

THE BEREA BAPTIST BANNER

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Ps. 60:4).

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June 1980

Ashland, Kentucky

A NEW CHURCH ORGANIZED

by Milburn Cockrell

The Grace Baptist Church of Ceredo, West Virginia, gathered on April 20, 1980, for the purpose of organizing a small group of saints into a New Testament Baptist Church. Other churches and pastors from the area were present. Pastor Robert Patton called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

After the congregation had sung "The Way of the Cross Leads Home," Elder Woodrow Walls led the group in prayer, after which another hymn was sung entitled "At the Cross." Elder Steve Cornette read from Ephesians 2:19-22, 3:30-21 and chapter 5. Elder Ronnie Wolfe rendered a special in song —



"Satisfied With Jesus." Pastor Patton moderated the organization proceedings, and Elder Joel Hamlin led the singing.

Elder Milburn Cockrell read the articles of faith and the church covenant to the

potential charter members of the new church. Those going into the new church from Grace Baptist Church voted to accept the articles of faith and church covenant. Upon hearing the mission's adoption of these, the Grace Baptist

Church voted to organize the mission into a New Testament Baptist Church.

Elder Cockrell read the list of names of those coming into the new church from the Grace

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THE CRY OF CREATION

MILBURN COCKRELL

(Preached on the Independent Baptist Hour March 23, 1980)

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:19-22).

Very few sermons have ever been preached from these verses. Interpreters have been puzzled by their meaning. The writer speaks of a subject here which is seldom mentioned in other scripture. Paul speaks of the transcendent glory for which all creation is looking and longing. Ever since man sinned a curse has rested upon the lower creatures and this planet. From Adam's fall the whole frame of nature has had an interest in man's redemption. It was for man's sake the

earth was cursed. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the earth is to share in man's recovery. Today all creation sympathizes with man's misery and expects its own emancipation from its present sin-blighted condition. What a beautiful thought!

A great deal of confusion exists as to the meaning of the word "creature" used in our KJV. The word in the original, which is translated in verses 19, 20, and 21 "creature," is translated in verse 22

"creation." The creation or the creature cannot refer to the children of God, for they are expressly distinguished from the creation of which Paul speaks. Neither can it refer to wicked men, for they have no wish for the manifestation of the sons of God. Infidels, sceptics, and atheists do not believe in any such possibility as the manifestation of the sons of God. The unsaved masses are not looking for any advent of spiritual bliss. It

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HYPOCRITES?

The man says he is kept away from the church by hypocrites is not influenced by them to stay away from anywhere else. Business is full of them, but if he sees a chance to make some money, he doesn't stop because of that. Society is full of them, and yet he never thinks of becoming a hermit. Married life is full of them, but that doesn't make him remain a bachelor. Hell is full of them, and yet he isn't doing a thing to keep from going there. He wants to have you think that he is trying to avoid the society of hypocrites, and yet he takes not a single step toward the only place no hypocrite can go — Heaven.

A LIAR CONFESSES

"Almighty God, as I sit here by the fire this Sunday night, the room lighted only by the TV light, hearing a passing car that may be carrying someone home from church, it just came to me that I have lied to Thee and to myself. I said I had to get up early and needed sleep; that was not true. I would have gone to my office if it had been Monday morning. I would have gone to the ball game if it had been Friday night. Now church is over and I'm still not in bed. God have mercy on me. I have lied to Thee and to myself. I didn't need the sleep and I am not sick. I am a liar. Amen."

New Church

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Baptist Church of Ceredo, West Virginia. The names are as follows: Milburn Cockrell, Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Cockrell, Carl Massie, Maxine Massie, Don Pemberton, Mary Pemberton, James Carr, Linda Carr, W.O. Miller, Doris Miller, John Valencourt, Jerry Valencourt, Mary Valencourt, Joanna Valencourt and Robert Valencourt.

The names of those coming on promise of a letter from Calvary Baptist Church in Ashland, Kentucky, were: Betty Masters, Steve Noel, Kimm Zamarron and Rena Holbrook. Those coming from Mt. Olivet Baptist Church near Ashland, Kentucky, were: Cora Holbrook, Darlene Arthur, Don Valencourt, Ella Valencourt, C.B. Stephens, Maxine Stephens, Roy White and Vickie White. A motion was made by Bro. Carl Massie and seconded by Bro. James Carr to accept the other individuals into the fellowship of the new church. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Bro. Carr and seconded by Bro. Pemberton to name the new church Berea Baptist Church. The motion carried. The name was adopted from Acts 17:11 as an example to follow and a name to live up to.

Elder Harry Balmer gave a charge to the new church from Matthew 16:18, 28:18-20, and I Timothy 3:15. The Lord blessed Elder Balmer with an excellent message.

The members of Berea Baptist Church received the right hand of fellowship from Grace Baptist Church, Ceredo, West Virginia; Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church of Chesapeake Ohio; Johnstown Baptist Church, Rock Camp, Ohio; Livingstone Baptist Church, Barboursville, West Virginia; and Midland Baptist Church, Midland, Ohio; and other brethren who were present.

The organizational service was concluded with a dismissal prayer.

On Sunday night of April 20, 1980, the Berea Baptist Church had their first business meeting. Milburn Cockrell was called as pastor of the new church, and other officers and teachers were chosen in order to perfect the church organization.

Since the organization of the new church four others have been added by baptism. These are Dennis Clark, Leeda Holbrook, Tonya Dennison, and Christopher Cockrell.

These were baptized on May 11, 1980, in the baptistry of the Grace Baptist Church. Following this Tonya Arthur came on profession of faith and is now awaiting baptism.

The members of the Berea Baptist Church ask the prayers of all of God's people that we may serve the Lord's Christ in truth and righteousness. The church would also like to thank each person who has spoken encouraging words and sent special offerings to help get the work started.

The Cry . . .

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cannot be said in any sense the unconverted world is subject to sin not willingly. The whole of unconverted mankind shall never be introduced into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Such would imply that all mankind would be saved — a thing everywhere refuted by the Bible.

I understand by the word creation in Romans 8 all animate and inanimate nature as distinguished from mankind. The Greek word (*KTISIS*) occurs in the New Testament 19 times. In our KJV it is translated "creature" 11 times, "creation" 6 times (Mark 6:10; 13:9; Rom. 1:20; 8:22; II Peter 3:4; Rev. 3:14), and once it is translated "building" (Heb. 9:11) and once "ordinance" (I Peter 2:13). The usual meaning of the word in the New Testament is creation, not necessarily extended beyond this world and not excluding mankind. However, the context in Romans 8:19-22 limits the meaning to inanimate and irrational creation so far as relates to this planet. It has this meaning throughout the 8th chapter of Romans (V. 39).

The Creation Subjected to Vanity

When God created the beings destitute of intelligence and

the world void of self-conscious life, He pronounced it "very good" (Gen. 1:31). There was nothing but good in all creation. There was no imbalance or lack of harmony, no disorder, disease or death. All that God made was well-made and free of defect. Not only was every part good, but it was all together "very good."

Man's primal innocence was surrounded by nature in her primal beauty. But man sinned, and in consequence of sin, he drug nature into decay and death. The fall of creation paralleled the fall of man. All creation was cursed and the serpent was cursed above all other creatures of the field (Gen. 3:14). The ground was cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles because of Adam's sin (Gen. 3:17). The entire planet became "subject to vanity" and experienced "the bondage of corruption."

Adam was in Eden with the beasts, the lion, the tiger and the lamb. The instant that he sinned, each animal was seized with a new instinct and raged against him. Since the fall there has existed the enmity of one creature to another. The brute creation is now subject to tornadoes and tempests just like man is. Animals are cruelly treated by evil men and made food for man's lusts. Man



THE CHURCH COVENANT OF BENJAMIN KEACH

Benjamin Keach Born 1640
Died 1704

DEDICATION

Arthur W. Pink
(1886 - 1952)

"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:5).

Before attempting to open-up the theme of this verse, a few words require to be said upon its setting. In 2 Cor. 8, the apostle sought to stir up the local saints to more liberality in giving. He begins by setting before them the encouraging example furnished by their fellow-Christians in the Macedonian churches. He says, *"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia."* The words *"we do you to wit,"* is an archaic expression meaning *"we make known to you."* The noble generosity and abounding liberality of those Christians the apostle attributes to the *"grace of God,"* thus giving Him the glory for it — a needful reminder for us. 2 Cor. 8:1, presents a blessed contrast from Acts 16:9: there it was the Macedonians calling on a converted Jew to come and help them; here the converted Macedonians were sending help to their Jewish brethren in Jerusalem.

"How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (v.2). The reference here is to the social condition which then obtained. The state of Greece at that time was one of desolation and destitution. It had never recovered from the Roman conquest. Then too they had suffered long from the civil wars between Caesar and Pompey, Brutus and Cassius, Augustus and Antonius. The Macedonians had been heavily taxed to pay off the national debt, and were, financially, desperately poor.

"For to their power I bear, record, year, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the

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We who desire to walk together in the fear of the Lord, do, through the assistance of His Holy Spirit, profess our deep and serious humiliation for all our transgressions. And we do also solemnly, in the presence of God, of each other, in the presence of our own unworthiness, give up ourselves to the Lord, in a church state according to the apostolical constitution that He may be our God, and we may be His people, through the everlasting covenant of His free grace, in which alone we hope to be accepted by Him, through His blessed Son Jesus Christ, whom we take to be our High Priest, to justify and sanctify us, and our prophet to teach us; and to subject to Him as our Lawgiver, and the King of saints; and to conform to all His holy laws and ordinances, for our growth, establishment, and consolation; that we may be as a holy spouse unto Him, and serve Him in our generation, and wait for His second appearance, as our glorious Bridegroom.

Being fully satisfied in the way of church communion, and the truth of grace in some good measure upon one another's spirits, we do solemnly join ourselves together in a holy union and fellowship, humbly submitting to the discipline of the gospel, and all holy duties required of a people in such a spiritual relation.

1. We do promise and engage to walk in all holiness, godliness, humility, and brotherly love, as much as in us lieth to render our communion delightful to God, comfortable to ourselves, and lovely to the rest of the Lord's people.

2. We do promise to watch over each others conversations, and not to suffer sin upon one another, so far as God shall discover it to us, or any of us; and to stir up one another to love and good works; to warn, rebuke, and admonish one another with meekness according to the rules left to us of Christ in that behalf.

3. We do promise in an especial manner to pray for one another, and for the glory and increase of this church, and for the presence of God in it, and the pouring forth of His Spirit on it, and His protection over it to His glory (Col. 4:12).

4. We do promise to bear one another's burdens, to cleave to one another, and have a fellow feeling with one another, in all conditions both outward and inward, as God in His providence shall cast any of us into (Gal. 6:2; Heb. 13:3; Rom. 12:15).

5. We do promise to bear with one another's weakness, failings and infirmities, with much tenderness, not discovering to any without the church, nor any within, unless

according to Christ's rule, and the order of the gospel provided in that case (1 John 3:17, 18; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14).

6. We do promise to strive together for the truths of the gospel, and purity of God's ways and ordinances, to avoid causes, and causers of division, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).

7. We do promise to meet together on Lord's days, and at other times, as the Lord shall give us opportunities, to serve and glorify God in the way of His worship, to edify one another, and to contrive the good of His church.

8. We do promise according to our ability (or as God shall bless us with the good things of this world) to communicate to our pastor or minister, God having ordained that they preach the gospel. (And now can anything lay a greater obligation upon the conscience, than this covenant, what then is the sin of such who violate it?)

These and all other gospel duties we humbly submit unto, promising and purposing to perform, not in our own strength, being conscious of our own weakness, but in the power and strength of the blessed God, whose we are, and whom we desire to serve: to whom be glory now and for evermore. Amen

THE CALL OF GOD

Doyal Thomas
Texarkana, Texas

"No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44, 45).

These verses of scripture declare plainly that they who are drawn by the Father will be raised up at the last day. Being raised up to the glories of resurrection is the work of God, and is the culmination of His work toward His chosen people.

It is the "conforming them to the image of His Son" that is here in view, and is the predestinated end that God has decreed for His people. This predestinated end is the result of God's election, calling, and justification as is specified in Romans 8:29, 30. It is the end that God has ordained, or appointed. By the means that He has decreed, "He works His work, His strange work, and performs His act, His strange act" (Isaiah 28:21).

The scriptures therefore confirm the doctrines of grace, and leave religious man without grounds or basis for any self-righteous boasting. And all boasting that man does religiously is nothing but self-righteous boasting.

That man is totally depraved, there can be no doubt. This dreadful condition of all men in their native state is the awful result of sin. When Adam rebelled against a Thrice Holy God, and sinned in the garden of Eden, he plunged himself and his offsprings into utter and complete ruin. This act resulted in the loss of all desire and ability to serve God, and placed man in a helpless and undone position. From this position, man deserves only the wrath of a Sovereign and holy God.

The unconditional election, or choosing by God of some

men out of this mass of filthy and depraved humanity to obtain salvation through the benefits, or merits of the shed blood of God's own dear Son follows. Except God intervene in the behalf of fallen man, it is clear that none could, or would be saved.

But God does save some. This fact alone verifies that God did intervene and rescue some from among the fallen race. The fact that some are saved from the wrath to come proves that God provided the way out of this dreadful condition. All men are not saved, to be sure, as is shown in Luke 16:23. Here it is stated that the rich man in Hell lifted "up his eyes, being in torment...". Beloved, there are inhabitants of Hell at this very time and moment. All men are not saved.

In choosing some to obtain salvation, God passed by others and left them to their just punishment. And He did no injustice to those He passed by. None can charge God in this matter, for, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16).

The doctrine of limited atonement, or particular redemption is a scriptural truth that cannot be denied. This doctrine is clearly set forth in the scriptures that teach redemption. Christ died for some, and He knew who they were. Every one of them He knew. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

This message now centers upon the biblical doctrine of God's calling. This calling is the work of God, the Holy Spirit, and to imagine that He

fails is to imagine that God is lacking in power, or ability. Such an imagination is absurd, and brings great and awful dishonor to God.

We ask you now to open your Bibles to the 6th chapter of the Gospel according to John, and to read with us our text scriptures again. These two verses, 44 and 45 will serve as our beginning point as we seek to search out "thus saith God" in the matter of those chosen and redeemed as being also the called.

"No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44, 45).

It is immediately apparent that Jesus speaks of the natural inability of depraved man to come to Him. In verse 44, He speaks as plainly as language can speak of this lack of ability. He said, "no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

In the face of this clear declaration by Jesus Christ Himself, depraved, religious man has the audacity to lift up his voice and say, "but any man can come to Jesus anytime he chooses to do so."

What a religious sham this is. What an ugly and ungodly shame this is. Just think. Puny, created worms of the dust even dare to say that Jesus lied. And that is just what men do. They say that Jesus lied about this matter, and insist upon it by repeating again and again that man can come to Jesus to receive the benefits of atonement anytime their depraved will desires to do so.

Just reform your habits, they say. Just clean up your conduct, they say. Just turn over a new leaf, they say. Just cry and be very sorry when you get caught in your sins, they say. But what DID Jesus say?

He said, "No man can come." Now, who is the liar in the matter?

It is clear then that the ability to come does not rest in the sinful creature at all. Don't take issue with me now about this. It is God's Word that has said so. It is not my word. It is God's Word. God said, "No man can come."

Jesus did not leave the matter after affirming that man has no ability to come to Him. He immediately dealt with the matter by also saying, "Except the Father which hath sent me draw him." This "except" clearly teaches that the Father will intercede and will indeed draw him.

Please notice also in the last phrase of verse 44 that Jesus makes a promise to "raise him up at the last day." Does our Lord make idle promises that He has no intention of keeping? Does He speak such words of assurance if He has no ability to carry them out?

Give very careful and serious consideration to what I'm about to say now on this point. It is very, very important, and I urge you to hear me plainly, and make no mistake in understanding.

First of all, please understand that Jesus DID make a plain and clearly stated promise to raise up at the last day "someone." Who is that "someone" who is to be raised up at the last day? Listen carefully. The "someone" is the same as the one drawn by the Father; the same one "who come to me" in the first phrase of verse 44.

The promise of resurrection is based upon coming to Jesus in this life. And coming to Jesus is based upon the drawing power of God, the Holy Spirit. Our dear Lord has never made a promise to raise up all men in the last day, in the sense of their being raised up to be conformed to the image of His Son, and to be eternally in His presence. He has promised

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Dedication

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ministering to the saints" (vv. 3,4). This tells us not a little about the spirit and nature of the giving of those early Christians. First, they gave "Beyond their power," denying themselves the bare necessities of life. Second, they did this "willingly," spontaneously, without being asked. Third, they earnestly pressed their gift upon Paul: "praying us with much intreaty" —which intimates that, under their distressing circumstances, the apostle was reluctant to accept their gifts.

"And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord." "Not as we hoped" means, far more than we expected or desired, "First gave their own selves to the Lord," explains it all. They had, unreservedly, dedicated themselves to God. They could truly say, "Naught that I have I call my own, I hold it for the Giver; For He is mine, and I am His, Forever and forever." Whole hearted consecration to Christ is always evidenced by freely giving to His cause, His service, His people.

As this is the first number of our eighth volume, these words seem an appropriate introduction to it: "But first gave their own selves to the Lord." May this be the initial act of both writer and reader at the commencement of 1929. But perhaps our text sets forth an aspect of God's truth which many Calvinists know little or nothing about, for one fears that it will hardly fit in to one-sided creed of some. Not a few have been so repelled by Arminian preachers urging the unconverted to give their hearts to Christ, that probably some would receive quite a shock were they to discover that our text is in the Word of God. The fact is that Arminians have made a wrong use of a right thing: they have applied to unbelievers what belongs only to believers. Our text speaks of a dedication rendered, not by sinners in order to be saved but by Christians because they were

saved. It was the answering response of their hearts to the wondrous love of Him who "gave" Himself for them.

But if extreme Calvinists are largely ignorant of the practical truth of personal dedication to God, it is to be feared that many other Christians are strangers to it experimentally. Does not the present state of the cause of Christ on earth bear witness to the fact? Does the reader suppose that there would be such a shortage of missionaries, that half of the human race would still know nothing of the glorious Gospel of Christ, had even one tenth of His people really "given themselves to the Lord?" Would so many departments of Christian enterprise be crippled through lack of funds? Why is there such a shortage of teachers and preachers, we mean really sound ones, not "blind leaders of the blind?" Is it because so few of our Christian young men have "given themselves unto the Lord?"

We are well aware that there is a Divine side in being called to minister God's precious Word, but there is a human side too. What constitutes a "call" to be an evangelist? God rarely speaks immediately and directly; He generally employs instruments and means. Suppose that late at night you saw a house on fire, and there was an axe and a hose on hand. Would you wait for a call before you attempted to help? Would not the very urgency of the case, your knowledge of the danger of those within that house, be sufficient? And would not the means to hand make it your bounden duty to help? In like manner, if God has granted to you a saving knowledge of His truth, and all around are men and women which you see are going down to Hell as swiftly as time can take them, is not that a "call" for you to bid them "flee from the wrath to come?"

Ah, the real trouble is that many Christians are afraid to "give themselves unto the Lord" lest He take them at their word. They are fearful that He might send them out to China or India. But, my reader, we have nothing to do with

consequences. Our first duty is to "give ourselves unto the Lord:" how God responds, what use He makes of our gift, is His business, not ours. It is not for us to reason why, it is not for us to make reply: it is for us to do, and die, if needs be: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). We do not wish to imply that God would send out to China or India every young Christian who truly dedicated himself to His service, but we do say that this is his first privilege and duty.

What is meant by "giving ourselves unto the Lord?" Surely there is little need for a lengthy explanation. It is the response of a regenerated soul to God's call, "My son, give Me thine heart" (Prov. 23:26). It is a compliance with the terms of Christian discipleship: "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). It is something which we do, a voluntary act on our part. It is obeying that Divine exhortation, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). It is the complete consecration of ourselves to Christ, and unreserved placing of ourselves at His disposal. It is love's response to God's unspeakable Gift. It is the glad return of a heart that has been won by Christ.

Truly, this is a "reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). When we think of the Lord of glory leaving the perfect peace and bliss of Heaven, and coming down to this world of sin and suffering; when we recall that while here, He "had not where" to lay His head; when we behold our sin in His own body on the tree; unless gratitude within us is dead, can our hearts remain unmoved? Is there no response unto Him who cried, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow" (Lam. 1:12)? Surely the least we can do is to dedicate ourselves to Him, spirit and soul and body.

Surely, Love so amazing, so Divine, demands my life, my love, my all.

Christ Himself has left us an example so to do: "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Yes, that bearing shame and scoffing rude, that passing through such unparalleled suffering, that being forsaken both by God and man, was for me. And now that He has saved me at such tremendous cost, and with such a wondrous salvation, He has left me here in the world for a little while. What for? To make money? To enjoy selfish ease? No, to represent Him, to show unto others something of His spirit; and the starting-point of this is that, we "first give ourselves unto the Lord."

To be continued in next issue



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The Call

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that His people will be raised up in this realm, and that none of them shall ever perish, nor shall any man pluck them out of His hand. Oh, Security! Oh the joy of knowing that His people are to be forever safe and secure in His keeping.

To declare that a single one of those chosen by the Father and given to the Son in the eternal covenant of redemption shall one day fall, or fail to come when called is to accuse God. Here this clearly. It is to accuse God.

For a single one of God's elect to be lost, then there must be some failure on God's part. If God promised to raise up every one He draws, as He certainly did in verse 44, and then fail to do so, it would prove Him either to be lacking in desire to do so, or, to be lacking in ability to do so.

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The Call

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If you say, "God decided not to raise up one," it accuses Him of changing His mind. It declares Him to be mutable as is man. The scriptures plainly teach however, that "God changes not" (Mal. 3:6). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

If you say, "God could not raise up one", then you accuse God of being limited in power, or ability to do so. This is an open attack upon His omnipotence. He is all powerful, and the only saviour (Isa. 43:11).

I repeat. If God does not raise up every one of His own, it is either because He would not, or, He could not. God forbid that man make such an awful charge against the Almighty God of the universe.

Have you ever questioned God on this matter? Have you ever imagined that God is trying His best to save some dead, alienated sinner, and the miserable sinner just will not let God save him?

Beloved friend, my God is not trying to do anything! He does as He will. He has always done as He will. He will forever do as He will. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. 21:1).

"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou" (Dan. 4:35).

"But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth" (Job 23:13).

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and

there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46: 9, 10).

Verse 45 of the text also presents some precious truth on this subject. It is declared here, *"Every one therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."* The last phrase, *"cometh unto me,"* is a continued promise that some will come to Jesus. Who is this someone? Is it every man of Adam's race? Then who is it?

First, it cannot be every man of Adam's race. How do I know that to be so? Because if every man of Adam's race comes to Jesus, then they all, without exception, will be raised up at the last day, as verse 44 has just said.

Is this the case? Certainly not. If it were the case, then Luke 16:23 would not be true. Remember the rich man in Hell? Is he to be raised up at the last day? What an absurdity this would be.

Then those who come to Jesus must be someone in particular. Who are they? Speculation upon their identity is not necessary, for God knows them, and has already identified them in verse 45. Here He said they are they *"that hath HEARD and hath LEARNED of the Father."* These are the ones that will come, and none besides them will ever come, because all that come are all that are drawn by the Father.

Have not all men heard, and learned of the Father? Paul answered this question in Romans 10:18, when he declared, *"Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."*

To hear the sounds of the gospel, or to hear with the natural ear does not mean that one has heard. Likewise, to have a head or intellectual knowledge of the things of God does not mean that one has learned of the Father. The natural man does not receive

the things of the Spirit of God, so declares I Cor. 2:14. Only one who has been made a spiritual being can perceive the things of God.

How is it that two may sit side by side and hear the preached gospel, and one of them hear the good news, and the other hear only the uncertain sound of human words? How is it? Have you ever considered the matter? You may say, "one of them wanted to hear, and the other one didn't." That sounds good, doesn't it? That sounds as if a man who is dead in trespasses and in sins can hear if he wants to. But is he not as dead as the other? Are there degrees of dead? Dead? Deader? Deader? Both were dead. But one heard. Why? How?

Consider this. When Jesus was crucified on Golgotha's barren hillside, there were two malefactors crucified along side Him. One on either side, that the scripture might be fulfilled that had said, "I was numbered with the transgressors." These two were guilty of murder and sedition. Truly, they fully deserved the punishment they were receiving. One of them admitted that they were getting their just dues.

Now, as two were facing certain death, does it make any sense that only one of them wanted to hear, or to live? What was said that one heard, the other heard also. What was seen by one was also seen by the other. But only one of them said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Why not both of them? Why either of them?

One of the guilty malefactors was effectually worked upon in regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The irresistible grace of Almighty God was effectively and efficiently brought to bear. He was awakened, made alive, given ears to hear and eyes to see. He was enabled to see Jesus, who He was. He acknowledged Him as Lord. In repentance and faith (which are fruits of the Spirit) he turned to Jesus and said, *"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."*

Listen now to the gracious Lord as He answers this guilty but repentant sinner whom He had just saved. *Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"* (Luke 23:43). Today! Today in paradise with the Lord! Praise God! To be in paradise with Him!

This one heard, and learned of the Father, as the Holy Spirit worked efficiently. The result is, he came to Jesus. In repentance and faith which were given to him, he came to Jesus. Why? Because it was given unto him to believe (Phil. 1:29). But why not the other? Because unto him it was not given. But why? *"Even so, Father, for lo it seemeth good in thy sight."*

There were no works done that day, nor was there any act of baptism of water, as some men affirm there must be. They can never deal with this repentant thief can they? This man was saved by the man, Jesus Christ, as are all who are, or shall be saved.

Why do two sit side by side and hear the message of grace preached, and one believe, and the other believe not? For the same reason as applied to these two thieves. To one it is given. To the other it is not given. Oh, the majesty of elective, distinguishing, discriminating grace! What maketh thee to differ?

Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man:
And all the steps that grace display
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace led my roving feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet
While pressing on to God.

Grace all the works shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.

In conclusion, God's call is a direct call, as shown by Acts 16:14. It is a particular call, as shown by Romans 8:30. And it is a effective call, as shown by II Sam. 9:5.

It is my prayer that you have received such a call. May God be pleased to use these words to get glory to Himself, and to edify and strengthen His dear saints. May God bless you all.

The Cry . . .

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makes some animals serve him by pulling the plow in order to grow food to eat from the ground which is cursed.

The cause of the creation's subjection to vanity is not from their original tendencies, or any fault in the beings themselves. It was all because of man's sin that they suffer as they do. How great an evil sin brought upon the whole world! It has polluted the heavens and earth. It has compelled the entire creation to witness the dishonor done to the Creator. When man ceased his allegiance to God the brute creatures and nature rebelled against man.

Just what did Paul mean by "being subject to vanity"? It means all things in nature, instead of being applied to their holy and legitimate end, are employed in promoting sinful and criminal ends. The sun shines on the thief who steals. The stars guide the course of ships of war. Wood and stone are used to build houses of iniquity. The bowels of the earth supply gold and silver to satisfy men's avarice. The rain waters the crops of God-hating men. Inferior creatures are often used as instruments of sin. This was not meant to be. Much of creation is being used in a manner God never intended.

This old earth is in the restless

bondage of corruption. The very air we breathe is dust from the carcasses of dead men, animals and plants. The grain reaped from the fields and the flowers which bloom grow forth from the fatness of the grave of corruption. *"The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away"* (1Pet. 1:24). The psalmist wrote: *"Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed"* (Ps. 102:25-26).

The earth is weary of being a place for graves. The sun is tired of shining upon desolate fields of barren deserts. The air was not created to be breathed by slaves. The fire that warms us was not designed to burn martyrs. The stones of the fields were not intended to build prisons. Music was not meant to drive people wild like modern music does. Trees were not originally made to hang men upon. Precious metals were not to be used to make idol gods and heathen temples. All of this perversion of nature demonstrates how it has been made subject to bondage.

Creation Groans

The present creation is not moving upward in the evolutionary process. Instead, it groans and cries out for relief from the bondage of corruption. Every crushed ocean

shell, every rotten log, every bubbling brook is the earth "groaning" and "travailing" in pain. Every bark of a dog, every moo of a cow, every neigh of a horse, every quack of a duck, every hiss of a serpent, every croak of a frog, every meow of a cat, every crow of a rooster, every gobble of a turkey, and every minor key of millions of birds are but cries for deliverance from the bondage of corruption. The whistling of the wind, the sound of thunder, the flash of lightning, the roar of a mighty earthquake are but nature's voices crying to God in sympathy with man's condition.

The Bible often mentions the groans of all creation. Jeremiah wrote: *"How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? The beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end"* (Jer. 12:4).

The prophet Joel spoke in this manner: *"The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth . . . The vine is dried up, and the fig tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men . . . How do the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate . . . The beasts of the field cry also unto Thee: For the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness"* (Joel 1:10, 12, 18, 20).

Isaiah penned these words: *"The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left"* (Isa. 24:4-7).

Sin is such a burden to the whole creation. The world of animate and inanimate nature cry out against this awful curse upon earth. The Bible says that the stones cry out of the walls (Hab. 2:11) and the land cries out (Job 31:38). The voice of nature cries out in the heat of burning deserts and the waving grass of the endless plains. Every thing in nature from weeds to worms is groaning and sighing for relief. In their own peculiar way they are saying, "Oh, come day of joy and gladness when the sons of God shall be manifest to men and angels!"

Creation is conscious of the great load lying upon it because of man's wickedness. Nature is not as it should be. It cries out for a better day. Look at the wild rose in the field and the rose in your flower bed which grows under ideal soil conditions. By aid of man one is rich and beautiful while sin has made the other poor and insignificant. See in all this the evidence of hidden possibilities. Here is nature's revelation of her greater abilities. When the curse is lifted all the hidden virtues that cannot now develop shall show their grandeur as we have never dreamed it possible.

Even the brute creatures seem to sense their suffering because of man's rebellion against God. Have you ever watched a horse or a dog die? Is there not a look in the poor creature's eye, as it looks upon its master so pitifully, which says it longs for deliverance? The Apostle Paul said these lower creatures groan to be liberated, and these groans are neither final nor fatal. One day they all shall *"Be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."*

Creation Restored

Just as the fall of nature paralleled the fall of man, even so the restoration of nature shall be contemporaneous with the restoration of man. This restitution of all things awaits the return of Christ and the unveiling of the sons of God. The whole earth is going to be renewed. There is to be glory conferred upon all

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SACERDOTALISM AND THE BAPISTS

By Milburn Cockrell

Price \$3.00

This book was written to reply to the New Light Movement which limits God's priesthood on earth to Landmark Baptist Churches. The book traces the history of the movement and sets forth its principle teachings. The writer shows the New Lighters have neither the Bible nor Baptist history to back up their new teachings. The book is paperback and contains 66 pages. Please include \$1.00 for postage and handling.

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creatures suitable to the glory conferred upon the children of God.

When creation is liberated the words of the psalmist will come to pass. In Psalm 96:11-13 he wrote: *"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."* In verses 7 and 8 of the 98th Psalm he wrote: *"Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: Let the hills be joyful together."*

These passages can mean nothing less than the seas, the rivers, the hills, the plains, the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and every living creature shall in some manner express joy at the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom on earth. All creation shall own its returning Lord and join in a tribute of praise to Him. In Revelation 5:13 John foretold this coming day: *"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."*

Spiritualizers of the Scripture are quick to assert this is highly figurative language of which the meaning is uncertain. I disagree. Call me literally a literalist if you will. I had rather be literally a literalist than little if ever a literalist. I believe the God who made all creation is capable of giving all things the

ability to express themselves. In Eden the serpent conversed with Eve in a language, suggesting animals may have had originally the ability to speak. Balaam's ass spoke to his master in Numbers 22:28-30. The sea can roar, the wind can whistle, the trees can wave their branches, the birds can sing, the mountains can quake, and the heavens can declare the glory of God (Ps. 19:1-3). In Luke 19:40 Jesus said the stones could cry out. Revelation 10:4 says: *"The seven thunders . . . uttered their voices."*

What a stupendous time when all creation enjoys the glorious liberty of the children of God. Then gold and silver shall no longer beautify the shrines of idols nor gratify the miser's avarice. Music shall be lifted from its degradation and made to magnify and praise its Creator. The key note of every song shall be Christ is Lord. Every star shall point to the Morning Star; every flower to the Rose of Sharon; every stone to the Rock of Ages; every lily to the Lily of the Valley; every drop of water to the Water of Life; every seed to the Seed of the Woman; every vine to the True Vine; every living thing to the firstborn of every creature. The ocean shall mirror forth His brightness and the chime of the waves and rush of the winds shall tell forth the glory of Him who made and sustains them.

The very instant the sons of God are manifest, creation shall experience a new and glorious genesis. Its groans shall be transposed into songs, its sufferings into joy and praise, its restlessness into perpetual peace. The desert shall bloom as the rose, briars and weeds will vanish, the earth shall cease its shivers, the red throat of the flaming volcano shall be mute, and all the shame and tragedy of a sin-smitten and Devil-hurt world shall be for ever terminated! All

creation, freed from its prison bonds, shall sing and echo with unending harmonies the glory of their Creator. Every atom of earth shall be full of His love and redolent with His praise.

Conclusion

The world today is intensifying its cry for relief. Earthquakes, hurricanes, tidal waves, and tornadoes are on the increase (Matt. 24:7). There is soon to appear *"Signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars"* (Luke 21:25; Rev. 6:12-13). The very *"powers of heaven shall be shaken"* (Luke 21:26). The stars of heaven shall fall unto the earth. The heavens are to depart as a scroll when it is rolled together. Every mountain and island will be moved out of their places (Rev. 6:13-14). The awful physical catastrophes of the tribulation period are the last and loudest cry of nature for relief from the curse.

Consider again verse 19 of the text: *"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."* The term

"earnest expectation" means "a waiting with the head raised and the eye fixed on that point of the horizon from which the expected object is to come." Lost souls on earth are not looking for the manifestation of God's sons. Even some Christians are not looking for the Lord to come. But such is not the case with all creation. The second coming of Christ is nature's "earnest expectation." Animate and inanimate creation looks away from themselves, eagerly expecting and welcoming the revealing of the sons of God.

Dear friend, where is your deepest interest? Are you looking for the return of Christ? Can you say from the heart, *"Abba, Father?"* Are you among those of whom the apostle says: *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?"* Can you pray, *"Our Father, which art in Heaven?"* A child can repeat it, a Romanist can mutter it upon his beads, a parrot might be taught to talk it, but only a heart that has regenerated by the Holy Spirit can pray it.

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