

DOES SELF CONSTITUTION PRODUCE FALSE CHURCHES?

By J.C. Settlemoir

Sent with a reply to *Misnomer*, by Elder Medford Caudill which appeared in *Voice in the Wilderness*, March 9, 2006, p. 1.

A SAMPLE OF QUOTES FROM BAPTIST HISTORY CONCERNING SELF CONSTITUTION

Here the reader will find a sample of Baptist churches, from history, which were *self constituted*, expressly stated. There are several other terms used synonymously with self constitution that were also used. I have included a few of these quotes. These terms are: *embodied themselves, formed themselves, organized themselves, set up themselves, set off themselves,, in-churched themselves, gathered themselves, settled themselves, formed themselves, by mutual consent united themselves, gave themselves up, banded themselves together, convened themselves, knit themselves together, gave themselves to one another* and the like. I have highlighted the pertinent phrases.

Soon the organization of a Baptist Church in Clinton arose. Mr. Leigh gave the lots for a Baptist Church edifice. The house begun in the summer of 1871 and in March, 1872, thirty-seven disciples *constituted themselves* a Baptist Church in the building from which they had been expelled. At this meeting, Mr. Leigh was chosen one of the deacons and also treasurer of the Church. Rev. H. Westcott, pastor at Bethlehem Church, was one of the constituents and called to be pastor at Clinton, entered at once upon his duties.

--- Griffith, Hist. NJ Baptists, p 87.

The brethren who had joined during the revival *constituted themselves* into a church, and called the young preacher to the pastorate. Boykin. Hist Bap in Ga., vol ii, p. 590.

These ministries had fruit and on the 24th of October, 1818, nineteen disciples *constituted themselves* the Sandy Ridge Baptist church. The Divine blessing abode upon the church in 1819. In that year began alternate preaching between Flemington and Sandy Ridge and continued for thirteen years and till the increase at Flemington demanded Mr. Bartolette's entire time. Griffith, Hist. NJ. p. 100

In March, 1846, 21 members met and *constituted themselves* a Church of Christ, with Mr. Johnstone as Pastor. Yuille. Baptists of Scotland. P. 59.

Thirty-seven members returned to the first church. Another party *constituted themselves* the Trinity church, worshipping in Temperance Hall. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 129.

Under the labors of Mr. Flock, many converts were baptized and added to Hamilton Square, Hightstown and Allentown churches. Some of these agreed to unite in 1898 and *constituted themselves* at the Baptist church at Windsor; Mr. Flock becoming pastor.

Griffith, Hist. NJ. P. 148.

Rev. W.H. Parmly, pastor in Burlington, established regular meetings at proper seasons in groves, in an old building and in school houses. The resident Baptists finally decided to organize a Baptist church. This they did, on the tenth of February 1851, twelve resident Baptists *constituted themselves* a Baptist church. Six were from Philadelphia, five from Burlington and one from Bridgeton. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 178.

Another student, S.W. Lynd followed, gathered twenty Baptists who on April 14th, 1821, *constituted themselves* the Baptist church of Bordentown. Mr. Lynd was called to be pastor and was ordained. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 214.

By the advice of Mr. Church, steps were taken to organize a Baptist church. A council was called to meet in April 1844 at the house of Alexander A. Shaw. The Council advised an organization and twenty-five Baptists *constituted themselves* the Cape Island Baptist church. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 344.

Pastor Lyell has given to us the early history of Baptist affairs in Camden. On February 5th, 1818, seven Baptists in Camden *constituted themselves* a Baptist church in the city. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 349.

In February 1894, twenty-four Baptists *constituted themselves* the Prospect Park Baptist church of Paterson. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 376.

On November 24th, 1896, in the evening, forty three Baptists, by previous agreement, *constituted themselves* a regular Baptist church. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 382.

Then seventeen took letters of dismission leaving only thirty-three in a population imbued with the demands of a city life. The seventeen hired a hall. Ten other Baptists joined them. A Sunday school was begun. And, on November 5th, 1857, these twenty-seven *constituted themselves* the "North Orange church." Griffith, Hist. NJ. 389.

In 1712, by advice of the pastor and two deacons of Cohansey, thirty-seven persons *constituted themselves* into a church, under the pastorate of Nathaniel Jenkins, one of their own number. Bap. Encyl, H-Q, p. 675.

The First white Baptist church, of Richmond, Va., was organized with 14 members, in 1780, when Richmond was a village of 1800 inhabitants, one-half of whom were Africans. "Since 1863 the colored Baptists have *constituted themselves* separately, and have their own associations." Cook. Story of Bap. P. 277.

The members of the dissolved Lower Rocky River Church, evidently desiring to be rid of a name then under suspicion, *reconstituted themselves* near Wembish's Mill as Bulltown Church in 1793, shortly after the dissolution of the old body, and in the same year entered the Bethel Association. Townsend. S.C. Baptists, p. 116.

COVENANT 31: 1798 COVENANT OF PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION (WRITTEN BY SAMUEL JONES)

We, whose names are under written, being desirous to be constituted a church of Jesus Christ, in this place, and having all due knowledge of one another in point of a work of grace on our hearts, religious principles, and moral characters, and being desirous of enjoying the privileges that appertain to the people of God in a church relation, do, in the name of the Lord Jesus, *voluntarily and freely give ourselves up to the Lord, and to one another, according to his word, to be one body under one head*, jointly to exist and act by the bands and rules of the gospel, and do promise and engage to do all things, by divine assistance, in our different capacities and relations that the Lord has commanded us, and requires of us: particularly to deny ourselves, take up our cross, follow Christ, keep the faith, assemble ourselves together, love the brethren, submit one to another in the Lord, care one for another, bear one another's burdens, endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and, finally, to honour, obey, and maintain them that may have the rule over us in the Lord. This is the Covenant we solemnly enter into, in the fear of God, humbly imploring the Divine assistance and blessing that we may be built up and established to the glory of God, the advancement of the Redeemer's interest, and the comfort and edification of our own souls, through the infinite riches of free grace, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord: and now, to the only wise God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be worship, honour, power, glory, dominion, and obedience rendered, now and ever more. Amen. — Source: Samuel Jones, *A Treatise of Church Discipline and a Directory* (Philadelphia: S. C. Ustick, 1798), 9-10. Dewesse. P. 145.

He had a giant frame and vigorous constitution, yet he continued his ministerial labors without relaxation. For nearly two years before his death he became unable to stand while preaching, and sat in an arm-chair while he addressed the people with deep pathos. Only two weeks before his final departure, in company with another minister, he visited the Sulphur Springs at Elk Lick, which appeared to afford him benefit. Before they left, *they constituted a church*, a measure not contemplated in the visit. Ducan. H. Mo Bap. P. 201.

In 1834, ninety-two members of Upper Freehold were dismissed to constitute the Freehold Baptist church. Two others made the number ninety-four, who in November 1834, *constituted themselves* the Baptist church of Freehold. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 217.

At a meeting in Elizabeth on June fifth, 1843, fifteen members of the Baptist Churches of Scotch Plains, Mount Bethel and Rahway assembled and *constituted themselves* the First Baptist Church of Elizabeth. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 278.

In September 1816, twenty-four members of Piscataway *constituted themselves* the first Baptist church of New Brunswick. Griffith, Hist. NJ. 321.

For some years he preached once a month at a log schoolhouse about twelve miles from Cape Girardeau. Because he saw no visible results for good from his labors, he talked about giving up that point to preach in some other locality. He was urged to continue his

appointment by his sister, Mrs. Gordon, a lady of influence and wealth in the community. She told him she believed there were blessings in store for that people. He labored on, and in 1861 such deep feeling was manifested that he decided to hold a meeting of days, sent for Eld. J.C. Maple, and they held a meeting, at the close of which, in that old log house, *they constituted a church* of thirty members, which was named Rubble's Creek, from a stream of the same name near by. Duncan. H. Mo. B. p. 255.

As a result of faithful Bible study, Mr. Oncken gradually reached the conviction that baptism belongs only to believers, and that immersion is the only Scriptural mode of baptism. After having long waited for an opportunity to receive baptism, Mr. Oncken was at length baptized, together with six others, by Rev. Barnas Sears, then of Hamilton Institution, on the 22d of April, 1834, in the river Elbe, near Hamburg; these seven believers were the first fruit of thousands *yet to follow*. On the succeeding day *these seven were constituted a church*, the First German Baptist church in *modern times*; Mr. Oncken was chosen pastor. [Bap. Encyl. Question. Did Sears have authority to constitute a church given him before he went to school in Germany?].

Burress

“From these considerations a New Testament church is readily defined as an independent body of penitent, believing, individual Christians, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *voluntarily banded together* in the name of Lord Jesus Christ, to keep his ordinances and to proclaim his gospel in all the world.”— [Baptist Refreshments, p. 24-5].

“He made every one a priest and a king. He invested every member with the right to execute his laws, but only when assembled with the brethren. As many as could conveniently unite came *voluntarily together and by mutual consent were constituted an 'ekklesia,' or official assembly, of Christ*. It was subject to *his* laws: it acted by *his* authority: it used *his* name to give a sanction to its acts; and as he had *authorized* it, and conferred on it all its authority, so he promised to be in its midst by his Spirit, and to ratify in heaven what it did upon earth.”

— [Theodosia Earnest, vol. ii, p. 115-116].

By Church I here understand some particular visible Church, which every believer ought to be a member of, and add himself to it. Tis not enough to be baptized, which visibly enrichts him into any Church, but he must be taught to observe all things commanded, whereof this is one, to join himself to some particular *Church or Congregation*. Therefore it is said, Acts 2:42, *They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers*. Mark it, they were not only baptized, but walked in the visible fellowship of the Gospel. And again it is said, verse 47, *And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved*. And again, Acts 17:4, it is said, *Those that believed consorted to Paul and Silas: they embodied themselves together, and cleaved to the Apostles*, verse 34. Drapes. Gospel Glory. Elect. Copy, p. 47.

Eastcombe Baptist 1802. On February 13th, of the same year, [1802] four persons were baptised in the village, and these with the pastor, his wife and daughter, making up the sacred number seven, *formed themselves into a church*. On February 13th of the present year the Baptist Church at Eastcombe completed the first century of its existence.
<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/GLS/Eastcombe/ebc-notes.html>

First Baptist Carrollton “ ‘... Many were converted, and the result was the organization of the Baptist Church at Carrollton.’

At the organizational meeting, August 26, 1839, held after a service, *ten men and women decided to form themselves into a church*. The ministering brethren present were Thomas Fristoe, Fielding Wilhite, and A.T. Martin.....

Names of brethren and sisters in Constitution—.....

In all ten, who agreed to form a constitution and rules of decorum, then adjourned.”

First Baptist Church, Carrollton, Mo. 1876-1976, p. 8.

The apostles taught the disciples the duty, and the principle, of the church relation, and they complied with it. But no official act of the *apostles* beyond teaching, do we learn, gave validity to its existence. With the pattern thus clearly given, and the scripture record of numerous churches in different places, we are taught, that wherever a sufficient number of believers in Christ, baptized upon a profession of faith in him, live sufficiently contiguous to each other for the purposes of the church relation, *they should unite together in such relation* on the principle of ONE ACCORD, *mutual consent in the truth*. The Bible is their only standard of doctrine and duty.” — [Johnson, W.B. *The Gospel Developed*. 1846. Quoted in Dever’s *Polity*, p. 187].

“After serious consideration and seeking God’s face among ourselves for the Lord to direct us in a right way for us and our children, so as might be for God’s glory and our souls’ good, we, viz., William Hiscox, Samuel Hubbard, Steven Mumford, Roger Baxter, Tacy Hubbard, Rachel Langworthy,....Mumford, *entered into covenant with the Lord and with one another, and gave up ourselves to God and one to another*, to walk together in all God’s holy commandments and holy ordinances according to what the Lord had discovered to us or should discover to be his mind for us to be obedient unto; with sense upon our hearts of great need to be watchful over one another, did promise so to do, and in edifying and building up one another in our most holy faith; this 7th day of December, 1671.” — [Ms of John Comer, Backus Hist. Soc. Library, quoted by Backus, *Hist. Of Baptists in New England*, vol I, p. 325].

“He received his dismissal from this church in 1796, and *joined a few people* that met him in a barn at Hinkley.” — [Warburton’s *Mercies*, p. 255, Notes on William Gadsby].

The Georgia Association: “The visible church is defined as a ‘congregation of faithful persons, who have gained Christian fellowship with each other, and have *given themselves up to the Lord, and to one another* and have agreed to keep up a Godly discipline, agreeably to the rules of the gospel.’” —[Hogue, *Antecedents of Landmarkism*, p. 222].

(A) Upon this, Mr. Gill's friends withdrew, and assembled for a time in Crosby's school room upon Horsleydown. *They formed themselves into a church* March 22, 1719-20, and on the same day; Mr. Gill was ordained their pastor.

“The church is in things spiritual independent of the state. It is *formed under authority from Christ*, and owes supreme allegiance to him. Its doctrine, ordinances, officers, discipline, and worship are under the authority of God's Word, and for these it is accountable only to God.” [Hezekiah Harvey, *The Church: Its Polity and Ordinances*, p. 64. 1982 Reprint by Backus Book Pub. POB 17274, Rochester, NY 14617].

“I agree that the brethren would have eased the situation had they joined with another church and then asked for an arm to organize. At one time I would have insisted on this, and do not say, for expediency, that it should not be done this way. However, to insist that this is the only way if [is– JC] against Scripture and Baptist history and practice.” [Jarrel E. Huffman, personal letter to JCS, April 22, 1996].

“I appreciate all of the facts you have given in the matter. I also realize, from past experiences and from history, that these things, right or wrong, have occurred throughout the history of the Lord's churches. Personalities, improper leadership, etc., have led to disputes, separations, splits, etc., through the years. But if two groups both have scriptural baptism, as you mentioned, how can we declare them not to be a church.” [Jarrel E. Huffman, personal letter to JCS, April 22, 1996].

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN INDIA

On the first day of November, 1795, Samuel Powell, who had gone to India upon the same ship with Mrs. Thomas, was baptized by Carey; after which Carey, Powell, Thomas and Long, Whom Thomas baptized, *organized themselves into a Christian Church*—the first Baptist Church in India.

John Thomas: *First Baptist Missionary to Bengal* By A. C. Chute, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia Pp. 51-52. Published by Baptist Book and Tract Society, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1893.

“Concerning a True and Orderly Gospel-Church.

Before there can be any Orderly Discipline among a Christian Assembly, they must be orderly and regularly constituted into a Church-state, according to the Institution of Christ in the Gospel.

1. A Church of Christ, according to the Gospel-Institution, is a Congregation of Godly Christians, who as a Stated-Assembly (being first baptized upon the Profession of Faith) *do by mutual agreement and consent give themselves up to the Lord, and one to another*, according to the Will of God; and do ordinarily meet together in one Place, for the Public Service and Worship of God; among whom the Word of God and Sacraments are duly administered, according to Christ's Institution.1 *THE GLORY OF A TRUE CHURCH, AND ITS DISCIPLINE DISPLAY'D* (1697); Quoted by Dever, p. 65.

In the year of our Lord 1687, came Mr. Elias Keach, son of Mr. Benjamin Keach, of London, and preached unto the people there and at parts adjacent; at or about which time the above said persons, by name John Eaton, George, Eaton, Samuel Jones, and John Watts, with others baptized by the said Elias Keach, agreed, by the advice of the said Mr. Keach, to set a day apart, and by fasting and prayer *to settle themselves in a church state*; which when they had solemnly accomplished, they made choice of the said Keach to be their pastor. [Taken from p. 11, Phil. A. Minutes].

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 Sense of our own Unworthiness, *give up our selves 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 Law-giver; 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. Keach, Glory of A True Church, Quoted by Dever in Polity, p. 90.

“But, at length, the Baptists having been rendered uncomfortable in their communion, by some particular persons, they were obliged to separate, with Mr. William Wallis, their teacher, and *soon formed themselves into a distinct church* of the Particular Baptist denomination, over which the Rev. Andrew Fuller is now, [1800] and for many years has been pastor.”— [*Life and Writings of Dr. John Gill*, by Jn. Rippon, p. 2].

“He had been five years a member of the Independent church, then under the care of Mr. Lathorp, when, with many others, he withdrew, and joined the Baptist church, the first in England of the *Particular* Baptist order, of which Mr. Spilsbury was the pastor. Two years after that, in 1640, a difference of opinion respecting the propriety of allowing ministers who had not been immersed to preach to them (in which Mr. Kiffin took the negative side), occasioned a separation. Mt. Kiffin and those who agreed with him *seceded, and formed another church*, which met in Devonshire Square. He was chosen pastor, and held that office till his death, in 1701...” Cramp, Bap. Hist, p. 393.

II. What Constitutes A True Church?

We are now confronted with the question of what constitutes a true church of our Lord. As we study the Scriptures for that answer, we find that there are only two Scriptures for that answer, we find that there are only two scriptural prerequisites: (1) the scriptural or right profession; (2) the scriptural or right baptism. When these two requirements are met, *you have constituted a true church*, or the material for a true church. Of course there must be agreement of purpose to keep house for God to form a community or company of baptized believers, but when you have a company of scripturally baptized believers, you have a scripturally constituted church of the Lord. (*Baptists and Kingdom Authority*, Dr. A. J. Kirkland, 1949, P. 3)

“Mr Leland [John Leland, the pastor] and others adhered to the customs of New England, each one put on such apparel as suited his own fancy. This was offensive to some members of the church [Mountponney]. The contention on this account became so sharp that on the 25th of July, 1779, about twelve members dissented from the majority of the church and were of course excluded. *The dissenting members formed themselves into a church*, and sued for admission into the next Association, and were received.” Hist. of Va Baptists, p. 234.

“In the execution of this power wherewith he is so intrusted, the Lord Jesus Calleth out of the world unto himself, through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit, those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his word. Those thus called, he commandeth to walk together in particular societies, or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which he requireth of them in the world. (Jn 10:16; 12:32; Mt. 28:20; Mt. 18:15-20); [1689 Confession, Ch. 26; 5].

“The member of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and waling) their obedience unto that call of Christ; and *do willingly consent to walk together*, according to the appointment of Christ; giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.”– [1689 Confession, 26: 6].

London Confession 1644

“XXXIII.

“That Christ hath here on earth a spiritual Kingdom, which is the Church, which he hath purchase and redeemed to himself, as a peculiar inheritance: which Church, as it is visible to us, is a company of visible¹ Saints, ²called & separated from the world, by the word and ³Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the Gospel, being baptized into that faith, and joined to the Lord, and each other, *by mutual agreement*, in the practical enjoyment of the⁴ Ordinances, commanded by Christ their head and King.” 1 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1 ² Rom. 1:7; Acts 26:18; 1 Thess. 1:9; 2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:18.

“There is not even any direct scriptural authority for such an organization as an association. The church, on the other hand, *receives its power and authority directly from Christ.*” — [Mercer. Hogue, Antecedents of Landmarkism P. 231.

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Middletown . “Tradition states that they consorted for mutual edification, but there is no church record previous to 1688, when they ‘*settle themselves into a church state,*’ after consultation with the brethren at ‘Pennepek,’ Pa., who had just taken that course.” [Baptist Encyl., p. 836].

“Another leading characteristic of the Apostolical churches was that of *each local church’s entire independence of any other and of all other local churches, and of any individual.* Each church was self-governing, the only authority recognized being the will of Christ as it was made known to them mediately through the inspired Apostles, and immediately through the Holy Spirit.” — [A.H. Newman, Baptist Doctrines, Jenkins, p. 242].

Newport Church Covenant— Adopted May 4, 1727.

“We, who desire to walk together in the fear of the Lord, do, by the help and influence of the Holy Ghost, profess our deep sense of sin and humiliation therefor.”

“And in the presence of the great God, the elect angels, and one another, having a sense of our unworthiness considered of ourselves, and looking wholly and alone to the Lord Jesus Christ for worthiness and acceptance, we do now solemnly *give up ourselves to the Lord in a church state,* according to the prime constitution of the gospel church ; that He may be our God, and we His people, through the everlasting covenant of His free grace.” [First Bap Ch., Graves & Adlam, p. 192].

“Before Mark 3 and Matthew 16 Christ had an *assembly* of baptized disciples. He was their Head and they were following Him and serving Him. What else is necessary before a group is an ‘ekklisia’?” — [The Origin And Perpetuity of the Baptists, p 7. No author, no date, but about 1958. Published by The Baptist Examiner, Ashland, Kentucky].

“Call For A Council of Recognition

Philadelphia, Aug. 10, 1867

To the _____ Baptist church in _____.

Dear Brethren:

There is a company of brethren and sisters in the Lord who wish to become an independent church. You are therefore requested to send your pastor and two brethren to meet in council at _____ at _____ o’clock, to take the matter into consideration. If the council approves the movement, said brethren and sisters will be glad to have the moral influence of its recognition. The following churches are invited to send messengers

---[Pendleton’s Church Manual, p. 169].

Rehoboth Baptist Church of Wales formed 1668

"Several of the members of this church went to America, and *formed themselves into a church,* at a place called Montgomery, Pennsylvania." He then tells of its pastors and some of its members.— [History of The Welsh Baptists, J. Davis, AD 1835, P. 114].

“1. Every Christian church possesses the right of discipline, formative and corrective. With its divine constitution in its hands, defining the qualifications which entitle to membership, it is its province to determine as to the possession of those qualifications, in the case of every applicant. Its nature as a voluntary society, involves the right to admit and to exclude. *Primitive Christians constituted a voluntary compact; they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then to one another; and were always addressed as those who had decided for themselves on the solemn subject of adherence to Christ.*” [Reynolds, J.L., Church Polity or the Kingdom of Christ, 1849. Quoted by Dever, Church Polity, p. 328].

“The fundamental principles of Church discipline are laid down in Matt. 18:15-18. Here the Saviour enjoins the course to be pursued towards an offending brother, and designates ‘*the Church*’ as the tribunal of ultimate appeal *what, then, is the Church? The context affords a satisfactory reply. ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I.’ This is the Church to which Christ alludes.* It is gathered in his name, and blessed with his presence; and is, therefore, competent to decide a question involving the interests of his cause. The Scriptures recognize no higher authority. It is worthy of remark that in the organization of this ecclesiastical court for the trial of offences, the officers of the Church are not even mentioned. Their presence is not considered indispensable. ‘No officer is here. It is not the Church clerk, nor the parties that have neglected to summon him. The Church’s Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, has left him out.’ — [Reynolds, J. L., Church Polity, Quoted by Dever in Polity, p.328- 329].

“I care nothing for the succession theory of churches in the sense that of one church came out of another church.”— [JJ Porter. Sumter Discussion, p. 180]. Q. In Landmarkism, Ross, p. 101. Ross Says Porter was a Landmarker].

"It would be impossible to establish the uninterrupted succession of any given church through the years, even should such a church have a continuous succession." (J. W. Porter)

“We who through the mercy of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have obtained grace to give ourselves to the Lord, and one to another by the will of God to have communion one with another as saints in our gospel fellowship. *Do, before God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy Angels, agree and promise, all of us (the Lord assisting) to walk together in this our gospel communion and fellowship, as a church of Jesus Christ in love to the Lord, and one to another, and endeavor to yield sincere and hearty obedience to the laws, ordinances and appointments of our Lord and Lawgiver in his church.*”— [Ivimey, Hist. English Baptists, vol II, p. 195-6].

“The Lord, and not Associated Churches, is the builder, Mt. 16:18. *Church sovereignty is delegated, and not original. All church authority originates in Christ, the Builder.*” — [Rector, W. Lee, Church Truth, Quoted in Vital Ch. Truths by R. J. Anderson, p. 55].

The Church at Oyster Bay.... “Several persons baptized upon profession of their faith; some by ordained ministers from Rhode Island; some by Mr. Weeks, residing in the place, and some by Thomas Davis. In the year 1748, a *considerable number of those baptized persons agreed and concluded to settle themselves in a regular church order*, according to the rules and patterns of the New Testament. Accordingly they appointed the eleventh day of July, A. D. 1748, and then met; and with fasting and prayer, they were solemnly incorporated. A church covenant, in writing, was subscribed by men and women then present, to the number of twenty-eight; John Stephens and Thomas Davis being called to assist therein. In the year 1750, they, by their letter and messenger, Daniel Underhill, proposed to the Association of the baptized churches for admittance and union with the Association; which was, after inquiry, granted, and their said messenger received.” [*Phil. A. Minutes*, p. 23]. Whence the authority of this church?

“It is not a multitude that makes a church. Christ had fore-designated how few would be recognized by Him—“*two or three are gathered in his name,*” *under his authority, he would be present with them as their Head, e.g.,* our missionaries to foreign fields are sent forth, two or more with their families, and on reaching their stations they organize themselves into a church, by covenanting to take the New Testament as their constitution, and Christ as their Head. Two males and two females generally compose Our first mission churches.”

Graves. *Great Carrollton Debate*, p. 809. See also pp. 950, 816. Cf. *LUF*, p 230.