groups of students or individually. People will learn a language to enhance their income, to travel, or just for the fun of it; how about learning one or more to win souls? Can you think of anything more important than the eternal destiny of souls? It's a Heaven or Hell matter.

We need to make preparation through preaching. A prepared preacher with a burden for souls here, and throughout the world, will soon stir up a congregation to greater evangelism. When people see that the preacher means business (the Lord's), they will respond. The gospel is powerful. The fields are white unto harvest. God is able. Let's get ready now, then GO. What are we going to do about it?

FEW IN NUMBER

*How many souls were safe in Noah's ark
When the waters began to fall?
I think you know the answer as we start;
They numbered only eight in all.*

*How many of them reached the promised land
When the Israelites were set free?
The multitudes were buried in the sand;
And there were only two, not three.*

*How many were the faithful ones of God
When Israel settled in the land?
They went a-whoring after heathen gods;
The prophet only was God's man.*

*How many stood by Jesus Christ the Lord
When he was tried in days of old?
There His disciples fled before the sword,
Another one his Lord he sold.*

*How many constitute the church today
When men in sin for wrong contend?
The gate is straight and narrow is the way,
And few the truth they will defend.*

*The Lord Himself said many would be called,
But few of them would be chosen;
Of many would the fate of sin befall;
Others, heresies' confusion.*

By A. BROTHER

just one, so you and mother could go to church together?"

I am not pleading for you to join me, I have no church. I do not want you to join me and I will not join you. Let us all join Christ. Could that we talk to heaven and call saint Peter and ask: "Are there any Methodists in heaven? Are there any Lutherans in heaven? Are there any Episcopalians, or Calvinists or Campbellites in heaven?" The answer would be, "No! All we have are Christians. We have no denominations here."

So, friend, if there are no denominations and denominationalists in heaven--if all the divisions are dropped--here and now is the time to do it. We plead for the unity of God's people on the Bible and the Bible alone. Jesus prayed for it, Paul preached it, early Christians practiced it; will you accept it?

FINDING OUT GOD'S WILL

IT HAS BEEN said that there are three tests for finding out whether a course of action is God's will:

(1) *Test it by the revealed will and plan of God, as we know it in the New Testament.* The more we know our Bible, the better will be our contact with Christ, and hence our knowledge of His will.

(2) *Pray about it, and be ready for an answer.* It is possible for us to have halted and wavered so long that we need to give ourselves a push to recognize and accept the guidance God is giving us.

(3) *Test it by circumstances.* Does God offer you a stumbling block, or an open door? Sometimes God wants us to break through obstructions to find and do His will; but sometimes events positively conspire to make it known to us, and God is in the events.

Renew your subscription.

IS ONE CHURCH • • •
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Christ. Then there is no difference--one church is as good as another. The "New Testament" church of which we are a part is trying to bring back or restore New Testament Christianity. We have no book but the Bible, no creed but Christ, and no name but His name. We plead for the unity of all Christians upon the Bible and the Bible alone.

I say if you are wearing a denominational name lay it down and take the name God has given in His Word, and wear it alone. Don't be misled by the creeds and dogmas of men, for they cannot save you in the end. There may be great organizations now, but the church of the Lord Jesus Christ will win in the end.

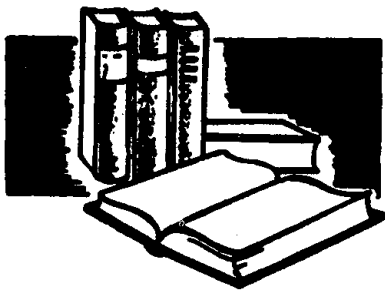
In a midwestern city there lived a father and mother with their nine-year-old boy. The mother was a member of a certain church; the father was a member of another. Both were ardent church workers. The question arose as to which church the son should go. Finally it was agreed that he should go with one, one Sunday, and the other the next. One morning as the boy and the father were about to start for church, the bell on the mother's church began to ring.

"Father, does God do everything for the best?" the boy asked. "Yes," the father answered.

"Did he build the church?" the questions continued. "Yes, it is His church," was the reply.

"Well, why didn't he build

**BOOK
Selection**



The Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands by Charles F. Pfeiffer and Howard F. Vos.

We recommend this excellent book to all who plan a trip to Bible lands and those who would like to take a trip to Bible lands. Perhaps it is the next best thing to going. The history, geography and archaeological discoveries are co-ordinated to make a profoundly interesting and valuable book. It is filled with actual photographs of the countries, the ruins and discoveries. The binding and type are beautiful. This book is completely up to date, being published in 1967. This will make a handsome and valuable addition to your library which you will continually prize. (It is advertized elsewhere on this page). The price is \$8.95 and well worth it. Send your order to *The Sword and Staff*.

HEALTHFUL AFFLICTION

THE AIR from the sea of affliction is extremely beneficial to invalid Christians. Continued prosperity, like a warm atmosphere, has a tendency to unbind the sinews and soften the bones; but the cold winds of trouble make us sturdy, hardy, and well-braced in every part. Unbroken success often leads to an undervaluing of mercies, and forgetfulness of the giver; but the withdrawal of the sunshine leads us to look for the sun.

--Spurgeon

**READERS'
... Response**

IRELAND:

"Greetings! I have received 2 copies so far of your little paper SWORD AND STAFF which I have read with interest. I have one serious complaint THERE'S NOT NEAR ENOUGH OF IT. A paper like this should be 3 times the size. So much false teaching is going out daily in very colourful covers POISON WITH A SUGAR COATING while good stuff like SWORD AND STAFF are limited. May God bless your efforts & I say that sincerely.

TEXAS:

"I read your article entitled 'The Charter of the Church' in the December, 1967, issue of THE SWORD AND STAFF. This article was a blessing to me and I feel confident it has helped all who have had the privilege to read it. May I take this opportunity to thank you for this article and your many contributions to the service of God."

NEBRASKA:

"I enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF so much--and may I mention especially the article 'Santa Claus vs. Jesus.' It should have been even stronger. I loathe that 'Santa Claus-Christmas' thing that goes on--and the more I study and dig into it, the worse I hate it."

VIRGINIA:

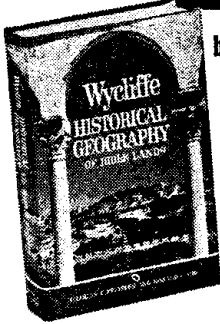
"Please remove the Christian Church on Cherry Avenue from the mailing list."

PLEASE HELP US

We said this in the December issue: "The first part of 1968 will find a great number of your subscriptions up for renewal. The editor of *The Sword and Staff* is a 'full-time' evangelist of the gospel, actively engaged in pressing the cause of kingdom, besides getting out the paper. Hence, time is something we just don't have enough of. In order to conserve precious time, we are not sending out notices of subscriptions being expired. When the time comes that you think your subscription is supposed to be renewed, please take it upon yourself to do this without being notified by us. We are counting on you to do this. Why not subscribe for others at the same time? We are looking forward to hearing from you. Please help us in this way."

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