



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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BLESSEDNESS OF DIVINE FAITHFULNESS

By Wayne Camp

TEXT: Lamentations 3:22-23 *It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

2 Timothy 2:13 *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*

INTRODUCTION

In a time of such unfaithfulness on the part of men, God’s faithfulness shines as a beacon of assurance to those of us who look to him as our great and glorious God. Unfaithfulness abounds

everywhere. Marital infidelity is terrible. A man’s word used to be binding but it is not so any longer. Promises are made but are not kept. Agreements are entered upon that are easily broken.

Our second text points out that even when we are unfaithful God remains faithful. We can rest assured that God will never be unfaithful. He will never be unfaithful to his promises. He will never be unfaithful to his prophecies. He will never be unfaithful to his people. He will never be unfaithful to his churches. He is faithful always at all times and in all circumstances.

It is a wonderful blessing to look to our faithful God. I want us to do that in this **(Continued next page, Bottom Left Col)**

CRITIQUE #5

By J.C. Settlemaier

An Examination of Great Commission Credentials and Other ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY Articles

In this continuing Critique of Bro Mark Fenison’s book *Great Commission Credentials*, and other ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY articles, we look at Bro Fenison’s attempt to turn the Salem church’s self constitution, [LANDMARKISM UNDER FIRE. 60] into an ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY constitution.

THE SALEM CHURCH CONSTITUTION Salem, Mississippi

The organization of this church was mentioned by Bro Cockrell in SCRIPTURAL

CHURCH ORGANIZATION [87-88] but he did not give this quote by Christian.

This community was called the Salem Baptist Church; but it was constituted, not only without a presbytery of ministers, but without the presence of a single ordained minister. >They simply agreed to meet together stately,= says Bond, >and worship God according to his Word, and to exercise good discipline over one another, and called Elder Curtis to preach to them...’ John T. Christian, *History of the Baptists*. Vol. II, 333. [Cf. *GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS*. 198].

Bro. Cockrell issued a challenge **(Continued Page 6 Left Column)**

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SCRIPTURE ABOUNDS WITH DECLARATIONS OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Moses reminded Israel of the faithfulness of God. **Deuteronomy 7:9** *Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.* Israel's national life was the story of a constant

merry-go-round. They had their times of faithfulness to God but every time that they began to prosper they wandered away from him. Yet God was always faithful to bring them back through bringing afflictions upon them. At times he slew thousands in order to bring them back and cause them to repent. They were unfaithful but God was never unfaithful to them.

David proclaimed his faithfulness. **Psalm 119:75** *I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* If there was ever a person who knew about the faithfulness of God it was David. David had his own personal times of unfaithfulness and yet he could always call on God and God would be faithful to answer his prayer. As the Scripture says David even considered God to be faithful when he afflicted him. There would be a tendency on most of our parts to think that God had forsaken us in times of affliction but the truth was exactly the opposite with David. He knew that his afflictions were manifestations of God's faithfulness.

Kings have and will worship him because he is faithful. **Isaiah 49:7** *Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.*

Jeremiah, in one of our texts, certainly proclaimed the faithfulness of our great God. **Lamentations 3:22-23** *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.* God's compassions are new every morning. Had it not been for his faithful mercies Israel would have been consumed. Thinking on these things caused Jeremiah to cry in jubilation, **"great is thy faithfulness."**

The apostle Paul did not hesitate to proclaim the faithfulness of God. **1 Corinthians 1:9** *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* One only has to read Romans 7:14 through the end of the chapter to see why Paul would praise the faithfulness of God. His constant warfare

with the flesh made him realize his proneness to wander. Therefore he proclaimed the faithfulness of God.

Again in his epistle to the church in Thessalonica Paul proclaimed the faithfulness of God. **1 Thessalonians 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. 2 Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.** Two times in his two epistles the Apostle Paul declared the faithfulness of God. The God who had called them to salvation was declared to be faithful. He also declared that God is faithful to keep his people from the evil one. Satan can never overcome one of God's people. He may test us. As he did Job he may put us through some terrible experiences. God is faithful as he was to Job. In the end Joe was better off than he had ever been before.

We are admonished to be faithful on the grounds of God's faithfulness. **Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)**. Certainly when we see the faithfulness of God it ought to encourage us to be faithful to him and to his service.

Sarah judged God to be faithful. **Hebrews 11:11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.**

SCRIPTURE IS PLENTIFUL WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

He promised that the seasons would remain for as long as this present world system stands. **Genesis 8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.** Many times while I was a child and through my teenage years I heard even preachers say that the time would come when you could not tell summer from winter except by the budding of the trees. Even on one occasion after I had been pastoring several years a church member said the same thing to me. I asked where she found this in the Scriptures. She said "I don't know but I have heard

preachers say it all of my life." There are many other things that are passed off as Scripture that are not. That are tags makes it very clear that as long as there is time on this earth there will be summer and winter and heat and cold. God is faithful in this matter as well.

Consider what God told Abraham many years before it came to pass. God told him that the Israelites would go into bondage for four hundred years and would then return to their land. **Genesis 15:13-16 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.**

It not only came to pass, it came to pass exactly on time. **Exodus 12:41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.** How we did need to remember the faithfulness of God. One area in which he has especially faithful is to his word. When he told Abraham that Israel would return to their land after many years it came to pass exactly as he had said.

Through Isaiah God promised his virgin born Son would come into the world. He declared that a virgin would conceive and bear a son. **Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**

When the fullness of time was come Jesus came as promised. **Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.**

My beloved brothers and sisters, God is true. **Romans 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art**

judged.

Every promise he has ever made is sure. **2 Corinthians 1:20** *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.* We often say that all of God's blessings come to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is very true. It is also true that all the promises of God are absolutely faithful through Jesus Christ.

Not one thing has failed of all he promised, no, not even one word. **1 Kings 8:56** *Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.* That is a marvelous declaration. Of all that God has promised not even one single word has failed of all His good promises. Not a single word! Thank God for his amazing faithfulness.

Hear the words of Joshua on this matter. **Joshua 21:45** *There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.* **Joshua 23:14** *And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.* God had promised many good things to Israel. By Joshua assures them that not *one* of those things has failed.

There is another side of God's faithfulness that we might like to forget about that Joshua sets forth. **Joshua 23:15** *Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.* You say God is faithful to his warnings and threatening just as he is faithful to his promises. When Israel sinned God was also faithful to bring his chastisements upon them. God is as faithful to his threats as he is to his promises.

Heaven and earth may pass away but God will be forever faithful to his word. **Luke 21:33**

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

God will never allow his faithfulness to fail. **Psalm 89:33** *Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*

THE WONDERFUL FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Let us left some of the wonderful ways in which God is faithful.

God is faithful in preserving his people. **1 Corinthians 1:9** *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* **John 10:27-30** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.*

God is faithful in disciplining his people when we sin. **Psalm 89:32-33** *Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. 33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*

It is out of Fatherly love that God is faithful in chastening his children. **Hebrews 12:6-11** *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto*

them which are exercised thereby.

When David was afflicted he knew that it was out of Divine faithfulness to him. **Psalm 119:75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.**

Afflictions are designed for our good. **Hosea 5:15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.**

God is faithful in glorifying his people.

He has called us to glory and he is faithful. **1 Thessalonians 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.**

He chose us and he will glorify us. **Romans 8:28-30 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.** In the mind of God all of his elect people are already glorified. And that which is in the mind of God will surely be brought to pass in time. What he has purposed for us he will bring to pass in his own good time. If you belong to him not one that he has purposed for you will fail to come to pass. Just as surely as the purposed your glorification in eternity that glorification will come to pass in time.

We can be absolutely certain that what he has begun in us he will complete. **Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.** This goes along with what was just before. God has begun a good work in each of the elect. Be assured he will complete that work.

Our glorification is as sure as the foundation of God. **2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.** For our glorification to fail the foundation of God would

have to fail. And that can never happen. If we are unfaithful God still abides faithful. For him to be unfaithful even have to deny himself and he could never do that.

He is able to keep us and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory. **2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Jude 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.** What a glorious day awaits us. One day we shall stand faultless in the presence of the wonderful glory of God and his Christ.

He will preserve us for his heavenly kingdom. **2 Timothy 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

If God is for us no one can be against us. **Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?**

One day we will awake in his heavenly kingdom and we will be satisfied.

CONCLUSION

There is perhaps no attribute of God that is more comforting to the child of God than that of his faithfulness. This is especially true when that child of God is under fire or he has is going through persecution or trouble.

God's faithfulness is the ground of our confidence, the foundation of our hope, and the cause of our rejoicing. It saves us from the despair to which our own unfaithfulness might easily lead, gives us courage to carry on in spite of our failures, and fills our hearts with joyful anticipations, even when we are deeply conscious of the fact that we have forfeited all the blessings of God.

In the days ahead, may we each rest and rejoice in the unfailing faithfulness of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. God is faithful. God has never lied. God has never

done anything of which he must repent. God has never said anything that he shall not do. God has never spoken anything that he will not make good **Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?**

SCRIPTURAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION. 84] to find a church constituted with no connection to another church or without a missionary. Bro Fenison comments on Bro Cockrell's challenge.

Examples where pure 'direct authority' is involved in the constitution of a church are extremely rare in American Baptist History. So rare that Elder Milburn Cockrell in his book entitled 'Church Constitution' challenged his opponents to find cases where no ordained minister, or letters of dismission, or mother church was connected to a constitution. Bro Cockrell was not denying it could be done, but it would be difficult to find. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. 198.].

Bro Fenison said I could find **only one** in LANDMARKISM UNDER FIRE. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. 198]. Actually there are seven! [LANDMARKISM UNDER FIRE. 60-66]. Here is what Bro Cockrell actually said.

What they need to prove the new hypothesis is to show that three baptized members constituted themselves into a church with no connection to another church and without a missionary. Milburn Cockrell. *SCRIPTURAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION*, p. 84.

One can see at a glance that Bro Fenison has modified the statement of Bro Cockrell considerably. He makes the singular into the plural cases. He adds "letters of dismission" and is able to tell us what the author thought but did not express.

Bro Fenison then says:

Bro. Settlemoir has grossly misrepresented this case. The whole truth of the constitution of this church is obtained only when both histories are considered together. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. 200].

Apparently he means by *both histories* Christian's *History* and *A complete History of*

Mississippi Baptists, by Leavell & Bailey, published in 1904. He asserts the whole truth concerning the constitution of this church can only be obtained when both of these histories are compared. If this is so, then Bro Cockrell did not have the truth on this church in SCRIPTURAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION [86-87] because he did not even mention Christian's *History of the Baptists* on the Salem Church—and this means he could not have known the truth according to Bro Fenison! But why limit this to two histories? What about Bond's *History*? What about Boyd's, Newman's and McLemore's histories?

In *LANDMARKISM UNDER FIRE* [60-61] where I referred to the constitution of this church as an example of a church constituted without ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY I referred to the book Christian quoted (he gave only the last name) and I took the author to be *John* Bond when in fact he was *T.M.* Bond. I discovered this error when I examined the book [T. M. Bond. *A Republication of the Minutes of the Mississippi Association from its Organization in 1806 to the Present Time*, 1849] and wish to correct that error here. [Cf. Christian. Hist. II. 333].

Bro Fenison goes on to quote Bro Cockrell:

"They prudently postponed the matter until they could correspond with the parent church in South Carolina, from WHOSE AUTHORITY they held their letters of church membership. In the mean time the young converts were recognized as candidates for membership in the church, and were properly cared and encouraged in the discharge of all their Christian duties." (Milburn Cockrell, *Scriptural Church Organization*, 2nd ed., p. 74 quoting "A Complete History of Mississippi Baptists, Vol. 1, p. 24). – Emphasis mine.

He then makes this statement:

Settlemoir must have read and knew this since he quoted both sources! The history cited by Christian clearly demonstrates that this constitution did not occur apart from seeking the authority and direction of the parent church and only after obtaining it. In the mean time while they waited upon the "parent church" for authority to act, the unbaptized converts were recognized as candidates for membership "in

the church” – referring to the parent church as no other church was yet constituted. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. 200].

Did I grossly misrepresent this account? We will examine this objection.

First let it be noted that I have read these various histories mentioned above on the Salem church and its constitution. The question now is: Did this Salem group *seek authority from the parent church* to constitute? This is Bro Fenison’s assertion. If they did so, Bro Fenison is responsible to bring forth the evidence by direct quotes. He needs to *prove* his claim. Has he done that? Can he do it?

Note first that Bro Fenison claims there is only one church mentioned in this paragraph.

In the mean time the young converts were recognized as candidates for membership in the church, and were properly cared and encouraged in the discharge of all their Christian duties.

I think this is a complete misunderstanding of the quote. It seems to me the church mentioned here is clearly the Salem Church. These candidates for membership were waiting baptism in the Salem Church—not the Pee Dee Church in SC! The proof of this is easy. They were baptized by Bro Curtis before he returned to SC.

But how could these candidates have been cared for and encouraged by the church in SC? Does Bro Fenison think they had a Lear Jet at their disposal so they could fly the SC pastor out to MS and minister in Salem and then fly back to SC for the next service there?

The question this church in Salem had and what they communicated with the parent church about was not authority to constitute—which is Bro Fenison’s idea— for they had already constituted in 1791! The question they had was what should they do about baptizing new converts, since they had no ordained man among them! They did not, incidentally, baptize in the name of the church in SC nor baptize them into that church!

Note carefully, the question of the Salem Church:

This brought up in the minds of these pioneer workmen in the Lord’s vineyard a very interesting question for solution. Who could

administer the ordinance of baptism according to the faith and order of the church? Curtis was only a licentiate, and was not authorized, according to the polity of Baptist churches, to administer baptism, and yet there were persons desiring the ordinance, who exhibited the usual evidences of conversion. The matter was postponed until by letter they could consult the parent church in Carolina. The church in that State on receiving this interesting communication from the "Natchez Country," Church took the matter under consideration and returned the answer: "That there was no law against necessity, and under the present stress of circumstances the members ought to assemble and formally appoint one of their number, by election, to baptize the converts." This advice was acted upon and Richard Curtis baptized the converts. Thus the first church in Mississippi was organized without a presbytery of ordained ministers. [Christian. Hist. II. 333-4].

When Bro Fenison reads this paragraph he boldly claims:

Mother church authority is written all over this example when both histories are consulted for the fuller picture. The parent church considered the uniqueness of their plight and gave them special authority as already valid church members to constitute themselves into a church and select a member and ordain that member to administer baptism to the new converts. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. 200].

One can only register amazement at this! Bro Fenison sees words which the text does not contain. He finds not only **authority**, but **special authority**! Where did this church grant anybody authority to constitute or for anything at all? How could they ordain without an ordained man if ordination means laying on of hands? How could they constitute without an ordained man? How could this group in Salem receive the Holy Spirit without an ordained man, as ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY holds? [SCRIPTURAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION.81]. Remember Bro Fenison and Bro Cockrell insist you must have an ordained man to do these things! A few examples will illustrate this point:

As such, it is authority to bring such disciples into church membership by one of two ways. Newly baptized believers were brought into

church membership either by directly adding them to an existing church (Acts 2:41-42) or by a church ordained man constituting them into a new church (Acts 13:3; 14:22-23). [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. iii].

Ordained men were involved in the gathering of every church recorded in the New Testament. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. 29]

Also, once a church is constituted under the authority of a church sent, church authorized, and church ordained man of God that the new church ought to follow the same procedure. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS.36].

Also, they did not believe that a baptized believer who was not ordained could administer the ordinances: [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. 37].

Below, we shall see that they had only two ways to practice “gospel order” and both were backed by church vote and church authority: (1) Church ordained and church sent men for the stated purpose to gather churches; (2) Church letters of dismissal for the stated purpose for gathering a church under the guidance of a church ordained man or men. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. 39].

As a necessary conclusion, new churches do not evolve but are made by this process and are constituted under the authority of a previously existing New Testament Church and/or its ordained representatives. [GREAT COMMISSION CREDENTIALS. iv].

But here in the case we are considering Bro Fenison has no ordained man available, yet he is able to jump-start a church without the ordained man with only the single battery of supposed church authority-current! Of course Bro Fenison’s reading is slanted by his ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY leanings and he sees everything off-kilter. Others see this letter from the SC church in an entirely different light! Whence the difference? Christian calls this communication from SC, *advice*! Leavell & Bailey see it as *advice* [SCRIPTURAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION. 88]. Bro Fenison calls it *authority*! There is no misprint in Christian or Leavell & Bailey so how did they read one thing and Bro Fenison another?

Nothing in this letter indicates that the Pee

Dee Church thought they were giving *authority* for anything! They do not use the word *authority*. They use no synonym for *authority*. The church at Salem did not ask for *authority*! Why not? They did not think they were receiving *authority*! In fact, if ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY had been in the minds of these Baptists of MS, they never would have met together at all! So *the SC church did not rule! It did not decree! It did not command! It did not give birth! It did not beget a new church!!* What did this church do? It gave *counsel*! It gave *advice*! It gave *guidance*! It said *there is no law against necessity*! It **recommended** what to do about baptizing without an ordained man. This is the whole of their *recommendation* and it was apparently nothing more. Thus for Bro Fenison to make this into an ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY grant of authority to constitute when there is no such word anywhere in the records of either church is like whistling under water!

In historical matters primary documents have more weight and take precedence over all other data. In this case we have the minutes of the Salem Church and I quote:

Original Minutes of First Baptist Church

October 1791. The Baptists of the vicinity of Natchez met by request of Richard Curtis and William Thompson at the house of sister Stampley on Cole’s Creek, and formed into a body, receiving (or adopting) the following articles or rules, considering it necessary that such as have a mind to join the church are only to be received by letter or experience. [Boyd. *Popular Hist. Bap. MS.* 18; Cf. McLemore. *Hist. MS Baptists.* 14].

Some questions are in order. What did they do? They met together! Mt. 18:20. What did they intend to do? To constitute a church? What then? They formed into a body. What is that? What kind of body? A church body! What else could it be? The YMCA? How did they do this? In what manner? By adopting the articles listed in the minutes and covenanting together on these articles and rules which follow! When did they do it? October 1791. When did this church communicate with the church in SC? Not until after this organization when they had converts waiting for baptism according to their own

records. If this was not a church, what was it? How could any group more clearly claim their constitution than did the Salem church?

This church had Church Rules, a Church Covenant and Articles of Faith! The charter members are listed!

Charter Members:--The charter members were seven in number; viz:--Richard Curtis (pastor), William Thompson (recording clerk), William Curtis, John Jones, Benjamin Curtis, Ealiff Lanier, and Margaret Stampey. [Church records. Boyd. 20].

Keep in mind it was at least August 1795 before Curtis left for SC [Christian. Hist. II. 335]. As Curtis was in SC for two and one half years, it was probably 1798-99 before Curtis made his way back to Salem. It was impossible for this church to claim they were constituted in 1791 according to Bro Fenison's scenario.

Thus we have the testimony of these marvelous church records. We have also the record of these historians, especially Bond, who personally interviewed at least one member of this church who was still living in 1849 when he wrote and who had been an eye witness of the founding of this church! [Bond. 3]. These records are all consistent and clear with self constitution but they fly in the face of ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY! This church was expressly constituted in 1791 without any authority from any other church on earth. There was no ordained man present. This nails ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY to the wall as far as the constitution of this church is concerned!

There is one expression in this history by Leavell & Bailey which some might question if it does not imply ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY. They say:

The hitherto oppressed and down-trodden Baptist community met in conference, and, under the superintendence of their beloved Richard Curtis, who presided as moderator, they completed their organization 'in due and ancient form,' as a regular Baptist Church. This was probably in the summer of 1798.

The term *completed their organization* refers to the installing of officers which the church did not do until Curtis returned from SC. [Cf.

Summary of Church Discipline of Charleston Association. Dever. Polity. 118; Keach. Glory of a Gospel Constituted Church p. 6.].

Bro Fenison's attempt to make it appear ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY was in operation in this constitution is altogether unworthy of his abilities and one can only be surprised at the attempt.

In conclusion we have these noted Baptists such as Bond, Christian and the first authors of The Baptist Association of MS who recorded this statement

This community was called the Salem Baptist Church; but it was constituted, not only without a presbytery of ministers, but without the presence of a single ordained minister. They simply agreed to meet together stately, and worship God according to his Word, and to exercise gospel discipline over one another, and called Elder Curtis to preach to them... [Bond. Republication. Min. MS. Bap. Association. 4; John T. Christian, *History of the Baptists*. Vol. II, 333]

Without any disclaimer, without any objection that this language should not be taken at face value and stating contrariwise that a church must have authority from a mother church to constitute. This certainly brings the claim of Bro. Cockrell and Fenison that ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY was the universal practice of Baptists into utter disrepute! Bond says nothing of the kind when stating how this church was constituted! Christian does not question the validity of this organization without a presbytery, without a single ordained man and without any earthly authority of any kind! Leavell & Bailey do not question it. Boyd does not question it. McLemore does not question it. Newman does not question it. The Baptist Association of MS printed this record at least twice without any explanation or disclaimer! Had ESSENTIAL MOTHER DAUGHTER AUTHORITY been a doctrine among them they would have certainly taken exception to the constitution of Salem church.

Bro Fenison accused me of *grossly misrepresenting* the case of the Salem Church. Is his statement true or false? The jury will have no trouble finding the correct verdict!

The Impeccability of Christ

A.W. Pink

We are living in a world of sin, and the fearful havoc it has wrought is evident on every side. How refreshing, then, to fix our gaze upon One who is immaculately holy, and who passed through this scene unspoiled by its evil. Such was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate. For thirty-three years He was in immediate contact with sin, yet He was never, to the slightest degree, contaminated. He touched the leper, yet was not defiled, even ceremonially. Just as the rays of the sun shine upon a stagnant pool without being sullied thereby, so Christ was unaffected by the iniquity which surrounded Him. **He "did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22), "in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5 and contrast 1:8), He "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21), He was "without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26).**

But not only was Christ sinless, He was impeccable, that is, incapable of sinning. No attempt to set forth the doctrine of His wondrous and peerless person would be complete, without considering this blessed perfection. Sad indeed is it to behold the widespread ignorance thereon today, and sadder still to hear and read this precious truth denied. The last Adam differed from the first Adam in His impeccability. Christ was not only able to overcome temptation, but He was unable to be overcome by it. Necessarily so, for He was "the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). True, Christ was man, but He was the God-man, and as such, absolute Master and Lord of all things. Being Master of all things-as His dominion over the winds and waves, diseases and death, clearly demonstrated-it was impossible that anything should master Him.

The immutability of Christ proves His impeccability, or incapability of sinning: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Because He was not susceptible to any change, it was impossible for the incarnate Son of God to sin. Herein we

behold again His uniqueness. Sinless angels fell, sinless Adam fell: they were but creatures, and creaturehood and mutability are, really, correlative terms. But was not the manhood of Christ created? Yes, but it was never placed on probation, it never had a separate existence. From the very first moment of its conception in the Virgin's womb, the humanity of Christ was taken into union with His Deity; and therefore could not sin.

The omnipotence of Christ proves His impeccability. That the Lord Jesus, even during the days of His humiliation, was possessed of omnipotence, is clear from many passages of Scripture. "What things so ever He (the Father) doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise....For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5:19, 21). When we say that Christ possessed omnipotence during His earthly sojourn, we do not mean that He was so endowed by the Holy Spirit, but that He was essentially, inherently, personally, omnipotent. Now to speak of an omnipotent person yielding to sin, is a contradiction in terms. All temptation to sin must proceed from a created being, and hence it is a finite power; but impossible is it for a finite power to overcome omnipotency.

The constitution of Christ's person proves His impeccability. In Him were united (in a manner altogether incomprehensible to created intelligence) the Divine and the human natures. Now "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13); "it is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). And Christ was "God manifest in flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16); "Immanuel"-God with us (Matt. 1:23). Personality centered not in His humanity. Christ was a Divine person, who had been "made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). Utterly impossible was it, then, for the God-man to sin. To affirm the contrary, is to be guilty of the most awful blasphemy. It is irreverent speculation to discuss what the human nature of Christ might have done if it had been alone. It never was alone; it never had a separate existence; from the first moment of its being it was united to a Divine person.

It is objected to the truth of Christ's impeccability that it is inconsistent with His temptability. A person who cannot sin, it is

argued, cannot be tempted to sin. As well might one reason that because an army cannot be defeated, it cannot be attacked. "Temptability depends upon the constitutional susceptibility, while impeccability depends upon the will. So far as His natural susceptibility, both physical and mental, was concerned, Jesus Christ was open to all forms of human temptation, excepting those that spring out of lust, or corruption of nature. But His peccability, or the possibility of being overcome by these temptations, would depend upon the amount of voluntary resistance which He was able to bring to bear against them. Those temptations were very strong, but if the self-determination of His holy will was stronger than they, then they could not induce Him to sin, and He would be impeccable. And yet plainly He would be temptable" (W.G. Shedd, 1889).

Probably there were many reasons why God ordained that His incarnate Son should be tempted by men, by the Devil, by circumstances. One of these was to demonstrate His impeccability. Throw a lighted match into a barrel of gunpowder, and there will be an explosion; throw it into a barrel of water, and the match will be quenched. This, in a very crude way, may be taken to illustrate the difference between Satan's tempting us and his tempting of the God-man. In us, there is that which is susceptible to his "fiery darts"; but the Holy One could say, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30). The Lord Jesus was exposed to a far more severe testing and trying than the first Adam was, in order to make manifest His mighty power of resistance.

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, without sin" (Heb. 4:15). "This text teaches that the temptations of Christ were 'without sin' in their source and nature, and not merely, as the passage is sometimes explained, that they were 'without sin' in their result. The meaning is not, that our Lord was tempted in every respect exactly as fallen man is-by inward lust, as well as by other temptations-only He did not outwardly yield to any temptation; but that He

was tempted in every way that man is, excepting by that class of temptations that are sinful, because originating in evil and forbidden desire.

"The fact that Christ was almighty and victorious in His resistance does not unfit Him to be an example for imitation to a weak and sorely-tempted believer. Because our Lord overcame His temptations, it does not follow that His conflict and success was an easy one for Him. His victory cost Him tears and blood. 'His visage was so marred more than any man' (Isa. 52:14). There was the 'travail of His soul' (Isa. 52:14). In the struggle He cried, 'O My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me' (Matt. 26:39). Because an army is victorious, it by no means follows that the victory was a cheap one" (W.G. Shedd).

One other objection may, perhaps, be noted, though we hesitate to defile these pages by even transcribing the filthy exhalations of the carnal mind. If the humanity of Christ was, because of its union to His Divine person, incapable of sinning, then in view of its being Divinely sustained how could it hunger and thirst, suffer and die? and seeing it did, then why was it incapable of yielding to temptation? It is sufficient answer to this impious question to point out that, while the Mediator was commissioned to die (John 10:18), He was not commissioned to sin. The human nature of Christ was permitted to function freely and normally: hence it wearied and wept; but to sin is not a normal act of human nature.

To be the Redeemer of His people, Christ must be "mighty to save, travelling in the greatness of His strength" (Isa. 63:1). He must have power to overcome all temptation when it assails His person, in order that He may be able to "succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). Here then is one of the solid planks in that platform on which the faith of the Christian rests: because the Lord Jesus is Almighty, having absolute power over sin, the feeble and sorely-tempted saint may turn to Him in implicit confidence, seeking His efficacious aid. Only He who triumphed over sin, both in life and in death, can save me from my sins.

(Taken from *Studies in the Scriptures* Sept. 1932.)

TOYS AND PLAYTHINGS OF THE RELIGIOUS BABYHOUSE

(J. C. Philot, "The Good Shepherd
and His Work")

"I will feed My flock." Ezekiel 34:15

The only real food of the soul must be of God's own appointing, preparing, and communicating.

You can never deceive a hungry child. You may give it a plaything to still its cries. It may serve for a few minutes; but the pains of hunger are not to be removed by a doll. A toy horse will not allay the cravings after the mother's breast.

So with babes in grace. A hungry soul cannot feed upon playthings.

Altars, robes, ceremonies, candlesticks, bowings, mutterings, painted windows, intoning priests, and singing men and women; **these dolls and wooden horses; these toys and playthings of the religious babyhouse**, cannot feed the soul that, like David, cries out after the living God. ***Psalm 42:10-11 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? 11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.***

Christ, the bread of life, the manna that came down from heaven, is the only food of the believing soul. ***John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.***

AN APPLE IN EXCHANGE FOR A PARADISE!

(Thomas Brooks, "Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices" 1652)

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his **devices**." 2 Cor. 2:11

Satan has . . . snares for the wise, and snares for the simple; snares for hypocrites, and snares for the upright; snares for generous souls, and snares for timorous souls; snares for the rich, and snares for

the poor; snares for the aged, and snares for youth.

Happy are those souls that are not taken and held in the snares that he has laid!

Satan's first device to draw the soul into sin is . . . **to present the bait, and hide the hook**; to present the golden cup, and hide the poison; to present the sweet, the pleasure, and the profit that may flow in upon the soul by yielding to sin, and by hiding from the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow the committing of sin.

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4-5

Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods! Here is the bait, the sweet, the pleasure, the profit. **Oh, but he hides the hook-** the shame, the wrath, and the loss that would certainly follow!

Thus Satan cheats them; giving them **an apple in exchange for a paradise!**

Satan tempts us by his golden baits, and then he leads us and leaves us in a fool's paradise.

He promises the soul honor, pleasure, profit; but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be.

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