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**A HISTORY
OF
THE FIRST KENT BAPTIST CHURCH
KENT CLIFFS, NEW YORK
1810 — 1910**

**BY
GORDON M. CHRISTENSEN**

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of
THE FIRST KENT BAPTIST CHURCH
KENT CLIFFS, NEW YORK
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History 317 - 318
Dr. R. C. McDanel

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Minutes of The First Kent Baptist Church, 1845 -1915, 4 vols.

Pamphlet: "Centennial, The First Kent Baptist Church", 1910.

Report of Church Clerk to State Baptist Convention, Sept. 27, 1940.

Treasurer's Report to The First Kent Baptist Church, May 4, 1939.

INTRODUCTION

On a rural hillside overlooking the Boyds Corners Reservoir stands The First Kent Baptist Church. Kent Cliffs, the hamlet which it serves, is located in the western end of the town of Kent, in the approximate center of the county of Putnam, New York.

Here in the foothills of the Berkshires and fifty-two miles north of Columbus Circle in the heart of New York City, this rural church serves a community of approximately one hundred families. However, due to the influx of summer residents escaping the heat of the city, the population of Kent Cliffs more than doubles from June to September; and regardless of denomination the church today provides a Sunday School and a place of worship for all who care to attend.

The church itself is a white frame structure of about 38 by 44 ft. The windows are of stained glass, and to the front is a small porch in lieu of a belfry. Behind the church is a small public "burying ground".

Inside, the cream-colored walls with the mahogany wainscoating and pews combined with the warm light of the stained glass enables the visitor to retain the calm atmosphere conducive to worship which he first obtains from the scene of natural beauty created by the lake and hills and the quiet of the countryside.

At present the church membership is seventy-nine; of this number twenty-one are no longer residents of the community.¹ The average attendance at the regular Sunday morning service is about twenty-five. The Sunday School roll lists fifty-four children and adults.²

The church receives its financial support from the contributions of the congregation and from endowment. There is on deposit with the Putnam County National Bank and the Fishkill Savings Institute a total sum of \$4,519.36 in trust, the interest on which may be used to defray the expenses of the church. There is also invested \$129.83 for maintenance of the church property.³

So much for the present. Let us look back to the days of the founding of the church and review the first one hundred years of its existence, for in those days this church was more than a place of worship. Through such disciplinary means as the church possessed and through the influence of its members, the church served as arbitrator of disputes, a friend to those in need, a custodian of order, and at all times endeavored to instill in the community a spirit of neighborliness and proper conduct.

These services, as well as the growth and development of the church through the years, I shall try to present in the following pages.

¹ Report of Church Clerk to State Baptist Convention, Sept. 27, 1940.

² Ibid.

³ Treasurer's Report to The First Kent Baptist Church, May 4, 1939.

PART I

I will note that when the church was constituted that the name of the town was Fredric but has since ben changed and caled Kente. And the first clerke was Asey Adams and his rechord cante be asertained it being partly destroyed. Isaac Drew was the second clerke and Abel Shaw third clerke. This record has ben accepted in place of the olde rechord By order of the church

Dun By Abijah Youmans. ¹

Peekskill Hollow.
October 4th 1810

Agreeable to a request a branch of the First Baptist Church of Christ in Phillipstown. a council of Elders and Bretheren assembled at the house of Brother Isaac Drew for the purpose of constituting that part of the First church in Phillipstown living in and about Peekskill Hollow into a church by themselves.

Churches called upon to sit in council viz -- Fishkill, Fredericktown, Carmel, first and second churches in Phillipstown.

- 1st. Chose Elder Ebenezer Cole moderator and Jobe Foss clerke
- 2nd Invited Bretheren from several churches to sit in council.
- 3rd Received letters of dismission from the church to which they belonged for so many as wished to be constituted
- 4th Enquired whether any written articles of Faith were among them. They had none and chose to take the Bible for their only directory and as a will of faith and practiss
- 5th Agreed that it was not necessary to write any articles
- 6th Agreed to fellowship them and bide them Gods speed to go on.
- 7th Apinted Elder Eben. Cole to give them the wright hand of fellowship. and Elder Jonathan Sturdeveant to give them a charge and Elder Jobe Foss to preach the constitutional sermon. After sermon closed by

¹ Minutes of The Second Baptist Church in Kent, I, Fly Leaf.

praise by Elder Simeon Barret and the Council constituted those whose names are inlisted by the name of -- Second Baptist Church in Fredricktown. ²

The above quotations followed by a list of thirty-seven names-- twenty-one of which are listed as "Members Male" and sixteen listed as "Members Phemale"--³represent the only record of The First Kent Baptist ⁴ Church from October 4, 1810, to July 18, 1818. The records of all minutes from July 18, 1818, through the present time, however, are complete though many of the minutes of early meetings are fragmentary.

It is unfortunate that there are no records available to tell us who the first officers were or for how long they served the church. Financial records were either not kept or else they have been destroyed for the period October 4, 1810, to May 11, 1868. The latter, however, is not too serious a loss as the minutes of the church meetings contain references to disbursements and needs of the church.

Elder Moseman Barrett served the church as its first pastor, and the record indicated that for thirty-three years and four months he labored diligently to present the Gospel to his congregation. ⁵

Church meetings were held every other Saturday, and the place of meeting alternated between the school house near Ebenezer Boyds and the school house near Elder Barretts. The Sunday worship service was held weekly. Its place of meeting alternated between these two school houses.

² Ibid., p. 1.

³ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴ The Second Baptist Church in Kent, incorporated Jan. 21, 1845, as The First Kent Baptist Church.

⁵ Ibid., II, p. 19.

The reason for this alternating of place of meeting was . . . "due to the great distance between the members living in East part of the town of Kente and those living near Boyds Corners" ⁶

These biweekly meetings were for the good of the soul and to maintain harmony between the members rather than for the transaction of business. This fact is easily ascertainable from a glance at the minutes of these meetings. The order of business being a hymn, prayer, and then opening of the meeting to testimony by the members as to their christian experiences. At this time grievances between members were brought before the church and settlement sought, charges of improper conduct by members of the church were heard, and those wishing to confess their sins and repent were given opportunity to do so. When it appeared that harmony had been restored, the meeting was dismissed by prayer. Candidates for church membership came before these meetings to relate their experiences; and if they were acceptable, they were taken into membership.

The meeting of August 29, 1818, is typical of these early church meetings, and the minutes of this meeting follow as illustration.

A Church meeting held at the school house by Eben. Boyds. Elder Moseman Barrett moderator after comencing by singing and prayer opened a dore for anyone to tell there mindes and there came forward Six candidates to jine the church and they was received. And the Church appeared to be in peace one with another and we closed our meeting by Singing and Praing. ⁷

⁶ Ibid., I, p. 20.

⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

The period of July, 1818, through February, 1819, seems to have been one of revival, and the forcefulness of Elder Barrett's preaching is attested by the fact that during this period fifty-eight, after observing the ordinance of Baptism, united with the church.⁸ There seems to have followed a period of quiescence, for from February 27, 1819, to September 2, 1826, there is no record of any new members being added to the church.

On January 1, 1820, we find the first record of anyone being elected to office in the church. At this meeting Abel Shaw was elected, for what we may presume to be his second term, as church clerk.⁹

Again picking up the officers of the church from information given in the minutes, we find that Deacons James Youmans and Peter Robinson were appointed a committee on January 21, 1821, to call on Sister Delilah Williams and to notify her to attend the next church meeting. The reason for the summons to Sister Williams, however, is not given.¹⁰

Due to the loss of the original minutes and the fragmentary information given in the minutes available, it is not until 1821 that we are able to assemble a complete roll of officers which now reads as follows:

Pastor - Elder Moseman Barrett

Deacons - James Youmans and Peter Robinson

Clerk - Abel Shaw.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 5-9.

⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

The absence of a treasurer at this point should be of no concern to the reader as the church had no property and apparently no expenses of any kind. And so far in our history there is no record of any financial transactions. Since there seems to be no duties for a treasurer to perform, we may assume that there was none.

The regular biweekly conference meetings continued to be held and recorded; but there is no business transacted by the vote of the church from January 1, 1820, until March 6, 1824, when by a vote of the church, Elder Barrett was requested to continue preaching for them each Sunday.¹¹ No reason for this vote is given, and we are left completely in the dark as to how a pastor was originally chosen. Nevertheless, Elder Barrett consented to their request, and he in turn requested that once each year the church let it be known whether they wished him to continue preaching for them.

The church made its first contribution to the ministry on October 21, 1824, when a Council of Churches met with The Second Baptist Church in Kent for the purpose of ordaining Brother Nathaniel Robinson to the ministry. Again we are hindered by the brevity of the information given as this notation, and the appearance of his name on the church roll is the only reference made to him.¹²

On April 1, 1826, at a meeting held at the school near Ebenezer Boyds, the church voted that ". . . henceforth the last Saturday in May should be known as the day of the 'Annual Business Meeting'; and in accord

¹¹ Ibid., p. 45.

¹² Ibid., p. 51.

with Elder Barrett's request, the pastor should be engaged from year to year. . . . " ¹³ In accord with this motion, The Second Baptist Church in Kent held its first "Annual Meeting" on May 27, 1826. The only business transacted was to request Elder Barrett to continue as their pastor for another year.

The church was forced, however, to call a special business meeting in October of this year for the purpose of electing a deacon to succeed Deacon Robinson. ¹⁴ They chose as his successor his son, Peter Robinson, and held a Council of Churches on November 30, 1826, for the purpose of ordaining Peter Robinson deacon. Of his ordination we are told that Deacon James Youmans presented the candidate and that Elder Warren of Carmel preached the sermon. ¹⁵

For reasons unknown it was decided at the meeting of March 13, 1827, to hold the second "Annual Meeting" on March 31 rather than in May. This meeting of March 31, 1827, proved to be a most important meeting, for it saw a continuation of the customary practices and the induction of a new one, as well as the creation of a new church office.

As in the past Elder Barrett was requested to continue as pastor, and as before he consented to do so. The new departure was the election of a trustee whose duty was to collect ". . . as much money as the brethren and sisters would give as a reimbursement to Elder Barrett for his services." To the office of trustee the congregation elected

¹³ Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

Abijah Youmans, but no account was kept of the amount of money raised for Elder Barrett's salary. ¹⁶

The following year Isaac Drew was elected trustee and to make the collection for Elder Barrett, who again consented to continue in the service of the church. At the "Annual Meeting" held on April 26, 1828, it was the will of the church that the trustee be elected for a period of one year.

The spring and summer of 1828 saw another revival in the community, and on the evening of April 12, 1828, sixteen candidates appeared before the church meeting and wished to join the church. ¹⁷ From February 16 to September 28 of that year, the church membership was increased by fifty-one persons through the ordinance of Baptism. One of these, a young man, Allen Light, was later to play an important part in the life of the church. Later, and in its chronological place, we will again hear of Allen Light.

Following the spring and summer revival came another quiet period, and the church transacted little or no business. The membership was being added to from time to time by the admission into the church of new settlers in the community upon presentation of letters of recommendation from other churches.

Isaac Drew was twice re-elected to succeed himself as trustee and to raise a purse each year for the pastor. On April 17, 1830, ¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 99.

Ferris Barrett was elected to serve as church clerk to replace Abijah Youmans, who had held the office for the preceding ten years.

During the year 1831 the members of the congregation decided that it would be advisable to build a church, since the membership had increased sufficiently to make the school house hardly adequate for the meetings. This seems to have been too trivial a matter to record in the church record. There is no mention of the purchase of property or of any building site being given to the church, nor is any committee credited with raising money for this purpose. In fact, were it not for the mention of a Dedicatory Service to be held on November 16, 1831, and the mention that every church meeting after that date was held at the "meeting house", there would be no reference in the minutes to the building of a new church. Since the school house no longer used for church meetings was the one near Ebenezer Boyds' residence, it may be safely stated that the new church was located near Boyds Corners and on a site now covered by the Boyds Reservoir of New York City's Croton water-shed. Neither is there any record of a special Dedicatory Service. ¹⁹

The growth of the church during the next six years was gradual and without noteworthy incident. Elder Barrett continued from year to year, and the existing officers were each year re-elected to succeed themselves. At each "Annual Meeting", Trustee Isaac Drew was instructed to make some collection for Elder Barrett. The amount raised in this manner is never given, and the church continued without a treasurer.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 109.

March 4, 1837, is the first time that a specific sum of money is mentioned in the minutes of the church meetings. On that date a committee, headed by Isaac Drew as trustee and aided by two unnamed members, was appointed to raise twenty-six dollars (\$26) to purchase a communion service.²⁰ At the meeting of May 6, it was announced that the communion service was on hand and that a Communion Service would be held the next day. The church decided at this time to hold communion once every three months.²¹

The "Annual Meeting" of 1838 was postponed one week and held the second day of June. At this time the church decided that two additional deacons should be elected, so they selected Brothers Charles Patrick and Freeman Smalley to serve with James Youmans and Peter Robinson in this capacity.²²

That this was a period of growth for the community and indicative of improved communications is evidenced by the fact that at the "Annual Meeting" of May 2, 1839, the church voted to hold an annual service jointly with the churches of Patterson, Shenandoah, and Milltown on the second Sunday in June.²³

With the acquisition of a church building came responsibilities and financial obligations, for at this meeting it was voted that a collection be taken the first Sunday of each month. The need for a treasurer, however, was not felt as yet, for none was elected. It was decided

²⁰ Ibid., p. 143.

²¹ Ibid., p. 145.

²² Ibid., p. 148.

²³ Ibid., p. 152.

that the trustee should receive this money and pay the obligations of the church. ²⁴

This system of financial support seems to have been adequate for several years. However, at a meeting held May 6, 1843, Trustee Isaac Drew was appointed to make an effort to solicit money from the congregation to pay "some debts", the amount and nature of which is not mentioned, nor at any later time is any mention made of his having succeeded or failed to raise the sum required. The trustees were also instructed to make a collection for Elder Barrett. ²⁵

Ferris Barrett, who had served the church as clerk for fourteen years, died on December 14; and on January 6, 1844, John Barrett was elected to succeed him as church clerk. At the same meeting John Barrett and Putnam Light were appointed a committee to raise money to repair the church. ²⁶

The next month brought cause for deep sorrow to the entire community, as well as to the church, for on February 19, Elder Moseman Barrett, who had so faithfully served as pastor for a period of thirty-three years and four months, died in his home after an illness of three days. ²⁷

During his pastorate Elder Barrett had never received a salary but was contented to give his services to the church while earning his living by his labor on his farm. His only compensation from the church was the joy in his work and such donation as was made annually during his last seventeen years of service.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 152.

²⁵ Minutes of The Second Baptist Church in Kent, II, p. 15.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

With the death of Elder Barrett, the church was confronted with the problem of securing an ordained pastor to administer the ordinances of Communion and Baptism. For this reason the "Annual Meeting" was held on March 2, 1844, instead of in May as regularly scheduled.

Since the church was unable to find a pastor of its own, it was agreed to have Elder John Warren, the pastor of The Carmel Baptist Church, come to them every fourth Sunday at 2:30 P. M. and that on the remaining Sundays one of the deacons should conduct the services.

* * * * *

PART II

The coming of Elder John Warren as pastor of The Second Baptist Church in Kent marked a turning point in the affairs of the church. The period to be dealt with in this part of the history may be best described as one of growth and increasing responsibility. However, even that alone is not explanatory of the reasons for the segregation of the years 1844 - 1878 into a section apart. Perhaps the reader, as I, will see that here was a period, unique and worthy of treatment by itself.

Prior to 1844 the church had had no responsibilities worthy of mention in its records. Through donations of property (by whom is not known), labor, and materials a "meeting house" had been erected. How we are not told. Our only clue is that after November, 1831, church meetings were alternated between the school house near Elder Barrett's and the "meeting house". Thus we determine the date and location. That the property belonged to the church we know, because later in this paper we will find that the church sold the property. Elder Barrett served for such donation as the congregation cared to make to him. So far as we know the church made no special efforts to increase the membership.

Elder Warren came as pastor of the church on March 2, 1844, to preach every fourth Sunday, the remainder of his time being devoted to his regular pastorate in Carmel.¹ On May 4 of that year, the congregation at

¹ Minutes of The Second Baptist Church in Kent, II, p. 19.

a regular meeting agreed that the appearance of the "meeting house" would be improved if it were painted and voted to raise money for this purpose.²

Due to the great distance separating the members of the east-end of the town of Kent from the "meeting house", the church decided that it would be advisable to build a second "meeting house" in the eastern part of the town so that worship service could be alternated as well as church meetings, which were then being held part of the time in the school house near Elder Barrett's. On January 6, 1844, a committee was appointed to make arrangements for the site and construction of a new "meeting house"; this committee consisted of Abijah Russell, James Hiett, Allen Light, and Warren Townsend.³

There is no mention made in the minutes of the Church of the activities of this committee or of the results of its efforts. It is known that they must have succeeded in carrying out their duties, for at the church meeting of November 2, 1844, we find:

. . . Thirdly Brother James Hiett stated to the church that the Brothers and Sisters composing the East part of the church wished the advise and council of their Bretheren here relative to their being constituted in a church at the New Meeting House. . . .⁴

It was decided by the church at this meeting that under the existing circumstances such a division would be advisable if a sufficient number from that part of the town should so desire. It was agreed that a

² Ibid., II, p. 20.

³ Ibid., II, p. 18.

⁴ Ibid., II, p. 23.

petition be circulated to be signed by those wishing to be constituted. If there proved to be sufficient signers, it should be presented at the next church meeting to be constituted at the new "meeting house" under the name of "The Second Baptist Church of Christ in Kent, of Putnam County". The church also voted at this meeting that in the event of such a division, that "This Church shall be called after the name of 'The First Baptist Church of Christ in Kent'".

It was also at this meeting that the phrase "Pay for Preaching" was first used when the church voted to raise money for Elder Warren.⁵

The next meeting was held November 30, 1844, and at this time the petition was read to the church. After considerable discussion it was decided that letters of dismission be granted to those so requesting, for the purpose of reorganizing as "The Second Baptist Church of Christ in Kent". Thus came the responsibilities of a mother church.⁶

On January 4, 1845, the church decided to elect a board of three trustees and that such a board of trustees should be maintained henceforth. The first duty allotted to them was "To see to the matter of incorporating the church under the name of 'The First Baptist Church in Kent'". They then elected as the first permanent board of trustees the following:

"Putnam Light, First Class.

Isaac Brown, Second Class

Zachariah Smalley, Third Class."⁷

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., II, p. 24.

⁷ Ibid., II, p. 25.

On January 21, 1845, the trustees appeared before Judge Azor B. Crane for the purpose of incorporating the Church. The following is a copy of the articles of Incorporation.

We the undersigned do hereby certify that in pursuance of publick notice Given by and in behalf of the First Baptis Church in Kent for the purpurs of Electing Trustees and incorporating Said Church achording to the Statute in Such Case made and provided that a majority of the members of Said Church did on the Fourth day of January in the yeare of oure Lord 1845 assembl at the Church in Said Town it beaing there usal plase of worship and by a plurality of Voices's that the foloing persons Trustees of Said Church vs Putnam Light First Isaac Brown Second Zacariah Smauley third Class and we further certify that the above named or titel, First baptis Church in Kent is the name or title designated by Said Church for Ever hearafter when Cold or Known Given under oure hands and Seals this (day).

	his)	
Zachariah	X	Smalley) Presiding
	mark)	
)	officers
John Barrett junior)	

Putnam County ss } On the twenty first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty five personally appeared before me, one of the Judges in and for the County of Putnam, Zachariah Smally & John Barrett junior, who severally acknowleged the foregoing certificate to be just and true in the matter set forth.

Azor B Crane. 8

⁸ From sealed copy attached to "minutes" of meeting of January 4, 1845.

March 1, 1845, found the church confronted with the problem of paying a definite salary to the pastor. Elder John Warren was to be engaged to preach every fourth Sunday for another year. He asked that the church pay him seventy-five dollars (\$75) a year. This they agreed to do. At this time it was decided to change the date of the "Annual Meeting" to the Saturday before the first Sunday in March. It was further agreed that the church should have in writing "Rules of Discipline". Adonijah C. Robinson was delegated to prepare such rules to be voted upon at the next church meeting. It was further decided that a discipline committee should be elected and that the duties of this committee should be provided for in the "Rules of Discipline". Members of the church elected to this committee were: Isaac Brown, Stephen Townsend, William Barrett, Allen Barrett, and Charles Patrick.⁹

On April 6, 1845, the "Rules of Discipline" were adopted, and the above-mentioned committee was instructed to enforce them.¹⁰

With the increasing responsibilities there seems to have come a sense of pride in the church and in the church property, for on September 6, 1845, the church decided to raise money to provide an iron fence for the "burying ground". They provided, however, that failing to raise enough money to complete this program, that the fence be built of wood.¹¹ As is frequently the case, there is no mention at any later time of the success or failure of this venture.

⁹ Minutes of The First Baptist Church in Kent, I, p. 25.

¹⁰ Ibid., I, p. 26., (Copy of "Rules of Discipline" will be found in Part III, pp. 31-32).

¹¹ Ibid., I, p. 26.

That the community became interested in the church is evidenced by the revival which took place during the spring of 1845. Between March 1 and May 2 of that year, thirty-five presented themselves to the church and united with it through the ordinance of Baptism. ¹²

Again the revival was followed by routine conference meetings and a period of quiescence. The next event in the life of the church occurred on August 4, 1849, when the church, by a unanimous vote, elected to join the "Union Baptist Association". At the same meeting it was decided that at each meeting the minutes of the preceding meeting should be read by the clerk. ¹³

Thus on September 4, 1849, the church sent delegates for the first time to the annual meeting of the "Union Baptist Association". This practice has been continued annually through the present time. The first delegates were Deacon Smalley, Jeremiah Travis, and Charles Patrick. ¹⁴

The "Annual Meeting" of 1850 proved to be one of importance, for on March 2 of that year, the church elected for the first time a treasurer. The church also elected a committee of solicitors whose duty it was to obtain from the members pledges of annual contributions for the support of the church. To the office of treasurer the church elected Putnam Light, and as solicitors they elected Putnam Light, Brother Moseman Barrett, and James Smalley. A third new office created at this meeting was that of choirister; Brothers James and Freeman Smalley were

¹² Ibid., I, p. 31-34.

¹³ Ibid., I, p. 52.

¹⁴ Ibid., I, p. 53.

appointed jointly to this position. Furthermore, it was voted to amend the "Rules of Discipline" by doing away with the discipline committee and to return to the previous system of having complaints made directly to the church at church meetings. At this time it was decided to have Brother James Eberle ordained, and a Council of Churches was authorized to be called for this purpose. Following his ordination the church requested that he become their pastor. The Churches to be called in council were Cold Spring, Shenandoah, Milltown, Carmel, Red Mills, and The Second Church in Kent. ¹⁵

On March 13, 1850, Brother John J. Eberle was ordained and became pastor of the church upon condition that the salary paid by the church should be sufficient to permit him to give up his business which required traveling and to settle on his farm. ¹⁶ Rev. Eberle's pastorate proved to be very short, for on May 4, 1850, the collectors reported that one hundred and twenty dollars (\$120) was all that could be raised for the pastor's salary. Rev. Eberle decided that "Since this sum was to be paid quarterly that existing conditions did not make it advisable for him to stay as pastor". ¹⁷

This action left the church without an ordained minister to perform the ordinances of the church and with pledged subscriptions of one hundred and twenty dollars (\$120) to be collected during the year. Perhaps this accounts for the action of the church when on January 4, 1851, they held their "Annual Meeting" and instructed the treasurer to buy "articles

¹⁵ Ibid., I, p. 59-60.

¹⁶ Ibid., I, p. 60.

¹⁷ Ibid., I, p. 61.

needed for the meeting house and to employ a sexton". The reason for holding the "Annual Meeting" two months early is not explained in the minutes of any meeting held, and it is only known that the meeting of January 4, 1851, was the "Annual Meeting" because that heading is given to it. The church at this time elected to have Elder Warren again preach for them every fourth Sunday. ¹⁸

Once again the "Annual Meeting" was held in January, and on the fourth of that month, 1852, the duties of collector were combined with those of treasurer. It was the wish of the Church that the trustees do their best to settle an ordained minister in the community that they might have "Preaching service every Sabbath". ¹⁹ In as much as this request could not be met by the trustees, on July 31, 1852, Brother James C. Smalley requested that the church license him to preach the Gospel. James Smalley had been born and brought up in the community, and "Believing him called of God to Preach his request was granted". ²⁰

At this meeting of July 31, 1852, it was decided that the church should call Brother Smalley as their pastor and that the "Rules of Discipline" and "Articles of Faith" should be printed that each member of the church might have a copy thereof. ²¹

Brother James Smalley entered whole-heartedly into his work as pastor of the Church. It was mainly through his efforts that on April 2, 1853, the Church agreed to the establishment of a Sunday School and appointed Brother Wright Barrett as its first superintendent. ²²

¹⁸ Ibid., I, p. 64.

¹⁹ Ibid., I, p. 71.

²⁰ Ibid., I, p. 74.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., I, p. 77.

In recognition of his labors, the church decided to call a Council of Churches to sit with them on December 13, 1854, to advise and ordain their pastor, James C. Smalley, a "Minister of God in the Baptist Faith". This council was composed of the pastors and delegates of the following Churches: Second Kent, Kent and Fishkill, Shenandoah, Carmel, and Red Mills. The council having found the candidate "worthy and able" proceeded with the Ordination Service. ²³

Rev. James C. Smalley's ministries were blessed with two revivals. The first was in January, 1858, when forty people, following the ordinance of Baptism, united with the church. ²⁴

In July of 1859 the question arose as to the advisability of making needed repairs on the "meeting house". After lengthy debate it was decided that the church should build a new church instead. Financial difficulties intervened; and on August 13 of that year, it was decided to repair the "meeting house" rather than build a new one. ²⁵

Allen Light, of whom mention has been twice made to date, was elected superintendent of the Sunday School on May 4, 1861. ²⁶ This fact is mentioned in order to keep his name fresh in the minds of the readers, for more is to be said of him at a later date.

Rev. James C. Smalley's pastorate was again responsible for a revival in February, 1864, which resulted in the Baptism of twenty-two converts. ²⁷

²³ Ibid., I, p. 83.

²⁴ Ibid., II, p. 11.

²⁵ Ibid., II, p. 19.

²⁶ Ibid., II, p. 27.

²⁷ Ibid., II, p. 44.

On August 6, 1864, Allen Light, previously designated to do so, submitted revised "Articles of Faith", "Rules of Discipline", and "Church Covenant". These were adopted by the church at this time.²⁸ In as much as there has been no subsequent revision, these documents will be reproduced in their entirety in an Appendix to this paper.

The first mention of a regular collection to be taken at each "Preaching service" occurred at the "Annual Meeting" of March 3, 1866, when the church voted to adopt this practice. The money so collected was to be used by the treasurer to defray expenses of the church. Money given at this time was to be in no way included as payment of pledged subscriptions made by members for the pastor's salary.²⁹

December 1st 1866. Pursuant to public notice a meeting of the members of the First Baptist Church in Kent and of the society at large in the vicinity of said church assembled at the meeting house belonging to the said church at Boyds Corners to determine what action should be taken in regard to the removal of the Meeting house and Burial ground belong to said church, on account of the Croton Aqueduct Board having included in their Survey of the lands which it will be necessary for them to occupy for the new dam now building near this place, the present site of our church and burial ground. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Charles Rundall one of the Trustees of said church, and the Rev. James C. Smalley was chosen for Moderator and Allen E. Light Secretary. It being considered very important business and the attendance not being so large as was desired a motion was made and carried by vote to adjourn the meeting to Thursday the 13th day of December 1 inst at ten O'clock in the forenoon.

December 13th met pursuant to adjournment at the meeting house of the First Baptist Church In Kent, at Boyds Corners. The meeting was called to order by Rev. James C. Smalley the moderator and prayer was offered by Rev. Briggs Perry. The

²⁸ Ibid., II, p. 47.

²⁹ Ibid., II, p. 56.

following resolution was put before the meeting and carried by vote. Resolved that the Trustees of the First Baptist Church In Kent are authorized to make application to the proper Court for power to sell the meeting house and burial ground belonging to said church and society.

The following resolution was also offered and carried by a unanimous vote. Resolved that the new meeting house and burial ground to be made for said church and society shall be located upon lands now owned by Putnam Light the house to be set in or near the corner of his orchard west of his house and the burial ground to be in the field above. The Trustees of said church to be a committee to select the site for the meeting house and burial ground.

The following resolution was also put before the meeting and carried by a vote of eighteen for and none against it. Resolved that the meeting house to be built shall be exclusively a Baptist meeting house and no other society shall exercise any authority over it.

On motion the meeting was adjourned sine die. 30

We find, however, that Brother Platt Parker offered to donate the property necessary for the rebuilding of the church and removal of the "burying ground". This fact is known because on April 16, 1867, at a special meeting called after giving public notice, the previous resolution as to the new location of the church and "burying ground" was rescinded and the following resolution passed. "Resolved that if it becomes necessary to move our church and burying ground, that they be located on lands now owned by Platt Parker, which he will donate for this purpose." 31

On November 30, 1867, Brother Allen Light reported at the regular church meeting that:

30 Ibid., II, p. 64.

31 Ibid., II, p. 71.

The Trustees had received a check of Two thousand eight hundred eighteen dollars from the Croton aqueduct Board for meeting house and burial ground. The trustees wished to know what to do with this check as they did not wish to place it in any bank unless the church would take the risk of it being lost.

The church voted that the check be deposited in the Fishkill Savings Institute. ³²

At the regular church meeting of April 4, 1868, the members who were willing and able were requested to come to the site of the new church and "burying ground" with teams and tools to give their time and labor to preparing the "burying ground" and fencing it. By September 5 of that year, the trustees reported that the "burying ground" was fenced and ready and requested instructions from the church regarding the building of the new church. The Church decided that the trustees should confer with members personally and then proceed in accord with their best judgement. ³³

One year later on September 4, 1869, the trustees reported that the new "meeting house" was completed and requested a committee to audit their accounts. At this time a committee consisting of Allen Light, Lewis Nichols, and George Chadwick, was appointed to arrange the Dedicatory Service. ³⁴

This church was dedicated on September 29, 1869. Rev. W. S. Clapp preached the dedicatory sermon, and the Rev. J. W. Jones made the

³² Ibid., II, p. 76.

³³ Ibid., II, pp. 77-79.

³⁴ Ibid., II, p. 84.

dedicatory prayer. This is the church in which worship service is now held each Sunday by the members and congregation of The First Kent Baptist Church. ³⁵ The committee appointed to make the audit of the trustees' accounts reported on January 1, 1870, that they ". . . found the accounts to be true and just and that a balance was in the hands of the Trustees amounting to Fifteen dollars and sixty four cents". ³⁶

During the construction of the new church, Rev. J. C. Smalley resigned as pastor. ³⁷ This left the church again without a pastor. On the sixth of August, 1870, Brother Allen Light, whose name has appeared constantly throughout the records of the church since 1828, requested that the church ". . . license him to attempt to preach the Gospel". This request they granted; and from that time until January 31, 1874, he preached for them as deacon and "licensed preacher". ³⁸

In response to a request of the church, the Rev. W. S. Clapp became pastor January 31, 1874. He was to preach for them twice each month for an unspecified salary. ³⁹

At a special church meeting held January 15, 1876, it was voted to call a Council of Churches to consider the propriety of setting apart to the Gospel Ministry Brother Allen E. Light. The churches of Carmel, Makopac Falls, Brewater, Ludingtonville, and Shenandoah, were requested to send their pastors and delegates. The ordination took place in The First Kent Baptist Church on January 26, 1876. On February 26 of that year, he accepted the pastorate of the church. ⁴⁰

³⁵ Ibid., II, p. 85.

³⁶ Ibid., II, p. 86.

³⁷ Ibid., II, p. 82.

³⁸ Ibid., II, p. 90.

³⁹ Ibid., II, p. 109.

⁴⁰ Ibid., II, pp. 115-117.

Through the "Annual Letter" to the "Union Baptist Association" dated September 1, 1877, we are able for the first time to determine the exact membership of the church. This letter, a copy of which is entered in the minutes of the church meeting of the above date, lists the membership as one hundred and seventy-three.⁴¹ Prior to this time no record had been kept of dates of death, of dismissal, or of the dates upon which the new members were added. It may be of interest to the reader to know that this is the only letter included in the minutes, and no copies seem to have been kept by the church.

During the fall of 1882, the Church solicited money to make needed repairs to the church.⁴²

During the winter of 1883 - 84, Rev. Light held special meetings at the Cole's Mills school house in addition to the regular service held in the Church. As a result of these meetings, thirty followed their conversion by the ordinance of Baptism and united with the Church.⁴³

The "Annual Meeting" of May 3, 1884, saw the first election of a woman to office in the Church when Sister Rosetta Stevens (Foshay) was elected treasurer. The only other women previously elected had been to the office of "Female Superintendent" of the Sunday School. At this time it was decided to adopt the envelope system of collecting subscriptions and contributions to the Church.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid., II, p. 124.

⁴² Ibid., II, p. 151.

⁴³ Ibid., II, pp. 154-156.

⁴⁴ Ibid., II, p. 157.

In preparation for entertaining the "Union Baptist Association", a committee consisting of Emma Cole, Phebe Stevens, and Elizabeth Wright was appointed to purchase sufficient carpet to cover the floor, as many lamps as would be needed to light the church, and as many chairs as they thought would be necessary. On August 27, 1887, the committee reported that the lamps and carpet had been bought for a total sum of twenty-three dollars and ten cents (\$23.10). It is not known whether the chairs were purchased or not. ⁴⁵

The first "Annual Treasurer's Report" recorded was made on February 4, 1888, and shows a balance on hand of three dollars and ninety cents (\$3.90). It may be said in passing that from this time on the balance reported by the treasurer is recorded in the minutes of the meetings; and while prior to 1908 the sum of three dollars and ninety cents is high, a deficit occurs only once when on February 28, 1904, a deficit of twenty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$27.50) is recorded. ⁴⁶

Upon only two occasions in a pastorate of nineteen years is any mention made of a sum of money being paid to Rev. Allen E. Light. On March 2, 1892, the solicitors reported to the Church that they had collected one hundred and fourteen dollars and fifty cents (\$114.50) for Rev. Light, and on March 4, 1893, when they reported donations totaling sixty-one dollars and sixty cents (\$61.60). ⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid., II, p. 169.

⁴⁶ Ibid., II, p. 177; III, p. 100.

⁴⁷ Ibid., III, p. 11.

The Rev. Allen E. Light was born in Kent, February 5, 1832. He had received only a common school education; and being dissatisfied with that, he devoted all the time possible to self-education. He joined The First Kent Baptist Church at the age of nineteen and devoted himself to the service of the church in whatever capacity he was called upon to fill--from sexton to pastor. For nineteen years he served as pastor of the church without once receiving a stipulated salary, but being dependent for his livelihood upon the produce of his farm. It is small wonder that his death on April 10, 1895, brought deepest sorrow to the congregation. 48

It is significant that the death of Allen Light, who had served long as pastor of the church should bring to a close a second era of the Church's history.

As the death of Elder Moseman Barrett closed the formative years, so did the death of Rev. Allen Light bring to a close the years of painful growth. Furthermore his death marked the end to the practice of Church Discipline which was mentioned in the introduction to this paper.

It is, therefore, fitting that we pause now and review the activity of the church in the lives of the members of the church and in the life of the community from the days of the founding of the church through the pastorate of Rev. Allen Light.

* * * * *

48 Ibid., et passem.

PART III

The chronological sequence is broken at this point to take up another phase of the church and its activities.

The death of Rev. Allen E. Light marks not only the end of a period in the growth and development of the church but also more definitely it marks the end of a period of disciplinary practices in which the church had indulged since it was first constituted.

It is not to be inferred that the death of Rev. Light was responsible for the discontinuance of the practice of Church Discipline of the individual through personal censorship, nor was his death responsible for discontinuing the practice of church arbitration in personal disputes. These practices had been of decreasing importance for some time prior to his death. The reason for choosing this point to break the sequence is that both passed from the life of the church at this time.

It will be recalled that at the time the church was founded, there were no written "Articles of Faith" or "Rules of Discipline".¹ These lacking, the church took its authority from the Bible and followed the accepted practice of the day.

The first "Rules of Duty and Discipline" were drawn up by Adonijah C. Robinson and adopted by the church without amendment, April 6, 1845.²

¹ Minutes of The Second Kent Baptist Church, I, p. 1.

² Minutes of The First Kent Baptist Church, I, p. 26.

To promote good order peace and harmony we agree to be governed by the following rules.

1. All regular church Meetings Shall be held on the Saturday before the first Sabbath in every month. Special church meetings may be called at any time approved by (here illegible) which meeting public notice must be given. Communion four times a year, the Sabbath after church meeting.
2. The moderator shall be chosen after prais and praying and remain in office till sukseeded.
3. In all buesness of the church every member in good standing shall be allowed to vote and all matters before the church shall be decided by a majority of votes except on receiving members who will be received only by unanimous vote. ³
4. The clerk shall keep a full and accurate account of all prosedings of the church and noe item of busness shall be omitted unless so directed by the church
5. All making request for membership by Baptism shall relate thier christian experience to the church and if any objection be made to theire reception or receptions of any applying by letter their case shall be refurd to a committee for examination and upon the reporte of this committee being presented the church shall examine the objection and if found groundless the objector shall peacibly submit to the decision of the church or suffer expulsion.
6. Believing it will promote the peace of the church a comittee shall be appointed of not more than seven nor less than three to serve in theire discipline for one year. and if any members are greeved in any thing with any Brother or Sister it will be there duty to come with and receive advise from Said comittee or hold the peace which if any refuse they shall be admonished by the church and if any member refuse the advise of said comitte he is guilty before the church - It shall be the duty of said comity to look after the prosperity of the church and its members to admonish and reprove with all meekness and if possible be first to answer charger and reports which concern the church or any of its members. if called for All complaints shall be brought in writing, first to said comitee if they recomend, the moderator shall then read the charge before the church which if received shall be refurd to said comitee for setelment who shall fix on a time and notify parties and effect if possible a reconciliation and report to the church the doings subject to theire approval and if in any case the committee fail to effect a reconsiliation they shall report there proceedings in Full to the church

³ Italics author's.

whose shall take such measures for adjustment as the case requires in case of disadistaction of the parties toward the comitie said comitie may be revised at the pleasure of the church to the number of seven if needed.

7. Noe complaint shall be received against any member unless the previous steps of laboure have been taken as required by our Saviour in Mathew 18=15-16-17- except (torn out) a heanious nature as to require the unedeate expulsion. of the member of admonition of the church.

8 it shall be the duty of all absent members to report themselves to the church at least once a year. . . .

9. These rules may be altered by three fourths of all the members of the church at any time. ⁴

Throughout the minutes of meetings prior to the adoption of these rules of order, it is apparent that anyone having a grievance with another member merely presented the matter before the church; and if it were of sufficient importance, then a committee would be appointed. However, frequently the matter was decided by a majority vote of the church.

However, the church would delay action on any matter a reasonable time until both parties of a dispute were present or until the accused had been given opportunity to speak in his defense.

. . . And it apeared that Brother Levy Baley had Ben Complained of Before . . . and the church had caled on him to come to church meeting and answer for himself and it apeared he did not come and it was put by til next meating. ⁵

⁴ Ibid., II, attached front cover.

⁵ Minutes of The Second Baptist Church in Kent, I, p. 12.

It was the policy to send delegated persons to inquire why a member was absent from church meetings and to notify them to attend the next meeting. Those against whom complaints were made were also personally notified to attend the church meeting--continued failure to respond in either case resulted in excommunication.

. . . The church thought it best to send for the brothers and Sisters that had neglected their place in the church and apinted Brother John Wixcom to go to Brother Mager Williams . . . ⁶ . . . Josphus Barrett Sayed he had a Defacilty with Brother John Wixom for not building a wall. The church apinted Brother Zachorar Smalley to Noteyfy Brother John Wixcom to the next church meeting to answer for himself to the complaint. . . . ⁷

On February 2, 1839, Samuel Barrett entered a complaint to the church against Jerome Dean, the charge being that Jerome Dean refused to pay a bill which was justly due. The church voted to call a special meeting at the church Saturday, February 23, 1839, at one o'clock and notify Jerome Dean to be present to defend himself. At the special meeting it was decided by a majority vote, that the complaint was true and the bill should be paid. Jerome Dean came before the meeting following the vote of the church and agreed to make settlement and confessed that he had wronged "Brother Samuel Barrett". ⁸

The settlement of disputes need not be of financial nature to be brought before the church as there are several references to settlements

⁶ Ibid., I, p. 14.

⁷ Ibid., I, p. 28, (May, 1822).

⁸ Ibid., I, p. 152.

of family quarrels and disputed boundaries. However, before giving illustrations of these, let me cite one other instance which, though legal, resulted in the excommunication of one of the parties.

On May 2, 1863, Charles Rundle, following the procedure of the "Rules of Discipline" stated before the church that ". . . Brother Isaac Townsend had sued him before a civil magistrate and that his conduct and that of Bro. Stephen Townsend was such that he could no longer fellowship them in the church. . . ." He requested that the church effect a reconciliation. At a special meeting held May 16, 1863, to settle the matter, it was the decision of the church that Brother Stephen and Isaac Townsend were given until the next church meeting to confess their fault and make reconciliation. This they failed to do, and on July 4, 1863, we find Brothers Stephen and Isaac Townsend "were excluded from fellowship of the church".⁹

In the minutes of the meeting of May 1, 1847, we find that a boundary line was in dispute, and a committee was appointed to make settlement. Appended to the minutes of the following meeting is a report of the action taken by the committee in making the settlement. From this report we find that all the deeds dealing with the disputed property were collected, the committee engaged a surveyor acceptable to both parties, and then determined from the deeds a point of beginning. Two members of the committee were to carry the "chain", and a third member was to carry the "flag". This solution was acceptable to both parties and carried out as

⁹ Minutes of The First Kent Baptist Church, II, p. 37.

recommended by the committee. Both parties later appeared before the church meeting and reported their satisfaction with the boundary as thus established. ¹⁰

The church kept a watchful eye upon the personal conduct of the members. Those believed guilty of violating the "Christian Principles", as seen by the church, were summoned before the church. If they were found guilty but penitent, they were admonished and allowed to retain "the fellowship of the church". Failure to appear before the church or to make satisfactory confession resulted in excommunication.

As the mores of today are not those of one hundred years ago, it is not for us to criticise the justice of the decisions of the church; nor are we to say that "the punishment does not fit the crime". The second and third examples may seem trivial to us and would today be regarded as proper, but keep in mind the difference in the times and customs of past generations.

The illustrations used in the following pages have been selected because, with the exception of the first, they are definite and clear as to the charge made, and they were accepted as true by a majority of the members of the church. They are not isolated cases, but each is representative of others of similar nature.

I have tried to arrange these illustrations in the order of the severity of the offence beginning with what today would be regarded as minor offences and progressing to the most serious charges.

¹⁰ Ibid., I, p. 10.

There are many cases of excommunication in the minutes of the Church where the charge is referred to as "a disorderly walk and neglecting to hear the church".¹¹ This seems to cover a multitude of sins, and its exact meaning I have been unable to determine either from context or by inquiry. It can be found by itself as grounds for excommunication, or it may be used following a specific charge.

August 11, 1819. . . . And Brother Hannis Lee came forward and confessed that he had Sed and Done so bad he was a Shamed to come to meating But his intenshun was to do beter for time to come and the church got in a mesur Satisfide with his confession And the church thought best as he was a Childe ¹² to lete him keepe his place in the church. . . .

January 15, 1820 . . . and the church Excommunicated Brother Hannis Lee For a Disorderly Walk and neglecting to hear the church. . . . ¹³ ?

October 6, 1849 . . . 5, one of the committe reported that there were reports that sister Tessie Barrett had been dancing. The report was investigated and found true. Sister Tessie Barrett refused to change her course. 6, The church voted to excommunicate Sister Tessie Barrett. ¹⁴

Feb. 1, 1862. . . . a complaint was entered against Brother Albert G. Travis for playing Chess, Checkers and intemperance. Brother Freeman Smalley was appointed to visit him and notify him to attend the next Church meeting and account of himself. . . .

March 1, 1862. . . . Bro. Freeman Smalley reported that he had seen Bro. Albert Travis and as he gave no satisfaction the church voted to exclude him from their fellowship. ¹⁵

I wish to call your attention to the fact that chess and checkers are underlined, which would seem to indicate that this constituted the most serious charge against Mr. Travis. Note also that "intemperance"

¹¹ Ibid., et passem.

¹² Italics author's.

¹³ Minutes of The Second Baptist Church in Kent, I, pp. 11, 14.

¹⁴ Minutes of The First Kent Baptist Church, I, p. 55.

¹⁵ Ibid., II, pp. 32-33.

is used; this is unusual and is its only appearance in the minutes. In all other cases where the use of liquor is used as a charge against a church member, the phrase is either "excessive drinking" or "drinking to excess".¹⁶

September 17, 1831 . . . Sister Betsy Ellis was excommunicated from the church for reporting a scandalous report which she could not prove about Brother Benjamin Tailors offering to come to bed to her. Then meeting closed by prayer.¹⁷

There are innumerable cases that might be cited as illustrations of the church's attitude toward excessive drinking. These may be found at most any time from October 4, 1810, through June, 1890, but more truly illustrative is the resolution adopted by the church, November 3, 1849.

. . . Where as it is a well established fact that intoxicating Liquors when used as a drink are exceeding hurtful to the sistom and produce effects detrimental to good morals the peace and comfort of families and the community in general, and where as it is the duty of every christian to set a good example and to use his influence against every evil as much as lies in his power, Therefore resolved that we mutually agree to abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors as a drink and that we will not encourage the use of it by others, and resolve further that if any member of this church violate the spirit of the forgoing resolution he shall be considered as subject to the discipline of the church. . . .¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., et passim.

¹⁷ Minutes of The Second Baptist Church, I, p. 107.

¹⁸ Minutes of The First Kent Baptist Church, I, p. 57.

Let me offer in this connection the case of one of the Brothers who when confronted by the church with a charge of drinking excessively, ". . . acknowledged he had used ardent Spirits but stated that the Doctor ordered him to drink it for Rheumatism. . . ." The church doubted this; but believing that he had been drinking excessively, excommunicated him. ¹⁹

The following illustration of Church Discipline needs no comment.

. . . 8 ly the commity Reported that they had investigated the Reports in circulation about Sister S _____ R _____ and Sister K _____ T _____ and were maid satisfide that the reports were true. . . . The Reports against sister R _____ and Sister T _____ is for keeping a house of ill fame such as hoordom and not trying to prevent the same. . . . 10 ly the church voted to withdraw the hand of fellowship from Sister R _____ T _____. ²⁰

Below is a summary of excommunications for Conduct unbecoming a member of the Church.

Drinking	32	
Failure to attend Church meetings	14	
Failure to answer summons to church meetings	8	
Refusal to become reconciled with other members	6	
Dancing	6	
Operating houses of Prostitution	4	
Fornication	2	
Circulating false & slanderous reports	2	
Lying before the church	2	
Playing chess - checkers & intemperance	1	
Excommunicated at own request	4	
Total	81	21

¹⁹ Ibid., II, p. 41.

²⁰ Ibid., I, p. 34.

²¹ Ibid., et passim.

These excommunications took place between July, 1818, and February, 1878. We have no record of those who may have been excommunicated prior to that time, and none are recorded after February, 1878.

February 2, 1878, is the date of the last excommunication and also the date of a resolution passed by the church in which the church resolved to withdraw fellowship from any member who should indulge in dancing.²² There is no record of anyone being excommunicated, however, for violation of this resolution.

The practices of Church Discipline and excommunication passed quietly and slowly into oblivion. That it had come to an end is indicated by an excerpt from the minutes of January 31, 1885. "Deacon Carrigan made a motion that some action be taken in regard to delinquent members and members that were not walking in the Christian path. No action was taken."²³

The affairs of state seem to have been of little concern to the church, for only upon one occasion is any mention of public affairs made. There is no mention at any time of the issues of slavery during the war years, nor is there any mention of the war or of any member departing for service or returning therefrom.

A resolution adopted on June 6, 1890, is the only reference in the four volumes to any public matter.

²² Ibid., II, p. 127.

²³ Ibid., II, p. 162.

. . . Be it resolved that we the First Kent Baptist Church of Kent Cliffs stand pledged by every legitimate means to work and pray, as well as to vote for the constitutional ammendment prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor as a beverage, which has been submitted to the people of New York State at an election appointed for the second Tuesday of April 1891. ²⁴

* * * * *

²⁴ Ibid., II, p. 187.

PART IV

Following the death of Rev. Light, the deacons were authorized to serve as a pulpit committee and to settle a pastor as soon as possible.

On June 1, 1895, they reported to the Church that the Rev. William Morrison would accept the pastorate of the church for the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250) annually. The church voted to accept Rev. Morrison and to raise the money needed to pay his salary.

Rev. Morrison's stay was short, indeed, lasting only six months, but during that time the local unit of the "Baptist Young Peoples Union" was formed. He resigned on December 7, 1895. ¹

The pulpit committee of The First Kent Baptist Church met jointly with the same committee of The Kent and Fishkill Baptist Church and agreed to present the following resolution to their respective churches:

Resolved that these two churches unite in hiring a pastor, that his time be divided as follows: Kent and Fishkill - Sunday morning and the second, third, and fourth Sunday evenings in each month. First Kent - Sunday afternoon and the first and fifth Sunday evenings. That the combined salary to be paid be six hundred dollars - Kent & Fishkill to raise \$400.00 First Kent to raise \$200.00. That supply pastors be paid in the same proportion. That E. H. Foshay request Merritt Miller to supply the pulpits of the churches.

This resolution was adopted by both churches on January 6, 1896. On February 5, 1896, Merritt Miller became pastor of both Churches. ²

¹ Minutes of The First Kent Baptist Church, III, pp. 32-33.
² Ibid., III, pp. 36-37.

During Mr. Miller's first year as pastor, twenty-one observed the ordinance of Baptism. In as much as Mr. Miller had lost his right arm in an accident, the Rev. W. M. Gray officiated at Baptismal services.

At the church meeting of April 3, 1897, it was ordered that the Kent and Fishkill Church together with The First Kent Baptist Church call a Council of Churches on April 28, 1897, for the purpose of ordaining Merritt Miller to the ministry. ⁴

The first special offerings were authorized by the Church on October 1, 1898, when a resolution was adopted that a special offering be taken the second Sunday in June for the Baptist Publication Society, the second Sunday in September for Foreign Missions, the second Sunday in January for the Ministers' Home, and a fourth on the second Sunday in April for the State Convention. ⁵

The first record of any legacy falling to the church is found in the minutes of August 5, 1899, when the trustees reported that they were in receipt of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) willed to the church by Norman Cole.

After a pastorate of a little more than four years, Rev. Merritt Miller resigned on July 7, 1900.

The church was without a pastor until February 2, 1901, when Rev. C. M. Sherman became their pastor. On December 23, 1900, Rev. Sherman notified the church that he would accept the pastorate of both The First Kent and the Kent and Fishkill Churches upon the conditions that the

³ Ibid., III, pp. 37-40.

⁴ Ibid., III, p. 47.

⁵ Ibid., III, p. 59.

salary be five hundred and fifty dollars (\$550) to be paid quarterly. He further requested that he be allowed to use either church three times a year to lecture, the time and place of these lectures being left to his discretion. This accounts for the delay between his acceptance of the pastorate conditionally and his formal acceptance. ⁶

Though Rev. Sherman's acceptance may have been conditional on his part and the acceptance of those terms doubtful by the church, his pastorate terminated without doubts or conditions, for on November 2, 1901, the church voted "not to engage Rev. Sherman for another year".

Rev. A. R. Babcock was asked by the churches to become their pastor on September 31, 1902, but he declined. ⁸

It was not until March 8, 1903, that a pastor for the two churches was settled. On that date the Rev. E. B. Hughs accepted the joint pastorate. Each church was to pay him two hundred and seventy-five dollars (\$275), and his time was to be divided equally between the churches. ⁹

Rev. Hughs, while little is said of his pastorate in the minutes, was not a man of hasty action, for on February 6, 1904, he tendered his resignation effective on January 1, 1905. ¹⁰ In spite of the eleven months notice given by Rev. Hughs, the churches were without a pastor from January 1 to May 5, 1905, when the Rev. Thomas Sherwood accepted a call to the pastorate, effective on October 1, 1905, and actually without preaching services for ten months. ¹¹

⁶ Ibid., III, pp. 69-70.

⁷ Ibid., III, p. 74.

⁸ Ibid., III, p. 77.

⁹ Ibid., III, p. 79.

¹⁰ Ibid., III, p. 81.

¹¹ Ibid., III, p. 82.

The next action by the church was the allotment of a vacation to the pastor, the duration of which was not specified; and so far as can be determined, the privilege was not exercised. ¹²

During May and June of 1907, the church was being repaired and painted according to the minutes of the meeting of July 6, 1907. The nature of the repairs is not given, nor are we told the amount expended. There was, however, more money raised than necessary, and it was the wish of the church that this money be deposited in the treasury. ¹³

The Kent and Fishkill Church seems to have been enjoying a period of prosperity at this time and asked Rev. Sherwood to give up his pastorate of The First Kent Baptist Church. This he did, and on August 3, 1907, his resignation became effective. This left the church without a pastor and dependent solely upon its own resources. ¹⁴

Rev. W. H. Larkin was called as pastor in accord with a vote of the church on December 29, 1907. He accepted but never became pastor, for on February 2, 1908, the church voted to recind this action and notified Rev. Larkin of this move on their part. By so doing, they seem to have aroused a "tempest in a teapot".

Therefore, in the minutes of a church meeting on February 28, 1908, we find a committee consisting of E. H. Foshay and Deacon W. H. Stevens appointed ". . . to settle the Larkin affair". The method of settlement is not given and seems to have been known only to the parties

¹² Ibid., III, p. 88.

¹³ Ibid., III, p. 94.

¹⁴ Ibid., III, p. 97.

concerned. All parties now being deceased, there is no way of determining the settlement. ¹⁵

Thus from September, 1907, to June, 1908, the pulpit was unoccupied except for an occasional supply pastor. In the minutes of the church meeting of July 4, 1908, we find that J. J. Allen, a student, was serving as supply pastor until the first of September. However, before that time the church voted to extend him a call as pastor. ¹⁶

At the regular meeting of April 9, 1909, the church voted to call a Council of Churches for the purpose of ordaining Pastor Joseph J. Allen. The churches of Bethel, Shenandoah, and those of the "Union Association" were to be called together on April 30, 1909, at two o'clock in the afternoon at The First Kent Baptist Church. ¹⁷

The "Council of Ordination" elected Rev. F. H. Barten of Mahopac Falls, moderator, and Brother H. C. Northrup of Carmel as clerk. After examination of the candidate, they instructed the Church to proceed with the Ordination Service. The Rev. E. R. Allen, pastor of the Spruce Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia, delivered the sermon and welcomed his son to the ministry. ¹⁸

Rev. Joseph J. Allen's pastorate of this church, though short, was a most successful one as evidenced by the fact that during the year seventeen united with the church by Baptism. ¹⁹ His pastorate was also successful to the church financially, for on February 6, 1909, the

¹⁵ Ibid., III, p. 98.

¹⁶ Ibid., III, pp. 101-102.

¹⁷ Ibid., III, p. 107.

¹⁸ Ibid., III, p. 108, "Minutes of Council of Ordination".

¹⁹ Ibid., III, pp. 101-114.

treasurer reported a balance of seventy-six dollars and ninety-five cents (\$76.95). ²⁰

Rev. Allen tendered his resignation on July 28, 1909, so that he might continue his studies at Crozier Seminary. The church reluctantly accepted Rev. Allen's resignation as of September 1, 1909. ²¹

The church was again without a pastor from this time until January 30, 1910. Mr. H. Robinson of New York City supplied the pulpit frequently during this period.

Brother Andrew Christensen, a licentiate of The Hope Baptist Church of New York City, came as candidate on Sunday, January 30, 1910. At the "Annual Meeting" of March 5, 1910, the church requested him to become their pastor. ²²

Once again the Church felt that this pastor was worthy of ordination into the Baptist Ministry and elected to call a Council of Churches to conduct an examination and advise as to the propriety of ordaining their pastor. By request of the Church, a "Council" composed of the pastor and delegates from The Hope Baptist Church of New York City and the churches of the "Union Association" met at eleven o'clock on May 19, 1910, in the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Carmel, New York.

Upon recommendation of the "Council", the church proceeded to hold an Ordination Service on May 26, 1910, at The First Kent Baptist Church. ²³

²⁰ Ibid., III, p. 104.

²¹ Ibid., III, p. 114.

²² Ibid., III, p. 116.

²³ Ibid., III, pp. 118-119.

Rev. A. P. Fox of Carmel, moderator of the "Council", read the Scripture. The ordination sermon was delivered by the Rev. E. Holloway of The Hope Baptist Church. Rev. Christensen was welcomed to the ministry by Rev. B. M. Posten of Farmers Mills. ²⁴

The Church held a Centennial Service on October 4, 1910, in accord with a decision made at the "Annual Meeting" of March 6, 1910. The Committee in charge of the service consisted of Rev. A. Christensen, Deacon J. A. Wright, Deacon E. H. Foshay, Byran Townsend, and Clara E. Stevens. ²⁵

There is no record of this service, but there remain, as souvenirs, in many homes of the community pamphlets prepared by Rev. Christensen. To this pamphlet I am indebted for the pictures, for the "Church Roll" of September 1, 1910, and for the "Church Covenant" which are included in the Appendix.

The Church officers at this time were:

Pastor	- Rev. Andrew Christensen
Senior Deacons	- W. H. Stevens George S. Wright
Junior Deacons	- E. H. Foshay Joseph A. Wright
Trustees	- A. C. Townsend E. H. Foshay B. E. Townsend
Treasurer	- B. E. Townsend
Clerk	- E. H. Foshay

²⁴ Ibid., III, p. 121.

²⁵ Ibid., III, p. 116.

Solicitors - J. A. Wright
 A. C. Townsend
 G. S. Wright

Organist - Ola M. Townsend

Ushers - F. A. Foshay
 Ray Townsend 26

²⁶ Ibid., III, p. 120.

APPENDIX

Articles of faith of the first Kent Baptist Church

Article 1st We beleive the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly insturction, that it has God for its author, Salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter, that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is and shall remain to the end of the world the Supreme Standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions Should be tried.

Art. 2nd We beleive that there is one and only one true and living God, whose name is Jehovah, the maker and Supreme ruler of Heaven and Earth inexpressibly glorious in holiness, worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love, revealed under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Art. 3.d We beleive that man was created in a State of holiness under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy State, in consequence of which all mankind are now Sinners, not be constraint but choice, being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, wholly given to the gratification of the world of Satan and of their own Sinful passions, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal rain, without defence or excuse.

Art. 4th We beleive that the law of God is the eternal and unchangable rule of his moral government, that it is holy just and good, and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfil its precepts, arises entirely from their love of Sin, to deliver them from . . . (torn) . . . , and to restore them through a Mediator . . . (torn) . . . unfeigned . . . (torn) . . . to the holy law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church

Article 5th We beleive that in order to be saved one must be regenerated or born again, that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit so as to Secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel, and that its proper evidence is found in the holy fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.

Art. 6th We believe that the Salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the Mediatorial Offices of the Son of God, who took upon him our natures yet without Sin, honored the law by his personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by his death, being risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Saviour.

Arct. 7th We believe that the blessings of Salvation are made free to all by the Gospel, that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial and obedient faith, and that nothing prevents the Salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, except his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, which refusal will Subject him to an aggravated condemnation.

Art. 8th We believe that a visable Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by his laws and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by his word, that its only proper officers are Bishops or Pastors and Deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties, are defined in the epistles to Timothy and Titus.

Article 9th We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to show forth in a Solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in a crucified buried and risen Saviour with its purifying power; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lords Supper, in which the members of the church, by the use of bread and wine are to commemorate together, the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self examination.

Art. 10th We believe that the first day of the week is the Lords day or Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and recreations, by a devout observance of all the means of grace both private and public, and by preparation for that Rest which remaineth for the people of God.

Art. 11th We believe that the end of the world is approaching, that at the Last Day Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution, that a Solemn Separation will then take place, that the wicked will be adjudged, to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy, and that this judgment will fix forever the final State of men in heaven or hell on principals of righteousness.

Church Discipline

An offence is the violation of some law or laws, which Christ has instituted for the regulation of His Church, and an offender is the individual who transgresses such law or laws either theoretical or practical.

Offences are personal or General.

1. Personal offences are the violations of duties obligatory on Christians, in the relation one Sustains to another, by which one brother is injured, either in property, person, or character
2. General offences are violations of duties obligatory on Christians, in the relation they Sustain to God, His truth, or his Church, by which the character of either, is or may be, injured; and on account of which injury all the members of the Church have an equal right to ask and receive Satisfaction.

Personal or General offences are either private or public.

Private offences are wrongs only known by a Single person besides the transgressor.

Public offences are wrongs known by at least two or more persons besides the transgressor.

With reference to Personal Offences either private or public, there are two rules or enactments of the Divine law-giver, which Should they be observed in the spirit of the Gospel, would render it almost impossible for difficulties of a personal character to get into or before a Church. The rules are.

1. With reference to the offending brother.

If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift

2. With reference to the offended brother.

If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he Shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established, and if he Shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. (Mathew 18 chapter 15 and 19 verses.)

These are rules the observance of which may not be omitted, either by the offender or offended, it is not optional in either case, because it is enacted with reference to every truth, theoretical or practical.

Private offences, (that is wrongs only known to a Single person besides the transgressor) Should not be received into the church to be acted upon, for the Bible law of evidence is "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth; at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses, Shall the matter be established. Deut. 19 chapter 15 verse, Num. 35 chap. 30 verse Hebrews 10 chap. 28 verse

1810

1910

Centennial

First Kent Baptist Church

Kent Cliffs, N. D.

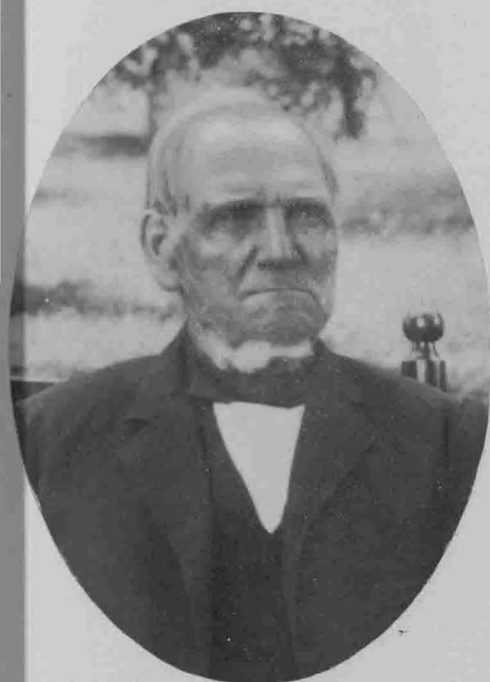


1810—Centennial—1910



FIRST KENT BAPTIST CHURCH, KENT CLIFFS, N. Y.

Pastors



REV. J. C. SMALLEY, Pastor
Dec. 13, 1854-Feb. 6, 1869



REV. W. S. CLAPP, Pastor
Feb. 3, 1874

Pastors



REV. A. E. LIGHT, Pastor
Ordained Jan. 26, 1876; Died April 10, 1895



REV. MERRITT MILLER, Pastor
Feb. 1896-Aug. 1900

Pastors



REV. E. B. HUGHES, Pastor
1903-1905



REV. THOS. SHERWOOD, Pastor
Oct. 1905-1907

Pastors



REV. J. J. ALLEN, Pastor
June 1908-Sept. 1909



REV. A. CHRISTENSEN, Pastor
March, 1910

Senior Deacons



W. H. STEVENS, Senior Deacon
Elected Jan. 5, 1878

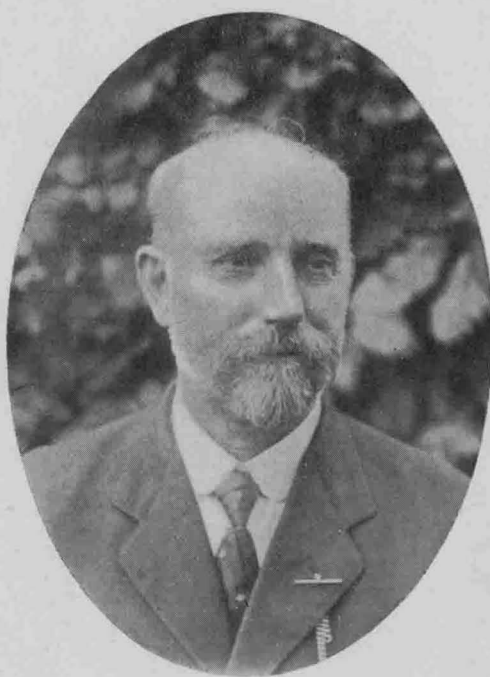


GEO. S. WRIGHT, Senior Deacon
Elected Feb. 1888

Junior Deacons



JOSEPH A. WRIGHT, Junior Deacon
Elected July 1, 1909



E. H. FOSHAY, Junior Deacon
Elected July 1, 1909

Board of Trustees



A. C. TOWNSEND

E. H. FOSHAY

B. E. TOWNSEND

Members of First Kent Baptist Church

SEPTEMBER 1, 1910

Adams, Almira	Barrett, Clarissa J.	Conklin, Joseph G.	Knapp, Jennie
Adams, Andrew J.	Barrett, Eudora	Conklin, Martha	Knapp, Zachariah
Adams, Enos B.	Barrett, James T.	Conklin, James	Light, Mary J.
Adams, Martin S.	Barrett, Bertha A.	Conklin, Martin	Light, Harvey E.
Adams, Jemima	Barrett, Charles W.	Conklin, Edith	Light, Persus
Adams, Willie H.	Barrett, Nelson	Cargain, Emeline	Light, Joseph
Adams, Nancy	Barrett, Phebe	Cargain, Susan	Lickley, Emma
Adams, Allie D.	Barnum, Bertha Horton	Cole, Charles P.	Merritt, John A.
Adams, Ezra	Bennett, Celista	Cole, Daniel H.	Merritt, John A., Mrs.
Adams, Freman	Bennett, Edison	Cole, Lottie F.	Owens, Fanny
Adams, Adrian	Bennett, Jackson	Christensen, Rev. A.	Odell, Emma J.
Adams, John M.	Bennett, Harriet	Denike, Charles	Odell, Marvin
Adams, Alvah	Bennett, John	Foshay, Edward H.	Odell, Lillian
Adams, Amos J.	Bennett, Ida A.	Foshay, Rosetta S.	Purdy, Nehemiah B.
Adams, Iva May	Brewer, Jeremiah	Foshay, Judson L.	Rundle, Oscar
Adams, Flossie	Booth, Artie J.	Foshay, Fred A.	Rickey, John P.
Adams, Grace	Booth, Carrie	Gilbert, Albert	Rickey, Charles G.
Adams, Herbert	Beacom, William H.	Horton, Wilbur	Rickey, Estella
Adams, Irving	Beacom, Annie A.	Hunt, Angeline	Smalley, Helen
Adams, Mamie C.	Beacom, Henry	Hunt, Alonzo	Smalley, Hannah
Adams, Arthur	Beacom, Ethel A.	Hunt, Iva J.	Smith, Harrison
Barrett, Louisa	Beacom, John		Smith, Elizabeth
Barrett, Lorenzo J.	Chadwick, Lewis B.		
Barrett, James J.	Chadwick, Morris J.		

MEMBERS FIRST KENT BAPTIST CHURCH, SEPTEMBER 1, 1910

Stevens, Edwin	Sprague, Florence	Townsend, Ray	Williams, Willard
Stevens, William H.		Townsend, DeWitt	Williams, Millard
Stevens, Phebe E.	Tompkins, Briggs	Townsend, Thomas	Williams, Walter S.
Stevens, Martin V. B.	Tompkins, Robert	Townsend, Zillah	Williams, Moses R.
Stevens, Sarah O.	Tompkins, Charles	Townsend, Grover	Wright, George S.
Stevens, Clara E.	Tompkins, Briggs	Townsend, Jennie	Wright, Elizabeth
Stevens, Howard R.	Tompkins, Hattie	Van Dyne, Bertha Travis	Wright, Henrietta S.
Stevens, George H.	Townsend, Emeline	Williams, Sarah J.	Wright, G. Everett
Stevens, Frank	Townsend, Asbury C.	Williams, George E.	Wright, Mary J.
Stevens, Celia	Townsend, Katharine	Williams, Rosanna	Wright, Joseph A.
Stevens, Cora	Townsend, Lyron E.	Williams, Permelia	Wright, Emma J.
Sutton, Louisa	Townsend, Nora	Williams, Flora M.	Wright, Thomas D.
Scutt, Arthur	Townsend, Ola M.		Wright, Nellie C.
			Warren, John S.
			Warren, Minnie B.



COVENANT

HAVING been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion: to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offence, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant, and the principles of God's word.