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EARLY AND LATTER RAIN

We have for some time understood the Scriptures to teach that the “early and latter rains” refer to special outpourings of abundant blessings of the Spirit upon *the church*—the early at Pentecost and since; “the latter” in the close of the present age. This seems to correspond with Peter’s remark about the light of Divine revelation being shed “on us upon whom the *ends* of the (age) world are come.” (The beginning and closing *end*.) This imbuelement of the spirit is not upon all professed Christians, but upon a “little flock.” While the general church seems to daily become more *worldly*, it has the effect of more perfectly separating the few who are deeply earnest. In harmony with this thought, we have ever expected increase of *light and knowledge* upon the pathway of the just, and our expectations are wonderfully realized. We have also felt that it was possible that to some might be given, by the same spirit, gifts of faith and miracles.

Our experience would not lead us to expect “*miracles*,” &c., from those who have other gifts of the spirit, such as “teaching,” &c., for it is said to *divide* to each. While we would be very cautious how we call everything miraculous which is uncommon, yet our expectations in this direction lead us to be cautious how we call anything a “fraud,” or of the devil, which might be of God.

The following item, clipped from a newspaper, seems to bear the impress of truth:

“WYTHEVILLE, VA., April 15.—For some weeks past the people of Scott county have been excited over the miracles which have been performed by Richard Miller, of that county. His fame has extended all over that section of the state, and hundreds of the afflicted are daily visiting him. Miller is a middle-aged man, employed as the keeper of McMullen’s mill, near Estellville. He is deeply religious, and claims to have had a dream a month ago in which the idea was impressed upon him that with God’s help he could perform wonderful cures simply through faith. He states that the next day, after fervent prayer, he healed a sick man by touching him. The intelligence of the miracle went all over the country, and the afflicted of all kinds came to him and were healed simply by the touch of his hand. Yesterday G. N. Wertz, a photographer at Abingdon, visited Miller, in company with a paralytic uncle, the seat of paralysis being in the mouth, which deprived him of both the power of speech and hearing. Miller looked at the afflicted man, and, after a short prayer, touched and told him that before he reached home he would be well. Last night, as Mr. Wertz entered the door of his house on his return his hearing and speech came back to him, and to-day he is apparently hale and hearty. Miss Irene Newton, of Bristol, Tenn., helpless from rheumatism,

was brought to Miller last week, and when an attempt was made to lift her in the carriage she rose from the sedan chair and said she was entirely well. One of the most wonderful miracles of Miller's was the cure of Mr. Peter Whitesell, who has been for some years afflicted with cancer. The cancer was touched, and in three days had disappeared. The miracle-worker is an exceedingly modest man, and always declines any compensation for his services, alleging that he is but the humble instrument of God. He takes no credit to himself for the performance of these miracles."

If true, the above is wonderful, but if the church lost some of the "gifts" of the spirit when her candlestick was removed (Rev. 2) by her leaving her first love and its simplicity, would it be unreasonable to suppose that as the little company of *separated ones* return to primitive simplicity and love, the candlestick may be restored, and, as a result, some of the gifts of the spirit? We certainly do not have a desire to oppose anything of this nature. Neither will we "forbid them because they follow not us." We shall expect, however, that all "gifts of the spirit" shall be (during this gospel age) poured out upon God's servants and handmaids, and prepare the way, so that in the next age the spirit may be dispensed to the world, as it is written, "Afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon *all flesh*." (Joel 2:28)

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— May, 1880 —



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