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THE KENTUCKY BAPTIST



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VOLUME I PAGES 73-78 November 15, 1971

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(As of November 15, 1971)
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Adrian L. Lampkin, Grayson

TERMS ENDING 1974
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tion, Louisville
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Historical Commission, Louisvil-
le

Martin and Lampkin will fill out
unexpired terms of others. Rone,
Tolman, and Walters received new
three-year terms recently at the
K.B.C. in Lexington. All of us are
glad to serve Kentucky Baptists.

presents

Series C: Portraits of Former State Secretaries of the Convention -

Calvin Miles Thompson

General Secretary-treasurer, General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, 1921-38.

Wendell H. Rone, Presiding

Wednesday, November 10, 1971 - 9:10 a.m. during the 134th Annual Meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Calvary Baptist Church Lexington, Kentucky.

MONOGRAPH ON CALVIN MILES THOMPSON

The following monograph appears in the Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. II. page 1415

THOMPSON, CALVIN MILES, SR. (b. Muskingum County, Ohio, Nov. 19, 1866; d. Philadelphia, Pa., July 19, 1944). Pastor and Kentucky Baptist leader. While he was a boy, his father and mother, Charles and Sarah Thompson, moved to Louisville, Ky., where Thompson attended Louisville Male High School. The Walnut Street Church licensed him to preach Feb. 4, 1885, and ordained him June 24, 1888. As assistant pastor to Thomas Treadwell Eaton at Walnut Street Church, beginning in 1885, Thompson led in the establishment of the "B" Street Mission, which soon became Third Avenue Baptist Church. While assistant to Eaton, he attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, receiving the Th.B and Th.M. degrees the latter in 1898.

Thompson held short pastorates in Clayton, N.Y., and Clarksburg, W.Va., after which he became pastor of Portland Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville, in 1895, and of Baptist Tabernacle, Louisville the following year.

After serving for two years as editor of the Western Recorder and president of the Baptist Book Concern, 1907-09, Thompson became pastor of First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville, Ky., where he remained eight years. During his later two-year pastorate at First Baptist Church, Winchester, Ky., he was elected corresponding secretary of Kentucky Baptists, serving 1921-38. Thompson was moderator of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, 1911-13, and chairman of the board of trustees of Bethel Woman's College while in the pastorate at Hopkinsville.

He married Clara Belle Morrison, Dec. 27, 1888, and they had six children, one of whom Calvin Miles Thompson, Jr., is a Baptist minister.

--George Raleigh Jewell

Of the six distinguished children five are yet living. Miss Helen Thompson lives at 427 E. Park Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky 40208, a retired French teacher at the former Girls High School and Manual Training High School in Louisville. Clara Belle is Mrs. William Chambers Powell, 4312 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa., 19104, a journalist for several magazines, principally Saturday

Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal and Woman's Day. The Rev. Dr. Calvin Miles Thompson, Jr., lives at 130 Beverly Road, Syracuse, New York, 13207. He was pastor of the Delaware Street Baptist Church in Syracuse for 37 years, retiring in September 1970, to become Director of Religious Activities for State WSYR, over which station he had broadcast "Meeting at the Cross Roads" for 36 years. He has one daughter, Mrs. Edwin (Helen Ruth) Taylor, 86 Oxford Road, Newton Center, Mass., 02154 who is the mother of three children. Will Thompson, journalist, (deceased) is survived by Mrs. Thompson who lives at 50 Midland Ave., Berwyn, Pa., 19312 and a son, Will Thompson II, engineer, 311 Country Road, Berwyn, Pa., 19312. John Morrison Thompson, a retired Philadelphia lawyer, lives during the summer at Box 221, Brigantine, N.J., 08203 and during the winter at 63B Ogden St., Jekyll Island, Georgia 31520; and his daughter, Mrs. Richard E. (Clara Margaret) Kleinmann, 4028 Locust St., Philadelphia, Pa., 19104. Scott Thompson, whose address is P.O. Box 1707, Titusville, Florida 32780, is a retired engineer.

Because of distances and health, it is not anticipated that any of the children will be present for this presentation ceremony, but recently Helen Thompson, Clara Belle Powell, and Calvin Miles Thompson visited the Kentucky Baptist Building and admired the portrait of their father. Letters from all the children have been received expressing appreciation for the Convention in honoring their illustrious father.

Presentation of Portrait to First Vice-President,
-Harold Wainscott

Acceptance of the Portrait by Harold Wainscott on behalf of the Convention.

Prayer of Appreciation for our Baptist leadership and heritage.
-Wendell H. Rone, Sr.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST'S FIFTH ASSOCIATION

BRACKEN

Bracken Association was the fifth constituted in Kentucky. Messengers from eight churches with five hundred and thirty-nine members met at the Bracken Meeting House near the present site of Minerva, in Mason County, on Saturday, May 28, 1799, and formed the Bracken Association. A sermon was preached by the venerable David Thomas. James Turner, was chosen moderator, and Donald Holmes, Clerk. Five of the eight churches which went into the organization had been dismissed from the Elkhorn Association for this purpose. These were Washington, Mays Lick, Bracken, later called Minerva, Stone Lick, and Locust Creek. The illustrious Lewis Craig, who moved to Madison County, from South Elkhorn Church in 1792, was regarded as the father of this Association. Other ministers were David Thomas and Philip Drake. William Wood, the pioneer preacher in Mason County, had been excluded by the Washington Church, the year before the Association was constituted.

At the meeting of the Association in the fall of 1799, following its organization in May, there were nine churches with six hundred members reported. Only one hundred thirty-nine baptisms were reported as the result of the "Great Revival" of 1801-2 but in 1805, there were nineteen churches with one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five members. From this time there was continued agitation over slavery, which resulted in the loss of several churches to the Emancipation Movement.

In 1812, fifteen churches reported to the Association about six hundred members. So discouraging was the situation, the question was raised as to the propriety of dissolving the Association. About that time Elder Walter Warder came to be pastor at Mays Lick, and of other churches in the bounds of the Association. By the year 1821, the number of the churches had increased to seventeen with 1522 members, but Alexander Campbell appeared on the scene, and caused great disturbance in the churches. In 1831, after the separation from Mr. Campbell's disciples sixteen churches remained with only 890 members. In 1838, 292 baptisms were reported and in 1847, there were sixteen churches with 1723 members. In 1862 the churches numbered twenty-six with 2575 members, but about one thousand of these were colored, who were dismissed at the close of the Civil War. The Association was composed of twenty-five churches in 1880 with 2523 members.

Masters,

---- A History of Baptists in Kentucky, p.69.

THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER AND THE FRONTIER BAPTIST CHURCH

The typical Baptist preacher of the early frontier came from the ranks of the people, among whom he lived and to whom he preached. He was a farmer and worked on his land five or six days each week, except when he was called upon to hold week-day meetings or funerals. He preached on Sunday and not infrequently during the week. He generally was without much education, for not only was there little opportunity for him to obtain an education, but there was a deep-seated prejudice against educated and salaried preachers.

"The experience of early Virginia Baptists in being taxed for the support of irreligious and vicious clergymen, whose only recommendation was that they had received a university education, led them to look with suspicion upon the highly educated and to prefer a ministry from the ranks of the people earning a support by following secular pursuits." 1

The prejudice against an educated and salaried ministry was not peculiar, however, to the early frontier, but prevailed generally throughout the denomination in the early years of the nineteenth century.

Some of the early frontier Baptist preachers did, however, receive some support. At the meeting of the Elkhorn Association of Kentucky in 1787 this question was asked:

"In regard to the duty of supporting a minister, whether it be
1A.H.Newman, A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States,
P.336.

considered as a debt or a liberal contribution? Debated and cast out. Query. Whether it is agreeable to scripture for churches to suffer men to preach and have the care of them as their minister that are trading and entangling themselves with the affairs of this life? Answer that it is not agreeable to scripture but that it is the duty of the churches to give their minister a reasonable support and restrict them in these respects." 2

In 1798 the South Elkhorn congregation raised a subscription for their minister, John Shackelford, consisting of salt, corn, wheat, pork, flour, sugar, tallow and whiskey and four cash subscriptions. Raising subscriptions for ministers, however, was not always as successful as that for Shackelford. Jacob Bower tells of such a subscription which was started by one of his Deacons in Illinois. The Deacon got one or two names besides his own on the paper, but found so much opposition that he told Bower that he was sorry he had started it, when the preacher advised him to burn it. It seems that it was the custom among the Kentucky churches "to get up, and pay annually a subscription for their pastors," but for some reason this custom was not followed in Illinois in the early years. (Autobiography of Jacob Bower, MSS.). With the beginning of the anti-mission movement, opposition to the payment of ministers evidently increased.

The attitude of early Baptists toward paying their pastors is thus described by the son of one of the early Kentucky Preachers:

"Aware of the damaging effects of the love of money, they contributed but little to the support of the preacher; and, other things being equal, esteemed him more highly if he managed to support himself. They would have gazed with astonishment at a man, "hat in hand," passing through their congregations, begging money for their preachers; yet they often showed by their kindness and liberality to their brethren, friends, and neighbors, that this was more from principle than from the love of money, of which, indeed they had but little to give in those days. Without the assistance they rendered your grandfather and his family in various ways, it would have been impossible for him to have given his time and thoughts, as he did, to ministerial work. In planting his crops and gathering them in, his brethren and friends often came and assisted him with their own hands, or sent their servants when they had them. The kind sisters would often come themselves or send their daughters to help your grandmother in times of sickness, and they sometimes remained for weeks together, not to be waited on, but to render more needful assistance. Many of these gentle nurses I remember well.

"As time rolled on and their circumstances improved some of the churches for whom he preached gave him small sums of money. This was first done by the Spring Creek Church in 1824. The amount made up for him there was, I think, sixty dollars. He likewise married a great many young people. Sometimes as many as three couples a day, often living at some distance from each other. For this he sometimes received small sums. Frequently at the request of friends at a distance he spent two or three weeks preaching funeral discourses, and some of these were considerate enough to make him some compensation. If they were not, nothing was ever said. His little income from these different sources, together with the excellent management and economy of your grandmother,

enabled him to live in a plain, inexpensive way, and to give his time and thoughts to the work in which he felt so deep an interest. Much, though, as his heart was set on this work, he always considered his duty to his family paramount, remembering that the sacred volume placed those who did not provide for their families lower than the infidel himself.

"As they became more prosperous the Baptists of this country exhibited a commendable spirit of liberality in supporting the ministry, contributing to aid in spreading religious knowledge, building up churches, schools, and colleges, and promoting the general interests of society." 3

The process by which a frontier preacher was "raised up" in a church was about as follows. When a "brother" was impressed that God had called him to preach, he made it known to the church and if, after the church had heard the trial sermon, it approved of his "gifts" a license was then given him to preach in a small territory, as for instance within the bounds of a single church. After further trial, if his "gifts" proved real, and he gave further evidence of usefulness as a preacher he was then permitted to preach within the bounds of the association. If, on the other hand, his "gifts" as a preacher did not seem to improve, he was advised to make no further attempts to preach. Taylor gives the following account of the action of the Bullittsburg Church in refusing to ordain a minister: Each member was asked his or her mind and they all agreed that he ought not be ordained because they could "not see that he had improved any from the beginning... but the whole church encouraged him to continue preaching." 4

We have in John M. Peck an excellent example of the process by which a young man was inducted into the ministry of the Baptist church. Having moved into a new settlement in New York state in 1811, even before he was well acquainted with the members of the church, he was frequently asked, "Don't you think you ought to preach the gospel?" Finally at a meeting of the church he was asked to disclose his feelings on the matter and after he had done so he left the church. In a few moments he was recalled and informed that the church had voted to have him "improve his gifts" within its limits, until it had gained a better knowledge of his qualifications. It also voted that he conduct the meeting and speak the next day. 5

W. W. Sweet, Religion On The American Frontier,
The Baptists, pp. 36-40

3 James Ross, Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross (Philadelphia, 1882), pp. 293-95

4 John Taylor, Ten Churches, pp. 83, 84.

5 Rufus Babcock, Memoir of John M. Peck (Philadelphia, 1864), p. 27.