

C. White

**BIBLE DOCTRINE**  
**IS THE FORMER AND LATTER RAIN**

GOD'S PRINCIPLES IN THE NATURAL LAWS  
AND THE COVERSION AND DEVELOP-  
MENT, CHRISTIAN CHARAC-  
TER THE SAME

By G. G. RUPERT

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### THE EARLY AND THE LATTER RAIN.

We are made to wonder if there ever was a period in the world's history when there were so many isms and low heresies and low theres, as pertaining to religion, as now. The Bible indicates strongly there never was. It says in the latter days that great signs and wonders would be wrought under the name of Christianity until that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. And the scriptures further state: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables"—2 Tim. 4:3-4. It is further said that Mystery Babylon the great will make all nations drunken with the wine of her fornication (false doctrine). Many such statements as the above show that the age in which we live are the perils of the last days. Every gift of the spirit is counterfeited. Every ism that can be devised by men is advocated and the people at large are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, hence how careful the speaker of truth should be to obtain the true principles upon which God works for the conversion of souls, and the development of Christian character. Of all the scientific and harmonious books in the world the Bible stands at the head. God, who is unchangeable, always deals upon fixed principles, and, He, being the creator, and the author governing the laws of nature, He must be the same in the development of Christian character and conversion of the soul. A little study of the Bible will reveal the fact that God deals upon the same principle as he does in the sowing, birth and development of the Christian as he does in the vegetable life and development of the herbs and trees of the earth and the fruit they bear, and if these principles are understood by the speaker of the truth, they need never be deceived by the isms and delusions of the last days.

Christ, the great teacher, gives us in plain language these principles in the many parables that He spoke when here. Quite a number of these are recorded in the 13th chapter of Matthew to which we now call attention: "And He spake

many things unto them in parables, saying, 'Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up, and choked them: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.'" Matt. 13:3-8. The explanation of the above parable is given in plain language. "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side, but he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty"—Matt. 13:18-23. Thus it is clear what the seed is, namely, the word of God. The sower is the one who teaches the word of God. The ground is the heart of the believer, and the condition of the heart determines the result of the sowing, therefore another writer says: "break up the fallow ground of your heart." The Lord instructs the sower how to sow: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." Isa. 28:9-10. "Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he

hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." Isa. 28:23-29. Thus the instruction could not be made plainer how God develops Christians. This sowing precedes the birth of the Christian as we read: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Pet. 1:23. When this seed is received into the heart God gives the increase, just the same as he gives life to the grain of corn planted in the ground. The apostle further says as this birth is produced: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocricies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Pet. 2:1-3. In order that seed in the earth might grow and bear fruit it must be watered and cultivated, just so with God's word as it is sown in the heart. Unless the thorns are taken out and the word continue to dwell in the heart, no spiritual growth can be produced: "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love to the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: for all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." 1 Pet. 1:22, 24, 25. The trouble with professed Christians has ever been this lack of spiritual growth. The apostle Paul met this difficulty with the Jewish people. He had many things he wanted to teach them, but they were so poorly prepared and dwarfed in Christian experience and knowledge, that he was compelled to say of them: "Of whom we have many

things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Heb. 5:11-14. The whole matter of Christian development and salvation depends upon the development of the individual who receives the ingrafted word and develops a Christian character. We grasp the divine promises of God as they are presented before us and by faith we accept them. This is the first step in conversion: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Pet. 1:4. But this alone does not suffice: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." 2 Pet. 1:5-10.

Many more scriptures might be given to teach this divine principle laid down in the Bible, for the conversion of individuals and the development of Christian character. The word is spirit and it is life. Both elements are in it to produce the development of the Christian.

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, symbolizes this process by a woman who washes her garments. Speaking of the church, he says: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it

ing began with John the Baptist, and followed up by Christ and His disciples, *was the former rain*, and when that rain of doctrinal teaching had developed the growth of the individuals and prepared their minds to *receive the witness of the Spirit*, then God witnessed to it, and we lay down this principle now as an eternal truth *unalterable*, and it is useless to attempt to change it: namely, no such demonstration as on the Day of Pentecost can possibly take place as a *genuine thing*. In our day, until *the genuine doctrines of the Bible precedes the manifestation* and develops a company of united believers. It is sad to know that in all the *so-called wonderful manifestations* of power now sought for and claimed to be manifested, this element of knowing the truth of God and *the doctrines of the Bible* are almost unknown and unthought of. This prepares us for a more thorough study of the prophetic utterances on this point.

Remember that the people are symbolized by *the grass, herbs and trees that are watered*, hence it makes those who receive *the doctrine grow*, and it will root up the false: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matt. 15:13.

The prophet Joel gives this consecutive order concerning the latter rain and also the outpouring of the Spirit of God: "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the *first month*." Joel 2:21-23. The verses following this quotation say that God's people shall eat and not be ashamed. Then, following this experience, he says: "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and

to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that he should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5:26-27.

The apostle, in his letter to the Corinthians says: "I have planted. Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." 1 Cor. 3:6. Paul planted the seed, Apollos sowed additional seed, and taught additional light upon the doctrines which Paul had sown in the hearts of the people, hence Apollos' work was *watering* the seed that Paul had sown. Having this matter clearly before us, we are prepared to study the prophecies concerning the early and latter rain.

Turning first to the writings of Moses, where we find the foundation of *all gospel truth*, we read: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation." Deut. 32:1-5. This tells us plainly what the rain is, namely, *the doctrine of the Lord or the fundamentals governing the Christian's life*. As these are taught to the people, they overthrow the errors and *false isms*, and *unsound positions*, and just as the rain waters the herbs and grass of the field so they grow, so *this kind of labor* among the people produces the growth of those who accept it. God says these doctrines distil as the dew. They *clear the mind*, and *develop a sound faith* in those who receive it, so the rain of the Bible is *the doctrines of the Bible* and not the outpouring or any manifestation, as it was manifested upon the day of Pentecost, as so many are now claiming. The doctrines had been taught before that manifestation. The disciples had been developed and *were all of one accord and of one mind*. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a *witness to their development and of the work that had been going on for four years in the falling of the early rain prior to the event*. This work of teach-

fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be delivered, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall CALL." Joel 2:28-32. Note he says it shall come to pass *afterward* that the spirit is poured upon the people. Zechariah gives the reason why this rain of doctrine should fall upon the people, and says: "Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd. Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle." Zach. 10:1-3. This makes it clear: for the idols have spoken vanity, the diviners have seen a lie and have told false dreams, they comfort in vain. Mine anger is kindled against the shepherds. This shows that when this condition exists, false dreams, false tongues, and idols are speaking vanity, and there are false healings, false doctrines, and false shepherds on every hand. Then the Lord's admonition to his children is: "Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain, and he shall make bright clouds and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."

In the place of agonizing and wrestling and working ourselves up to obtain a thing in their imagination, which is nowhere promised in the Bible, we had far better be asking God for light upon His word and He has promised to give every one that light who will search His word as for a treasure. The office of the Holy Spirit is to lead into all truth, and truth is obtained by searching as for a hid treasure. Ask of God and He will give it to you willingly, hence the agonizing and Hungering and thirsting should be for knowledge. Hosea says: "My people perish for lack of knowledge. No man

need ever spend an hour in wrestling with God for his Holy Spirit with which to perform miracles in order to magnify themselves as a sign that they are the children of God. Christ says: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Matt. 7:11. This shows that He is always anxious to bestow His Spirit, but, to know the word of God requires seeking, knocking, hungering and thirsting, and searching as for a hid treasure. The Spirit of God is a gift from the Lord and is ever present in every time of need on condition. "Jesus answered and said unto him, '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. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you,'" John 14:23-26. He never even promises to give that light in answer to prayer alone, but it is by diligent search and by becoming familiar with the word that we are able to detect the false from the true. In certain instances misled souls have been known to agonize all night long for this visionary and imaginary power: asking the Lord for the latter rain when they have not the faintest idea what the latter rain is or will be, and should they receive the Spirit, they would not obey the doctrines and truth if brought to them, for such doctrines they have no interest in whatever.

This latter rain is promised on certain conditions as stated by Hosea: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3. This following on to know the LORD is spoken to protestantism (see Yellow Peril by the writer). This, protestantism has not done. As fast as light has come in the protestant reformation, in the place of following on to get more light and more truth, each one has

latter rain fall in abundant showers from the lips of such servants, is our prayer.

#### MIRACULOUS POWERS.

As we study the Bible we see that it has ever been the desire of the human heart to practice some mystical thing which would be regarded as supernatural and thus lead and attract the people to themselves. Satan, knowing this part of human nature, has taken every advantage of it and has worked with signs and wonders with all power and deviousness in them that perish. Every true manifestation of God's power has been counterfeited until it is difficult for even many conscientious people to discern between the true and the false, thus he deceives, if it were possible, the very elect. In the last days of the world's history satan is to especially work in this manner. The Bible alone, and a correct understanding of its teachings is the only thing that can possibly protect us from these deceptions.

The prophet says of this time "Ask of the Lord rain, in the time of the latter rain" that is, ask for a knowledge of His word and to understand *sound doctrine*. The reason for this is stated "for the idols have spoken vanity and the diviners have seen a lie and have told false dreams." This is a great age for the people to be led by *dreams, false visions, false impressions*, and to hear a voice speaking unto them, *fortune telling, mystical interpretation of dreams, supposed divine healing, supposed tongues, etc.* All should be received only after the most careful study of the Bible and the general tenor and influence surrounding the one who practices these things.

The Bible says: "To the law and to the testimony (law and the prophets) if they speak not according to this word" it is because there is no light in them. Miracles are not confined to God alone. James and Jambres withstood Moses with their miraculous workings. Protestantism is to deceive the world by means of *those miracles* which will be wrought among them. It is far from a denial of unbelief of the gifts of the spirit of God manifested by His power to *disbelieve every counterfeited purported to be the work of the spirit of God.*

stopped and established a creed, *ceased to grow* and, as a result, opened the door to false isms, thus leaving the latter rain, *the greatest of all light, to the remnant who are called out of these organizations* and out of the world and upon them falls the responsibility of the *complete reformation of truth and sound doctrine* which is to develop a people who will be prepared to meet the Lord when He comes. When they are developed upon the broad platform of the whole Bible in one harmonious chain of truth and every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted is rooted up, and they are brought into one accord and of one mind, as on the day of Pentecost, *then, and not until then*, will God witness with the outpouring of His Holy Spirit and signs follow the believer. The Lord's people are symbolized by trees, grass, herbs, etc., in the study of this question. Isaiah, speaking of the last message, gives us this encouragement as to the success and shortness of his work. He says: "For I will *pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground*; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as *among the grass, as willows by the water courses*. One shall say, 'I am the Lord's'; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Isa. 44:3-5.

May God speed on His truth and raise up men of His own calling, not *hirelings*; not men who have been made by denominational creeds, schools, and various isms, but men of God's own calling; men who are seeking to know what is truth; men who are willing to take the Bible, the whole Bible, and *nothing but the Bible as authority*; men who are in such touch with the Lord that His spirit can lead them into all truth; men who are not afraid to declare the whole counsel of God; men who do not dare confer with flesh and blood as to their support; men who will make soldiers for the cause of truth and who love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength.

May the Lord raise them up at this time for the harvest truly is great and such laborers are truly few. May the

What we want is the genuine and not the counterfeit, and rest assured that no genuine will ever be offended at the most critical examination as to its genuineness.

Divine healing is as much a gift of the spirit of God as any other gift. The speaking with tongues is also another gift of the spirit and to deny the counterfeit is no denial of the genuine. We speak of these two gifts because the counterfeit of these two is the most prevalent. The baptism of the Holy Ghost could be added as the third.

How are we to know the genuine gift of tongues from the counterfeit? We need not be mistaken for we have an example of its manifestation as recorded in the 2nd chapter of the Acts as taken place on the day of Pentecost. It says on that day there appeared and sat upon the disciples "cloven tongues like as of fire" and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. The other tongues here spoken of are plainly stated as *Parthians, Medes, Elomites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Capadocia in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, about Syrene, strangers of Home, Jews and Proselytes and Cretes and Arabians*. Now the record says "that every man heard the disciples speak in his own tongue." It says the spirit sat upon them with *cloven tongues, two languages at least*. Thus enabling them, as a whole, to speak in the language which they had never learned. This manifestation became a mystery to the hearers so much so that there were 3000 added to them that day. This manifestation was truly a sign to the unbelievers. Thus we have the manifestation, its effect upon the unbelievers, and the plain statement that it was the power of God working a miracle enabling the disciples to convey the thoughts of their own mind in an unknown tongue to the unbelievers. And remember, that that unknown tongue was the language of the unbeliever who heard it and not the natural language of the speaker. It was not a manifestation called tongues which the speakers themselves did not understand at the time they were speaking for they did, for they conveyed their own thoughts, not the thoughts of some other power which they knew nothing about.

for the record says that Peter spoke to them from the book of Joel and other Old Testament writers.

This record is too plain and positive for any one to be mistaken, namely, that any miracle God may work in speaking in an unknown tongue is simply the shortening of the process of learning the language. Christ made wine out of water, whereas the lengthened natural process was to make it through the vine. The lengthened natural process of speaking in an unknown tongue is to learn that language and convey our thoughts to another of a foreign tongue from ours. The miraculous part of speaking in an unknown tongue is to be able to convey your own thoughts immediately without learning the language by the natural process, and remember that tongues are always for conveying your own thoughts, and not being placed under a mystical power to use you to do a thing that you don't know anything about yourself. That is hypnotism that is practiced, nothing more, nothing less.

We find, therefore, the apostle, having difficulty in the church of Corinth, not with what is now called an unknown tongue, but what was a real unknown tongue or unknown language to the body of the church. He was compelled to write upon this question and from his statements on that occasion the counterfeiters of this gift now take advantage and try to prove that their gift is scriptural and genuine, but a careful examination will show that these false interpretations of this scripture will not stand. There were, in the church at Corinth, men who possessed different languages and from the reading of the 14th chapter of 1st Corinthians these different languages became a source of annoyance and disorder in the church. Those who possessed them were not willing to be governed by the majority who possessed a known language.

Paul says: "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God for no man understandeth him; that is, no one in the congregation understandeth him, but he that prophesieth (teaches), speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation and comfort." He further says: "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself."

That shows *he understands himself* but no one else understands him, but he that prophesieth (teaches), edifieth the

Now says the apostle: "If I come unto you speaking with tongues (different languages), what shall I profit you?" He further says: "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words *easy to be understood*, how shall it be known what is spoken for ye shall speak into the air? Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, for as much as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the *edifying of the church*."

"Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret." We ask what is it to interpret? We reply to be able to translate *his own thought and language into the language of those who hear him*. Paul says the man who speaks in an unknown tongue *gives thanks well at the table*, but *no one understandeth what he says*. He sums up the question of unknown tongues and the *profitableness of practicing an unknown language in a church where the body of the people cannot be edified* thus: I thank my God, I speak with tongues (languages) more than ye all: yet in the church I'd rather speak *five words with my understanding*, than by my voice I might teach others also, than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue (language). With this plain, positive statement as to the value of an unknown tongue being uttered in the church, it is a mystery why anyone should advocate now a manifestation in which *there is no language*. The individuals *themselves admitting they do not understand what they are saying as a thing of importance* now to be *attached to a religious service*. Is it not purely suffering this hypnotic influence to come upon them that they may advertise themselves as a chosen vessel of the Lord in preference to all others. Even if their manifestation was true, it would still remain the fact that its value to any body of unbelievers or believers would be practically worthless. These counterfeit manifestations are supposed to be interpreted by the individual, hence an attempt is frequently made but the interpretations are of the *most ordinary thought* and which they could utter without the manifestation.

Now, says, the apostle: "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, but prophesying (teaching) serveth not for them that believe not, but to them which believe. On the day of Pentecost this was fulfilled. But whoever heard of anybody being converted to God by what is now called the gift of tongues? It would ever discourage and drive away the thoughtful and the candid. It can only possibly astonish or hypnotize some superstitious mind who is unacquainted with the word of God.

The apostle further instructs the church concerning the use of an unknown language to the body of the believers. He says thus: "If any man speak in an unknown tongue let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course: and let one interpret, but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God." The writer has spoken many times through an interpreter: thus translating his own thought and words into another language by the second party, likewise in the church. It is supposed that the body of the believers shall be the ones to conduct the meeting in their language, and, if anyone having another language is present there are two ways by which his thoughts can be conveyed to the church. First, by God working a miracle enabling him to present *his thoughts* in the language of the people in the church; second, if the church desire, those having the unknown language can speak to the church through a translator or interpreter. This is the Bible teaching upon the subject of tongues.

Let no one be deceived by any manifestation not in accordance with the Bible teaching. God's truth should stand out clear and be separated from every false ism and doctrine, and the latter rain is designed to do this by all who will receive it.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: