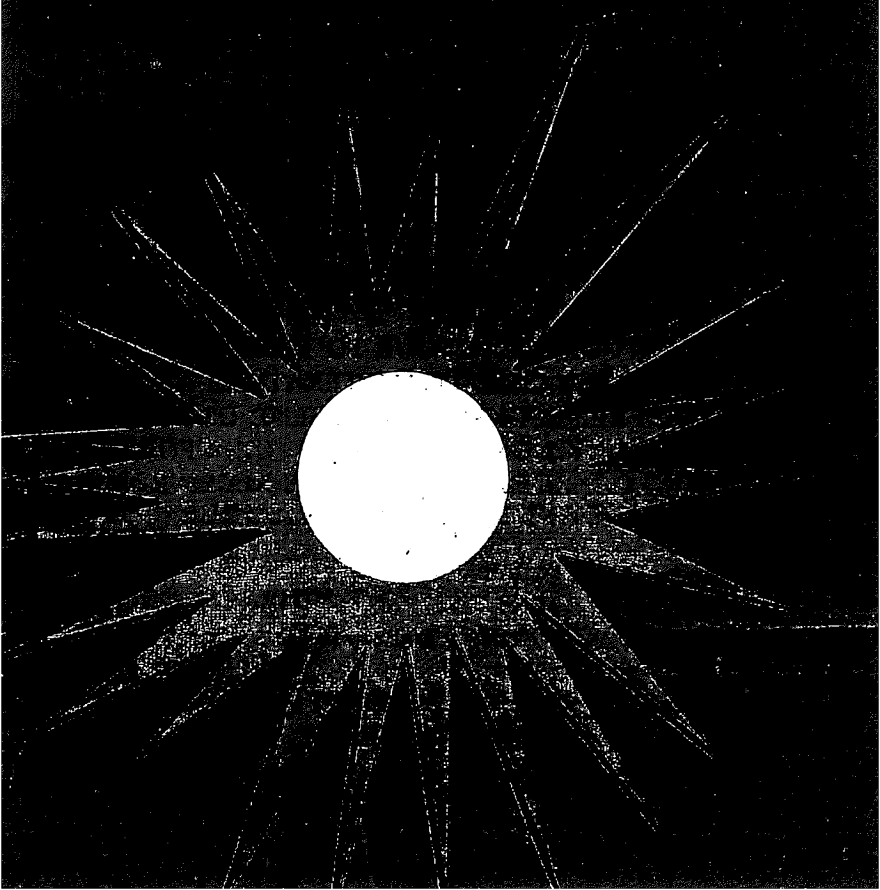


THE BIBLE TEACHER



क्या आप जानते हैं ?

रेडियो श्री लंका से प्रसारित प्रवचनों को अब आप पुस्तकों के रूप में प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। प्रत्येक पुस्तक को मुफ्त प्राप्त करने के लिये, डाक व्यय के लिये, केवल 25 पैसे का डाक टिकट हमें भेजिए। इसी के साथ पुस्तक का नाम भी लिखना न भूलें।

1. सत्य सुसमाचार—लेखक : सनी डेविड
2. उद्धार की योजना—लेखक : सनी डेविड
3. क्रूस की कथा—लेखक : सनी डेविड
4. खाली कब्र—लेखक : सनी डेविड
5. 15 प्रभावशाली रेडियो प्रवचन—लेखक : सनी डेविड
6. 20 लघु रेडियो संदेश—लेखक : सनी डेविड
7. सुसमाचार बोलनेवाला—लेखक : जे० सी० चोट

(अनुवादक सनी डेविड)

नोट : सारी पुस्तकें एक साथ प्राप्त करने के लिये रु० 1.75 के टिकट भेजिए। आपका पता साफ़ लिखा होना चाहिए।

OFFER !

IN OUR ENDEAVOUR TO HELP YOU WITH EXCELLENT CHRISTIAN LITERATURE WE OFFER YOU FREE BOOKS BY MAIL. SEND US JUST TEN RUPEES BY MONEY ORDER AS THEIR FORWARDING CHARGES AND YOU WILL RECEIVE MORE THAN FORTY BOOKS ! YES ! ITS TRUE !

Send to : Church of Christ
(Box 3815), C/22, NDSE-2,
New Delhi-110049

Published by Sunny David for Church of Christ
Post Box No. 3815, New Delhi-110049.

Printed at : Pioneer Fine Art Press, Ajmeri Gate, Delhi-110006.

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Editor :

J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor :

SUNNY DAVID

Published by Church of Christ, Box 3815,

New Delhi-110049.

Pleading for the restoration of pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 8

October 1977

No. 6



The Pentecostal Problem

Here in India, and around the world, there seems to be a great interest in Pentecostal teaching. This interest has been intensified as a result of the charismatic movement with the emphasis on "speaking in tongues" in most religious groups. No doubt a lot of this is a reaction on the part of many to the cold, routine, traditional and indifferent way of doing religious things. Therefore, the opposite extreme has a lot of appeal where all the stress is on closeness, warmth, participation, feelings, emotionalism, and the special guidance of the Holy Spirit. Both of these not only oppose each other but are contrary to the teaching of God's word. Why is it that man must always go off the deep end and end up in religious error? The Bible offers an alternative and that is the one way to God, the narrow way, the truth. (John 14 : 6). In this way one may follow the Lord but still be emotionally involved. To be cold and indifferent about it would render it heart-

less. To forsake the Lord for feelings only would be an equal mistake. As stated, truth and emotionalism goes hand in hand in pure Christianity.

Getting back to the Pentecostal problem, let it be understood that that is exactly what it is—a problem. In the first place, the Pentecostals derive their name from the day of Pentecost and what happened on that day as recorded in Acts 2. Because the Apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on that day, and subsequently the power to speak in tongues and to perform miracles, there are many today who feel that they have likewise received the Holy Spirit and as a result that they can also speak in tongues and perform miracles. In reality, and contrary to their thinking of course, they can do neither. But the whole thing is based on a misunderstanding of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To understand it one must go back prior to the day of Pentecost and read and study those scriptures where the Lord promised the Holy Spirit, and especially the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To do that one will immediately note that Christ promised to send the comforter, or the Holy Spirit, which was the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to only a limited number and that number happened to be specifically the Apostles. (John 15 : 26, 27; John 16 : 13). Then when you turn to Acts 1 and 2 you will see that the Apostles were the ones who literally received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As we read on in Acts 2 and the chapters following we see that the Apostles were the ones who spoke in tongues and performed miracles. (Acts 2:4,43). We know that all did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit to enable them to perform miracles because later on we have seven men being chosen who were full of the Holy Spirit but who did not have the power to do miracles and it was through the laying on of the Apostles hands that they were given such power. (Acts 6). As a result, for example, Philip went down to Samaria and performed miracles, baptized a number of them, but he could not lay his hands on them that they might also have miraculous power and therefore Peter and John, Apostles, came down to lay their hands on a select number. Evidently it

was a select number since Simon was not one of those who received it although he wanted this power to the extent that he tried to buy it. (Acts 8). Therefore, we conclude from this that only the Apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit, which would include Paul, and later on Cornelius and his household, to convince the Jews that the Gentiles were now accepted of God, but all others, with the exception of those the Apostles laid their hands on that they might have miraculous power, received only the gift of the Holy Spirit, which carried no miraculous power with it whatsoever. Now since we are not Apostles, and since there are no Apostles today to lay their hands on us to give us miraculous power, then that means that we do not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and neither can we receive it. And that further means that without the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the laying on of hands measure of the Holy Spirit then we are not able to speak in tongues or to do any miracles. With regard to speaking in tongues, the Apostles did not mutter or stutter around making sounds and noises that no one could understand but rather when they spoke in other tongues that meant that they had the power to speak in other languages or languages that they had not previously known. (Acts 2 : 6, 8.) It is an admitted thing, however, that all of the Pentecostals are unable to miraculously speak in other languages as did the Apostles. When they travel to other countries they must speak through a local translator or interpreter. That means then that they do not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit as they claim.

In the second place, the Lord did not intend for the things that happened on the day of Pentecost to be so emphasized that such people would become known as Pentecostals. While these people may claim that this is a name that has been given to them, it could also be pointed out that it is also a name that they accept. That is, they call themselves Pentecostals. But what does the Bible say ? It says that salvation is in the name of Christ, not in the name of Pentecost. (Acts 4 : 12). Furthermore, the Lord has promised to be with us only when we meet in his name. (Matthew 18 : 20). That means that

when people meet in the Pentecostal name that the Lord is not with them. They might object by saying that they also meet in the name of Christ but if so then why are they Pentecostals? No, the Lord is not with them and will not be with them until they lay down their error to obey God.

In the third place, the Pentecostals claim that they have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and therefore the Spirit is guiding them and all of that, and yet they are all divided up. They even reject one another, oppose each other, fight among themselves, and accuse each other of preaching false doctrine. Would the Holy Spirit lead some of them in one direction and others in another direction? Would the Holy Spirit have some to preach one doctrine and others to preach a conflicting doctrine? Would the Holy Spirit lead some of them into one church but have others to go into another church? Would the Holy Spirit condone man-made names, doctrines and practices? My friends, can't you see how that these people are utterly deceived. Speaking of the evil, the wicked, the false teacher, the one who does not love the truth, the Bible says, "...Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2: 9-12). These are the kind of people who do not love the truth and will not accept it when pointed out. They want to be deceived. They boast of their power and the signs and wonders that they are able to do. They claim that it is God who is doing them but God is not doing such because he has not promised to do so. If there are any signs and wonders done it would have to be through the power of Satan. But again I stress that when people like this refuse to take God's word on these matters then it means that they do not love the truth. I remember one time talking to a Pentecostal woman who claimed that she had prayed for a sinner

and God had saved her on the spot and then through prayer God had miraculously healed her of some disease. But I called her attention to what the Bible had to say about being saved that Jesus said that one must believe and be baptized to be saved according to Mark 16 : 16, and I continued to remind her that until she finally became so frustrated that she threw up her hands and shouted, "I don't care what Jesus said". Well, to be sure, I was shocked that she would dare make such a statement. I then asked her how she could say such words. I asked her if the Holy Spirit had led her to make such a remark. She finally admitted that she had become excited and had spoken before she had thought. I then wanted to know if the Holy Spirit, since she claimed to be guided by the Holy Spirit, would allow her to get excited and to make such a statement before thinking. She never was able to fully explain what had happened. She was preaching error and when the truth became too much for her, then on her very own, and without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, because she never did have the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, then she declared that she didn't care what Jesus had said. But she was right—she didn't care what Jesus had said or else she would not have been following false doctrine. And the same applies to Pentecostals in general. They do not care what Jesus says. They are interested only in the Spirit, outward, fleshly, carnal, and material things. They believe that they have some mysterious power and therefore that makes them better than everyone else and that is all that counts. But they are deceived. They have nothing. They certainly do not have the truth, If they had truth then they wouldn't be all divided up. The Spirit would not so lead them.

In the fourth place, they are unable to speak in tongues as the Bible teaches and they cannot perform miracles. They would say that I am denying the power of God. I would ask then if they believe that God is still creating men and women out of the dust of the earth today as he did with Adam and Eve. If they explain that he is not, but that he has the power to do so, then I would ask them if they are not denying the

power of God, if they are not limiting God. Sure, I believe God could put on a new arm, give a person a new eye, raise one or more from the dead, that is, if he wanted to. But he doesn't want to. He doesn't have to. He has already proven him self time and time again. He is on record as having done all those things. Do you not believe it? Must he have to do it over and over again? Would you demand that he do so? What would be the purpose of it? If you do not believe the record that includes all of the miracles that God did, would you believe a miracle today even if you saw it with your own eyes? Those things were written that we might believe, and miracles were done to confirm the word. (John 20: 30, 31; Mark 16:20). My friends, the word has already been confirmed. It is time for you to believe it and obey it. He has not promised that he will confirm it again. But if you still maintain that miracles are for God's people today, then I challenge you to go out to the graveyard and raise one, two, a dozen, and all the dead that are there. You can't, and you know you can't. I challenge you, or anyone, to go to the hospitals and miraculously heal all the sick that are there. You can't, and you know that you can't and neither can any one else. I challenge you to put a new leg on that person that doesn't have one or to give a blind man new eyes. You can't, and you know you can't. Has God failed? No, because he didn't promise to do such things. You are deceiving people. You are an imposter. You are the servant of Satan.

My friends, beware of the Pentecostals. Do not let them deceive you. Demand that they show you in the Bible where the scriptures call them Pentecostals. Have them to demonstrate their powers by putting on a new arm, giving the blind a new set of eyes, raising the dead, etc. If they cannot, then you know that they are not living up to their claims. Ask them to speak in some language they have never studied. Question them about the church they are members of and the name that they wear. Compare their teaching with the word of God. If you will do this then you will surely be able to see them for what they are.

The Pentecostal Movement is a problem in the sense that it represents many deceived souls, people who are using magic tricks to get attention and to gain followers, people who are teaching error. They claim to be following God but are lost. They claim to be guided by the Holy Spirit but are divided. They claim to be able to perform miracles but are unable to produce any real proofs and evidences of such. You, our readers, are urged to follow the scriptures, not the Pentecostals. Only the Lord can save you as you do his will. Then you will be a Christian, not a Pentecostal. That is the big difference.



**associate
editorial**

By What Authority?

Man is a religious being, he wants to serve and worship God. But most of man's service and worship done in the name of religion is not actually by the authority of God. To illustrate this fact, just a few minutes ago a man was sitting in my office who told me that in their village they worship a tree. There are many others who likewise every day bow down in worship to a tree or before an idol of stone or wood, or some thing of nature like sun, moon, rivers. etc. It seems that man in his search of God would accept anything and everything that is introduced to him in the name of a religion or God.

One of my friends told me an interesting story about a man who wanted to make some followers and thereby make a source of income for himself. So he, according to his plan, planted some gram seeds in a large quantity at one place under a tree, and after putting a little earth on them, he then placed a nicely cut stone over the seeds and then covered the place with earth

like there was nothing planted therein. Now, from the morrow, he began to publish the story among his friends that God had appeared unto him in a dream and had revealed to him that at a certain place, of course, at the place where he had planted the stone), soon a stone will come up out from beneath the earth, and it would be a holy place of worship. His friends got excited and in turn told the same story to others in the village. Now all the people began to watch if it was going to be true. The man who had planned the whole game, however, left his home and came to live at the place where he had planted the stone, so to keep a twentyfour hours watch and to see when the seeds would turn into plants and would force the stone from beneath to come up. And, surely, there it was within a few days. Now as people began to notice the holy stone as it was predicted by him they believed in him that he was a man of God and accepted him as their priest and the stone as their god, and they began to worship there and offer their money as unto God.

This is just an illustration to show you how intelligent people could believe in a lie, without considering the question, by what authority they are doing so. This kind of thing, however does not only exist among those who does not know the true God, but there are likewise many believers in Christ who also believe and practice several things in the name of Christianity or God without ever realizing by what authority they are doing them. They observe different days and practice several things which are nowhere mentioned in the law of Christ, who is the author of the true religion of God, and who said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18). They serve and worship Him in a manner which is not acceptable unto him. And so he said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9). They are in organizations and denominations which the Lord never established or authorized. On the contrary he said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matthew 15:13).

This article is written to encourage you and to cause you to see by what authority you do the things that you do in the

name of religion. Remember, CHRIST HAS ALL AUTHORITY. (Matt. 28:18). And his authority is revealed unto us in his New Testament. Therefore, anything that we practice or do, including our worship and service to God, it must be according to the New Testament teaching. (Matthew 7:21).

What Shall We Do?

By Mark H. Nunley

The book of Acts in the New Testament is sometimes called the book of history in the New Testament. This book tells us of the beginning of the Lord's church on the first day of Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection. On that day we find the first Gospel sermon in its entirety being preached, part of which we have recorded in Acts 2. And as we read on through the book of Acts we learn about the spread of the Gospel and the church, and we learn how to become a Christian.

In Acts chapter 2 when Peter and the other apostles preached in Jerusalem letting these people know that they had crucified the Son of God, the people were convicted of their sins, in other words, they were pricked in their hearts. (Acts 2:37). And realizing their lost and undone condition before the Lord, they asked, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37) And they were answered as follows, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

In Acts 8 we find Philip preaching in a city called Samaria, and the multitudes gave heed to the things that he preached. (Acts 8:6). And being receptive to the Gospel, notice what they did, "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8:12).

Towards the end of Acts 8 we find Philip preaching the Gospel to one man in a chariot, and upon hearing the Gospel

this man asked what hindered him from being baptized (Acts 8:36) to which Philip said he could if he believed with all of his heart and then this man confessed his faith in Jesus. (Acts 8:37). Now notice the words of Acts 8:38, "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he baptized him."

In Acts 9:18 we learn that Paul "arose and was baptized" when Ananias told him what God expected him to do. Concerning Cornelius in Acts 10, we find Peter saying, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

In Acts 16 we find Lydia and her household, as well as the Philipian jailor, being baptized into Christ upon hearing the Gospel.

Then notice this verse in Acts 18:8, "and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized"

Can there be any doubt then that when a person hears the Gospel preached and it produces faith in them (Rom. 10:17), and they are led to repent or to decide to obey the Lord because of their faith (Acts 3:19), that they should be baptized into Christ for the purpose of washing their sins away? (Acts 22:16). Certainly not !

Back to the Bible

Man has long since departed from the Bible. This is very evident from what we see in the religious world itself. There is division and confusion everywhere. As a result, many have given up and quit altogether. But what is wrong with the Bible ? There is nothing wrong with the Bible. Man's present condition does not come from following the Bible, but as a consequence of having left it. Therefore, the solution is to be found in returning to the Bible.

The Bible is God's word revealed to man. God has spoken through his Son, Jesus Christ (Matthew 17 : 5; Hebrews 1:1,2) and that word has been recorded in written form that we might read it and believe it. (John 20 : 30, 31). It is all given by the inspiration of God. (2 Timothy 3 : 16, 17). It is perfect. (James 1 : 25). It is the truth (John 17 : 17. It is to be preached to all. (2 Timothy 4 : 2; Matthew 28 : 19, 20). It makes one free. (John 8 : 32). It will judge one and all. (John 12 : 48). It will live and abide forever. (1 Peter 1 :23).

This book, God's word, will not deceive us, divide us, and lead us in the wrong direction. Rather, if believed and obeyed, it will save us and lead us as one to eternal life. No wonder the Psalmist David wrote, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalms 119 : 105). He also wrote, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalms 1 : 1, 2).

We of the churches of Christ are what we are because we have obeyed the word of God as revealed in the Bible and we plead with one and all everywhere to return to the Bible for all that they do and say in the name of religion. We plead with you to do the same. Join with us as we speak where the Bible speaks and we are silent where it is silent. Take your stand with us as we do Bible things in Bible ways and wear Bible names only. This will not make you a member of your church but it will make you a member of Christ's church. It will mean then that we are united as Christians only.

To be more specific, let us urge you to return to the Bible for the Lord's church. Strange as it may seem, but when we turn to the scriptures we do not read of the denominations that we are so familiar with today, but rather we read of but one church and that one belongs to Christ. Christ promised to build it (Matthew 16 : 18) and it was built as promised. (Acts 2). Christ died for it (Ephesians 5 : 25), shed his blood to purchase

it (Acts 20 : 28), he is the saviour of it (Ephesians 5 : 23), he is the head of it (Colossians 1 : 18), and he adds the saved to it. (Acts 2 : 47). There is but one (Ephesians 4 : 4), and it wears the Lord's name. (Romans 16 : 16).

We plead with you to return to the Bible for the plan of salvation. According to the scriptures one must hear the truth (Romans 10 : 17), believe in God (Hebrews 11 : 6), repent of his sins (Acts 17 : 30), confess Christ (Matthew 10 : 32), and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2 : 38). Then one is saved and the Lord adds him to his church. (Acts 2 : 47).

We encourage you to return to the Bible for the Lord's name. Man-made names and titles are generally used today, but in the scriptures we read where those who obeyed God were Christians and Christians only. (Acts 11 : 26; 26 : 28; 1 Peter 4 : 16). And as a body, they were the body of Christ or the church of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12 : 27; Romans 16 : 16).

We beg of you to return to the Bible for the Lord's way of worship. There is but one way. (John 4 : 24). We are to assemble each first day of the week (Acts 20 : 7), to pray (Acts 2 : 42), to study (2 Timothy 2 : 15), to sing (Ephesians 5 : 19), to partake of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26 : 28), and to give. (1 Corinthians 16 : 2). The Lord's way cannot be improved on or changed for the better.

In these things, and in all things, we encourage you to go back to the Bible for a thus saith the Lord. Only then can you be right in religion. Only then will we be united. Surely the Lord's way is the one and only way.

J.C.C.

Is The Bible True ?

W. A. Bradfield

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (1 Peter 1:21).

I want to Believe the Bible

I accept it by faith. It teaches that I will live after death. I want to go to a better home. I want to meet friends and loved ones gone before. I have been taught from childhood that the Bible is true. Great men of the past have accepted it. It is much easier to believe than it is to disbelieve.

I Believe in God

Atheism cannot be proved. One would have to know everything to know there is no God. It is most reasonable to believe in God. It is very unreasonable to believe there is **no God**. The universe testifies to His existence. Every house is built by some man. The watch has an intelligent maker. We know about God by what he made. Look into the sky, into nature, and into the face of a baby and see God. There is a Great Designer-Engineer back of all this. **What is the alternative?** No hope—nothing for which to live. What a dreadful and bleak picture!

"Show me God and I will Believe"

Show me your brains, and I will believe you have some. Show me the wind and I will believe. Show me George Washington, and I will believe that he lived. We do not see life but the results of it. We also see the results of your brains, the wind, and George Washington. We see God by what He has done. We see everywhere the evidence of His being.

Unique qualities of the Bible

It is our guide from time to eternity. (Ps. 119:105). It can never be destroyed. (Mt. 24:35). It is complete for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16). It came from God. (Heb. 1:1, 2). It reveals man's origin, mission, and destiny. No other book does this. It has stood the test of time. Such men as Voltaire, Paine, Ingresoll and many others have tried in vain to destroy it.

The writers of the Bible

The Bible was written by forty writers over a period of 1600 years. It is a single volume composed of 66 books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The writers included Kings, Shepherds, Soldiers, Fishermen, and Farmers. It was written in King's palaces, Shepherd's tents, prison, etc. The Bible authors gave both the good and the bad sides of its characters. Consider, for example, Abraham, Noah, David, Moses, and Peter. In spite of all these differences, the Bible is one book; there are **no** contradictions in it.

The Influence of the Bible

Its moral influence has spread abroad. It has marked the path over which civilization has ever traveled. Human freedom has been advanced. Woman's position has been exalted. The working man has been helped. The dignity of labour has been recognized. Literature, Art, and Education have been promoted. There must be a reason for all this; **the Bible came from God.**

It Reveals the Scheme of Redemption

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die; even so, in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:21). The story from "Paradise to Paradise" is the greatest story ever told. It is the greatest message moral man ever heard. This story which includes the blood of Christ reveals that man, in order to be saved, must believe (Jno. 8:24), repent (Lk. 13:3), confess Christ (Rom. 10:10), and be baptized (Acts 2:38).

It will be a Standard of Judgment

"I saw the dead small and great stand before God. The books were opened and another book was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. 20:10). When the roll is called up yonder, we will all be

there and the Bible will read then just like it reads today. Our attitude toward its Holy commands will determine the eternal destiny of all of us.

Learn the Lesson of "The Anvil"

The Bible is like the anvil which wears out many hammers and remains unblemished.

The Anvil

"Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door

And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;

When looking in, I saw upon the floor,

Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

'How many anvils have you had', said I,

'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'

'Just one,' said he; then said with twinkling eye,

'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know'.

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word

For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon;

Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard,

The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone."

The Bible—"This book Contains"

The mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers.

Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.

It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

Here heaven is opened and the gates of Hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good its design and the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, carefully, and prayerfully.

It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure.

It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and is established forever.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour.

And condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.

Why One Church Grew

Charles E. Crouch

Nearly all churches want to grow, and some have developed means of growth which God does not approve. As we consider church progress, it is well that we study the growth, service, and power of God's first church : Jerusalem. The first half of the book of Acts is a divine record of its progress and influence. From Acts 6 : 1-7, we learn some key factors in its growth which God approved and richly blessed.

The church in Jerusalem grew because of its *steadfastness in prayer*. The apostles gave top priority to prayer in their lives—ahead of preaching the word. (Acts 6 : 4). Does prayer have first place in your life ? (1 Thess. 5 : 17). We need to consider the importance given to prayer throughout the New Testament. Prayer cannot displace preaching, or service to God; but it does give aim and power to Christian lives. (James 5 : 16). Church power and progress are closely related to the fervent praying done by its members. (Acts 4 : 23-33; Eph. 6 : 18-20).

The Jerusalem church grew because of its *faithfull ministry of God's word*. The apostles did not "forsake the word of God and serve tables." (Acts 6 : 2). They spoke the word of God faithfully and courageously. Though commanded to

cease teaching in the name of Christ (Acts 4 : 18; 5 : 28, 29), they continued speaking in that name. The church in Jerusalem was evangelistic and Christ-centered. It was not apostle-centered, preacher-centered, elder-centered, or youth-centered. It was rather Christ centered. It gave to Jesus the preeminence he deserves and God requires. (Col. 1 : 18). And it could be Christ-centered only by preaching the true gospel of Christ. "Upon this rock" it was built. (Matt. 16 : 18). So the first church "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching." (Acts 2 : 42).

Why were they so energetic and faithful in preaching his word ? They were men who "had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13). They believed that his were the "words of eternal life" (John 6 : 68), and they were bold in preaching that which makes believers unto life eternal. (John 20 : 30, 31). Their ministry soon extended beyond Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1 : 8; cf. Col. 1 : 23). That church contended "earnestly for the faith," without addition, subtraction, apology, or unkindness. Sound doctrine is always an essential in transforming sinners into Christ-like characters. There is no substitute for the "whole counsel of God," faithfully spoken in love. (Acts 20 : 27; Eph. 4 : 15; 2 Tim. 4 : 1-4). Solid spiritual progress is directly related to the faithful proclamation of God's word.

The Jerusalem church grew because of *men of good report*. (Acts 6:3). Seven men were chosen to serve God's people in that city. Nothing is said of their being chosen because they were prominent, successful, wealthy, or poor; but rather because they were "of good report." The influence of godly men is wholesome and inspiring to the cause of Christ. The effect of those with unholy influence is dreadful. There is a place in the kingdom of God for the former; not the latter. The church is "the pillar and support of the truth." (1 Tim 3:16). The truth in every place depends upon men of good report to support and extend its influence. It is a mistake to select persons unfaithful in life, or with ungodly influence, to lead in any public way in the kingdom of righteousness. Soundness in life is an essential to spiritual power as soundness in doc-

trine. This factor in church power can be winked at only at the loss of godliness and to our own sorrow. We want God's church to grow. But the sacrifice of this principle would be self-defeating.

The church in Jerusalem also grew because its leaders were *full of the Spirit and of wisdom*. (Acts 6:3). Paul prayed, in Eph. 3:16, that the church at Ephesus might be "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." He also admonished them, "Neither give place to the devil." (Eph 4:27). When the army of the Lord is led by men who are full of God's Spirit and word, it cannot be defeated or led astray. But when Satan fills our hearts with fear, self-pity, envy, pride, human tradition false teaching, or the deceitfulness of riches, we "give place to the devil," and become spiritually impotent. (Acts 5:1-11).

Another reason the church in Jerusalem grew was *its cooperative spirit*. Their teamwork is a model until now. "The saying pleased the whole multitude." (Acts 6:5). "And all that believed were together, and...continued stedfastly with one accord." (Acts 2:44, 46). "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul." (Acts 4:32). It was a church united in Christ, characterized by marvelous teamwork, and not hampered by strife or discord. Murmuring and complaining create sloth, destroying church power. Loss of souls is the most tragic result. But with the cooperation of all disciples of the Lord today, the church can face the future triumphantly as in ancient days. May we resolve to lock arms together that we may with our total might do God's will today. (Phil. 1:27).

The Jerusalem church also grew because of a *generous use of the material means God had given to it*. It was a benevolent church. The need was great. Tables had to be served. (Acts 6:1). They gave cheerfully and liberally. (Acts 2:45; 4:32, 36, 37). Thus the needs of the Grecian widows, and others, were met. (Acts 6:5, 6; 4: 34). Having pledged their hearts to Christ, they held back nothing that was needed to advance his cause. Theirs were compassionate hearts and helping hands.

The church is often limited by lack of material means to reach out. God can use only what we surrender to him. That which is withheld from God can feed no fatherless or widows, win no victories for Christ, and save no souls for eternity; but it will corrode our own souls. If the church of the Lord today is to be like his first church in Jerusalem, *we must go about doing good.*

Because of its faith and fidelity, Jerusalem was both a suffering and influential church. It did not enjoy the favour of its opposition (Acts 4), but like Jesus, it did have favour with the people. (Mark 12: 37; Acts 2:47). The Lord stated in John 15:17-19, that his disciples need not expect to be loved by the world. But they can be influential in the world. We can win or lose the respect of the world. May we therefore work and pray, not that we may be loved by the world, but that we may win the world to Christ—even though there be suffering in the process.

Because it was militant and faithful, the church in Jerusalem achieved glorious results. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7). Many other victories were achieved by that great church. *The same factors will accomplish similar results now.* We have the same seed of the kingdom which was planted and watered in Jerusalem. (Luke 8:11). And Jesus has promised to be with all who are faithful to him even "unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20). May God help us to increase our faith, enlarge our hearts, and give ourselves wholly to the cause of Christ as workers together with God. The presence of the above factors in church power will make the difference between "wishing" and "working" for success in the growth of God's kingdom.

History of Sprinkling

Donald Holley

The church of the first century was not slothful respecting the faith and practice of the apostles; but thereafter, within the space of two centuries, serious innovations had crept into the churches of Christ. In numerous churches, innovators arose who took little heed of apostolic doctrine, and who respected not the "faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.)

The Christians of the third century were therefore possessed of a more liberal spirit in matters of religion than the apostles; so the century was marred by religious disputations, and among other departures from New Testament procedure, it witnessed the substitution of sprinkling for the practice of immersion.

The origin of Sprinkling

The first departure from the apostolic practice of immersion occurred in the year A.D. 253, or thereabout. This incident involved Novatian, who, in apprehension of death, according to Eusebius, had water poured over his person in bed; Novatian was, therefore, the first ever to receive affusion designed to suffice for Christian baptism. It appears from the records, however, that a large quantity of water was poured over the man in order to simulate, as far as possible, an actual immersion. Subsequently, the clergy and some members of the laity opposed his being ordained a presbyter, because (they said) it was unlawful for a man who had not been immersed to be admitted into the clergy.

Thereafter, the name *clinici* was used to distinguish those who had been merely sprinkled rather than immersed, and it usually connoted a sick-bed ceremony. Many persons, however, raised the objection that this "baptism" was imperfect or not fully valid; moreover, sprinkling was regarded as an innovation by many of the so-called "church fathers."

Reliable church historians indicate that the early church (for some time after 250 A.D.) made sprinkling or pouring the

exception only in cases of persons dangerously ill, who received "clinical baptism". About eighty years afterward, in the twelfth canon of the Council of Neo-Caesarea (314-325), the priesthood was officially prohibited a person who had received "*clinical* baptism." The council made the restriction on the grounds that such a person had been "baptized" in fear of death, and not from his deliberate choice.

The Development Thereof

We can easily observe the gradual development of sprinkling, thus seeing how the practice achieved common usage through slow degrees and sinuous methods.

The first law for sprinkling was given in A.D. 753. Pope Stephen II, while in political asylum in Britany, was consulted whether, *in case of necessity*, an infant could lawfully receive baptism by affusion. He replied in the affirmative. Thereafter, although immersion continued its dominion in the majority of infant baptisms, it became more common for sprinkling and pouring to be admitted in cases of "necessity." In 816, the Council of Calcuith (which was English) specifically ordered infant immersion and forbade the priests in administering affusion thereunto.

By the twelfth century, sprinkling had almost entirely supplanted immersion in France, which seems to have been the first country where affusion became the ordinary practice for persons in good health. We must assume, however, that the practice existed without the express sanction of the Papacy.

As the controversy between immersion and sprinkling continued late into the next century, the forces of the latter appear to have made remarkable gains in strength among the councils of the Roman Catholic Church, which entirely dominated religious thought in the medieval period. The Synod of Angiers, in 1275, spoke of neither immersion or affusion as having preponderance over the other. In the Council of Nemours (1284), sprinkling was again declared to be limited to cases of "necessity"; and Thomas Aquinas, living in the same period, said that, although immersion was certainly the safe practice, yet sprinkling and pouring were likewise permissible. In the

Council of the Liege, Bishop John, which assembled in 1287, prescribed the manner in which children should be sprinkled. The foregoing clearly demonstrates an increasing trend toward liberalism regarding the mode of baptism among the Roman Catholic councils. Moreover, the practice of immersion, from about the eleventh or twelfth century, had begun a gradual decline into a state of disuse.

Hence, for the space of thirteen centuries, immersion retained the status of being virtually the universal practice of the Western Latin Church, although sprinkling was the exception, being administered only to invalids and those who were deathly ill, as well as others who claimed inability to endure cold bathing. Affusion was therefore considered as justifiable only in cases of "necessity". The Greek Orthodox Church, however, chose not to follow the Western church in this matter, but retaining immersion, insisted even upon dipping infants; and it remains her practice unto this day.

As we have seen, there was an increasing demand, notably in ecclesiastical circles, for the popular practice of affusion, so that the fourteenth century witnessed a climax regarding the matter. The Council of Revenna, in 1311, granted affusion the official sanction of the Papacy; in fact, a choice was extended between sprinkling and immersion, both of which were henceforth practiced with the full authority of the Catholic Church. So, finally, the innovation enjoyed common usage by the end of the fourteenth century; and sprinkling soon prevailed over the practice of immersion, which, thenceforth, began to disappear from Catholic churches. The practice of immersion, however, did continue, though not uniformly, even into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; but it had been superseded in most European churches before the time of the Reformation.

In the Reformation

The light of the Reformation Movement revived the controversy between immersion and sprinkling; and the reformers, while generally conceding immersion to be apostolic practice,

were wont to follow the traditional (that is, Catholic) mode of baptism. Wycliffe, for example, contended that the mode of baptism was immaterial. Likewise, Calvin wrote that whether a person is immersed or sprinkled is not of the "least consequence"; but he added, "It is evident that the term *baptize* means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive Church." At Geneva, however, in spite of his knowledge of the Greek language and of church history, Calvin wrote: "Then the minister of baptism pours water on the infant, saying, 'I baptize thee', etc." Calvin was, therefore, according to Dr. William Wall, the first to prescribe affusion absolutely.

Luther, however, who seems to have been somewhat more zealous for apostolic or ancient usage, contended for the practice of immersion. The reformer wrote: "For this reason I could wish that the baptized should be totally immersed, according to the meaning of the word."

Many people, fleeing Catholic persecutions, sojourned for a time in Geneva, where Calvin exerted an influence upon large numbers who later returned to their native countries, taking with them a love of sprinkling. Affusion, therefore, having been given further perpetuity in the Reformation, was established in most Protestant churches; and in our day it is customary among the Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, *et cetera*.

Further Development

Early in the Reformation, the work of Calvin spread throughout Europe, and particularly into Scotland, whence (though not until much later) its influence moved into England.

In its beginning, the Church of England pursued the practice of immersion and suffered no exceptions among its converts: even infants were dipped. Unlike the Continental churches, the English church did not readily abandon immersion but continued the practice until late into the sixteenth century. A publication (1530) during the reign of Henry VIII reads; "Let the priest baptize him [the candidate] by dipping him in the

water thrice." Somewhat later (1549) the Common Prayer-book of Edward VI contained a similar decree. In fact, history records that Edward himself was immersed; and not only so, but Queen Elizabeth I was likewise immersed into the English church.

The English hierarchy, however, desiring to introduce the practice of sprinkling into full communion, pressed down an ecclesiastical yoke on the people, who continued to require immersion. Fewer children, beginning in the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, were immersed than previously; and the number thereof continued to decrease until after the reign of Queen Mary, at which time the English adopted the practice of sprinkling in imitation of Calvin and the Presbyterian churches of Knox.

But the Restoration Movement, in the nineteenth century maintained that whatsoever is without express New Testament command, or apostolic example, or not a matter of necessary inference, is foreign to Apostolic Christianity. Accordingly, the practice of sprinkling was found not to be justified as either a command, or an example, or a necessary inference; for its lawfulness existed nowhere save in human directories. Alexander Cambell and others, being fraught with apostolic convictions, began therefore to immerse all who obeyed Christ, allowing no one to be excepted.

Conclusion

Inasmuch as baptism is a command of God, the performance thereof must fulfill certain specifications as set forth in the New Testament. In particular, apostolic baptism required "much water" (John 3:23); it required a coming to the water (Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:36); it required a going "down into the water" (Acts 8:38); it required a burial in, and a resurrection from water (Rom. 6:4, 5); it required a coming "up out of the water" (Acts 8:39); it required that baptism should be administered in the name (i.e., by the authority) of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38), and that baptism should be preceded by faith, repentance, and confession, as essential conditions of salvation from sin.

The preceding scriptures admit no possibility whatsoever that apostolic baptism was performed by affusion. So in baptism as well as in all other doctrinal matters, the churches of Christ plead for a restoration of the New Testament order of things. Finally, apostolic practices, ordained in the New Testament and enjoined upon the early churches, constitute the only service which is pleasing to God; and such practices are not subject to modification, emendation nor supplantation.

MOSES OR CHRIST, WHICH ?

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17). "We are not under the law but under grace." (Rom 6:14). "No man is justified by the law before God." (Gal 3:11).

I. The Ten Commandments :

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Ex, 20:3).
2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images." (Ex. 20:4).
3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." (Ex. 20:7).
4. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." (Ex. (20:8).
5. "Honor thy father and thy mother," (Ex. 20:12).
6. "Thou shalt not kill." (Ex. 20:13).
7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Ex. 20:14).
8. "Thou shalt not steal." (Ex. 20:15).
9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness." (Ex. 20:16).
10. "Thou shalt not covet..." (Ex. 20:17).

II. The Law of Moses more Than Ten Commandments :

1. There were moral principles included in the Law that were no part of the decalogue, or Ten Commandments. (Ex. 21:16).
2. The Ten Commandments served as a constitution for the people of Israel. Other rules and regulations announced later were based upon them.

3. The two great commandments: love God supremely and one's neighbour as himself were not included in the Ten Commandments. (Mt. 22:37-39).
4. The Ten Commandments divide themselves into two main parts:
 - a. The first four deal with Israel's duty to God.
 - b. The last six deal with her duty to man.

III. The Limited Nature of the Law :

1. It was given to the Israelites only. (Deut. 5:2).
2. It was added because of transgression. (Gal. 3:19).
3. It was a shadow of good things to come. (Heb. 10:1-3).
4. It was not given to the Gentiles. (Rom. 2:14).
5. It was to last until Christ came. (Gal. 3:19).
6. It was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. (Gal. 3:24).
7. Christ came to fulfill the law. (Mt. 5:17).
8. He took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. (Col. 2:14).
9. Therefore, we are not under the law but under "a new and living way." (Heb. 10:20).

IV. Which Is Binding Today ?

1. Jesus came to establish a better covenant. (Heb. 8:6).
2. The Law was perfect for the purpose for which it was given. However, it was only a national and temporary law. Consequently, it was not adequate for a universal and spiritual kingdom.
3. The Ten Commandments as such are not a part of the New Testament. However, the principles taught in nine of the Ten Commandments are a part of the Christian teaching. The fourth commandment "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" is not included in the duties of the Christian.
4. Augustine has well said: "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed: the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."

V. The Gospel of Jesus Christ :

1. God spoke to the fathers in times past through the prophets but he has spoken to us in the last days through his Son. (Heb. 1:1, 2).
2. God spoke from heaven and said, "Hear ye Him." (Matthew 17:5).
3. Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant. (Heb. 9:15-18).
4. Christ is the High Priest of our perfect tabernacle. (Heb. 8:2; 9:11-14).

VI. The Law and The Gospel Contrasted :

Law

1. Included one nation. (Eph. 2:14).
2. Dedicated by blood of animals. (Heb. 9:19).
3. Law in the flesh. (Gen. 17:13).
4. Priesthood of man. (Heb. 7:11).
5. Many offerings. (Heb. 10:11).
6. Circumcision in flesh. (Eph. 2:11).
7. Circumcision by hands. (Eph. 2:11).
8. Circumcision a seal. (Rom. 4:11).
9. Sins remembered yearly. (Heb. 10:3).
10. Cannot take away sins. (Heb. 10:11).
11. Not perfect. (Heb. 8:8).
12. Did not give inheritance. (Gal. 3:18).
13. Ministration of death. (2 Cor. 3:7).
14. Yoke of bondage. (Gal. 5:1).
15. On tables of stone. (2 Cor. 3:3-6).
16. Purged the flesh. (Heb. 9:13).

Gospel

1. Included all nations. (Mk. 16:15).
2. Dedicated by blood of Christ. (1 Pet. 1:19).
3. Law in the mind and heart. (Heb. 8:10).

4. Priesthood of Christ. (Heb. 7:8).
5. Christ offered once for all. (Heb. 9:28).
6. Circumcision in heart. (Rom. 9:29).
7. Circumcision without hands. (Col. 2:11).
8. Holy Spirit a seal. (Eph. 1:13).
9. No More remembrance of sins. (Heb. 10:17).
10. Saves to the uttermost. (Heb. 7:25).
11. Perfect law of liberty. (Jas. 1:25).
12. Able to give inheritance. (Acts 20:32).
13. Law of the Spirit of life. (Rom. 8:2).
14. Liberty—made free. (Gal. 5:1).
15. On tables of the heart (Heb. 8:10).
16. Purges the conscience. (Heb. 9:14).

The Book of the Month

THIS month we will send you a 167 page book, "THE NEVER FAILING SCRIPTURES", by L.R. Wilson. "In this book the scriptures are not only shown to be the inspired word of God, but the author gives background information on them, revealing their origin and tracing their history on up to the present time. This should be a means of creating for the reader a deeper faith in God's word and thus leading him to obey its teaching."

With your request for the copy of this book you should send a postage stamp of twentyfive paise as its mailing charges. Write your name and address in BLOCKS.

Radio Sri Lanka Broadcasts

ENGLISH—*The Voice of Truth*—Speaker : Reggie Gnana-sundaram.

All correspondence should be sent to The Voice of Truth,
Post Box 3815, New Delhi 110049.

Sundays—10 : 15 to 10 : 30 P.M.

Frequencies—(1) 15,120 KHZ, 19 Meter Band ; 100KW
(2) 11,725 KHZ, 25 Meter Band ; 100 KW
(3) 7,190 KHZ, 41 Meter Band ; 10 KW

Tuesdays—9 : 30 to 9 : 45 A.M.

Frequencies : (1) 11,724 KHZ, 25 Meter Band ; 100KW
(2) 15,128 KHZ, 19 Meter Band ; 100KW
(3) 6,075 KHZ, 49 Meter Band ; 10 KW

HINDI—*Gospel Truth*—Speaker : Sunny David.

All correspondence should be sent to Satya-Susamachar, Post
Box 3815, New Delhi 110049.

Tuesdays—8 : 45 to 9 : 15 P.M.

Thursdays—9 : 00 to 9 : 15 P.M.

Fridays—9 : 00 to 9 : 15 P.M.

Frequencies—(1) 11,800 KHZ, 25 Meter Band ; 100 KW
(2) 7,190 KHZ, 41 Meter Band ; 50 KW
(3) 6,075 KHZ, 49 Meter Band ; 10 KW

TELUGU—*The Voice of Truth*—Speaker : Joshua Gootam.

All correspondence should be sent to The Voice of Truth,
Post Box 80, Kakinada 533001.

Mondays—2 : 30 to 2 : 45 P.M.

Tuesdays—2 : 30 to 2 : 45 P.M.

Wednesdays—2 : 30 to 2 : 45 P.M.

Frequencies—(1) 11,800 KHZ, 25 Meter Band ; 100 KW
(2) 7,190 KHZ, 49 Meter Band ; 50 KW

TAMIL—*The Way of Truth*—Speaker : P. R. Swamy.

All correspondence should be sent to The Way of Truth,
Post Box 3301, Bangalore 560033.

Tuesdays—5 : 30 to 5 : 45 P.M.

Thursdays—6 : 45 to 7 : 00 P.M.

Fridays—6 : 45 to 7 : 00 P.M.

Frequencies—(1) 11,800 KHZ ; 25 Meter Band
100 KW
(2) 7,190 KHZ, 49 Meter Band ; 50 KW

ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO LISTEN

Bible Correspondence Courses and Christian Literature
are available in these different languages from the addresses
listed.

From Whence The Rivers Come

"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."
(Ecclesiastes 1:7)

what geography student has not marveled at the vast amount of water that annually runs into the seas and oceans, yet they do not fill up and run over. The Mississippi River alone empties 5,062,500 gallons of water PER SECOND into the Gulf of Mexico. YET THE SEA IS NOT FULL.

Today, we explain this by the method of "evaporation and precipitation." The rivers run into the sea. The water in the sea evaporates, going into the clouds. The clouds, crossing land, drop the rain onto the soil and it, in turn, returns to the rivers to begin the cycle again. The water makes a continuous cycle.

Thousands of years ago, the inspired writer, Solomon, recorded this same process in a little different wording:

"Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."

TO :

From :

The Bible Teacher

Post Box No. 3815
New Delhi-110049