

A STUDY OF THE EDUCATION, MORALS, SALARY AND
CONTROVERSIAL MOVEMENTS OF THE FRONTIER
BAPTIST PREACHER IN KENTUCKY FROM ITS
SETTLEMENT UNTIL 1830

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1830

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of
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by
Randall Allen Corkern
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TO MY WIFE
BETTY VIRGINIA MULLINAX CORKERN
WHO WORKS SO PATIENTLY AND TENDERLY
TO MAKE OUR DREAMS COME TRUE

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THESES

Th. D.

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ORIGINAL

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis did not magically appear. Unlike Topsy, in Harriet Beecher Stowe's disturbing work Uncle Tom's Cabin, it did not simply just grow. Before this finished product could appear in its present form there were at least three perceptible stages of development.

The first stage consisted in the discovery of such a subject. In the fall of 1944, while a graduate student in the field of American History at the University of Mississippi, I discovered an autobiography of William Winans. Ray Holder, a student at the University, had edited this autobiography from the primary document which is housed in the Mississippi State Archives in Jackson, Mississippi, as his Master's Thesis. William Winans was a Methodist itinerant minister in the earliest days of the settling of Mississippi. In writing of his life Winans presented many facts about his personal life, the Methodist denomination, the Methodist ministers and the political and theological issues of the day. After reading this autobiography it occurred to me that here was a field which was ripe for some careful study. Could not one take the original materials available as found among the Baptists of a typical frontier region, gather them around an acceptable outline, and then present them in a fashion which

would be both interesting and at the same time make a contribution toward a better understanding of the Baptist heritage as developed in America?

The second stage was one of incubation. I brought the idea of this subject with me to the Seminary. During my undergraduate studies I brooded upon the idea and browsed through the stacks at intervals until I had satisfied, at least myself, that there was material enough for such a study of the frontier Baptist preacher in Kentucky.

The third stage was one of maturation. This included all the work or process of bringing this thesis to full development or maturity. There were background books, manuscripts, diaries, autobiographies and not a few biographies and histories to be read. There were manuscript minutes of Kentucky churches and associations to be read. There were notes to be selectively taken and catalogued. Last, and perhaps most challenging, was the task of sifting, analyzing and presenting the findings in readable fashion.

To this finished work many people have contributed. For their help I am indebted.

To my parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Corkern, who have always led me to believe that knowledge is an Open Sesame to a better understanding of people, I acknowledge the incentive for this thesis.

To Doctor S. L. Stealey, former Head of the Department

of Church History at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and now President of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, goes the acknowledgment of his mature guidance and helpful suggestions.

To Doctor Theron D. Price, my major professor, grateful appreciation is expressed for his guidance in the beginning of this thesis and for his acute suggestions which culminated in its final form.

To Doctor Leo T. Crismon, Librarian, the acknowledgment is given of his helpfulness in making available necessary materials and giving freely of his helpful guidance.

To Mrs. Jewel Sumner and Mr. Thomas High my appreciation must be expressed for the many hours which they spent in ferreting out grammatical inaccuracies and softening rough phrases.

Randall Allen Corkern

March 1, 1952
Louisville, Kentucky

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

It has been well and truthfully stated that the greatest accomplishment of the United States has been the conquest of the continent. And the greatest and most important task which the American churches faced following the winning of independence was that of following the great streams of westward moving peoples as they found their way over the mountains into Kentucky and Tennessee. . . .¹

Because of the vast importance of the influence of the West upon American Christianity it is timely to study one of the frontier movements, with an especial emphasis upon the religious leadership as evidenced in the Baptist denomination.

Almost every rudimentary student of American history knows that there have been a number of frontiers discernible as the American people expanded westward. The habitable boundaries of our country were never for many years allowed to become static or inert. However, for a study of frontier Baptist leadership, considerably helped by an accessible body of church materials, the early Kentucky frontier arena is probably the most important.

For it is here that methods and techniques and strategies were given birth. The American preacher had

¹ William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 18.

never before been involved in a similar environment with so many subsequent molding forces. His methodology and techniques, highly suitable perhaps for settled and more stable situations, needed a drastic reexamination. Because of the exigencies of the time and place in which he found himself it was necessary to adapt to the needs. Thus a type of ministry and religious experience came into being which will ever be inseparable from the early frontier. As new frontiers were born and as expansion continued, these newly found techniques and methods were to be used over and over again with the shifting of the arena of life.

I. THE PROBLEM AND PLAN OF PROCEDURE

The problem confronted in this work is found in its three-fold aim. First, a part of the purpose is to discover the degree of preparedness of the frontier Baptist preacher for meeting the challenge involved in presenting the gospel of Christ to the inhabitants of the Kentucky frontier. Second, it is also a part of the purpose to study the adjustment which the frontier preacher made to his life and times. Third, another important part of the purpose is to bring to light many examples, illustrations and incidents in the life of the frontier preacher which are of interest to the student and the general reader.

The methodology adopted has been to study certain

selected and salient features of the frontier preacher's make-up. Foremost, and always, the author has tried to approach the problem through a study of the preacher himself. Because effort has been made to keep the extraneous material at a minimum, there will not be found in this work a history of religion upon the frontier or the story of the growth of the Baptist denomination in Kentucky, either by local churches or associations. However, in order to have a well-rounded plan or approach, it has been necessary intermittently to disregard slavish obedience to this rule and to study the preacher through his connection with the church. Also, there has been some study of the attitudes and prejudices of the people belonging to those churches.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

William Warren Sweet, the competent American church historian, says that the future of American churches was determined largely by the manner in which the churches met the frontier problems. He further states that it was the churches which mastered the western challenge most completely that became the leading American churches.² He

2 Sweet, loc. cit.

believes that the Baptists were particularly well suited "in their ideas of government, in their economic status, and in their form of church government to become the ideal western immigrants."³

If this has been true, it is propitious indeed to focus attention upon Baptist leadership which enabled this denomination to build for their Lord so large a Christian force in the rough unhewn frontier.

The validity of such a study as projected should be evident. The study is pursued under a limitation of topography and time --- namely, the State of Kentucky in its adolescent stage. Yet here are to be found, by a cross-sampling of the materials available, the education, the morals, and the pecuniary affairs, as well as the controversial movements of the Baptist minister. Because of the general similarities of frontier regions, conclusions reached in this study of the frontier Baptist preacher in Kentucky should be germane to the other and later frontier regions.⁴

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

As the materials for this thesis have been brought

³ William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1930), p. 312.

⁴ Cf. Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), pp. 19-21.

together and presented, it has been necessary to use two terms repeatedly: early frontier and frontier Baptist preacher.

Early frontier. This term may be roughly defined as the territory between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River from the close of the Revolution to the year 1830. In this study the meaning will be limited somewhat further, being used only to indicate that section of the frontier which became the State of Kentucky.

Frontier Baptist preacher. This term includes any minister, whether ordained or licensed, who labored in a religious capacity during this formative phase of the work. There has been no attempt at gradation as to type of service or length of tenure. Thus the rolling-stone preacher who preached for a year or two in the state and then left has been considered as valid a minister as others who labored there for many years. Both receive the appellation, frontier Baptist preacher.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THESIS

The remainder of this thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter two deals with a background sketch of the place and times in which the frontier Baptist preacher worked. In this part of the work the territorial origins of the new settlers, as well as the reason for their

westward movement, are given consideration. After establishing the dominant racial strain, a rapid survey is given to the chief occupation of the time and the hardships of life on the frontier. This includes the condition of travel and communication. The chapter closes with an attempt to estimate the strength of the Baptists upon the frontier and to give an on-the-scene description of the state and condition of religion on the early frontier.

Chapter three opens with a study of the availability of education upon the Kentucky frontier. There is a consideration of the educational phases Kentucky passed through which are relevant to this work. Brief examination is given the length of the school sessions, the teachers, the books used, and the physical plants of the schools. Next, there is a study of the origin and prejudice against education among Baptist members and preachers. The main body of materials consists of a cross-sampling of the educational preparedness of the frontier Baptist preacher from its lowest level to its highest attainment. The chapter closes with a summation of results based upon an understanding of the task the frontier Baptist preachers were engaged with and the peculiarities of the environment in which they worked.

Chapter four presents a study of the frontier Baptist preacher's morals. It gives consideration first

of all to the general moral conditions of the early Kentucky frontier. Discovering that the churches were an integral part of the frontier society with its boisterous virility, church members soon found it necessary to screen their ministers and examine their credentials in order to maintain a high clerical moral standard. Following this section, there is a study of the frontier Baptist preacher and the problem of spiritous liquors. Next, there is a section on the frontier Baptist preacher and the problem of sex. Also included in this chapter is a consideration of questionable business transactions in which the frontier Baptist preachers may have been involved. Then follows a brief treatment of the frontier Baptist preacher and miscellaneous character blemishes. The chapter closes with an evaluation of the frontier Baptist preacher's morals.

Chapter five is devoted to a study of the frontier Baptist preacher's salary. It begins with a study of the prejudice against a salaried ministry, its origins and results. Next, it is observed how, in spite of much prejudice, many early churches accepted the responsibility for ministerial support. The methods developed by the frontier Baptist churches to provide ministerial support are considered. After this study, it is next shown how the preachers often came to Kentucky to improve their financial status. The major portion of the chapter deals

with a cross-sampling of the salaries received by the frontier Baptist preachers. There also is a brief survey of the methods used by the early preachers to supplement their income. The special gifts or services rendered to the frontier Baptist preachers are also studied. The chapter is concluded by several examples of frontier Baptist preachers who were unusually successful in the accumulation of worldly materials.

Chapter six deals with a study of the frontier Baptist preacher's relation to the anti-slavery movement. In the first place, it begins with a survey of the introduction and growth of slavery in Kentucky. A study of the beginnings of anti-slavery sentiment in Kentucky is then made. After this review of the inception of anti-slavery sentiment in Kentucky has been made, the beginning of the anti-slavery movement among the Baptists is shown. Next, it is seen how dissension over the issue began to bring about withdrawals from the fellowship. The section after this shows how many frontier Baptist preachers found it necessary to take a stand on the issue of slavery. The next consideration is a study of the formation of the Baptized Licking-Locust Association, Friends of Humanity movement. There is also a brief study of the Kentucky Abolition Society and its activities. Next, the efforts at amicable discussions of the issue

of slavery between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions and their usual failure are shown. An important part of this chapter is given over to the salient facts in the lives of pioneer anti-slavery preachers. After this study of the prominent anti-slavery preachers, there is included a brief section dealing with frontier Baptist preachers who owned slaves. The chapter concludes with the results and reasons of the failure of the anti-slavery movement in Kentucky.

Chapter seven is a study of the frontier Baptist preacher's relation to the anti-mission movement. In the first place, there is a study of the favorable attitude which church people in Kentucky had toward missions in the early frontier years. After this study, the beginnings and growth of anti-missionism are traced. It is seen how the attitude of many people and churches changed from one of pro-missions to anti-missions. There is a treatment also of the leading men behind the anti-mission movement. The chapter is brought to a close by a survey of the causes and results of the anti-mission movement.

Chapter eight consists of a summary and review of conclusions.

V. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The materials available for research upon this

thesis are extensive and varied. They are housed mainly in three libraries. The best collection of materials is found in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In this library are voluminous secondary sources necessary to an understanding of this frontier period. Best of all, however, are the primary sources at the person's disposal, slowly and painstakingly collected through the years.

The Filson Historical Club in downtown Louisville, Kentucky, has the next best collection of materials which reveal the Baptist preacher's relation to frontier Kentucky. Other valuable materials are to be found in the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort, Kentucky.

In this summary review of the literature used, there has been no attempt to list all of the books which furnish instructive material. If this is desired one may look to the selected bibliography in the back of the volume. There has been an attempt, however, to list the distinctive categories available and to enumerate the most worth while volumes under each category.

Secondary Sources

Books used for acquiring the frontier flavor. A number of books are available which deal effectively with the frontier and its spirit. Such studies help to give

the feel of the frontier setting and to enable a person to sense its flavor. For instance, Thomas Perkins Abernethy in his Three Virginia Frontiers makes numerous elucidating remarks about the Kentucky frontier. Another volume, The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity, by Peter G. Mode, gives illuminating insights into the prevalence of the frontier spirit in American Christianity. Frederick L. Paxson's History of the American Frontier: 1763-1893 is a valuable setting forth of frontier conditions. Another work of this nature is The Winning of the West by Theodore Roosevelt. A well-known American historian, Frederick Jackson Turner, also has a contribution to this flavor entitled The Frontier in American History. Reuben Gold Thwaites has edited a series on Early Western Travels: 1748-1846 which gives first hand information of a revealing nature about early frontier appearances and activities.

General Kentucky histories. There are many histories on early Kentucky. The better treatments are ones such as A History of Kentucky by W. B. Allen. One of the earliest and best known of the books of this type is the one by Lewis Collins which he called Historical Sketches of Kentucky. Another volume, History of Pioneer Kentucky written by R. S. Cotterill, is quite usable. Filson's Kentucke, another of the earlier histories, is edited by Willard Rouse Jillson. The book by N. S. Shaler,

Kentucky, a Pioneer Commonwealth, furnishes general material on the beginnings of Kentucky. Another volume which merits consideration is by Z. F. Smith and is entitled The History of Kentucky.

American Christianity and Baptist histories. Myriad words have been written on the beginnings and growth of Christianity in America. Volumes which contain material pertinent to this study are varied. W. E. Arnold gives a frontier church presentation in his A History of Methodism in Kentucky. Frank Greenville Beardsley's treatment in The History of Christianity in America is acute. Well known to all students of Baptist history are the volumes by David Benedict entitled A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World and also his Fifty Years Among the Baptists. Robert Davidson writes of the frontier beginnings of his denomination in his book, History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky. The early Baptists of Virginia are sketched faithfully by Robert Boyle Howell in The Early Baptists of Virginia. Another Baptist historian of repute and fidelity is Albert Henry Newman, who offers as the fruit of his pen a volume which he called A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States. Localized, and an important contribution to the materials for this thesis is the volume by William Dudley Nowlin, Kentucky Baptist History: 1770-1922. Robert B.

Semple gives valuable facts in his A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia. By far the most valuable Baptist history for use in this dissertation is the two-volume set of J. H. Spencer. Entitled A History of Kentucky Baptists, it far surpasses any other work on the Baptists in Kentucky before or after his time. Spencer, an itinerant Baptist preacher, spent nineteen years gathering the data for his work of love. He rode over Kentucky on horseback, always looking for material. Though it has some inaccuracies and is poorly organized with numerous repetitions of material, it has yet to be bettered. William Warren Sweet, perhaps the dean of American church historians, must not be overlooked. His The Story of Religion in America and a later volume, Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists, 1783-1830, are invaluable.

Histories on special subjects. In gathering the materials for this thesis it was necessary to make some study in movements which entailed a search through histories on special subjects. One such work dealing with the anti-mission spirit is the unpublished Doctor's thesis by B. H. Carroll, Jr., The Reflex Effect of the Foreign Mission Movement Among American Baptists. On slavery, there is the well written book by J. Winston Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky. Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz deals with missions in his Home Missions on the American Frontier: With Particular Reference to the

American Home Missionary Society. A Master's thesis by Mary Kaltenbrun, The Negro Colonization Movement in Kentucky, deals with the slavery problem on the frontier. Another Master's thesis by Wenonah Maranam entitled Some Phases of Pioneer Education on the Kentucky Frontier with Emphasis on Nelson County: 1785-1860 gives a survey picture of education in Kentucky. The anti-slavery movement is treated extensively in Asa Earl Martin's The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky Prior to 1850. Another book on the history of education in Kentucky is The Gates Slowly Open by Frank L. McVey.

Short histories of Kentucky churches and associations.

Of the numerous short histories, written by persons interested in their church or association, only a few will be mentioned. A centennial history is available in W. O. Carver's History of the New Salem Baptist Church, Nelson County, Kentucky: 1801-1901. A History of Mays Lick Baptist Church was written by Z. T. Cody. Ella Cofer has a short history entitled History of Severn's Valley Baptist Church: 1781 to 1931. S. J. Conkwright in his History of the Churches of Boone's Creek Baptist Association of Kentucky with a Brief History of the Association has gone more into detail than have most of these short histories. J. A. Kirtley wrote a short History of Bullittsburg Church. Elkhorn Association history is the subject of a work

written by Basil Manly, Jr., entitled History of the Elkhorn Baptist Association, Kentucky, 1785-1815. Also a short work is the one by W. J. M'Glothlin entitled The Baptist Church of Christ, on Glen's Creek, In Woodford County, Ky. Another interesting brief history is the work of George W. Ranck called The Traveling Church. Perhaps the most extensive of these histories is the one written by Wendell H. Rone, A History of the Daviess-McLean Baptist Association in Kentucky.

Biographies of Kentucky frontier Baptist preachers.

These treatments, though not so numerous as might be desired, are valuable in that they give so many intimate glimpses into the lives of the frontier preachers which are not to be found in any other material. There is the volume by P. Donan entitled Memoir of Jacob Creath, Jr. One of the better biographies is the Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross, written by James Ross. Another work is the one by Lewis N. Thompson, Lewis Craig, the Pioneer Baptist Preacher: His Life, Labors and Character. Quite useful and revealing is the work of Thomas M. Vaughn, Memoirs of Rev. Wm. Vaughn, D. D. A Sketch of the Life of William Calmes Buck by Arthur Yager is also available.

Primary Sources

Writings by the frontier preachers. Each of these

writings is intensely interesting and of invaluable aid in the presentation of the material of this thesis. For instance, there is the Diary of David Barrow Pioneer Baptist Minister Va. - Ky. In this work Barrow has described his first impressions of Kentucky, many of his speaking engagements, his aversion to slavery as well as many other important revelations. James Fishback, one of the best educated of the later frontier preachers, gives A Defence of the Elkhorn Association; in Sixteen Letters, which reveals his writing ability as well as the troubled spirit of the churches during his time. Another work is published in the form of biographical memoirs of John Gano, though it was written principally by Gano himself. It is entitled Biographical Memoirs of the Late Rev. John Gano, of Frankfort. This volume gives many fine helps toward understanding John Gano which are not to be found elsewhere.

One of the most outstanding frontier Baptist preachers was William Hickman. He has written A Short Account of My Life and Travels, For More than Fifty Years; a Professed Servant of Jesus Christ. Also available are some loose photostatic pages from the Journal of Luther Rice which reveal his work among the churches of Kentucky in respect to the mission task. Another usable source, in many respects, is the work of W. P. Strickland in which he edited the Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods

Preacher. Though Peter Cartwright was a Methodist, he nevertheless made many contacts with the Baptists upon the frontier and in his writing he has given many of his impressions. Perhaps the most worthwhile of these writings by the frontier Baptist preachers are the two volumes by John Taylor. A History of Ten Churches tells of Taylor's experiences in ten different Baptist churches upon the frontier. This work is known to be one of the best presentations of frontier life and is written by one of the better examples of the frontier Baptist preachers. Invaluable in the section on the anti-mission movement is the pamphlet by Taylor entitled Thoughts on Missions and Biographies of Baptist Preachers.

Manuscript minutes of the local churches. These are the original manuscript copies of the records, or minutes, of frontier Baptist churches in Kentucky. They have either been loaned or given to the various depositories for safe keeping. The pages are yellow, brittle with age, but in most instances readable when patience and care is exercised.

Minute books of churches containing necessary information for this study are Beech Creek Baptist Church, Boone's Creek Baptist Church, Bryan's Station Church, Buck Creek Baptist Church, Buffalo Lick Baptist Church, Cassey's Fork Meeting House, Christiansburg Baptist Church, Church on the Twins, Dry Ridge Baptist Church, East Hickman Baptist

Church, Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church, Glen's Creek Baptist Church, Green River Baptist Church, Harrod's Creek Baptist Church, Mount Tabor Baptist Church, Plum Creek Baptist Church, Providence Baptist Church, Severn's Valley Baptist Church, Tate's Creek Baptist Church, West Fork Baptist Church and White's Run Baptist Church.

Manuscript and printed minutes of the associations.

Manuscript minutes available which contain relevant material are those of the Elkhorn Baptist Association, Green River Association of Baptists, Long Run Baptist Association and Salem Baptist Association. Printed minutes from the following associations are helpful: Bracken, Cumberland River, Northbend, North District and South District.

VI. THE PROBLEM OF THE MATERIALS

The foregoing review of the literature has revealed a wealth of materials pertaining to the thesis subject. The materials are of various origins and divergent purposes. Of primary materials there are found autobiographies, diaries, hand written manuscript copies of local church minutes, associational minutes and personal correspondence. Of secondary materials there are found secular histories, denominational histories, local church histories, magazine and newspaper articles.

The student of church history who is working on a research problem has the task of sifting and analyzing the accessible materials. After the relevant materials have been evaluated, there follows the collating of the findings so as to fit them into an organized pattern.

In working through the materials for this thesis, the writer has had to face several problems of varying importance. In order for the reader better to understand the limitations under which the writer worked, as well as to assure him that the writer was at least aware of the problems, they are briefly summarized.

Incomplete presentation of factual details. This means that often, though the writers presented the main fact, they failed to fill out the picture with factual data which help make a better understanding. For example, it is often impossible to discover the given name of some frontier preacher. Many times only the surname or possibly the surname and one initial is given. Thus some ministers can only be referred to as "Reverend Toller" or "Reverand Ferrens." Also it is difficult to discover exactly when a frontier preacher was pastor of a particular church. Even when the church minutes are available they may record the minutes for years without once indicating who the pastors were. This problem is seen again in the fact that it is difficult to pin down the geographical location of many of the churches mentioned. Most locating

can be done only by locating the church according to the association. This type of church locating is inadequate because the scope of this thesis deals with formative years and churches were sometimes formed, and existed for several years before any associational connections were made.

There are several reasons for this incomplete presentation of factual details. One reason is that the writers were simple untrained frontiersmen who knew more about planting corn and reaping wheat than they did about keeping records. Perhaps the greatest reason is seen, however, in the fact that these men were not conscious of recording history. They would never think that anyone outside their locality or their generation would be interested in their records or writing. Writing for the immediate context, they would see no need to give a man's full name or to describe the location of the church. That would be unnecessary and perhaps absurd because everyone in the community knew.

With these facts in mind it is discovered that some church minutes exceed others in importance and in the contribution they are able to make. This varying degree of importance often arose because of the particular individual who recorded the happenings. One writer would record minutes with words cut to a bare minimum, often leaving out many facts. Another might be more verbose, descriptive

and include more irrelevant material. Yet a careful sifting would reveal many welcome nugget facts.

The method adopted in this thesis in respect to this problem has been to fill out the picture as much as possible by cross-references and related descriptions. At the same time speculation and conclusion-drawing have been avoided.

The proper use of the individual church histories.

Almost every Baptist church in Kentucky has had someone write a brief history of her founding and growth. This has always been done by someone particularly interested in the church. Perhaps a pastor or an interested lay member desirous of making public the local heritage of the church wrote a history. Often it has been by one considered as a local historian. These histories range in length from only three or four pages to fifty or sixty pages. A problem arose early as to the proper evaluation of these brief histories. Comparison with the existing primary materials indicates a better than average degree of accuracy of the histories, making it possible for the student to rely upon their statement of fact when necessary.

This attitude toward this group of materials is defended in several ways. First, it is pointed out that no one would consider it worthwhile from a standpoint of time spent or remuneration derivable to write such works unless he was personally interested in what might be

discovered. Secondly, these sympathetic writers usually lived in the communities in which the churches about which they wrote were situated. Because of this fact, they were familiar with the local narratives of the church beginnings. Also, their familiarity with the church and community made it possible to have access to any records extant. Then again, they could sometimes talk to someone who had a relative or friend who lived when the church began. It would be unfair however not to point out at least one fact which might be against the sympathetic writer, i. e., that it could cause him to be biased and to overstate the facts or to bog down his narrative with glittering generalities.

With these considerations in mind, this writer has considered the statements of the small individual church histories as fairly accurate. Yet it must be realized that if the minute books themselves have not been destroyed or lost, and are thus available, the small church histories become almost valueless. That is true because the contemporary will write more vividly and accurately than the person of a succeeding generation.

Because of this fact, the individual church histories have never been used when other and more primary material has been available. However, when such other material has not been found at hand, the writer of this thesis has not failed to fall back upon the treatments as found in the

individual church histories.

The reading of the handwritten manuscripts. Handwritten manuscripts, including church minutes, association minutes and personal correspondence, are available in volume enough to consume considerable time simply to read them. Though they are immensely interesting they are not without a problem - one of reading. The quality of paper, pen and ink existing in frontier Kentucky was not comparable to that which we have today. After a century and a half or more the paper is yellow, brittle and aged. The ink has become increasingly dim. Many of these books were exposed to heat and cold and water which have not helped their condition. Add to this the fact that the clerks in the churches were not too educated and hence could not write too clear a hand and correct reading becomes a problem. Usually however, the content is discovered upon the exercise of patience and diligence. Not always so however are some of the spellings of words. Often it is next to impossible, because of individual peculiarities of writing and alphabet formation, to decide what letter was meant or whether it is a capitalization or not. Obviously, however, this problem is easily surmounted except in the case of a quotation made verbatim.

Proper reading becomes a problem in this thesis as the subject makes it necessary to include numerous quotations.

Whenever a quotation from a manuscript has become necessary, this writer has simply attempted to spell the word according to the way it appears.

CHAPTER II

A BACKGROUND SKETCH OF THE PLACE AND TIMES

CHAPTER II

A BACKGROUND SKETCH OF THE PLACE AND TIMES

Shortly after the beginning of the latter half of the eighteenth century the American spirit of restlessness and adventuresomeness began slowly to awaken once again. There was a vast western country to be explored, subdued and settled. As the desire for expansion began to form in men's minds, their attention became focused upon the Kentucky region.

Kentucky had been the hunting ground of Indian tribes living north of the Ohio and south of the Tennessee for many years. They aptly called it the "Dark and Bloody Ground."¹ Seasonally the tribes would range over into the forest-like territory to kill the elk and buffalo. Occasionally they encountered one another and engaged in bloody conflict. At the time of these Indian forays, according to Collins,² there were no permanent settlements within the borders of the present state of Kentucky.

I. SETTLEMENT BEGINNINGS IN KENTUCKY

Popular belief, of length and persistence, has attri-

1 Temple Bodley, History of Kentucky (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1928), I, 86.

2 Lewis Collins, Historical Sketches of Kentucky (Maysville, Kentucky: The author, 1847), p. 17.

buted to an idealized Daniel Boone the first exploration and settlement of the new region, as well as a leadership of its pioneer settlers in warfare during the Revolutionary War.³ However, a number of intrepid explorers had already preceded him. Yet the Boone company which came in 1769 and the James Knox company which followed in 1770 may be regarded as the first visitants to explore fruitfully the region.⁴ For almost two years these parties pushed on into the frontier. Although their exploration was characterized by many skirmishes with the Indians, Boone himself being taken captive at one time, the explorers returned with glowing accounts of the amazing fertility of Kentucky soil.⁵

By the eve of the Revolutionary War settlements in Kentucky began to appear along the middle border. With the decisive victory of Lord Dunmore's War in 1774 advance was stimulated out of Pennsylvania and Virginia toward the West, giving zest to land-title speculation and colonial projects.⁶

In the spring of 1774, James Harrod, who had been

3 Bodley, op. cit., I, 88.

4 Collins, op. cit., p. 18.

5 Loc. cit.

6 Frederic L. Paxson, History of The American Frontier: 1763-1893 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), p. 89.

a member of an earlier surveying party, gathered a group of about fifty men and went down the Ohio and up the Kentucky to the place afterwards named Harrod's Landing. After going a short distance overland, they stopped and began to build. They laid out lots, built log cabins, and called the settlement Harrodsburg.⁷

Almost simultaneously, in 1775, another permanent settlement was made about a mile and a quarter below Otter Creek by Daniel Boone called Boonesborough.⁸

With the establishment of these two settlements, the Kentucky frontier, which furnishes the background and place for the study of the frontier Baptist preacher, was opened up. Abernethy differentiates this frontier from others, feeling that it was not so far removed from its base of supplies as had been the settlement at Jamestown. Yet he admits that:

It was many a weary mile down the Ohio from Wheeling or Pittsburg to the mouth of the Limestone Creek, and then overland to the Bluegrass region. And it was a still more arduous journey down the Valley of Virginia to the Holston Valley, and thence through Cumberland Gap and along Boone's Wilderness Trace to the Crab Orchard in Central Kentucky.⁹

7 Bodley, op. cit., I, 92.

8 Thomas Perkins Abernethy, Three Virginia Frontiers (University, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1940), p. 64.

9 Loc. cit.

By the end of 1776 Virginia had organized a Kentucky county covering the whole of the new area which was to become the State of Kentucky. Most of the western settlements made in the decade following the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown were directed to Kentucky county, which had the Ohio River on its northern side, and the Cumberland River near its southern extremity.¹⁰

These frontiersmen did not arrive in any appreciable numbers during the pre-revolutionary days. Those who did come consisted mostly of hunters and Indian fighters, men such as Daniel Boone. According to Sweet, they "were trail blazers and had little permanent influence, in that they established no cultural institutions."¹¹ Many of them sent no permanent roots into the soil, but moved ever westward into the wilderness.

Though the land was extremely fertile and the country open to settlement, physical entrance into Kentucky was by no means an easy accomplishment. One familiar with the map of this section and its topography finds but two practicable routes from the east. One was by way of the Ohio River from the north and the other at

10 Paxson, op. cit., p. 89.

11 William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 18.

the extreme southeast through the Cumberland Gap.¹² Added to the barrier of a lack of ease in entrance there were, prior to the Revolution, the habitual retarding factors of the British colonial policy and Indian menace to keep back the settlers.¹³

However, when the patriots laid down their guns or turned them into plough shares, a rapid, steady immigration into Kentucky began. In the spring of 1779 scores of settlers made their way into this region. Boonesborough became for a time the busiest spot in Virginia's remote county. It was a stopping place for settlers, traders, and land speculators, who came with their long trains and loaded pack horses over Boone's Wilderness Road.¹⁴ Filson wrote, "Numbers are daily arriving, and multitudes expected this Fall; which gives a well grounded expectation that the country will be exceeding populous in a short time."¹⁵

People flocked in so rapidly that in 1780 the population was thought to have been over twenty thousand.

12 R. S. Cotterill, History of Pioneer Kentucky (Cincinnati: Johnson and Hardin, 1917), p. 28.

13 Abernethy, op. cit., p. 63.

14 George W. Ranck, Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days and Revolutionary Annals (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1901), p. 110.

15 Willard Rouse Jillson, Filson's Kentucke: A Facisimile Reproduction of the Original Wilmington Edition (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1930), p. 29.

No one really knew what the number was, for no count was made; but it had probably multiplied more than a hundred fold since early 1778, when there were reported few more than a hundred all told. Perhaps nine-tenths of the western immigration was to Kentucky. . . .¹⁶

This post-revolutionary immigrant to Kentucky was basically a new type settler. Now instead of primarily explorers and adventurers there came those who were interested in homes.¹⁷ Among them were many small farmers and other people of the lower middle class. There were also young planters and lawyers and men of means, who had been impoverished by the long struggle which had accompanied the Revolution. This new type of settler helped most to transform Kentucky into a state. For it was the post-revolutionary settler who laid the foundation for the cultural life of the new communities, and in whose wake schools and churches quickly appeared.¹⁸

To say that this ever increasing volume of people uprooted themselves from their homes, their families, their friends, and their more stable culture because they were restless and adventurous and desired to give vent to their pent up feelings is an over simplification. To be

16 Bodley, op. cit., I, 213.

17 W. E. Arnold, A History of Methodism in Kentucky (n. p.: Herald Press, 1935), I, 7.

18 Sweet, The Baptists, p. 20.

sure there were some adventurers, some speculators, some drifters, but there were far more compelling and drastic causes for the population expansion.

After the Revolution had ended, the eastern seaboard was everywhere deluged with complaints of hard times. American commodities found closed doors in parts of the British West Indies. Illiberal trade policies with the new nation had been adopted by France and Spain. The large planter as well as the small farmer found himself in a comparable plight. He found no ready markets, and his debts threatened to engulf him as his surplus products lay unsold.¹⁹ Because of this fact, many of these people began to move to the western frontier.

The primary object of most of the immigrants was the acquisition of land. Many soldiers who had fought in the Revolution were paid by land grants in Kentucky.²⁰ But whether it was a grant or an outright purchase, the land was an absorbing interest. Many desired to settle, while others expected only an enhancement of value which they might turn to profit.²¹ Soon the land trade was booming, and in 1780 a land office was opened in Harrodsburg.

19 Ibid., pp. 19-20.

20 B. T. Kimbrough, The History of The Walnut Street Baptist Church (Louisville: Press of Western Recorder, 1949), p. 8.

21 John Mason Brown, The Political Beginnings of Kentucky (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1889), pp. 52-53.

On the first day of registry over 1,600,000 acres were entered.²²

II. TERRITORIAL ORIGINS OF THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

The territorial origins of the new settlers were many. There were some individuals and families from each of the old States, both North and South.²³ Yet during this early period, settlement was essentially the work of frontiersmen from Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina.²⁴ The New England States and New York never took any appreciable interest in the winning of the new West. Very few from these last mentioned states settled there until after most of the hazards had been overcome and the territory made safe by those states bordering on the new region.²⁵

Scotch-Irish was the dominant racial strain on this frontier. For the most part the Scotch-Irish were native-born Americans. When the seaboard colonies were

22 Bodley, loc. cit.

23 J. H. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists From 1769 to 1885, Including More Than 800 Biographical Sketches (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumers, 1885), I, 482.

24 H. Addington Bruce, Daniel Boone and the Wilderness Road (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 68.

25 Bodley, op. cit., I, 85.

settled, the people were foreign born, usually of an English or Dutch or German extraction. But in this early Kentucky the story was different, as Scotch-Irish second generation Americans were in the majority.²⁶

The reason for this is apparent. Of the three leading states Virginia, North and South Carolina, Virginia sent the greatest number of pioneers into the new area. When Virginia was founded, a large part of the people established themselves in the Valley of Virginia. They were mostly Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians whom religious persecution had driven from their native land.²⁷ Later, when they led in the westward movement, their numerical strength enabled them to establish the basic racial strain in Kentucky. As the frontier kept growing in population Virginians continued to arrive, oftentimes coming because relatives or friends had preceded them and located.²⁸

Several reasons combined to cause Virginia to take the lead in the pioneer settlement during the latter eighteenth century. One factor was the comparative nearness to Kentucky. Another was the fact that Virginia

26 Bruce, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

27 Bodley, op. cit., I, 85.

28 Brown, op. cit., p. 51.

had the charter title to the most desirable and accessible part of the region. A third factor to be taken into consideration was the avid individualism of the Virginian and a peculiar adaptability to frontier life.²⁹ For some years he had been accustomed to living very much to himself. As a result he was not now hesitant about moving farther into the wilderness in search of more and richer land.

The early settlers soon became matured and hardened as they faced many problems in the new frontier. In those first early days the Indians were a spasmodic menace. Oftentimes, when the Indians were marauding and pillaging sections, it was necessary for the scattered settlers to gather up their wives and children, with such provisions as they could hastily collect, and take refuge in the nearest fort. Here they remained until it seemed safe to return.³⁰

III. KENTUCKY FRONTIER LIFE DANGEROUS AND UNHYGIENIC

Hygienic conditions were often far from desirable in frontier Kentucky. A single spring had to serve a number of families. It served not only as a source of

29 Bodley loc. cit.

30 Ibid., I, 209-210.

water for cooking, drinking, and washing, but also as a watering place for the horses, cattle, hogs, and poultry.³¹

Because living conditions were not up to par there were undesirable features. David Barrow, an early frontier Baptist preacher, wrote succinctly about his impressions after a tour of inspection into Kentucky.

This country like all other countries where people are dirty, is very productive of fleas, chinchas, and house flies. They have an abundance of gnats. . . .³²

Another problem was the preservation of meat. In warm weather no ice was available, and meat soon became unfit for food. The only way to preserve it was to salt it. Thus salt became one of the absolute necessities of life and every settler went to great pains to secure it.³³

IV. FARMING THE CHIEF OCCUPATION

The chief occupation of early Kentucky was farming.³⁴

31 Ibid., I, 208.

32 David Barrow, "Diary of David Barrow Pioneer Baptist Minister Va. - Ky.," (a typed copy in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, from the original now in possession of descendent Thomas Marshall Barrow, St. Louis, formerly of Owensboro, Kentucky), p. 26.

33 Fannie Casseday Duncan, When Kentucky Was Young (Louisville: John P. Morton and Co., 1928), pp. 95-96.

34 Theodore Roosevelt, The Winning of The West (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), III, 64.

It was the occupation settlers expected to take up in the new country. With their own hands they cleared small fields in the great wooded expanse and then set themselves to the task of farming.

The farmers were not disappointed by the soil they found. David Barrow spoke with enthusiasm when he thought of the soil.

As to the soil I think sincerely that the great creator has imbued it with a very rich property in the greatest proportion that is to be found in the whole of North America if not in the whole world. . . .³⁵

In a description of the soil Filson bears out the enthusiasm of Barrow when he describes its composition, saying, "The soil of Kentucke is of a loose, deep black mould, without sand, in the first rate lands about two or three feet deep. . . ." ³⁶

Corn, hemp and tobacco were the leading crops in those early years.³⁷ After the Revolution, the cultivation of tobacco, which began with the first permanent settlement of Kentucky, greatly increased. In some sections, timber was cleared away in wholesale fashion to make way for the increasingly numerous fields of tobacco.³⁸

35 Barrow, op. cit., p. 22.

36 Jillson, op. cit., p. 22.

37 Cotterill, op. cit., p. 234.

38 Ranck, Boonesborough, p. 133.

Crop production ran considerably higher than the settlers had been accustomed to seeing. Barrow could hardly believe his eyes.

The produce of these countries is beyond what I ever had conception of. Great things have been told and in those instances exaggerated accounts have been handled abroad so as to exceed all belief, but in truth I never saw anything like it.³⁹

Colonel Harrod, of Harrodsburg, while experimenting in small grain production, found that he could raise thirty-five bushels of wheat per acre and fifty bushels of rye.⁴⁰ Filson had heard it affirmed, by people he thought of as honest, that in some cases over one hundred bushels of corn had been produced from an acre in one season.⁴¹

With the passage of only a few years, living conditions began slowly to improve. Barrow felt that the improvements made in the few years would surprise a traveler and perhaps at the same time indicate the possibilities of the country.⁴² A number of small towns began to appear. As the eighteenth century expired Lexington was the largest town of the West. Its population was less than three thousand.⁴³

39 Barrow, op. cit., p. 23.

40 Jillson, op. cit., p. 25.

41 Ibid., pp. 24-25.

42 Barrow, op. cit., p. 24.

43 Roosevelt, op. cit., III, 63.

V. TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES ALMOST NIL

Transportation facilities were almost nil and social intercourse was kept at a bare minimum during the years immediately after the founding of Kentucky. In many sections the population was sparse, people were separated by long distances, and the means of communication were crude and undeveloped.⁴⁴ With all of the time taken up in making a living there was no time for road building. The pioneers therefore utilized the trails made by the Indian and buffalo.⁴⁵ As the years passed the roads grew worse instead of better because of increased travel and because nothing was being done to improve them. The rows of paralleled ruts which were called roads were almost impassable except for the rider on horseback. Wheeled pleasure vehicles in most parts were unknown. Heavy farm wagons traversed the roads only after much energy had been expended by the horses and the drivers.⁴⁶ Perhaps the hardest part of the farmer's work was not the growing of the produce, but getting it to the proper markets over the deplorable transportation routes. For many years Kentuckians labored under the disadvantage of inadequate

⁴⁴ Niels Henry Sonne, Liberal Kentucky 1780 - 1828 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 13.

⁴⁵ Cotterill, op. cit., p. 235.

⁴⁶ Paxson, op. cit., p. 114.

transportation for the moving of the abundant resources and crops.⁴⁷ In the winter season the roads often became practically impassable.⁴⁸

VI. IMMIGRATION INTO KENTUCKY ACCORDING TO DENOMINATIONS

Baptists had come into Kentucky with the first immigrants. No matter whether the settlers were from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland, Southern Pennsylvania or from the other states beyond the mountains, and whether they came in the early years or latter there were always to be found Baptists.⁴⁹ Historians, of denominations other than the Baptist, are almost completely agreed that the number of Baptist members and Baptist ministers was surprisingly large.⁵⁰

One reason for the shifting of many Baptists to the West was their continual search for absolute religious equality and freedom.⁵¹ The battle for religious liberty in Virginia had been won, but the memory of the established

⁴⁷ Samuel M. Wilson, History of Kentucky (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1928), II, 145.

⁴⁸ Otto A. Rothert, A History of Unity Baptist Church: Muhlenberg County, Kentucky (Louisville, John P. Morton and Company, 1914), p. 3.

⁴⁹ Wilson, op. cit., II, 361.

⁵⁰ Arnold, op. cit., I, 11.

⁵¹ Brown, op. cit., p. 52.

church still plagued the minds of many Baptists. They remembered with deep-seated prejudice the persecution of many of their ministers. So now, even though they had been legally emancipated from the binding effects of the establishment and persecution, they moved on.

Sometimes they came in small groups with people of other faiths, sometimes they came as a family group, and at least once an entire Baptist church immigrated from Virginia to Kentucky. Under the leadership of a venerable minister, Lewis Craig, and Captain William Ellis, a group of Baptists in Upper Spottsylvania in 1781 decided to move en masse to Kentucky. After an arduous journey they settled at Craig's Station, on Gilbert's Creek, in what is now Garrard county, The Church became known as the Gilbert's Creek Church.⁵²

The exodus of this traveling church comprises one of the most interesting accounts of this frontier settlement. There were between five and six hundred people, the largest body of Virginians to set out for Kentucky at one time, in the traveling caravan. In the group were to be found the church members, their children, their Negro slaves, and some outside immigrants who had attached them-

⁵² George W. Ranck, The Travelling Church: An Account of the Baptist Exodus from Virginia to Kentucky in 1781 Under the Leadership of Rev. Lewis Craig and Capt. William Ellis (n. p.: Baptist Book Concern, 1891), pp. 5-12.

selves to an organized expedition. Almost everything except the church building made the trip. Official books, records, the simple communion service, the treasured old Bible from the pulpit - all were taken. So completely effective was the departure that for several years the Upper Spottsylvania Church was without either congregation or Constitution.⁵³

It is not surprising as a result of such movement to find that Baptists constituted the largest denomination in early Kentucky. Cotterill⁵⁴ says that from the beginning the Baptists more than outnumbered all the other denominations. It has been said that the organization and building of the Baptist churches in Kentucky was but an extension of the field of the Baptists of Virginia and North Carolina.⁵⁵

There were also many Presbyterians that came with the early immigrants. Since the dominant racial strain that came into Kentucky was Scotch-Irish, it was natural that the Presbyterians should be found in large numbers.⁵⁶

53 Ibid., p. 13.

54 Cotterill, op. cit., p. 243.

55 A. H. Newman, A History of The Baptist Churches in the United States (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1894), p. 333.

56 Paxson, op. cit., p. 116.

Very soon after the permanent settlers came, Presbyterian ministers and missionaries arrived in the country for the purpose of preaching.⁵⁷

Methodism, too, had its adherents and found a place in the frontier. As a result of the great revival of 1799 and 1800, carried on largely by the Methodists and Baptists, these two denominations ultimately became the most potent religious forces in the frontier region.⁵⁸

A few Anglicans were to be found scattered about. There were some Lutherans, Catholics, and members of the Reformed Dutch and German Churches, but they were in the decided minority.⁵⁹ The only groups to be found in measurable strength were the Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists.

VII. BEGINNINGS OF BAPTIST WORSHIP IN KENTUCKY

Organized public worship was first begun in Kentucky by the Baptists.⁶⁰ There were Baptist ministers ready to

⁵⁷ William Henry Milburn, The Pioneers, Preachers and People of The Mississippi Valley (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1860), p. 354.

⁵⁸ Roosevelt, op. cit., III, 87.

⁵⁹ Loc. cit.

⁶⁰ Jillson, op. cit., p. 29.

begin the work and laboring in the State as early as 1776. Thomas Tinsley was regularly preaching in Harrodsburg on Sunday in the spring of that year. Spencer⁶¹ considers him the first settled preacher. He excepts Squire Boone, the brother of Daniel, who explored the state before any settlement was made. The year 1776 also found William Hickman, Sr., preaching at different places while he was at the time making a tour of investigation and observation. He soon returned to Virginia, not returning to make Kentucky his permanent home until eight years later.⁶²

In 1779 a number of Baptist ministers visited Kentucky.⁶³ Three of them were John Taylor, Joseph Reding and Lewis Lunsford. Their main objective was to look over the country with a view to future settlement. With the exception of Reding, these preachers soon returned to Virginia. However, as the years passed, many of them returned to Kentucky to take up permanent residence and to become pastors.⁶⁴

61 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 12-13.

62 W. B. Allen, A History of Kentucky (Louisville: Bradley and Gilbert, 1872), p. 176.

63 David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World (New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1848), II, 227.

64 Allen, loc. cit.

By 1781 a few Baptist ministers began to settle permanently. This settlement continued until by the year 1786 Lewis Craig, Joseph Bledsoe, George S. Smith, Richard Cave, James Smith, James Rucker, Robert Elkin, John Taylor, William Taylor, John Tanner, John Bailey, Joseph Craig, Ambrose Dudley and a few others were to be found at work in scattered sections of the state.⁶⁵

The Severn's Valley Baptist Church was the first constituted Baptist church in Kentucky, perhaps in the entire West.⁶⁶ It was organized with eighteen members by two ministers, William Taylor and Joseph Barnett, on June 17, 1781. John Gerrard was chosen first pastor. They called it the Regular Baptist Church of Severn's Valley.⁶⁷

For years the congregation had no church building. In the summer they gathered in the groves to hold service. When winter came they worshiped in one of the rude pioneer dwellings.⁶⁸ About 1799 the first church building was begun. Called Severn's Valley Church, it was open to

65 Benedict, op. cit., II, 228.

66 B. F. Riley, A History of the Baptists in the Southern States East of the Mississippi (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898), p. 35.

67 Samuel Haycraft, A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky and Its Surroundings (n. p.: The Woman's Club of Elizabethtown, Ky., 1921), p. 14.

68 Ibid., p. 15.

all groups as it was a town church project. It was a large house of hewed poplar logs. A rough, loose floor was laid and break-back benches set up. This structure was covered but never finished. The building was used in the summer time for public worship of all groups and occasionally as a school building.⁶⁹

From this time on Baptist growth and organization developed rapidly. With the Baptists being the earliest denomination on the ground, it was not surprising that many prominent families became Baptists before other denominations could win them.⁷⁰

Yet the work progressed not without peril. For a number of years no church group met without the fear of Indian molestation. The fact that Kentucky had no constituted church until 1781 - seven years after its settlement - is definite evidence of the unsettled, disturbed condition of the region.⁷¹

As the worshipers assembled in the groves, each man with his rifle, sentinels stood in strategic positions to guard against surprise Indian attacks.⁷² Even as they prayed, they did so with half-opened eyes, knowing they

69 Ibid., pp. 82-83.

70 Arnold, op. cit., I, 11.

71 Riley, op. cit., p. 35.

72 Z. F. Smith, The History of Kentucky (Louisville: The Courier Journal Job Printing Company, 1886), pp. 403-404.

had to be watchful.⁷³ Lest one underestimate this problem, it is noted that the Brashear's Creek Church in Shelby county, organized in 1785, was unable to meet for two years because of the Indian danger.⁷⁴

In spite of all obstacles, there were in 1785 enough organized Baptist churches in the state to merit the formation of three associations. There was the Elkhorn Association with six churches: Gilbert's Creek, Tate's Creek, South Elkhorn, Clear Creek, Big Crossing and Limestone. Salem Association consisted of only four: Severn's Valley, Cedar Creek, Bear Grass, and Cox's Creek. The third association was the South Kentucky Association, which boasted a membership of five Separate Baptist churches including Gilbert's Creek, No Lynn, Pottinger's Creek, Head of Boones's Creek and Rush Branch.⁷⁵

Because of the growing needs of the communities and the expanding needs of the churches the number of ministers was often inadequate. This made it necessary to spread the duties of a minister over several churches.⁷⁶ The

73 Haycraft, op. cit., p. 15.

74 George L. Willis, Sr., History of Shelby County, Kentucky (Louisville: C. T. Dearing Printing Company, Inc., 1929), pp. 65-66.

75 Basil Manly, Jr., History of the Elkhorn Baptist Association, Kentucky, 1785 - 1815, (/n.p., n.n., n.d./), p. 18.

76 Sonne, op. cit., p. 13.

fact that there were a number of licensed ministers in the area relieved the shortage to some extent.⁷⁷ These men often ministered to churches in the same capacities as the regularly ordained ministers. However, it was still necessary at times for a church to be inconvenienced by the lack of a minister for some time. Mays Lick Church, which was organized in 1789 with only four members, was without a minister for seven years. They called consecutively four ministers, William Wood, William VanHorn, a Reverend Toller, and a Reverend Ferrens, but all to no avail. During this period the members enjoyed preaching only when a traveling minister came along. Occasionally William Wood came and preached for them. Though they had no minister, they kept the church going, having regular Sunday worship and monthly meetings to conduct their business.⁷⁸

According to Asplund's Baptist Register, in 1790 there were in Kentucky 42 Baptist churches with 3105 members. Laboring among these churches were 40 ordained and 21 licensed ministers.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Milburn, The Pioneers, Preachers and People, p. 353.

⁷⁸ Z. T. Cody, History of Mays Lick Baptist Church (Mays Lick, Kentucky: /n.n./. 1890), p. 4.

⁷⁹ John Asplund, The Annual Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America (Published for the author in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1791), p. 47.

Asplund's figures, if correct, and there is no reason to doubt that they are fairly reliable, would seem at first glance to refute the above statement that the number of ministers was often inadequate. However two facts, if remembered, help to resolve this apparent contradiction. First, there is the fact that those ordained ministers who were in the state at the time were not always evenly distributed. Often there were found two or three ordained ministers in one church. Because of this, it could happen that a number of churches in the more backward and inaccessible places found themselves without a pastor, though another church, not too far away, might have two or even three ministers available. The second fact is that, though there were a number of licensed ministers available, churches still preferred the ordained minister, feeling that they had been proven where as the licensed minister seemed to them still an apprentice.

The typical Baptist preacher of the Kentucky frontier was a settler who came from the ranks of the people. Usually this meant he was a farmer and worked his land week days, stopping to preach only on week-ends or for funerals. Almost always they were obliged to support themselves, or at least to supplement their incomes by working at various

occupations.⁸⁰

Generally speaking, the frontier preacher had little formal education, for there was much prejudice against educated and salaried ministers.⁸¹ What they lacked in erudition and finesse they made up by a mature use of their natural talents and indefatigable zeal. Mode⁸² says that these early preachers were filled with an apostolic urge to follow the venturing settlers with the gospel.

VIII. STATE OF RELIGION UPON THE KENTUCKY FRONTIER

Early Kentuckians were not distinguished for their religious piety. The general moral and civic laxity imposed a plenitude of exacting work upon every minister available. Among the pioneers there were many morally undesirables. Others of them were reckless and desperate men. Organized law upon the frontier was conspicuously absent. There in the new country any person could find comparative immunity from punishment.⁸³ Lawlessness

⁸⁰ Wendell H. Rone, A History of the Daviess - McLean Baptist Association in Kentucky: 1844 - 1943 (/n.p., n.n., n.d./), p. 13.

⁸¹ William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1930), p. 314.

⁸² Peter G. Mode, The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), p. 52.

⁸³ Frank Grenville Beardsley, The History of Christianity in America (New York: American Tract Society, 1938), p. lll.

abounded in many of the communities and courts were almost unknown. In the new population were to be found many individuals who would seem to be undesirable from the standpoint of any citizenship possibility. Many of them were former convicts or redeemed servants. These persons, impulsive in social action and highly sensitive to suggestion, often played dramatic parts during the open-air revivals by attacking the camp meetings.⁸⁴

Contemporary writers were perturbed as they noticed the lack of piety. The considerable religious work which was being done by the Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Catholics seemed scarcely to affect the current of life in Kentucky.⁸⁵

The "Continental Sabbath" idea found much favor on the frontier. While speaking of frontier conditions Joseph Doddridge said:

There was no other vestige of the Christian religion than a faint observance of Sunday, and that merely as a day of rest for the aged, and of play for the young.⁸⁶

In Kentucky, in addition to widespread drunkenness, profanity, Sabbath breaking, and a general procrastination in reference

⁸⁴ O. Olin Greene, "The Revival of 1800-1," Publications of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, Vol. II (1911), 8.

⁸⁵ Cotterill, op. cit., p. 241.

⁸⁶ Beardsley, op. cit., p. 111.

to religious duties, there was much of gambling, horse racing and duelling.⁸⁷

French skepticism and infidelity penetrated even the frontier. In the latter years of the eighteenth century Tom Paine was in vogue. French liberalism colored much of American thinking. In Kentucky, many of the early towns received their names from French infidels.⁸⁸

Such were the conditions as the frontier preachers applied themselves earnestly in an effort to keep their religious experiences from receiving too much of the coloration of their environment. As the preachers surveyed their times, they were keenly aware that religion played only a small role in the lives of most of the early Kentucky settlers. David Rice, the well known Presbyterian preacher who came to Kentucky at an early date, bemoaned the situation deeply and wrote his much-quoted passage:

After I had been here some weeks and had preached at several places, I found scarcely one man and but few women who supported a credible profession of religion. Some were grossly ignorant of the first principles of religion. Some were given to quarreling and fighting, some to profane swearing, some to intemperance, and perhaps most of them totally negligent of the forms of religion in their own houses.⁸⁹

Placed in a new and demanding environment, far removed

87 Ibid., p. 112.

88 Ibid., p. 95.

89 Sonne, op. cit., p. 11.

from the normal condition of life, many settlers became so engrossed in securing the material needs of life that matters of the soul were pushed into a secondary place.⁹⁰ It was all they could do to build homes, clear fields, raise crops and establish themselves in the frontier.⁹¹

Thus as the frontier preacher planted the gospel seed in the Kentucky seedbed, he undoubtedly sometimes had qualms as to an immediate or abundant harvest. David Barrow commented, perhaps with a rationalizing strain:

As to religion it is with them as it is with all other parts of the world. They have no true vital religion but where the grace of God has implanted the Devine principle in their hearts.⁹²

At times it seemed as if those who professed religion were in danger of having their ardor dampened by the disinterested environment. Painfully conscious of the woeful and inadequate state of religion in Kentucky, John Taylor said:

Embarrassed as my worldly circumstances were, the face of things as to religion gave me more pain of mind; there were a number of Baptists scattered about, but we all seemed cold as death - every body had so much to do that religion was scarcely talked of, even on Sundays, all our meetings

90 Ibid., pp. 11-12.

91 The Courier Journal, January 1, 1942.

92 Barrow, op. cit., p. 26.

seemed only the name of the thing, with but little of the spirit of devotion - In short, we were such strangers to each other, that confidence was lacking for want of more acquaintance, and our common calls were such that we had not time to become acquainted - Kentucky felt to me now, as the Quails did to the Hebrews, who ate of them til they were loathsome and returned back through their noses.⁹³

But hope springs eternal in the human breast and the frontier preachers did not easily give up. They labored with great energy. As the settlers began to finish their homes and establish themselves in their communities, they began to listen more thoughtfully to the ministers, and the word of God which they proclaimed did not return void. However, on another occasion Taylor is exuberant as he recounts a vivid experience which he and Joseph Reding shared.

We met about thirty or forty people, and began about the time designated. I went forward - there was nothing very visible while I was speaking - Reding dwelt on the awful subject, of a Judgment to come - the first appearance, was a young lady who began to weep and tremble, sitting by her grandmother; - the old lady for some time strove to stop her - at length she began to tremble herself, as if the Judge was at the door - From thence the effect spread through the whole house, with solemn groans and lamentations. . . . the only remedy I had to prevent hallowing with all my might, was to vent the tender

⁹³ John Taylor, A History of Ten Churches (Frankfort, Kentucky: J. H. Holeman, 1823), pp. 43-44.

feelings of my heart, by exhortations and feeling invitations . . . our worship continued perhaps six hours, in prayers, praise, and exhortations among the people . . . I solemnly surveyed the house a little before we started, and it is a fact, that the floor of it was a wet with the tears of the people, as if water had been sprinkled all over it, or with a shower of rain.⁹⁴

Such was the background of the place and times in which the frontier Baptist preacher spent his time and gave his life.

94 Ibid., pp. 24-25.

CHAPTER III

A STUDY OF THE FRONTIER PREACHER'S EDUCATION

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One might wish more light upon educational procedures and conditions of frontier Kentucky. The happenings of those days, when there were no organized school systems and when much of all learning was received at home, are shrouded in obscurity.¹

It has been stated earlier that Kentucky was distinguished for its lack of piety.² Cotterill³ feels that the region was as equally distinguished for its lack of schools as for its disregard of religion.

There were, of course, no public schools in Kentucky and such private ones as there were could boast of little but the name. The teachers were generally Irish, and their principal qualification seemed to be a capacity for consuming "moonshine" in indefinite quantities. The alphabet was commonly learned from characters printed on a shingle and other knowledge was acquired in similar ways. Books were scarce, and, as a consequence, there was much studying together - a state of things resulting in much confusion, inasmuch as every one studied aloud. The good students were often rewarded by the teacher passing around a bottle of whisky or a "plug" of tobacco.

1 N. S. Shaler, Kentucky, a Pioneer Commonwealth (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1886), p. 18.

2 Cf. ante, p. 49.

3 R. S. Cotterill, History of Pioneer Kentucky (Cincinnati: Johnson and Hardin, 1917), p. 248.

Unremitting application of the rod was relied upon to remedy all defects physical mental or moral.⁴

Many people have always believed that the early settlers were responsible for this backward condition because they were so uneducated.⁵ It was not until after the Revolution that immigrants came to Kentucky in any appreciable numbers. Those settlers who then came to the thinly settled frontier were comparable in intelligence, culture, and education to those of the Eastern states. Hymphrey Marshall, the Kentucky historian, states that during this time there "was to be found as much culture and intelligence as fell to the lot of any number of people, promiscuously taken, in either Europe or America."⁶

I. EDUCATIONAL BEGINNINGS IN KENTUCKY

As shown by the available facts it is a misconception to believe that even the earliest settlers did not manifest interest in education. In 1775, almost as soon as Harrodsburg was founded, Mrs. William Coomes, a Catholic woman from Maryland, was teaching a fort school.⁷ About this

4 Ibid., pp. 248-249.

5 Z. F. Smith, The History of Kentucky (Louisville: The Courier Journal Job Printing Company, 1886), p. 687.

6 Loc. cit.

7 Ibid., p. 689.

first school the earliest Kentucky historians, such as Filson, Bradford and Marshall, are completely silent. Nothing is revealed of the teacher, the curriculum, or the pupils.

By 1777 another school was operating. John May, who was soon killed in a fight with the Indians upon the Ohio River, was the first teacher at McAfee's Station. His pupils consisted mostly of the children of the McAfee families who had just settled.⁸

However, these educational beginnings were not so enthusiastically supported by all the settlers and many of their ideas as to the worthwhileness of education were distorted and vague. Some were interested only in their property titles and the clearing of the rich land. The consensus among these persons was that their children could learn more about life by helping to secure the necessities, such as food, clothing and shelter, than they could ever obtain from books.⁹ This attitude did much to discourage and obscure the work of such efforts as those at Harrodsburg and McAfee's Station. It has been said of early Kentucky that the "main stream of people's lives was untouched by any plan of education."¹⁰

8 Smith, loc. cit.

9 Frank L. McVey, The Gates Open Slowly, a History of Education in Kentucky (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1949), p. 11.

10 Loc. cit.

II. EDUCATIONAL PERIODS IN EARLY KENTUCKY

Examination reveals several educational periods in early Kentucky.¹¹ The first period consisted of the fort schools. They received this name because they were held in the forts. The fort school continued until conditions were secure enough on the frontier for the inhabitants of the stations to live on their own land.¹²

Oftentimes the conditions in the forts were very undesirable. Being crowded together, with a need of continual discipline, the children presented a problem of paramount importance.¹³ It became natural for one of the women of the fort to act as teacher and to gather the children together into some obliging person's cabin for instruction. As the forts and stations became increasingly numerous in the region, the number of these schools multiplied until by 1790 there were over two hundred.¹⁴

The second period in Kentucky education was that of the old field, or subscription, schools.¹⁵ They were designated as old field schools because the school building was usually erected on land that had been depleted of its

11 Wenonah Maranam, "Some Phases of Pioneer Education on the Kentucky Frontier With Emphasis on Nelson County: 1785-1860," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Louisville, Louisville, 1943), p. 4.

12 Loc. cit.

13 McVey, op. cit., p. 18.

14 Loc. cit.

15 Maranam, loc. cit.

fertility and abandoned.¹⁶ Often it was an abandoned clearing which the Indians had farmed for years, until the soil failed to produce.¹⁷ These subscription schools were community projects. They had their origin in the motivation of groups of neighboring pioneers attempting to provide some form of education for their children.¹⁸

During the last two decades of the eighteenth century the Kentucky Gazette carried a number of advertisements of subscription schools that offered instruction in a number of subjects at what would be considered a low tuition cost.

In December of 1787 the Kentucky Gazette¹⁹ carried the following announcement:

Education. - Notice is hereby given that on Monday, the 28th of January next, a school will be opened by Misses Jones and Worley at the Royal Spring, in Lebanontown, Fayette County, where a commodious hous sufficient to contain fifty or sixty scholars will be prepared. They will teach the Latin and Greek languages together with such branches of the sciences as are usually taught in public seminaries, at twenty-five shillings a quarter for each scholar, one half to be paid in cash, the other in produce at cash price, etc., etc., Lebanon,

(Signed)

Dec. 27, 1787 Elijah Craig

16 Cotterill, op. cit., p. 249.

17 Samuel Wilson, History of Kentucky (Chicago: The S. J. Clark Publishing Company, 1928), II, 235.

18 Maranam, op. cit., p. 5.

19 Kentucky Gazette, December 27, 1787.

Thus did Elijah Craig, frontier Baptist preacher, announce his headship of what Spencer called the first classical school in Kentucky.²⁰

In November, 17, 1800, David Barrow, another early Baptist preacher, issued written notice that he would conduct a school. At the same time he set forth the rules that would govern his Lubbegrad Reading School.

Rules For School. Rules to be observed and strictly attended to in the Lubbegrad Reading School.

- 1st. The teachers & Scholars to appear at the school House each Morning if possible, by half an Hour by Sun; with Hands and Face cleanly washed, and Hair neatly combed.
- 2nd. Fires to be raised by the Maile Scholars in Rotation, according to Arrangement, the House to be cleanly swept twice a Day, by the Females in the same Manner.
- 3rd. The Scholars are to be particularly careful not to dirty or tear their Books & Cloaths.
- 4th. The Pupils are to be kind and civil to each other, and by no Means, to call one another out of their proper Names.
- 5th. In school Time, each one is to keep his or her Seat, without necessary Reasons or Orders require the contrary. two are not to be absent at one time, without Leave obtained or Orders given; not even one, without he or she bears the Token of Absence.
- 6th. Each one is to mind his or her Business during Book-Time; and there is to be no Fleering, Laughing, Hunching, Whispering, or making Mouths to provoke others during the Hours of Exercise.

²⁰ J. H. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists From 1769 to 1885, Including More Than 800 Biographical Sketches (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumers, 1885), I, 488.

- 7th. If any Scholar is at a Loss, and wants Instruction in any Word, or Part of his or her Lesson, they shall apply to the Master.
- 8th. When the Scholars, whether in or out of School, have an Occasion to speak to or of the Master, it shall be with the Title of Mr. Barrow, and in like Manner to or of all married Persons and grown unmarried ones. Master & Miss, with only their given Names, and when in Conversation with all such, the Terms Sir & Madam are to be used.
- 9th. The Hours for Pray or Diversion, are from half after eleven, till one in the Winter, and so in Proportion as the Days lengthen.
- 10th. Diversions at Play-Time are, Running, Jumping, Prison-base, Cat, and such others as the Master from Time to Time shall admit, but Wrestling, Climbing, and such as endanger Cloaths or Limbs will not be admitted.
- 11th. Quareling, Swearing, or Cursing, Lieing, using Obsene Conversation, giving one another the Lie, and Fighting will demerit the severest Kind of Punishment.
- 12th. The girls are to exercise inosent Diversion to themselves.
- 13th. The Punishments for Transgressors are three, Viz, The Laugh-Block, Imprisonment & the Rod.
- 14th. If after all necessary Means have been made use of, and there should be any Scholar that cannot be broken of Quarreling, Swearing, Cursing, he shall with advise of a Majority of the Trustees be expelled from the School.
- 15th. Additions to be made to the Rules, as Occation requires.
- 16th. No Scholar to be admitted, or allowed to continue in School who has the itch.
- 17th. The Scholars are not at Playtime or coming to or going from School unnecessarily to be Hallowing, Shouting, Nieing, or Making fearful Outcries.
- 18th. The Scholars are not to pilage one anothers School Baskets, snatch Food from each other hands or take from each other or any one else, any Thing which is not their own.

19th. If it appears necessary, a Monitor will be appointed from Time to Time to give Information of Disorder that may be committed out of School.²¹

The third educational period is that of the county academy, or seminary schools.²² This type school was begun in 1778 and was the first state-aided attempt at education. Even though it was inefficiently handled, the effort lasted until about 1810.

The private academy replaced the county academy and was prominent in Kentucky for a number of years. It was not until 1838 that the public school system was begun, thus inaugurating another education period in early Kentucky.²³

III. SURVEY OF THE SESSIONS, TEACHERS AND TEXTBOOKS OF THE KENTUCKY FRONTIER SCHOOLS

During these early days of Kentucky, the development of education was hampered greatly by a lack of coordination of efforts and failure to formulate a definite policy

21 Asa C. Barrow, "David Barrow and His Lulbegrud School, 1801," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. VII (April, 1933), 89-90.

22 Maranam, op. cit., p. 5.

23 Loc. cit.

toward schools.²⁴ As a result higher education was slow to proceed. Rothert says there were no schools in Muhlenberg county which went beyond primary work until about 1850.²⁵

The length of the school sessions was extraordinarily short when compared with present day standards. In Muhlenberg county the schools were open only a few months each year.²⁶ In Nelson county the terms were of ten to fifteen weeks duration. However, some of the loss of time was overcome by longer hours each day. Eight and even ten hours were not unusual. Furthermore, school opened six days per week.²⁷ Daniel Drake of Mays Lick, Kentucky, a pioneer in Kentucky medicine, recalled that as a general rule he attended school during the winter and stayed home the other seasons of the year to participate in the farm work.²⁸

Many of the teachers were migratory, teaching only when they were not employed with some other task.²⁹ It is

²⁴ William Elsey Connelley and E. M. Coulter, History of Kentucky (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1922), I, 304.

²⁵ Otto A. Rothert, A History of Muhlenberg County (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1913), p. 210.

²⁶ Loc. cit.

²⁷ Maranam, op. cit., p. 43.

²⁸ Emmet Field Horine, editor, Daniel Drake: Pioneer Life in Kentucky, (New York: Henry Schuman, 1948), p. 143.

²⁹ Connelley, op. cit., p. 304.

known that some were adventurers, temporarily out of funds. They welcomed the opportunity to teach school for pay, however small.³⁰ Thus it was doubtful that very many of these early instructors were adequately prepared.

On the Kentucky frontier the student suffered from a scarcity of books. The pupils were asked to bring to school any books they might obtain. Often none were accessible.³¹ Daniel Drake said that in his boyhood days there was no bookstore north of Licking River, and perhaps none in the entire state.³²

At times the only book available from which to read was the Bible.³³ Often the pupils were furnished with a paddle which had the letters of the alphabet and the numerals printed or cut upon it.³⁴ The spelling book most often used was that of Thomas Dilworth.³⁵ Less frequently used was an arithmetic also by Dilworth.

In some schools the manuscript textbook was used.

30 McVey, op. cit., p. 29.

31 Maranam, op. cit., p. 43.

32 Horine, editor, op. cit., p. 161.

33 John Augustus Williams, Life of Elder John Smith: With Some Account of the Rise and Progress of the Current Reformation (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll and Company, Publishers, 1870), p. 24.

34 Smith, op. cit., p. 691.

35 Loc. cit.

This was a book, compiled by some zealous teacher, written in neat script, setting forth on large pages the materials. These manuscript textbooks, sometimes over a hundred pages in length, were carefully guarded. Only the teacher would have a copy and it was from his copy that the students were guided.³⁶

The Mays Lick education plant was a small log house which had been erected by the joint labor of several neighbors about 1796. It was a one-story structure about sixteen by twenty feet. There was a great wooden chimney, a broad puncheon floor, and a door of the same material, complete with latch and string. Light was admitted through oiled paper by long openings between the rough logs. This Mays Lick school was typical of the buildings of pioneer school days.³⁷

Such were the conditions of education on the Kentucky frontier. How important did education seem to be to the frontier Baptist preacher? Were there any prejudices against education or the education of preachers? What advantage did the frontier Baptist preacher take of the educational opportunities open to him? How well did he prepare himself in the early schools? These and other relevant questions must now be considered.

36 McVey, op. cit., p. 19.

37 Horine, editor, op. cit., pp. 143-144.

IV. PREJUDICE AGAINST EDUCATION AMONG THE BAPTISTS

The idea has prevailed by and large that the early Baptists of Kentucky were illiterate and ignorant and that they flagrantly ignored the field of education. Perhaps this attitude was nurtured by their opponents, or by their own defiant replies. But regardless of its origin, its credibility is to be doubted. Spencer³⁸ feels safe to assume that a larger part of the prominent citizens of frontier Kentucky have been members of Baptist churches than have belonged to the churches of any other group.

The crux of the matter is that the Baptists have been misrepresented and misunderstood.³⁹ What they really believed was that a liberal education was not necessary to salvation. They also felt that college education was not indispensable to preaching.⁴⁰ They did not believe that a person's status with God was at all dependent upon education, neither did they believe that education was enough to make a preacher. This position was often construed to mean that Baptists were opposed to all education.

Baptists have always encouraged the acquiring of a basic education, feeling that it was important for the

38 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 489.

39 Ibid., I, 488.

40 Loc. cit.

happiness and progress of mankind. However, it must be admitted that they were often opposed to theological education for Baptist preachers. Many times the frontier preachers felt they had seen Greek, Latin and Hebrew given more importance than their Saviour.⁴¹ It was only natural when such experiences were fresh in their minds that they should be antagonistic and prejudiced toward learned ministers.

Most of the impetus for this prejudice originated before the settlers ever reached the Kentucky frontier. Baptists of Virginia, almost from their beginning, had failed to participate properly in the education programs.⁴² One reason they underrated the importance of education in ministers was the strong tendency shown by the Congregational and Episcopal Churches to regard education as not only indispensable but the only requisite preparation for preaching. Many of the Episcopal and Congregationalist ministers made no pretense of an inward call. Some made no attempt to cultivate personal piety.⁴³ Hence, many Baptists felt

⁴¹ David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World (New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1848), II, 462-463.

⁴² Robert Boyle Howell, The Early Baptists of Virginia (Philadelphia: The Bible and Publication Society, 1857), p. 122.

⁴³ John A. Broadus, "The American Baptist Ministry of One Hundred Years Ago," The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. IX (January, 1875), 16.

that any preacher who acquired a theological education would depend upon his education too much and not enough upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The net result was that there were to be found ministers among the Baptists, some wielding great influence, who were not adverse to nipping in the bud any plan to better the education of Baptist ministers. The Kentucky frontier had its share of these. John Taylor, who worked with ten Kentucky frontier Baptist churches during his lifetime, spoke with fervency and some contempt on the subject.

. . . part of the distresses of my old age, was the plan now set on foot by some of the Baptists, for patrimonial, theological education; and the object of all this is to make preachers, preachers of a certain grade. Missionary preachers. And this produces a new clue for begging or teasing the people for more money, with this pretext, we will make more preachers for you, as if Jesus Christ did not know how to make preachers for his own use among men. . . . In the schools of the prophets, their pupils were called their sons; but their education was very different from what is aimed at now. It is said, Christ kept his disciples with him three years before he sent them out to preach. If this was true; it was not to learn literature. Nothing is more absurd than to say, that a man cannot understand the Scriptures, but by a knowledge of the original languages in which they were written.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ John Taylor, Thoughts On Missions, and Biographies of Baptist Preachers (n.p., n.n., 1820), p. 23.

Many of the frontier preachers could not see how education would contribute to or enhance their ministry. They felt that there was no necessity for them to study. The Lord had called them to preach. When they preached they had only to open their mouths and the Holy Spirit would promptly fill them with undebatable arguments.

Illustrative of this prevalent view is a conversation between William Vaughn, a pioneer preacher who knew the importance of education, and one of his co-workers. Vaughn asked his companion what his text and subject had been on the preceding Sabbath. His co-worker replied that he did not remember, for when he stepped into the pulpit the Lord always gave him his text and told him what to say. Furthermore a half-hour afterwards he could not remember his text. Needled by the man's casualness and lack of comprehension, Vaughn replied, "You must care very little about what your God tells you to forget it so soon."⁴⁵

Some of the Baptist pioneer preachers felt that knowledge would destroy their effectiveness. John Smith, who in later life became active in the movement of Alexander Campbell, had always cherished the dream as a boy of going away to secure an education. However his desire

⁴⁵ Thomas M. Vaughn, Memoirs of Rev. Wm. Vaughn, D. D. (Louisville: Caperton and Cates, 1878), p. 81.

and call to preach caused him to hesitate since he felt that any learning he might obtain would be useless if he preached.

He felt, at that time, that he could deny himself all knowledge, dear as it was to his mind, rather than destroy his influence by his learning.⁴⁶

As a result, often the young minister did not wait to secure an education, but began immediately the task of calling men to repentance.⁴⁷

Indicative of this fact is the observation not only that some Kentucky Baptist preachers looked askance at education but that the same spirit was found among the Baptist lay membership as well. Throughout the entire range of this dissertation, much opposition to education is discovered. The oldest organized church in Kentucky, the Severn's Valley Church, records in its minute book September 7, 1816:

Agreed that this Church disapprove of providing an Education fund as recommended by the resolution of Bro. Hubbard as entered on the minutes of last association and that our members give Information there of to the Association.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Williams, op. cit., p. 66.

⁴⁷ Lewis N. Thompson, Lewis Craig, the Pioneer Baptist Preacher: His Life, Labors and Character (Louisville: Baptist World Publishing Company, 1910), p. 46.

⁴⁸ Severn's Valley Baptist Church Minutes for 1816, II, 53.

It must be remembered that Kentucky was new country. The people themselves were generally quite uneducated. Naturally they preferred and sympathized strongly with preachers but little superior to themselves in general culture.⁴⁹ Hence the Baptists were content to select their ministers from among the gifted members of the individual churches.⁵⁰ Thus the message of the Baptist preacher was directed to the poor and uncultivated persons who comprised the majority of the settlers. The objective of the frontier Baptist preacher was to minister to the religious indifference and average low morality of the frontier people, rather than to dispute with intellectuals.⁵¹

It was not until 1829 that the Baptists felt the incentive to enter into educational control in Kentucky. In January of that year a number of Baptist ministers and laymen petitioned the state legislature for a charter incorporating a board of trustees called "The Kentucky Baptist Educational Society." The charter was granted. The objective of the society was the establishment of a college under the control of Kentucky Baptists.⁵² The

49 Broadus, op. cit., p. 17.

50 Sonne, op. cit., p. 15.

51 Ibid., pp. 14-15.

52 William Dudley Nowlin, Kentucky Baptist History: 1770-1922 (/n.p.: Baptist Book Concern, 1922), p. 46.

result of this action was Georgetown College.

V. THE LOWEST EDUCATIONAL STRATA AMONG THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHERS

The frontier Baptist preacher in Kentucky was generally a person without much formal education.⁵³ Many of them were illiterate persons, even though at times they displayed considerable natural talents.⁵⁴

Our preachers and teachers were in general, almost as destitute as the people at large, many of whom could neither read nor write, did not send their children to school, and of course kept no books in the house.⁵⁵

Such preparation could not help but make the ministries of many of these frontier preachers weak and inefficient.⁵⁶ Yet this was not always true, for some of the best examples of frontier Baptist preachers in Kentucky had very little educational opportunity.

William Hickman, who is considered an excellent ex-

⁵³ Wendell H. Rone, A History of the Daviess-McLean Association in Kentucky: 1884-1943 (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p.13.

⁵⁴ Horine, editor, op. cit., p. 193.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 161.

⁵⁶ J. H. Spencer, "Fifty Years of Baptist Progress," Memorial Volume Containing the Papers and Addresses That Were Delivered at the Jubilee of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1888), p. 23.

ample of the Kentucky frontier Baptist preacher, spoke of his sparse training saying, "My chance of learning was very small, having little time to go to school, I could read but little, but barely write any. . . ." ⁵⁷ The fact that Hickman had a fruitful ministry and is always referred to with respect and admiration is indicative of diligent application of natural talents which enabled him largely to overcome his inadequate preparation.

Joseph Reding, another of the earliest arrivals in Kentucky, was reared by an uncle. Because the uncle was poor, young Reding had but small opportunity to learn. ⁵⁸ By the time he had grown to manhood he could read haltingly by spelling the words as he proceeded. He was also able to write a little. ⁵⁹ Yet like Hickman, Reding is known as an effectual Kentucky frontier Baptist preacher.

Jacob Lock was called as pastor of Mount Tabor Church in 1803. At the time he accepted the call he could not read and did not know the alphabet. ⁶⁰ Lock later learned

⁵⁷ William Hickman, "A Short Account of My Life and Travels, For More Than Fifty Years; a Professed Servant of Jesus Christ," (a typed copy in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, from the original owned by W. P. Harvey), p. 1.

⁵⁸ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 90.

⁵⁹ Taylor, Thoughts On Missions, p. 47.

⁶⁰ Spencer, op. cit., I, 386-387.

to read, though slowly and often inaccurately. However, such an accomplishment could not cause the earlier fact of an inadequate education to be ignored. To say the least, Lock began his ministry under a handicap by not being able to read.

When he was about twenty-five years old, Warren Cash came to Kentucky and joined the Clear Creek Church.⁶¹ At this time he did not know the alphabet. Susannah Cash, his wife, was the daughter of a Baptist minister and a somewhat cultured woman.⁶² Taking her husband under her tutelage, she began the task of teaching and helping him. Spencer⁶³ related that because of her work and because he had a good mind to begin with, Warren Cash soon became a useful preacher. Such were the negligible educational attainments of a considerable segment of the frontier Baptist preachers in Kentucky.

VI. THE MEDIAN DEGREE OF PREPAREDNESS FOUND IN THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER

The next observable stratum of educational preparedness

61 Ibid., I, 329.

62 W. O. Carver, History of the New Salem Baptist Church, Nelson County, Kentucky (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p. 7.

63 Spencer, op. cit., I, 59.

consists of those men who attended the frontier schools long enough to read, write, and to pick up other essentials for a frontier life. These schools were usually of the old fort or subscription type. It is in this group, which may be called the group of average preparedness, that the largest number of the earlier preachers are to be found. The following men are examples of this median degree of preparedness.

In 1808 Rueben Ross began a thirty-year pastorate of the Spring Creek of West Fork Church.⁶⁴ Altogether, he probably did not spend more than twelve months in the classroom. His attendance was always spasmodic and not consecutive. After his fourteenth year he did not again return to school.⁶⁵ However, during his irregular attendance he learned to read well, to write a good clear hand, to answer all practical purposes on the frontier. People who heard his sermons or engaged Ross in conversation supposed him to know grammar.⁶⁶

Robert Kirtley attended some of the best schools in early Kentucky.⁶⁷ In 1796, Robert was placed in a school near Lexington by his parents. Several months later he had changed schools and was under the tuition of an educated

64 Ibid., II, 367.

65 James Ross, Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross (Philadelphia: Grant, Faires and Rodgers, /n.d./), pp. 36-37.

66 Loc. cit.

67 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 300.

Englishman, known as Parson Stubbs. Soon he was taught by Absalom Graves, who influenced him markedly. After this he attended one other school for a short time. Though he had attended four schools, the entire length of time spent in the classroom did not exceed eighteen months.⁶⁸ Because of this schooling, brief as it may have been, he had received the essentials of an English education. Upon reaching maturity and being ordained he was called as pastor of the Bullittsburg Church.⁶⁹

When he was six years old William Vaughn was enrolled in school. The teacher's name was Roundtree.

Spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic were the only branches taught in this school, and these very imperfectly. His letters were torn out of an old book and pasted on a paddle. These were soon learned, and in a little while he began to read. His reading-book was the Bible, and in a short time he learned to read it pretty well. When he came to a hard word he would guess at it and pronounce it something, and as the teacher would never correct him, he supposed he did not know any better himself.⁷⁰

Later William Vaughn, who was to become pastor at Russellville, attended several night writing schools. When about ten he attended a writing school of two weeks. Five

68 J. A. Kirtley, History of Bullittsburg Church (Covington, Kentucky: Printed by Davis, 1872), pp. 52-53.

69 Spencer, op. cit., I, 301.

70 Vaughn, op. cit., p. 13.

years later he attended another writing school for thirteen nights. Perhaps the entire time spent in school did not exceed ten months.⁷¹

Jacob Rogers, pastor of the Mill Creek Church for twenty-three years, attended school for six months. During this time he learned to read and to write acceptably.⁷²

The third pastor of Cox's Creek was Isaac Taylor. He was taught long enough to be able to read and write. Spencer⁷³ adds that he enjoyed the advantages of his father's library, which consisted of the Bible and a hymn-book.

Sometimes the education was neglected until after the individual felt the call to preach and saw the need for study. John Higgins, a mature adult, was baptized by Edmund Waller in 1813, and began preaching several weeks after. Aware of his lack of learning, Higgins enrolled in a grammar school in Fayette County, determined to prepare himself better for his work. He soon became pastor of the Forks of Dix River Church and remained there for nineteen years.⁷⁴

In 1806 Daniel Walker became pastor of the Wilson's Creek Church. This was his field of labor for twenty-five

71 Ibid., p. 16.

72 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, II, 68.

73 Ibid., I, 74.

74 Ibid., I, 36.

years. One finds, upon inquiry, that he was taught to read and write.⁷⁵ Nothing more is said of his education.

It was said of William Downs of the Rolling Fork Church that he received a fair English education. Evidently it was enough to enable him to teach school, for he adopted that profession for a time.⁷⁶

Thus it has been seen that the median degree of preparedness, according to present day standards, was quite low. Actually this group had few more advantages than those considered in the lowest degree of preparedness. Yet these men did have the advantage of a few weeks in school. This enabled them to learn to read and write as well as most of their frontier neighbors or church members. Because they did at least attend school for a time, they were somewhat ahead and more suited for the Kentucky frontier than their brother preachers who could hardly read or write.

VII. THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL PREPAREDNESS AMONG THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHERS

The highest level of educational preparedness among the frontier Baptist preachers in Kentucky consisted of those men who had attended college or seminary, or who had

75 Ibid., II, 60.

76 Ibid., I, 164.

done some special studying. Of the three groups considered, this was the smallest. There were several men of ability in this level of attainment.

John Gano has been regarded by some as the most learned and distinguished of the frontier Baptist preachers in Kentucky. He came to Kentucky in 1787 after years as a successful pastor of the First Baptist Church in New York City.⁷⁷ Already a preacher of eminence and with a background of distinguished service, he became pastor of the Town Fork Church near Lexington. His education had begun at six years of age when he attended a common country school.⁷⁸ Gano himself relates of his later education at Princeton College:

Princeton College, was at that time kept in Newark, New Jersey; and governed by President Burr, with whom I was a great favourite. I frequently attended their public examinations, and had encouragement from the President, that I might enter college if I chose, when found upon examination to be fit for it. I found my advantages great, not being confined to any particular class, but was at liberty to make all the progress I was able to, in any branch of study. I intended, when I did enter, to enter the senior class; but unfortunately I was taken sick, before I had made but very little progress in the classics. My sickness was probably owing to my too close application to study, and the want of exercise. The doctors and

77 Ibid., I, 116-126.

78 Biographical Memoirs of the Late Rev. John Gano, of Frankfort, (Kentucky) Formerly of the City of New York (New York: Southwick and Hardcastle, 1806), pp. 11-12.

my friends, advised me to take a journey, and relax my mind from study.⁷⁹

There is no indication from Gano's memoirs that he ever returned to school.

According to Spencer, about 1800 John Gano instituted a "Religious Polemical Society." There seems to be no other information available concerning this interesting development except that Theodrick Boulware, another frontier preacher, attended some of the meetings.⁸⁰

Silas Noel was another of the few frontier Baptist preachers who attended college. His first pastorate was the Big Spring Church. Later and more successful pastorates were the Stamping Ground and Great Crossing Churches. Though it is impossible to find which college he attended, it is known that he was given a good English education. Later he was educated in the classical languages and studied law.⁸¹

John Taylor, with his characteristic derogatory remarks concerning education, tells of Noel receiving an honorary degree in Lexington. Taylor begrudgingly admits that the receiving of the degree did not diminish Noel's desire to preach the gospel to all types of people.

79 Ibid., p. 39.

80 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 315.

81 Ibid., I, 316.

The high powers of Lexington, authorized to make Doctors of Divinity, a year or two back has saluted him with a flowing diploma. But it is pleasing to see that these high flying trifles does not prevent his yet going into thickets; or, according to his own term, while at his work, the highways and hedges, to invite the poor, the halt, the blind and lame, with every other soul to seek the salvation of God.⁸²

Jacob Gregg, who became pastor of the Mays Lick Church in 1802, was a native of England. He was educated at the Bristol Academy. J. B. Taylor pays tribute to his amazing photographic memory when he states that while crossing the Atlantic he memorized the Old and New Testament as well as the whole of Watt's Psalms.⁸³

The Clear Creek Church called Henry Toler about 1816. While growing up in Virginia, the lad had exhibited such talent that a wealthy Baptist known as Counsellor Carter offered to send him away for more education. Toler accepted the generous offer and spent three years of study under the direction of Dr. Samuel Jones in Pennsylvania.⁸⁴

James Fishback, of the Baptist Church in Lexington, was another early preacher of superior advantages.

⁸² Taylor, A History of Ten Churches, Second Edition (Bloomfield, Kentucky: Will H. Holmes, 1827), p. 188.

⁸³ Spencer, op. cit., I, 190-191.

⁸⁴ Ibid., II, 26-27.

In the year 1793, my father sent me to school at Transylvania Seminary, with a hope, as I believe, on his part, that the Lord would carry on his work by grace in my soul to real conversion, and that in the end I should become a preacher of the Gospel.⁸⁵

At Transylvania, Fishback finished his literary course under Henry Toulmin, a Unitarian minister of superior ability. After this, however, he chose the study of medicine. Soon he was sent abroad to receive a medical education.⁸⁶ After beginning the practice of medicine, he was converted and ordained.

Guerdon Gates was graduated with honor from Washington College. Later he studied at a theological institution, the name of which cannot be discovered. Before moving to Kentucky, Gates was a professor for two or three years in Washington College. In 1823 he became pastor of the Baptist Church in Paris, Kentucky.⁸⁷

Jacob Creath, Jr., preached in various churches in and around Lexington and Frankfort. After receiving the rudiments of an English education, young Creath was advised by a friend, William Dossy, to go away for further schooling.

⁸⁵ James Fishback, A Defence of the Elkhorn Association (Lexington: Thomas T. Skillman, 1822), p. 62.

⁸⁶ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, II, 29.

⁸⁷ Ibid., II, 31.

He instructed me to repair to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and place myself under the care of Brother Abner W. Clopton, who was a learned man, a physician, and a professor in the University.

With him I studied the Latin, Greek, and English languages, and theology

I continued at Chapel Hill during the year 1819. In the fall of 1820, Brother Clopton removed to Milton, Caswell County; to preside over the female seminary at that place. I accompanied him, and continued there until November, 1821, when I became a student of Columbia College, Washington City, D. C. It was there under the supervision of William Staughton, D. D. I remained there until December, 1823. . . .⁸⁸

William Warfield also had superior educational advantages. Because he gave indications of a superior mentality, his father spared nothing in providing educational opportunities. After completing his academic course, he entered Transylvania University, where he spent six years, graduating both in letters and law. After his ordination to the ministry Warfield studied at Princeton Theological Seminary for two years. Upon his return from Princeton he became associated with the New Providence Church until 1825, when he changed to the Mount Zion Church.⁸⁹ When Reuben Ross heard Warfield preach he was disappointed because he had expected his superior educational advantages to place him high above his co-laborers.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ P. Donan, Memoir of Jacob Creath, Jr. (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll and Company, 1872), pp. 61-63.

⁸⁹ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, II, 369-370.

⁹⁰ Ross, op. cit., pp. 333-334.

There have been seen thus far in this study of the frontier Baptist preacher's educational preparedness three basic strata of preparedness. First, there were those who were illiterate, or practically so. Oftentimes these preachers, and there were many of them in early Kentucky, never attended any school. The second group consisted of those who had the advantage of attending the elementary schools, either of the old fort or subscription type, for varying lengths of time. They therefore mastered enough of the three R's to prepare them more suitably for frontier ministries. This was the largest group and designates the median degree of preparedness. The third group was made up of those who had superior educational advantages. They either attended some college or studied privately under some scholar after completing their elementary or academic education. These men were in the minority. Such men as John Gano and Silas Noel were among the first in Kentucky who had attended college. However, it has been noted that as the transition time began to near and as the Kentucky frontier began gradually to be assimilated into a settled, cultured society, more and more of the young ministers received some collegiate training. Thus by 1820, a larger percentage of those entering the ministry had received some higher education.

VIII. THE SELF-TAUGHT FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER

One last group, those who were largely self-taught, deserves to be mentioned. There were a number of these frontier preachers who had no advantage of schooling. Sometimes they failed to attend because they lived too far away from the nearest school. Oftentimes there were too many to supply food and clothing for in the family, so that there was no other alternative than to forego the formal acquisition of learning and to help secure the necessities of life. Others failed to attend school because of the prejudice of parents who felt that no learning from books could benefit their children. But even when all these things were true, there was still the possibility of being self-taught. Some of the frontier preachers in Kentucky showed not a little ambition and aggressiveness as they sought in various ways to improve their education.

William Calmes Buck, who began his ministry in 1820 by working with the Highland and Little Bethel Churches, was largely such a self-taught individual.⁹¹ The frontier community in which he grew up was very backward. His father, though able at the time to send him away to school, refused because he had never given such opportunities to his other children. To do so for William would be showing partiality

91 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, II, 172.

and giving him advantages which the other children had not enjoyed.

He [Buck] then determined to gain by his own pluck and energy, what had been denied him by the circumstances of his youth. With beautiful devotion, he dedicated all his spare time and strength to his studies. Fortunately he had access to a village library of good books, and he carried home great loads of pine knots to serve as his lamp; and he snatched from the night, long hours for reading and study, which his fellows were devoting to sleep and amusement. So successful was he in his heroic self-training, that he acquired not only a good English education, with a fair knowledge of Latin and philosophy, but also the habit of study, and power of concentration that made him a good student all his life long, that even enabled him to take up and learn Greek after he was fifty years of age; and Hebrew after he was sixty.⁹²

Some of the frontier preachers, as they reached maturity, and almost always after they had accepted the call to preach, began the attempt as best they could to supplement any education they might have received as school children.

William Vaughn was such a man. He had always wanted to be different from the preachers he heard, who preached the same thing in almost the same words each Sunday. After beginning to preach he tried to increase his education.⁹³

⁹² Arthur Yager, Sketch of the Life of William Calmes Buck (Louisville: C. T. Dearing Printing Company, [n.d.], pp. 4-5.

⁹³ For Vaughn's earlier education cf. ante, p. 60.

First, he took his savings and purchased several books including Walker's Dictionary, Murray's Grammar, and Buck's Theological Dictionary. These he kept by his side, even during the week as he worked, and frequently referred to them. He studied systematically the Bible, and read Bunyan and Shakespeare. At other times he read attentively Stackhouse's History of the Bible. He also read Witsius on the Covenants and Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice.⁹⁴

Walter Warder became pastor of the Mays Lick Church in 1814. Upon coming to Kentucky he had engaged, as many of the early preachers did, in teaching school. Spencer says, "His education was very limited, but by means of close application while teaching it was much improved."⁹⁵ Thus at least one pioneer preacher taught himself as he taught others.

Often the preachers were given help and encouragement at home. Jeremiah Vardeman, a co-laborer of William Vaughn and Walter Warder, received his small amount of education in that way. John Mason Peck attributed Vardeman's education to the help he received from the family circle, as well as his own natural desire to obtain knowledge.⁹⁶

94 Vaughn, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

95 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 201-202.

96 J. M. Peck, "Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman," The Christian Repository, Vol. III (August, 1854), 460.

Benjamin Tolbart, first pastor of the Hazel Creek Baptist Church beginning in 1797, received his education in the home. He learned to read with the help of his wife after marriage.⁹⁷

David Barrow, who announced his Lulbegrud School in 1801, studied grammar after he married.⁹⁸ Elder Jeremiah Walker helped him and he became an excellent grammarian.⁹⁹

Much of the studies attempted by the pioneer preachers as they supplemented their sketchy learning was of a theological nature. It was often done as they worked with a church. Such was the case of Robert Kirtley.¹⁰⁰ While pastoring the Bullittsburg Church, he secured a few valuable histories, good theological and Bible dictionaries, and with these aids applied himself to the study of the Bible. He did not have access to commentaries and theological text-books. The Bible was his only book.¹⁰¹

IX. FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHERS WERE THE PRODUCT OF THEIR TIME AND ENVIRONMENT

Summing up the educational preparedness of the

97 Wm. J. Johnson, History of Hazel Creek Baptist Church (Greenville: Banner Print, 1898), p. 6.

98 For information on Lulbegrud School cf. ante, p. 46.

99 Spencer, op. cit., I, 193.

100 For Kirtley's earlier education cf. ante, pp. 59-60.

101 Kirtley, op. cit., p. 58.

frontier Baptist preacher in Kentucky, it must be confessed that most of the preachers did not possess the learning which comes mainly from constant perusal of books. Instead, they were the products of their times and environment. The westward-facing pioneer had found that in the simple conflict with nature book learning was of little service. On the frontier, the requirements for preachers had been steadily lowered until they could be met by almost anyone with native talent for preaching and an ability to persuade churchgoers that he had received a call from God.¹⁰² Certainly it was not considered necessary to have a fine education. It is probable, though, that these early ministers were better suited to the times in which they lived than they would have been if educated in the usual sense.

It has been seen that the frontier Baptist preachers were men of varying degrees of education. Then, as today, selectivity and screening processes were unconsciously carried on by the people who listened. The people selected a man comparable to their level. Into the wilder, more unsettled regions went the preachers of lesser education and into the tamed, more settled regions went the preachers of greater education. There were few exceptions to this rule. Every frontier Baptist preacher had his place.

102 Ernest Sutherland Bates, American Faith: Its Religious, Political, and Economic Foundations (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1940), p. 329.

CHAPTER IV

A STUDY OF THE FRONTIER PREACHER'S MORALS

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An observer, after the Great Revival of 1801-1802, wrote that the character of the state of Kentucky seemed entirely without blemish. This utopian situation was regarded as a result of the revival success. Thus one man observed:

I found Kentucky to appearance the most moral place I had ever seen. A profane expression was hardly ever heard. A religious awe seemed to pervade the country; and some deistical characters had confessed that from whatever cause the revival might proceed, it made the people better.¹

Ten years later when John F. Schermerhorn and Samuel J. Mills made a trip through Kentucky, which included a visit with John Taylor, they described the conditions as vastly different. To them, the morals of Kentucky were loose and many of the inhabitants were extremely ignorant and very vicious. They reported the prevalent vices as being profanity, gambling, horse racing, fighting, drunkenness, and a violation of the Sabbath.²

1 Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz, Home Missions On the American Frontier: With Particular Reference to the Home Missionary Society (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1939), p. 127.

2 Loc. cit.

It seems probable that both of these observations were extremes and that Kentucky was not so good as one report would indicate nor so bad as the other would have one to believe. However, in any society where people are gathered together in the unique conditions of frontier environment, it is generally assumed that the actions and proprieties are far from that which is always desirable.

The frontier Baptist preachers of Kentucky were integral parts of their environment. Though most of them had considerable natural talents and were infused with enthusiasm and devotion for the promulgation of Christianity,³ they could hardly escape being somewhat moulded by the roughness of the Kentucky frontier and its inhabitants. They were often lacking in dignity and solemnity. It is in this rough frontier context that the morals of the frontier Baptist preacher will be studied. The frontier preacher's environment, with its mores, must be kept in mind if a proper perspective of his morals is to be attained.

Before considering specific areas and studying the frontier Baptist preacher's attitudes and actions, it is necessary to prepare the background. First, the place of discipline in the Kentucky frontier churches will be noticed.

³ W. H. Perrin, J. H. Battle, and G. C. Kniffin, Kentucky: A History of the State (Louisville: F. A. Battey and Company, 1887), p. 218.

Next, the easy entrance into these churches by any frontier preacher desirous to speak the word will be observed. Finally, it is discovered that abuses of this freedom caused the ministers to be more closely studied by the church members. With this background laid, it then becomes possible to study some prominent areas of delinquency.

I. FRONTIER BAPTIST CHURCHES GAVE MUCH ATTENTION TO DISCIPLINE

Disciplining of members absorbed much of the attention and interest of the business meetings of the Kentucky frontier Baptist churches. A study of the minutes of any early church reveals the part played by the churches in maintaining and preserving a moral order. Members are disciplined for drinking, fighting, harmful gossip, lying, stealing, adultery, gambling, horse racing, shady business deals and even misunderstandings, disputes and family quarrels.⁴ The discipline cut across every stratum of society in the community. Men or women, white or black, laymen or clergy, all were disciplined if necessary.

⁴ William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), pp. 48-49.

II. BAPTIST CHURCHES WERE OPEN
TO ALL MINISTERS

In the early days it was usual to allow any preacher to speak in the meeting house of the various communities. As early as 1789 this fact is observed in the minutes of the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church.

Agreed that the members of this Church may invit ministers of any denomination to preach in their houses.⁵

This practice seemed to be considered natural by many of the churches for years. In 1818 the White's Run Baptist Church unanimously agreed that her doors were open for all gospel ministers "of the same faith" to preach to the people.⁶

As late as 1829 the Dry Ridge Baptist Church felt it safe to invite all ministers to worship in her meeting house.

Resolved by the Church that any member of the Church invite any traveling preacher of the gospel to preach in the dry ridge meeting house.⁷

⁵ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1789, p. 5.

⁶ White's Run Baptist Church Minutes for 1818, p. 27.

⁷ Dry Ridge Baptist Church Minutes for 1829, p. 44.

III. ABUSES OF FREEDOM CAUSED MINISTERS
TO BE SCRUTINIZED

It was inevitable that with such free and easy entrance into the services of the frontier Baptist churches some ministers would take advantage of the situation. It was only a matter of time until complaints began to be heard because some of the ministers did not measure up to what the people considered the clerical standard.

Thus before long there were to be found warnings in the church and associational minutes against certain preachers and against letting all aspirants preach in the churches without first examining their credentials.

As early as 1793 the Elkhorn Association advised her churches to be on their guard against the imposition of a Robert Smith. Though he had been excluded from his church, he continued to preach in the Elkhorn vicinity. Mainly because of his action Elkhorn Association appointed a committee of her ablest preachers to guard against clerical impostors.⁸

In 1798 this same Elkhorn Association again entered in her minutes a warning against two Baptist ministers.

⁸ J. H. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists From 1769 to 1885, Including More Than 800 Biographical Sketches (Cincinnati: J. R. Baubers, 1885), I, 344.

Agreed to caution the churches of a certain John Duncan, who has sustained the character of a Baptist preacher, but is not in union with us or any of our churches; and that he is a man not of fair religious character. Also, there is a certain Peter Bainbridge in the same situation.⁹

Spencer¹⁰ thought that Peter Bainbridge was a man of generosity and purity of morals. He seemed to have had, however, a lack of firmness and a liking for "worldly amusements."

Again in 1799 the Elkhorn Baptist Association advised caution.

We advise the Churches of our union to beware of encouraging any stranger to preach among them without proper credentials and a fair character.¹¹

Thus the Elkhorn Association began to see the necessity of screening the ministers and to insist upon each minister's having the proper credentials and character. Other associations saw this need also.

In 1797 the Salem Association minutes warned against a Reuben Smith.

The Association advise the Churches of this union to discountenance Reuben

9 Ibid., II, 115.

10 Ibid., II, 116.

11 Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1799, p. 80.

Smith from either preaching or administering the ordinances amongst them unless he unite himself with some Church.¹²

During 1799 Salem Association advised the churches to be cautious in restoring excommunicated ministers to their former standing.¹³

Nothing more is mentioned in the Salem minutes concerning this problem until 1804, when another insertion appeared in the form of a query.

Query from Cones Creek Church would it not be proper for the association to advise the Churches in our union not to encourage strange ministers to preach amongst us unless they support a good character and come well recommended by the Churches or Society to which they belong Ans. Yes See John 2 Epistle.¹⁴

The next year the association cautioned their churches against using the services of William Downs.

Agreeably to a request from Rolling Fork Church we caution the Churches in our union not to permit William Downs to preach among them he having been excommunicated by that Church.¹⁵

A number of years later, in 1819, this association considered once more the problem of their excluded brethren.

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- 12 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1797, p. 11.
 13 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1799, p. 11.
 14 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1804, p. 15.
 15 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1805, p. 15.

. . . in relation to strange preachers it was recommend that the Association insert in her minutes the names of excluded ministers and that no person attend their preaching of such ministers.¹⁶

In 1823 Salem Association reported a James Haycraft, a minister who had been excluded for reasons not revealed, as refusing to give up his credentials which he had received from the association.

Brethren Warren Cash and David Thurman appointed to demand the credentials of James Haycraft who has disorderly left us.¹⁷

A short time later David Thurman reported his result to the association.

Bro Thurman reports that he requested Mr. James Haycraft to give up his credentials to him but he refused to comply with his request.¹⁸

At the same time this incident occurred the association again considered the case of William Downs.

Agreed to advise the Rolling Fork Church not to liscense William Downs to preach any longer until his conduct gains the confidence of his brethren greatly.¹⁹

16 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1819, p. 20.

17 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1823, p. 131.

18 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1824, p. 133.

19 Loc. cit.

That other associations were disturbed and quizzical over some derelict frontier preachers is seen also. In 1801 the Green River Association received a query from the Bethel Baptist Church.

Can a minister who has been silenced for immoral conduct be restored to his ministry again without the aid of a Presbytery?
 Answer - The Association advises in such cases, to call a Presbytery.²⁰

Sometimes associations called upon a sister association to help them adjudicate their problems. In 1804 the North District Association received such a plea for help from the South District Association.

. . . also a letter from a body of Baptists under the name of the South District Association, was presented and read; containing complaints against two of the preachers in the South District Association, and alledging difficulties with some of the Churches in the Tate's Creek Association, and urging this Association to take up the business. . . .²¹

By 1805 the North District Association had set up an advised procedure on how to unseat an undesirable preacher.

The Association advise, that a Church in such case, withdraw all

²⁰ Green River Baptist Association Minutes for 1801, p. 5.

²¹ North District Association Minutes for 1804, p. 2.

the power she gave such Preacher; and two Preachers may suspend or stop such Preacher from preaching, until he can be tried by a council of five Ministers, whose decision in such case ought to be obeyed, until reversed by the Association.²²

In 1816 the Log Lick Baptist Church inquired of North District Association on the proper relation the church should sustain to exclude preachers.

Query from Log Lick, "how ought churches to act toward preachers who have been excluded, or withdrawn themselves from our Association, and still appear in public as a preacher?"

Answer, we think the Churches ought not to encourage excluded preachers, either by hearing or inviting them to preach. But such as have withdrawn themselves from our union, who are in good standing in their own societies, we think the Churches ought to act discretionally.²³

In 1810 the Mount Tabor Baptist Church decided that thereafter it would be the duty of the pastor and deacons to enquire about every traveling preacher before he should be encouraged to preach among them.²⁴

The Long Run Baptist Association received a request in 1812 from the East Floyds Fork Baptist Church urging a screening procedure before ordination of ministers.

22 North District Association Minutes for 1805, p. 2.

23 North District Association Minutes for 1816, p. 2.

24 Mount Tabor Baptist Church Minutes for 1810, p. 53.

A request from East Floyds Fork that this assn. shall form some plan, which would be likely to prevent the ordination of improper persons to the ministry.

We advise that in the ordination of ministers the united consent of the Church be gain'd, and we think it not improper for her to advise with the Sister Churches most convenient, and that at least three Experienced men in the ministry, be called to assist in the work, having due regard to the word of the Lord on that Subject.²⁵

Another association, South District, received a query from Little Hickman Baptist Church in 1813 concerning a defence against excluded, fraudulent preachers.

Query from Little Hickman - "How are the churches to prevent fraud from being practiced on them by excluded preachers who pass themselves under the name of baptists?"

Answer - We advise the Churches to be cautious in inviting strange persons to preach amongst them, without sufficient authority.²⁶

Bracken Association made some recommendations in 1820 to churches about to ordain ministers.

Whereas the ordination of ministers of the gospel is a subject of vital importance - we recommend the churches to be particular as to the qualifications of candidates for the ministry, to consult the views and wishes of neighboring churches

²⁵ Long Run Baptist Association Minutes for 1812, pp. 37-38.

²⁶ South District Association Minutes for 1813, p. 2.

as much as practicable, and to take due care to obtain the aid of as many of the ministers as can be done conveniently - for, in the multitude of council, there is safety.²⁷

It has been observed that the members of the frontier Baptist churches were liable to the effects of discipline whether they were laymen or clergymen. A large majority of the early preachers were rugged and consecrated individuals. However, there were to be found some preachers of weak character. That this was undoubtedly true is felt after a study of the foregoing cautions excerpts from the minutes of the churches and associations. These unstable leaders caused much consternation in the ranks of their members and often retarded the growth of the churches. It is now necessary to consider the prominent areas of delinquency among those frontier Baptist preachers whose reputation and calling were considered questionable.

IV. THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER AND SPIRITOUS LIQUORS

Intoxicating liquors were used by almost every one on the early Kentucky frontier. Perhaps for a short time, because of difficult circumstances of procuring liquor, the early settlers practiced a great deal of abstinence.

27 Bracken Association Minutes for 1820, p. 6.

In those times the nearest point where liquor could be obtained was many miles away. Importation and manufacture were rendered difficult by the hostility of the Indians.²⁸

Exactly when liquor manufacture was introduced into Kentucky is not known. It is known that its sale was regulated in hotels as early as 1781 and that it was being manufactured in Kentucky as early as 1783.²⁹ In a speech before the New York Barmen's Guild in January of 1951, Robinson Brown, Jr. a distillery director claimed that Elijah Craig, a frontier Baptist preacher, made the first sour-mash bourbon in Kentucky in 1789.³⁰

Just how essential liquor was in the frontier environment is attested to by numerous frontier preachers.

James Finley, a Methodist circuit rider whose ministry was spent in frontier travel, spoke of the commonplace acceptance of liquor.

Ardent spirits were used as a preventive of disease. It was also regarded as a necessary beverage. A house could not be raised, a field of wheat cut down, nor could there be a log rolling, a husking, a quilting, a wedding, or a funeral without the aid of alcohol. In this state of things there was a great laxity on the subject of drinking, and the ministers as well as the members of some denominations imbibed pretty freely.³¹

28 Perrin, Battle, and Kniffen, op. cit., p. 217.

29 Loc. cit.

30 The Louisville Times, January 29, 1951.

31 W. P. Strickland, editor, Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley; or, Pioneer Life in the West (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1853), p. 248.

Peter Cartwright, the eccentric Methodist itinerant, also had some recollections on the prevalence of drinking.

From my earliest recollection drinking drams, in family and social circles, was considered harmless and allowable socialities. It was almost universally the custom for preachers, in common with all others, to take drams; and if a man would not have it in his family, his harvest, his house-raisings, log-rollings, weddings, and so on, he was considered parsimonious and unsociable; and many, even professors of Christianity, would not help a man if he did not have spirits and treat the company.³²

However, it cannot be said that the churches were completely unaware of the evils attendant to the use of intoxicating liquors. Cases of discipline for drunkenness, or as they phrased it, "drinking too much" were very frequent in these frontier churches.³³ The key to understanding their position is found in the word moderation. Most Baptists of this period, as well as a majority of all the people, seemed to have no objections to liquor drinking when it was conducted in moderation.³⁴ However, when the members of the Baptist churches became over-indulgent and lost their sense of control in the matter they were likely

³² W. P. Strickland, editor, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher (Cincinnati: Carlton and Lanahan, 1856), p. 212.

³³ Wendell H. Rone, A History of the Daviess-McLean Association in Kentucky: 1884-1943 (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p. 25.

³⁴ Loc. cit.

to be admonished by their church. Often they were excluded.

The problem of intemperance and the probable subsequent failure of persons to behave according to the expectations of a Christian did present itself to these early churches. As early as 1790 an indication of this fact is noticed in the minutes of the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church.

Query, Whether a man that drinks too much in public ought to have gospel Steps taken with him or that it is approved of.³⁵

The minutes fail to disclose how this query was answered.

Elkhorn Association received a query from the Licking Baptist Church in 1796 concerning the availability of church membership to those who retailed liquors.

Quere from Licking. Whether the Church is Justifiable in shutting the door against a member of a sister Church (that offers his membership) for the cause of retailing of Liquors agreeable to law: Answered No.³⁶

The Buffalo Lick Baptist Church in 1815 also had a question about liquors.

Querry: Are there not Evils attending the use of Spiritious Liquors, which come Short of Staggering, or Swearing - if there be, what will this Church advise as to the proper course to pursue for the

³⁵ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1790, p. 9.

³⁶ Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1796, p. 68.

glory of God, and for the Suppression
of the evil.

Ansr We believe it is difficult to
draw a line at the Same time, we advise
our Brethren, whenever they are persuaded
that a Brother has drunk too much that
they friendly and prudently, talk or deal
with him according to our Lords direction
in the 18th of Matthew.³⁷

Further testimony that the liquor problem was ever
so close to this church is seen in the Buffalo Lick records
of ten years later when the church was faced with the
problem of persons selling liquor on the church grounds.

On motion by Br. Lee whether the
Church would take up the subject of
persons bringing of Spirits, to Sell
. . . to the Meeting House in time of
Worship - The Church voted She would
Take it up - and after Invegistation
the Church Solemny Protest against
Such Practices.³⁸

Thus the problem of liquor was not disregarded by
the churches, even though its use was almost universal.

However, as a result of its common-place acceptance,
it was inevitable that there should be Baptist preachers
who would become a great deal more than moderate users of
liquor. In the various records there is abundant evidence
of the degrading effect liquor had upon a number of the
frontier Baptist preachers.

p. 41. 37 Buffalo Lick Baptist Church Minutes for 1815,

p. 95. 38 Buffalo Lick Baptist Church Minutes for 1825,

Peter Cartwright tells of a Baptist preacher, though he does not give his name, who spent the night with him when he lived between Hopkinsville and Russellville. He recalled that about night time an old gentleman and a youth rode up to his place.

He asked me if Peter Cartwright, a Methodist preacher, lived there.

I answered he did.

He asked, "Are you the man?"

I answered, "Yes."

"Well," said he, "I am a Baptist Preacher, have been to Missouri after this my sick son, and I have called to stay all night with you." I told him to do so, and alight and come in. I disposed of their horses as best I could, supper was prepared, and they partook of our fare. After supper they both stepped into the other room, and when they returned I smelled whiskey very strongly; and although these were not the days of general temperance as now going on, yet I thought it a bad sign for a preacher to smell very strong of whiskey, but said nothing. When we were about to retire to bed, I set out the books and said, "Brother, it is our custom to have family prayer; take the books and lead in family prayer." He began to make excuses and declined. I urged him strongly, but he refused, and so I took the books, read, sung, and prayed; but he would not sing with me, neither did he, nor his son, kneel when we prayed. Next morning the family was called together for family prayer; again I invited him to pray with us, but he would not. As soon as prayer was over he went into the other room, and brought out his bottle of whiskey; he asked me to take a dram. I told him I did not drink spirits. He offered it to all my family, but they all refused. After breakfast he and his son harnessed up their horses to start on their way home.

"Perhaps, brother," said he, "You charge?"

"Yes," said I, "All whiskey drinking preachers, that will not pray with me I charge."

"Well," said he, "It looks a little hard that one preacher should charge another."

"Sir," said I, "You have given me no evidence that you are a preacher, and I fear you are a vile imposter; and when any man about me drinks whiskey, and will not pray with me, preacher or no preacher, I take a pleasure in charging him full price; so haul out your cash." He did so, but very reluctantly.³⁹

William Hickman, while still in Virginia, spoke disparagingly of his pastor's addiction to liquor.

. . . I went often to Church to hear the parson preach, when he was sober enough to go through his discourse. . . .⁴⁰

A study of the available materials during the Kentucky frontier period reveals a number of frontier Baptist preachers who fell victim to the drink habit.

George Eve moved to Kentucky and became a preacher in the Bullittsburg Church in 1797. In 1801, George Eve and William Hickman constituted the North Fork Baptist Church. Eve was a popular preacher and was known as an excellent song leader.⁴¹

In spite of his success and popularity George Eve became intemperate in use of liquor. John Taylor explains his disintegration.

³⁹ Strickland, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, pp. 137-138.

⁴⁰ William Hickman, "A Short Account of My Life and Travels, For More Than Fifty Years; A Professed Servant of Jesus Christ," (a typed copy in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, from the original owned by W. P. Harvey), p. 2.

⁴¹ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 294-295.

Though David says tell it not in Gath nor publish it in the streets of Askalon. It is only stating a well known fact, that this man, to the astonishment of the world, fell by the intemperate use of spirits; from the abuse of which no man on earth is safe, while making regular or steady use of them. How this evil grew on Mr. Eve, we cannot well divine; perhaps Mr. Eve, with the growth of his popularity, became too fond of gay society, (where he was often called on to solemnize marriages or other civilities) where luxury much abounded; and perhaps he also forgot what Solomon said in similiar cases-that a man had better put a knife to his throat than be given to appetite. Another thing; Mr. Eve was so complaisant and obliging a temper, he could not readily say, No - and the tempter therefore took the advantage of this yielding texture. Mr. Eve was expelled from the little North Elkhorn church, for the same sin Noah committed, and though he returned and gave satisfaction to the church, and preached on, several years, yet the same crime was committed, and he was excluded the second time, and died an exile, or out of the pale of that church he had as an instrument raised up.⁴²

William Kellar was the first pastor of the Harrod's Creek Baptist Church. He had begun his work several years before 1800. Spencer⁴³ feels that William Kellar was better fitted than most men to be a frontier preacher. He had extraordinary physical strength and courage, and was a man of unflinching industry.

John Taylor felt that everything "that is calculated to recommend a man to his fellowmen, was summed up in Mr.

⁴² John Taylor, Thoughts On Missions and Biographies of Baptist Preachers (n.p., n.n., 1820), p. 39.

⁴³ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 349-351.

Kellar."⁴⁴ Yet in speaking of this frontier preacher, Taylor commented on his activity as a distiller.

He seemed by nature a mechanic, and laboured hard with his own hands. He put up a little water mill on a weak stream, that led on to setting up a distillery, which did not seem to involve his care, so as to keep him from preaching at home or abroad. Yet his distillery cleared him more than a thousand dollars per year. He was far from being a speculator, yet providence threw things in his lap, as if God intended to be kind to his family.⁴⁵

It seems quite amazing that, even though the use of liquor was a common thing, a clergyman should be openly engaged in the distilling business. It is interesting to note the casual manner in which Taylor speaks of this enterprise and his conclusion that Providence was good to William Kellar.

William Downs, earlier alluded to, was the second pastor of the Rolling Fork Baptist Church, succeeding Joshua Carman. Spencer notes that he was one of the most brilliant and fascinating orators in the Kentucky pulpit. He concluded, however, that Downs was too hastily ordained to the ministry. It was soon discovered that he was indolent, slovenly, and self-indulgent. Shortly after his ordination he was called before the church to answer the charge of

⁴⁴ Taylor, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

intoxication. The Rolling Fork Church publicly excluded him and requested Salem Association to advertise his character.⁴⁶ This was done in the minutes of 1805.⁴⁷

Not every preacher who became a victim of alcohol ended in complete disgrace. Some where able to overcome the temptation and to become "tee-totalers." This was the case of Richard Cave, pastor of the Clear Creek Church in 1805. Again John Taylor reveals the situation.

Poor Richard so far betook himself to the use of spirits, that distress was awakened in his brethren; but their great confidence in him as a man of candor with his partial acknowledgments, prevented his final expulsion from the Church. But the great physician cured him in the only way that any man from that disease can be cured - by an entire abstaining from the use of it at all.⁴⁸

An unusual account of another frontier preacher, John BenBrook, and the problem of liquor is cited by Spencer. BenBrook was an early preacher in Red River Association being pastor of the Lake Spring Church about 1805.

He was much admired as a speaker, and was very popular in his church. But unfortunately he got to distilling whisky as a means of supporting his family, and soon got to indulging in the too free use of it. The church at

46 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 163-164.

47 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1805, p. 15.

48 Taylor, Thoughts On Missions, pp. 42-43.

Lake Spring attempt to exercise discipline over him, but his popularity was such that a majority of the church sustained him. He informed the minority, that he could have them excluded, for inveighing against their pastor, but he preferred they should take letters and join a neighboring church called New Salem which they did, to the number of about twelve. But the habit of drinking to excess grew on him, till he fell into public disgrace.⁴⁹

Mays Lick Baptist Church persistently had trouble with the liquor problem. The second, the third, and even the fourth pastors of this church became intemperate, either while pastor of the church or shortly afterwards.

Jacob Gregg was pastor of the Mays Lick Church from 1803 to 1805. He was excluded from the church "for using harsh language about his brethren."⁵⁰ Spencer⁵¹ says that after leaving Mays Lick Gregg began to indulge in intoxicating liquors too freely and frequently throughout his life he was overtaken in the fault.

Baldwin Clifton was the third pastor, being with the Mays Lick people from 1808 to 1809. The church was again unfortunate in the selection of their minister, as Clifton was intemperate.⁵²

⁴⁹ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, II, 233-234.

⁵⁰ Z. T. Cody, History of Mays Lick Baptist Church (Mays Lick, Ky. n.n. 1890), p. 12.

⁵¹ Spencer, op. cit., I, p. 191.

⁵² Cody, op. cit., p. 12.

The fourth pastor of Mays Lick was William Grinstead. He was warm, genial, popular, but also intemperate.⁵³ In 1824 he was excluded from the Mays Lick Church for intemperance.⁵⁴ Spencer says that though he made several attempts to reform he "fell lower every time he attempted to rise, til he became an inverterate drunkard."⁵⁵

Moses Pierson was pastor of the Cox's Creek Baptist Church from 1809 until 1825. After the labor of these years he resigned and moved to Indiana. It was rumored that after moving to Indiana, though he preached occasionally, he engaged in tavern keeping.⁵⁶ At his death his reputation was a sullied one.⁵⁷

William Buckley succeeded John Taylor as pastor of Corn Creek in 1816. Spencer evaluated him in the following paragraph.

As a preacher Mr. Buckley gave much satisfaction to his hearers. But as a

53 Cody, loc. cit.

54 Robert B. Semple, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond: Pitt and Dickinson, Publishers, 1894), p. 404.

55 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 199.

56 Roy H. Wright and Elsie Southwood Wright, History of Cox's Creek Baptist Church, (Cox's Creek, Kentucky: L. S. Chambers, 1935), p. 19.

57 Spencer, op. cit., I, 73.

man he was indolent and improvident, and consequently always very poor. Supplying the necessities of such a man, as the brethren had to supply those of Mr. Buckley, is always an aggravation, even to the most liberal. This speedily rendered him unpopular and involved the necessity of his moving from place to place, even to his old age. He was finally silenced from preaching for drunkenness.⁵⁸

James Vickers was licensed to the ministry in 1820. At different times he was pastor at the Licking, Banklick, Wilmington, Brush Creek, Four Mile, Newport, Jamestown and Dry Creek Baptist Churches. Spencer⁵⁹ says that among the masses he was probably the most popular preacher ever to labor in Northbend or Campbell County Association, and that he probably preached in that region of the state more than any other frontier preacher of his day. Yet James Vickers drank considerably.

But bright as was the escutcheon of this loved and honored minister of Christ, it had one disgraceful stain on it. In the days of his youthful levity, he cultivated an unextinguishable thirst for strong drink. This was a poignant thorn in his flesh during the whole of his subsequent life. He struggled against the demon he had invoked in his youth, with strong crying and tears; but it occasionally overcame him, even in his old age. His repentance was so earnest and so manifestly sincere, that his brethren, and even the unconverted, cordially forgave

58 Ibid., I, 463.

59 Ibid., I, 282.

him as often as he sinned. He wept freely and confessed his sins even in his public ministrations, and his audiences always wept with him. He continued to labor with great zeal till within a few hours of his departure.⁶⁰

David Hardisty, pastor of the Springfield and Bethlehem Churches in Washington county around 1825, was another minister who became a slave to drink. He was later excluded from the church for drinking. However, he was soon restored to the church and to the ministry.⁶¹

Thus it has been seen that drinking among the frontier preachers was observable in more than isolated cases. The above citations are cross-samplings of how the churches and ministers were affected by the problem of drink.

But before one should cast the first stone of condemnation or reproach S. H. Ford advised:

Let it be remembered, that the use of spirits as a common beverage, was a practice so general among all classes, that exceptions were rarely found. Professors of religion, of every grade of refinement, kept spirits in their families, and considered it essential to genuine hospitality to place them before their guests.⁶²

60 Ibid., I, 283.

61 Ibid., II, 133.

62 S. H. Ford, "History of the Kentucky Baptists," The Christian Repository, Vol. V (August, 1856), 70.

V. THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER AND SEX

Unlike the liquor problem of which there is an abundance of revealing material, the frontier Baptist preacher's aberrant relationship with the opposite sex has considerably fewer references. The reasons for the dearth of this material are several. For one thing, sex derelictions by their very nature, were hidden and jealously guarded. Public knowledge of such action was the last thing desired. Thus it is possible that some delinquencies were never brought to public attention. Another reason is that wayward relations between the sexes did not make for good associational and church records. Probably out of respect to the church and the ministry, the writers often failed to record such delinquencies or at least left out many of the graphic details, realizing perhaps that if man's every thought and action were known to his fellow man all would appear corrupted. Yet, in spite of this restriction, there are evidences of sexual delinquency among a few of the frontier Baptist preachers.

Joseph Dorris is an example of such delinquency. Before moving to Kentucky, Dorris had lived in northern Tennessee. While living in Tennessee, Dorris had belonged to the Mero District Association. He was a man of talent, being a member and the pastor of one of the churches in this association.

At this time he was accused of grossly immoral conduct. Though he was considered by almost every one to be guilty, the charge could not be proved. The association felt it could neither exclude Dorris nor fellowship him. In this predicament they hit upon the solution of dissolving the association, and forming a new one. They would form the new association with the same churches, except that they would leave out those which upheld Dorris.⁶³

By 1799 Jo Dorris was in Kentucky. In this year he is charged by Archebald Woods of base conduct and is brought before the Tate's Creek Baptist Church. There was a committee selected to act as enquirers. It was composed of members of other churches as well as Tate's Creek. Squire Boon of Dreaming Creek was the clerk. Archebald Woods made a number of allegations which appear in the minutes of Tate's Creek Church.

Which are as followteh first that Dorris character from different parts of the world was Base and his conduct at Sd Woodses house was Base by reason of Said Dorris being Seen keeping Company and whispering in a private manner with Sd Woods negro woman proven by Jesse Cobb that he was with a negro woman and by others and confessed to by Dorris. Secondly said Woods charges him the said Dorris with being in cumberland with a molatto woman his arm around her neck and Wispering to her in a private manner out

63 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 362.

of doors about the going down of day light. Proven by Peter Woods and acknowledged to by Dorris so far as this he said he thought his hand might be leaning against the wall over or on her shoulder. thirdly a charge for some unsavory conversation concerning lewd woman proven by Peter Woods. Dorris was also heard in his own defence then the Committee withdrew and considered the matter and brought in as followeth, We the Committee from the things alleged by Archebald and Peter Woods against Br. Dorris conclude unanimously that his conduct with those woman was unseemly and from a Review of the Ministerial character is reprobable and cannot be left countenanced by those who love the interests of religion.⁶⁴

In 1814 Peter Cartwright, the Methodist itinerant, in a camp meeting near Russellville, Kentucky, had an experience with a person he called "an old apostate Baptist Preacher."⁶⁵ Cartwright stated that the unnamed Baptist preacher had left his wife, who was still living, and was living in open adultery with a young woman. According to Cartwright, the former minister was deeply convicted, realizing what wrong he had done. At this time he expressed a desire to join the Methodist church.

All this took place in the public congregation. I told him that if we, as a Church, could do him any good on fair Scriptural terms, we should be glad to do

⁶⁴ Tate's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1799, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁵ Strickland, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, p. 147.

it. "But," said I, "You cannot be ignorant as not to know that the word of God condemns your course, and if our sins are as dear to us as a right foot, or hand, or eye, they must be cut off, or plucked out, and cast from us, or we cannot enter heaven. Now, sir, are you willing, and will you give up this course of living, put away the woman with whom you are now living, and go and live with your lawful wife, and will you do it now?"

He burst into tears, wrung his hands in apparent agony, and said he wanted to be saved. "But will you not take me in on trial six months?"

"No sir, we will not, unless you sacredly pledge yourself, before God and the Church, that you will from this moment, abandon your present course of living."

He said he was afraid to promise this.

"Then," said I, "It is altogether useless to say another word on the subject, for we will not, under any consideration, receive you even on trial."

So we parted, and I fear he was eternally lost.⁶⁶

Joseph James, beginning about 1820, held at different times the pastorates of the Somerset, New Hope, Rock Lick, Mount Olivet and Flat Lick Baptist Churches. For a time he was considered the ablest preacher in the Cumberland River Association. However, he later yielded to the seductions of liquor and adultery. Spencer says that as a result Joseph James became an outcast and "his sun went down in a dark cloud. . . ." ⁶⁷

66 Ibid., pp. 147-148.

67 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 416.

Absalom Batterton belonged to the East Hickman Baptist Church. In September of 1828 he had been excluded from the church for immoral conduct. In October of the same year he was restored.⁶⁸ A year later the church considered the case of Batterton in their business meeting. They were somewhat handicapped by the fact that he no longer lived in Kentucky. Yet the fact that their decision would have little effect on Batterton did not deter the church from excluding him from their fellowship.

. . . the church met in order after prayer & proceeded to business the case of Absalom Batterton taken up for consideration, and inasmuch as the sd. Batterton has left the state, the regular gospel setps could not be taken with him, for his immoral conduct, but from his own confession and the most positive proof of gross immorality the Church unanimously agreed that he should be excluded from the Church by order of the Church.⁶⁹

It is seen that there were at times delinquent relations between the frontier Baptist preachers and members of the opposite sex. However, considering the number of Baptist preachers upon the Kentucky frontier, the number of sexual aberrations were few. In fact the records reveal only a few cases in which there was a diffusion of knowledge concerning such actions.

⁶⁸ East Hickman Baptist Church Minutes for 1828, pp. 137-138.

⁶⁹ East Hickman Baptist Church Minutes for 1829, p. 141.

VI. THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER AND QUESTIONABLE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

Some of the frontier Baptist preachers were not able to discover a basic cleavage between right and wrong when related to their own personal business transactions. Often they discovered, to their chagrin, that there were many entangling alliances which the preacher could not afford to make. On different occasions a few of the frontier Baptist preachers became involved in questionable business transactions which more than likely marred their influence.

William Wood, the first pastor of the Limestone Baptist Church which was organized in 1785, appeared to have been a man of culture and considerable ability. About 1798 Wood became involved in land speculation and was excluded from the church. This was done after a complaint had been brought against him in the church concerning certain business transactions which he had failed to explain satisfactorily.⁷⁰

Lewis Craig was pastor of the South Elkhorn Church for nine years.⁷¹ In 1792 Craig moved from this field because he had become embarrassed over some unfortunate

70 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 67-68.

71 Ibid., I, 31.

land speculation.⁷² Out of this speculation Lewis Craig suffered the loss of his property.⁷³

John Taylor admitted that he left the Clear Creek Church because of a misunderstanding over a business transaction.

But another very prevailing reason with myself in leaving Clear Creek was, a very respectable individual, had withdrawn his membership from the church on my account, delicacy itself will forbid going into a minute detail of all this business - I had brought money to purchase land for him in Kentucky - when he saw the land, he became displeased with the mode of the appropriation of his money, we left it to men as arbitrators - with their decision he was displeased; a very influential character from another church prevailed on him to bring a complaint into Clear Creek to which the church agreed, by sending for helps from other churches - the first decision of the church was unfavorable to the justness of my course with the offended man - on this result I stopped preaching a month or two - This gave great consternation to chief of the members of the church, not considering that their decision extended thus far - the fact was they scarcely knew what they had decided on, for they were hurried into it by foreign agents - I was ready to confess that in some things I had failed with the complaining man, in point of generosity, but in point of justice I had never thought I had failed; the church however hasted to the same churches for helps to reconsider what they had done - the second

⁷² Lewis N. Thompson, Lewis Craig, the Pioneer Baptist Preacher: His Life, Labors and Character (Louisville: Baptist World Publishing Company, 1910), p. 29.

⁷³ Spencer, op. cit., I, 31.

decision of the church gave the
offended man such dissatisfaction,
that he immediately withdrew from
the church - all this was while I
had the pastoral care. . . .⁷⁴

Elijah Craig was the first pastor of the Great
Crossing Baptist Church, assuming its care in 1786.⁷⁵
Craig was an enterprising business man. Frontier Kentucky
offered excellent chances for ambitious persons. He soon
became engaged in diverse business transactions. In his
first business venture he purchased one thousand acres of
land and laid off a town which was called Lebanon. His
speculation succeeded. Later he erected a saw and grist
mill. Other ventures which he began included the first
fulling mill, the first rope works, and the first paper
mill in Kentucky. He expected to continue his two pursuits
- the ministry and his various business interests. The
result, according to Spencer, was a very hampered ministry.
His speculative ventures constantly caused him trouble.⁷⁶

In time Craig became blunt, outspoken, and sour in
temper. One of the fruits of his pen at this time was a
pamphlet which he wrote about Jacob Creath, Sr., which he
entitled A Portrait of Jacob Creath.⁷⁷ The pamphlet,

74 John Taylor, A History of Ten Churches (Frankfort,
Kentucky: J. H. Holeman, 1823), p. 77.

75 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 85.

76 Ibid., I, 88.

77 Ibid., I, 311.

bitter and vindictive, caused considerable trouble. This personal altercation prompted Craig's temporary exclusion from the Church.⁷⁸

A council was called among several of the churches for the investigation of the charges. The minutes of the East Hickman Baptist Church reveal the charges that Craig made against Creath in his pamphlet. The charges included falsehoods, frauds, deception, intoxication, and a scheme to get money by preaching.⁷⁹

At Craig's request the church permitted him to substantiate the claims which he had made against Creath before the church. His attempt to vindicate his authorship of the pamphlet is seen in the church minutes of the East Hickman Baptist Church.

Craigs Proof

On the First Falsehood Proven by Brethren George Eve, David Clarkson and Hawkins Smith.

2nd Falsehood. Proven by Brethren, Henry Payne, James Betty, James Culbert, Lewis Corbin, & Ambrose Dudley -

3rd falsehood Proved by Br. John Paynees Letter to Br. Thomas Lewis -

4th falsehood Proven in past by Br. Thomas Lewis and Refd for Information from Br.

Clifton Thompson -

5th falsehood Proven By Brethren, Dudley, Lewis and Wife

the 2nd Charge

⁷⁸ James B. Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers (Richmond: Yale and Wyatt, 1837), I, 72-73.

⁷⁹ East Hickman Baptist Church Minutes for 1807, p. 92.

Fraud of Deception in obtaining
Jim and detaining one Hundred Dollars
from Br. Thomas Lewis

Deception the First - Proven By
Brethren Henry Payne Thomas Lewis &
Wife -

2nd fraud of deception - From the
Information of Br. Henry Payne the
church was of the opinion that Craig
had strong ground for his supposition -
Also Creath applying to two men to
influence his judges - Proven by Br. John
Paynes letter and A. Dudley -

Fraud of Deception - In obtaining the
first helps - Proven by Brethren George
Eve, Ambrose Dudley & Leon Young -

Similar Deception in obtaining the 2nd
Helps Proven by Br. Joseph Reading -
Frankfort Trip, deception in getting
money proven by Br. Henry Payne & sister
Lewis -

Intoxication From the Certificate of
Elisha Carter of Bourbon county & of
W Ballenger of Knocks & the relation
of David Clarkson of Virginia (who
traveled with creath) from his Brother
William Clarkson of Bourbon the Church
thought the presumption very strong - 80

Out of the tangled affair emerged the fact that Jacob
Creath was cleared of the charges made by Craig. It was
felt that the charges of Craig were largely unfounded.
However, party spirit was so intensified that a division
resulted in Elkhorn Association, and Licking Association
was formed by the group opposed to Creath.⁸¹

80 Ibid., pp. 92-94.

81 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I,
311-312.

Jacob Creath, the defendant mentioned above, had succeeded John Gano as pastor of the Town Fork Church in 1804.⁸² At one time, during this pastorate, Creath became involved in a dispute which arose as a result of an exchange of slaves between Creath and a member of his Church. Creath exchanged a negro girl for one owned by Thomas Lewis. When the exchange was made Jacob Creath gave a note to Lewis for the difference in the value of the slaves. Soon after the transaction the girl Creath had procured died. When the note came due, Creath refused to pay the one hundred dollars. Upon being brought before the Town Fork Church it was decided "as Mr. Lewis was rich, and Mr. Creath was poor," that Creath should be released from paying the note.⁸³

John Price, who was pastor of the East Hickman Baptist Church for many years, was charged by David Baker in 1813 of a business transaction unbecoming to a minister. It is noticed that the language of the church minutes is in the first person singular. The explanation for this is that Price was the moderator at the time of recording.

Br. David Baker laid in several charges at Br. Price, which are Ref'

⁸² Robert B. Semple, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Pitt and Dickinson, Publishers, 1894), p. 183.

⁸³ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 311.

untill the Thursday before the 4
 friday in this month the clerk is
 Directed to write to the church at
bryants for assistance at that time -
 First Charge - For asking the rent of
 the place after they had made the
 exchange-
 2ly - for saying I had got 180 dollars
 out of him in the trade -
 3ly - for offering a sum for a sure
 bargain when he had no intention of
 canceling the Bargain -
 4ly - for saying he was only trying
 my principles -
 5ly - that he would sighn the deed If
 I would take the 180 dollars for noting-
 6ly - For then telling me he was joaking -
 7ly - for not being willing to make a
 Deed According to contract -
 8ly - For conveying of land by Deed to
 me that he had no right to -84

The next year, in 1814, the church made its decision
 upon the matter.

After hearing all the Evidence that
 was offered - the Church was of opinion
 the charges was not well founded & were
 dismist - 85

These are typical of the questionable business
 transactions of a number of the frontier Baptist preachers.
 Often the transactions were shady, sometimes they simply
 seemed out of character for the "man of God." In the
 final analysis they were always an impediment to the
 frontier preacher's ministry. In defence of the preachers,

84 East Hickman Baptist Church Minutes for 1813,
 pp. 111-112.

85 East Hickman Baptist Church Minutes for 1814,
 p. 112.

however, it may be said that these efforts were usually made in an attempt to better themselves financially. That this supplementation of income was often necessary because of the low salaries of many of the frontier Baptist churches will be seen in the next chapter. Yet even when this comment has been made the fact has not yet been surmounted that the means they adopted to the end were often questionable.

VII. THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER AND MISCELLANEOUS CHARACTER BLEMISHES

Before bringing this study of the frontier Baptist preacher's morals to a conclusion with an attempt to evaluate his character, it is necessary to consider briefly a few miscellaneous character blemishes.

Earlier in 1808 John Price, mentioned previously, had been accused before the East Hickman Baptist Church by Ambrose Brown of falsehood. The minutes are once more written in the first person singular.

Br. Ambrose Brown laid in several charges at Br. J. Price Fst charge, for Improper Conduct at Br. David Bakers where he told me that there was a falsehood between Br. Jones and myself and notified me to attend at Br. _____ the next morning to clear myself if I was clear, and that if the lie fell on me he would publish me in the gazette, as he was not answerable to society for his conduct -

the above charge was taken up. After consideration was Dismist.⁸⁶

John Conlee was pastor for a short time of a church in Kentucky situated on Alexander's Creek in Warren county. His ministry is described as greatly imparied by his acquisition of the habit of exaggerating in his conversation.⁸⁷

The pastor of Upper Howard Creek in 1811 was Edward Kindred.

In June, 1811, Elder Kindred [pastor] preferred charges against himself for whipping an apprentice boy. The Church took it up and after examining the matter, and from Brother Kindred's acknowledgement, retained him as formerly.⁸⁸

Samuel Greathouse was pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church in Allen county about 1820. At this time he preached one Sunday a month. On another Sunday each month Zechariah Emerson occupied the pulpit. Thus, as often happened on the frontier, these preachers were co-pastors.

Greathouse, fiery-tempered and jealous, developed a dislike for his fellow-worker. He began to circulate reports about Emerson which he could not substantiate. The church called Greathouse before its official body and,

86 East Hickman Baptist Church Minutes for 1808, p. 98.

87 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, II, 113-114.

88 S. J. Conkwright, History of the Churches of Boone's Creek Baptist Association of Kentucky with a Brief History of the Association (Winchester, Kentucky: n.n., 1923), p. 83.

after investigation, convicted him of slander. Becoming discouraged Greathouse began to drink and attempted little preaching thereafter.⁸⁹

John Rush, who preached in Kentucky churches during the second decade of the nineteenth century, gave promise of usefulness in the ministry. However, because he became engaged in the slave traffic and refused to refrain from "trading in negroes" the churches refused to hear him preach.⁹⁰

The first pastor of the Union Baptist Church in Warren county was John Hightower. He was known to entertain loose notions about keeping the Sabbath. Spencer says he held the Sabbath very lightly and broke its sanctity for very trivial causes. His influence caused many to hold no scruples against fishing, hunting, and attending to business on Sunday.⁹¹

The Bethel Church in Christian county excluded a Brother Davenport, a licentiate of the church, for five reasons.

1. For attending a barbacue near Hopkinsville, on the 4th of July last.
2. For attending the Races in Hopkinsville.
3. For frequenting the Theatre in Frankfort.
4. For neglecting, for months together, to

⁸⁹ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, II, 114-115.

⁹⁰ Ibid., II, 63.

⁹¹ Ibid., I, 324.

attend Church meeting.
 5. For holding a licence from this
 Church, after having declined
 preaching.⁹²

Such were the miscellaneous character blemishes, of varying importance it is true, which were a part of many of the frontier Baptist preachers.

VIII. AN EVALUATION OF THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER'S CHARACTER

Thus far the facts presented which help to reveal the character of the frontier Baptist preacher have more often than not cast a harsh light upon his figure. This has been done not to disparage the lives or monumental efforts of these pioneer religious workers in Kentucky, but to show that it was impossible for a large number of ministers to labor upon a virgin frontier without some deviations from the usual acceptable ministerial character.

It should be made clear that the examples cited in this chapter of men and preachers whose lives and actions were below the clerical criterion did not compose the majority of the frontier Baptist preachers but only a minority. This becomes self-evident when it is realized that these examples are not simply a cross-sampling of deviations from Christian social action but are the sum

92 Bethel Baptist Church Minutes for 1817, II, 2.

total of the delinquencies uncovered in the search for material in the autobiographies, biographies, histories, minutes of associations, and records of churches of the time. Though there were probably other instances of moral immaturity or laxity among the ministers, many of which were unrecorded for various reasons, as far as the material used in preparing this study is concerned, these are almost all of the deviations from expected ministerial character which are to be found.

Any study of the morals of the early frontier Baptist preachers must state unequivocally that by and large the character of the minister was of a lofty nature.

The character of these men is forever grounded in the result of their work. James E. Welch wrote to the editor of The Christian Repository in 1856, thanking him for the articles which had been appearing in the Repository on the early preachers who planted the first churches in Kentucky.

. . . I can bear witness, from personal observation through a quarter of a century, as well as from parental information, to their untiring industry and self-consecration, to the great work of preaching the gospel among the new and rising settlements.⁹³

It is from such personal observations as James Welch

⁹³ James E. Welch, "Early Preachers of Kentucky," The Christian Repository, Vol. V (May, 1856), 290.

records that the beloved character of the frontier Baptist preachers is discovered.

In 1808 Elizabeth Thomas wrote from Henderson, Kentucky, to her home church for a letter of dismissal. In the letter she speaks of her pastor John B. Carpenter.

I have had but little privyleg of meeting till October last since that time we have preaching statedly from our beloved Brother John B. Carpenter . . . he is a man that is much loved by the people and he is a instrument of much good. . . .⁹⁴

When the minister was beloved as was William Tandy the church tenderly and prayerfully cared for the minister in time of sickness or trouble. In 1821 the West Fork Baptist Church observed a day of prayer for the recovery of her minister.

On account of the alarming illness of our beloved pastor, agreed unanimously, to observe tomorrow, as a day of fasting and of solemn prayer to Almighty God that he may be graciously pleased, if consistent with infinite wisdom, to restore our brother to health and strength and to use fulness in his Church.⁹⁵

John Scott was an example of a frontier Baptist preacher, walking for twenty-three years among his people with impeccable character. Scott was pastor of the Church on the Twins from 1802 until 1825. At this latter date,

94 Unpublished personal letter from Elizabeth Thomas to the Baptist church at Henderson, Kentucky, 1808.

95 West Fork Baptist Church Minutes for 1821, p. 103.

he requested leave from the church in order to become a member of a church nearer his home. Though the people wished to retain him, they prepared the following letter for the new church, speaking highly of their pastor.

That he has been a member of this Church and our preacher ever since the year 1802 and as far as his conduct has come within our knowledge it has been strictly moral, sweet, and generous - that his public ministrations in the word and ordinances have been thankfully received and much appreciated - they have been given freely without money or price and as a member he is tender and affectionate even to transgressors, and with much reluctance we parted with him on the first Saturday in February in this year to join another Church and we unaminously and heartily requested him to attend us as our preacher in futer - and during his residence among us there is not a single record stains on our Church Book against him.⁹⁶

William Vaughn highly commended the labors of Walter Warder, who was pastor of the Mays Lick Baptist Church from 1814 - 1836.

All men admitted that he practiced what he preached He evidently maintained a close walk with God and cultivated the piety of the heart; abounded in the fruits of righteousness and reflected the moral image of Christ in his intercourse with society using the world without abusing it.⁹⁷

96 Church on the Twins Minutes for 1825, pp. 149-150.

97 S. H. Ford, "William and Walter Warder," The Christian Repository, Vol. V (March, 1856), 180.

J. W. Rust spoke of Elder Reuben Ross with much conviction.

He has left behind him, in the memory of his life, a striking exemplification of the power, the dignity, and the majesty of the Christian Religion.⁹⁸

Today, as the living witness the results of previous labors, as they look back into the past and survey the dead, one becomes conscious of the high character of a greater majority of the frontier Baptist preachers. The minority who lagged in moral sensitivity bear mute testimony to the frailty of human nature.

⁹⁸ "Elder Reuben Ross," The Christian Repository, Vol. IX (June, 1860), 402.

CHAPTER V

A STUDY OF THE FRONTIER PREACHER'S SALARY

CHAPTER V

A STUDY OF THE FRONTIER PREACHER'S SALARY

The frontier Baptist preacher in Kentucky believed that every sincere gospel preacher received his call to that office from God. He further believed that it was his sacred duty to preach to the best of his ability whether he received any remuneration or not.¹

Ministers of other religious faiths upon the Kentucky frontier usually asked a stated salary from their people. The least they demanded of them was a support. David Rice, the Presbyterian, once refused to administer the Lord's Supper to his Danville congregation because they had either refused or neglected to pay his salary. He explained that he did not feel that it was right to admit persons to the Holy Table who were not faithful in their pecuniary engagements.²

Father Whelan, the first Catholic priest to settle in Kentucky in 1787, sued his people for his salary. His conduct fell so disastrously short of the clerical criterion in this suit that he was fined five hundred pounds for slandering the jury.³

1 J. H. Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists From 1769 to 1885, Including More Than 800 Biographical Sketches (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumeister, 1885), I, 491.

2 Ibid., I, 492-493.

3 Loc. cit.

I. PREJUDICE AGAINST A SALARIED MINISTRY,
ITS ORIGINS AND RESULTS

At the turn of the nineteenth century prejudice against a salaried ministry prevailed among Baptists not only in Kentucky but throughout America.⁴ This attitude, as it was manifested in Kentucky, had a vital effect on the Baptist panorama there. When David Benedict observed the Kentucky churches he commented that they did very little for their preachers.⁵ The Baptist preacher who earned his support by following secular pursuits was the preference.⁶ As a rule, the Baptist preacher exhorted without any specific charge and supported himself independently by hard labor during the week.⁷

The opposition and prejudice against supporting the ministry in Kentucky originated in the states having an established church. Virginia and North Carolina, from whom Kentucky had drawn heavily upon for her inhabitants,

⁴ William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 36.

⁵ David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World (New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1848), II, 251.

⁶ A. H. Newman, A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States (Vol. II, The American Church History Series, 13 vols.; New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1894), p. 336.

⁷ John Augustus Williams, Life of Elder John Smith (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll and Company, Publishers, 1870), p. 78.

had the Episcopal church established by law. Each parish had a church, its attached glebe and comfortable residence for her rector. Usually the ministers were educated in England, with not too much emphasis upon their personal piety or morality. After appointment they became the religious teachers in the parishes.⁸ The citizens of the State, regardless of faith or denomination, were taxed to provide the salaries of the established ministers and were compelled to pay the assessments.⁹ Many of the learned "parsons" of the established church were below needed standards of morality, while some were openly profligate in their lives.¹⁰ The Baptists, both ministry and laymen, were rankled by having to support this apostate ministry.

Added to their dissatisfied feeling was the fact that all dissenters from the established church who ventured to preach were liable to rude and violent mob persecution and subject to legal fines and imprisonment. Spencer says that many of the pioneer preachers in Kentucky, Lewis Craig, Elijah Craig, John Shackelford, John Tanner

8 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 573.

9 Robert Boyle C. Howell, The Early Baptists of Virginia (Philadelphia: The Bible and Publication Society, 1857), p. 127.

10 Spencer, op. cit., I, 573.

and perhaps others had suffered confinement in Virginia jails.¹¹ Because the Kentucky settlers had not forgotten these occurrences in their original states, they were prejudiced and opposed to paying ministerial salaries. For years they remained suspicious and were watchful of any tendencies which might lead to a recurrence of such events.

The frontier Baptist preachers themselves had helped to educate the laymen into the erroneous belief that it was sinful to pay men for preaching the gospel.¹²

The records of the proceedings of Bethel Church substantiate the minister's part in helping to propagate and maintain prejudice toward ministerial salaries.

. . . a baptist preacher of eminence, is viewed with suspicious eye by his brethren in the ministry, as well as by the laity, if he should receive anything like a stated salary for preaching. --- Some preachers express their disapprobation of having anything mentioned, respecting their support, in Church meetings, (the proper place to do such business,) and wish it left done privately: Others are so very scrupulous that they object to a public subscription and would rather suffer, than receive anything publicly. This may truly be termed false modesty; This private manner of doing a good act, has induced a number of the brethren to consider ministerial support in the light of charity, instead of duty. Hence, if they think their minister has enough to eat and to wear, they conclude there is no necessity to make him

11 Loc. cit.

12 Williams, op. cit., p. 78.

compensation for his labours.¹³

Broadus felt that the indiscriminating teachings of many of the frontier preachers who professed no desire for remuneration was too big a temptation to the masses. It appealed to, and was completely acceptable to, basic human selfishness.¹⁴

Elijah Craig, one of the earlier frontier Baptist preachers from Virginia who had been jailed while there for preaching the gospel, wrote and published a pamphlet against compensating ministers.¹⁵ Semple, the Virginia historian, who apparently saw and read the diatribe, stated that Craig attempted to prove by the Scriptures that stationed preachers or pastors were precluded from receiving any compensation for their service. As he stoutly beat the drum for this idea, he overlooked no opportunities to condemn fellow preachers for being money seekers.¹⁶ Such works as this only added to the complacency of the churches, making them feel that the clerical stamp of

13 Bethel Baptist Church Minutes for 1812, I, 22-23.

14 John A. Broadus, "The American Baptist Ministry of One Hundred Years Ago," The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. IX (January, 1875), 14-15.

15 Thomas M. Vaughn, Memoirs of Rev. Wm. Vaughn, D. D. (Louisville: Caperton and Cates, 1878), p. 66.

16 James B. Taylor, Virginia Baptist Ministers, Richmond: Yale and Wyatt, 1837), I, 73.

approval had been placed upon their practice.¹⁷

However, not all of the preachers felt that way. John Taylor, in his inimitable way, tells of two young ministers named Mills and Schermerhorn who visited in his home. They disagreed with his lack of emphasis upon money.

Those young visitants of mine were very sociable, and among other freedoms asked me how I had got through the world, as they saw me then well settled and now old; which led to another question, what amount of supplies I had generally received from the people for preaching? After having considered it very puny indeed, and in a friendly way blamed the badness of my policy; after finding that the Baptists in Kentucky were a great people . . . they became quite impatient with my indolence, assuring me if I would only stir up the people to Missions and Bible Society matters, I should find a great change in money affairs in favor of the preachers; urging by questions like this, do you not know when the sponges [He probably meant Springs] are once opened they will always run? Only said they, get the people in the habit of giving their money for any religious use, and they will continue to appropriate for all sacred purposes.¹⁸

Several harmful results accrued to the Baptists of frontier Kentucky as a result of this popularized misconception of the relation between money and Christianity.

17 Vaughn, loc. cit.

18 John Taylor, Thoughts On Missions and Biographies of Baptist Preachers (n.p., n.n., 1820), pp. 5-6.

For one thing, there was an almost entire withdrawal of money from the instrumentalities to be used in the Kingdom work. A later chapter of this dissertation will deal with its blighting effect upon missions. Another result which will be noted in the current chapter is the failure of the churches adequately to support their pastors. This failure made it necessary for the frontier Baptist preacher of Kentucky to supplement his income in various ways.

II. BAPTIST CHURCHES OFTEN ACCEPTED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

Yet, in spite of the opposition to a salaried ministry, there was much staunch support in favor of one. Numbers of the first Baptist churches in Kentucky realized the obligation of a church to support its pastor.¹⁹

Less than two years after its constitution, Elkhorn Association, the oldest and at the time much the largest association, grappled with the question of ministerial support.²⁰ Meeting at Bryan's Station on August 4, 1787, it made and answered the query.

Query - whether it is agreeable
to Scripture for Churches to suffer

¹⁹ S. H. Ford, "History of the Kentucky Baptists," The Christian Repository, Vol. V (August, 1856), 71.

²⁰ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 491-492.

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 it is the duty of the Churches to give their minister a reasonable support and restrict them to these respects.²¹

On July 4, 1795, the East Hickman Baptist Church considered the question of ministerial pay.

Respecting the support of the gospel, to which its agreed that it is the Churches Duty to support the widow, & also the Lords Table. & Defray the charges of the meeting house - & that it is her Duty to support a minister that she calls to serve her - Further, that the Church Believes, its a ministers Duty to Preach the gosple, visit the sick & take care of the Flock.²²

In 1797 the Elkhorn Association was questioned again on ministerial aid and answered in the affirmative.

Quere from McConnells run are the Churches bound by scripture to contribute to the support of pastoral ministers? Answered that God hath ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.²³

Spencer²⁴ says that many of the earliest Baptist churches in Kentucky recognized their responsibility to

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- 21 Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1787, p. 9.
 22 East Hickman Baptist Church Minutes for 1795,
 p. 26.
 23 Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1797,
 p. 72.
 24 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 492.

their pastor and provided stated and fixed salaries before the close of the eighteenth century. He lists Clear Creek, Cox's Creek and Bryan's as indicative of this trend.

With the beginning of the nineteenth century an increase in the realization of pecuniary responsibility to the minister is noticed. In 1816 the Elk Creek Baptist Church placed the responsibility upon individual church members to give cheerfully.

Resolved, that it is the duty of every member of the church to contribute his or her proportion, as god hath prospered them, towards the support of a pastor and to do it cheerfully.²⁵

Bethel Baptist Church showed they had a clear conception of the ethics involved in the settling of a pastor upon the field; however they admitted that current practices fell short of the ideal.

We believe it would be proper on the settling of a minister, that there should be a mutual agreement between the parties and that the terms of the agreement, should be entered at large on the records of the church. But the Baptists in the western country don't like so much formality. Their object is, to get a person to preach for them once a month, and to administer the ordinances among them when necessary; but the support of the minister is left entirely out of the question.²⁶

25 Elk Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1816, p. 9.

26 Bethel Baptist Church Minutes for 1812, I, 22.

Not only were arrangements made by many of the churches for the support of their pastors, but the traveling ministers were not forgotten. As early as 1790 the Severn's Valley Baptist Church considered the rolling-stone type minister.

A motion being made whether it was a duty to contribute to the support of traveling ministers and it was agreed that it was and the money shall be put into the hands of the Decon to be disposed of, as appears to be necessary and keep an account of what each member lay in and Report the same to the Church.²⁷

In 1795 the Bryan's Station Baptist Church specified a particular limit for itinerants.

Agreed that Bren. Ambrose Dudley, Wm. Waller, Henry Roach, and John Mason or any Two of them do contribute to any Travelling Minister out of our Fund any sum at discretion not Exceeding Two Dollars.²⁸

The Christiansburg Church voted in 1813 that it was their duty to contribute to the necessities of traveling preachers who served them.²⁹

It is interesting to note that at least one association was not unmindful of the aged ministers in their midst. In 1801 the Elkhorn Baptist Association in a meeting held at

27 Severn's Valley Baptist Church Minutes for 1790, I, 12.

28 Bryan's Station Church Minutes for 1795, p. 81.

29 Christiansburg Baptist Church Minutes for 1813, p. 41.

the South Elkhorn Baptist Church passed a resolution intended to aid her aged ministers. The usual committee was appointed.

. . . to receive the bounty of the Churches for the benefit of our aged Brethren John Gano David Thompson & J. Suttan as an indication of our love and care of them in their old age and it is recommended to the Churches to make frequent contributions & send them to the committee who are to distribute the same as to them may appear right and render an account to the association what they have received and from whom and how they have distributed the same.³⁰

Earlier, it was suggested that the frontier Baptist preachers proclaimed the gospel, even if they failed to receive any remuneration.³¹ However, from the beginning of preaching in Kentucky there were Baptist preachers who were not adverse to speaking about the delicate subject. Ambrose Dudley was one such minister. For a time he was employed in visiting churches near Lexington as an evangelist. During this itinerant ministry he unhesitatingly urged the churches not to be neglectful, but to make suitable provision for the support of their ministers.³²

Often when ministers spoke frankly about help, many Baptist members were shocked. Once Moses Pierson, pastor

30 Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1801, p. 86.

31 Cf. ante, p. 109.

32 Taylor, Virginia Baptist Ministers, I, 201.

of Little Union Baptist Church, had a Reverend Lyons from Louisville to assist him in a revival. When the meeting closed and plans were being made to make some provisions for Brother Lyons, it was said that he shocked their delicacy by publicly informing the sisters of the church that "some socks and shirts would be very acceptable!"³³

III. METHODS DEVELOPED BY THE FRONTIER BAPTIST CHURCHES TO PROVIDE MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

The Baptist churches of the Kentucky frontier, though varying often in the smaller details, used practically the same methods to raise money. In many churches, such as the Great Crossing Church, there were found on the minute book pages specific directions for the collection of monies.

The following rules are adapted for the observance of this Church

First There shall be an offering before we ajouin at our November and December Meetings . . . for the reception of such money and the names of such property as the brethren may feel free to contribute to our minister

Second The money thus contributed shall be put in the hands of the Brother Deacons and it shall be their duty to receive it and also to keep an account of all property that may be offered and the time and place it is to be delivered

33 Vaughn, op. cit., pp. 224-225.

Third The Brother Deacons may receive anything that may be offered for our minister when not in meeting and keep an account of the same

Fourth It shall be the Duty of the Brother Deacons to report their progress toward the sum collected, the property named for collection and the persons names thus contribution at our Jan y Meeting

Fifth It shall be the duty of the Brother Clerk to record and report - and also to make out a memorandum of the property name the time and place of delivery and give it to our brother minister in order that he may receive sd property

Sixth The Brother Deacons may give what they collect to our minister as they collect it - or they may retain it until the day of the report at which time our Brother minister is to receive the collection and by this means the church will have knowledge what is done for their minister, which must give every pious mind satisfaction

Seventh It shall be the duty of the clerk to read the forgoing at our November and December meetings, untill this church says to the contrary.³⁴

In 1789 the Severn's Valley Baptist Church discussed and passed upon the problem of ministerial support.

A motion was made respecting the Sopoly of those who labor in the gospel and it was agreed that those who contributed any necessaryes for that purpose should give an account of the same to the Deacons who are requested

³⁴ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1804, I, 109-110.

to Set down thire nams and also the contributions made by them, and have a true list of the Same given into the Church from time to time when required.³⁵

The East Hickman Baptist Church also agreed in 1791 about gospel ministry support.

Also took into consideration an old reference respecting a mode for the support of the gosple & agreed that the gosple minister shall be supported by a free contribution.³⁶

Gradually, as the churches began to see their responsibility for ministerial support, there evolved what came to be known as the subscription list. A factor leading to the development of this subscription list was the penchant of the early frontiersmen for keeping records and making public everyone's attitude and contribution. This procedure consisted of a listing of all male members of a church. Each member would then subscribe a certain amount which he would contribute for the support of the pastor. This could be either produce or money. The produce or money amount was then placed by the person's name and he was expected to bring forth his contribution sometime during the year. Thus in 1798 the members of the Great Crossing Baptist Church made provisions for their pastor.

35 Severn's Valley Baptist Church Minutes for 1789, I, 9.

36 East Hickman Baptist Church Minutes for 1791, p. 12.

The Reference respecting our minister brough forward & agreed to, thus a list of the members names to be given to the Deacons, & for them to present it to the members and for them to set down & pay whatever they may find free to do, for the Support of the ministry and also for necessary uses for the Church.³⁷

Throughout the entire frontier period with which this thesis deals the minister's funds were largely raised by the subscription list. Whenever the church desired to help the pastor a subscription list was circulated. In 1815 the Buffalo Lick Baptist Church found it necessary to take action because their funds were exhausted.

Proposed by Br M. Baskett and Seconded that the Church take into consideration, the fund, of the Church which is Exhausted, after consultation agreed, that the number, and a list of the male members be taken - and a Calculation be made of what it will take to Supply the Expenche of the Church for the year, and what each member contributes toward Raising the fund to be entered against his name.³⁸

In 1816 the Boone's Creek Baptist Church used the subscription list.

On motion of Bro G. Boon to raise a contribution for our minister the

I, 23. 37 Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1798,

p. 42. 38 Buffalo Lick Baptist Church Minutes for 1815,

church unanimously agreed to do so
& a Subscription placed in the hands
of our Deacons to be paid at our Feb
9 meeting.³⁹

In 1823 the Plum Creek Baptist Church recorded its
first subscription list, though the church had been
organized and had had a pastor for ten years.

Met according to appointment and
after prayer proceeded to Business
according to order a motion made and
second to know whether there shall be
a superscription paper drawn or not
for the Benefit of Brother stout the
Church says draw one.⁴⁰

Among a number of the early frontier Baptist churches
the voluntary subscription list was used, but in some cases
there came to be an apportionment of fees among the male
members. This was done in an effort to cause more people
to contribute. In 1816 the Glen's Creek Baptist Church
made an effort to bind its members to contribute.

A motion made and seconded to adopt
a rule to bind each male member to
contribute something for the support of
the Church, agreed to and appoints Br.
James Ford to enroll each male members
name and present to them for to contribute
at their discretion.⁴¹

Whenever a church made up such a "binding" subscrip-

p. 34. 39 Boone's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1816,

40 Plum Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1823, p. 32.

p. 33. 41 Glen's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1816,

tion list they usually took into consideration the ability of the member to pay. Beech Creek Baptist Church decided that all money contributed by the male members should be "equalized according to their abilities."⁴²

This trend had begun quite early. In 1794 the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church had appointed a Committee to "Leavy a money on the church agreeable their abilities. . . ."⁴³ This feature continued during the frontier days. In 1817 the Christiansburg Church agreed to raise a fund to defray the expenses of the church.

. . . the fund is to be raised by the most wealthy Brothers paying in one dollar and the other brethren in proportion as the Lord hath prospered.⁴⁴

After the assessment had been made it was not always easy to collect. As the period covered by this survey comes to a close the difficulty of collecting the assessments is noticed. In the minutes of the Buck Creek Baptist Church in 1830 it is learned that some of the members had defaulted.

The church appointed Brother Benjamin C Stevens to draw off a list of all the male members names that has not paid their 25 cents for these several years back and also those that have paid and to collect and pay over to the Brother deacons.⁴⁵

⁴² Beech Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1828, II, 48.

⁴³ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1794, p. 18.

⁴⁴ Christiansburg Baptist Church Minutes for 1817, p. 89.

⁴⁵ Buck Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1830, p. 33.

The subscription list was usually payable annually. The Green River Baptist Church always set a specific date each year for the members to bring their contributions, and also a date to settle with the pastor.⁴⁶

Other churches preferred that the subscription list be dealt with on a quarterly basis. The Tick Creek, or Bethel Church, asked in 1812 that the funds "be paid Quarterly if convenient."⁴⁷ At least one church, the Church on the Twins, in 1823 used a monthly subscription list.⁴⁸

IV. FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHERS SOUGHT IMPROVED FINANCIAL CONDITIONS IN KENTUCKY

Before studying a cross-sampling of some salaries paid by early Baptist churches in Kentucky, it should be stated that quite a few of the immigrant preachers had come to Kentucky in hopes of better financial conditions. John Gano in his memoirs states frankly why he came to Kentucky. One of the main reasons was his hope of financial improvement.

46 Green River Baptist Church Minutes for 1823,
p. 36.

47 Bethel Baptist Church Minutes for 1812, I, 21.

48 Church on the Twins Minutes for 1823, p. 129.

One Mr. William Wood, came from that country, and gave a very exalted character of the state of it. He made several encouraging proposals to me to go there, said there was a prospect of usefulness in the ministry, the necessity of an old experienced minister to take care of a young church there, and flattering temporal prospects for the support of my family. For these reasons I concluded to remove. Besides, I was considerably in debt, and saw no way of being released, but by selling my house and lot. This I concluded would clear me, and enable me to purchase waggon and horses to carry me to Kentucky.⁴⁹

John Shackelford came to Kentucky in 1792 because of a lack of financial security in Virginia.⁵⁰ Because he was unable to pay for a farm he had purchased, Henry Tolar relinquished title and came to Kentucky.⁵¹ Thus old established states sometimes lost valuable ministers as they left to search for a greater degree of financial security.⁵²

V. THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER HELD MONTHLY CHURCHES

The churches to which the pioneer preachers came or which they helped to organize were not "full time." Almost without exception the churches practiced what came

⁴⁹ John Gano, Biographical Memoirs of the Late Rev. John Gano, of Frankfort, (Kentucky). (New York: Southwick and Hardcastle, 1806), p. 118.

⁵⁰ Robert B. Semple, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Pitt and Dickinson, Publisher, 1894), p. 156.

⁵¹ Taylor, Virginia Baptist Ministers, I, 239-240.

⁵² Ibid., p. 198.

to be known as the monthly system. Under this arrangement the attendance of the pastor was expected only once a month. David Benedict says that the pastors of these churches which met so infrequently were called by many "thirty-day Baptists."⁵³ This procedure, which became so basic to the entire Kentucky frontier, arose as a result of several factors. First, in the very earliest of frontier days there were not enough people or churches of sufficient means to support stationary pastors. Second, the paucity of pioneer preachers made it necessary for each one to divide his time among a number of churches.⁵⁴ Long years after these reasons had disappeared, the monthly system lived on. In the materials following, unless specifically stated, the churches were quarter-time.

VI. A CROSS SAMPLING OF THE REMUNERATION RECEIVED BY THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER

The following cross-sampling of the salary received by the frontier Baptist preachers in Kentucky is divided into three approaches. First, there is a study of the frontier preachers salary as seen from a study of the churches over a period of years. Next, there are listed

53 David Benedict, Fifty Years Among the Baptists (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1860), p. 63.

54 Ibid., p. 62.

cross-samplings of churches of which there is to be found only one reference to salary. The third approach is seen in a study of the salary as discovered, not from church records, but from the frontier preachers themselves.

From 1785-1787 John Taylor was pastor at Clear Creek. During the first year a church building was completed, and a salary of seventy dollars was agreed upon for the pastor.⁵⁵ Taylor explained vividly the arrangements for these years and the result.

This year the Church went into an agreement to make compensation to their pastor, as they now had one --- seventy dollars was fixed on, some said the pastor will be pacified with this small sum, as we have our meeting house to build this year. The next year a hundred dollars was voted for the pastor, by the Church, not knowing but the first seventy had been all paid. The plan fallen on was to make out an apportionment on each member, and give the several sums drawn off into the hands of the pastor, and he gave the individual credit when the sum was paid --- these several sums were in such produce as would answer for family use, out of this hundred and seventy dollars, I received about forty --- those who did pay never knew but that the rest paid also. The third year it was thought best to hire a man to attend to my business, this was done by commissioners appointed by the Church, who hired a man for a hundred dollars. The trustees took care to get their money from each individual, this produced a little flouncing --- thus ended my Peter-spence at Clear Creek.⁵⁶

55 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 61.

56 John Taylor, A History of Ten Churches, (Frankfort, Kentucky: J. H. Holeman, 1823), pp. 53-54.

Thus for shepherding the Clear Creek Baptist Church for three years, John Taylor actually received only forty dollars out of a promised one hundred seventy. Probably far more helpful was the hired man who helped with the farming, as it is noted that Taylor owned considerable land at this time.⁵⁷

Bryan's Station had as their pastor Ambrose Dudley. An entry in the record book for 1788 explained the salary and method of collecting.

The Church are of oppinion that the minister of our Church Receive from us the sum of Fifty Pounds to be paid in such property as each person shall think proper at the Common Selling price and that the proportion for each one to pay be ascertained by a member of the Brethren appointed for that purpose.⁵⁸

In 1789 the Bryan's Station Church voted to raise a subscription for Brother Dudley, but there was no specified amount.⁵⁹

No further reference was made concerning the pastor's salary until 1793. The church agreed to raise another subscription, again with no specified amount, to be paid on the first day of January in 1794.⁶⁰

57 Jennie Scearce, "Clear Creek Church," (unpublished manuscript, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky), p. 2.

58 Bryan's Station Church Minutes for 1788, p. 14.

59 Bryan's Station Church Minutes for 1789, p. 23.

60 Bryan's Station Church Minutes for 1793, p. 67.

The next mention of the financial assistance made to the pastor was in 1805. At this time the financial report of the church was made, and it is discovered that for the year 1804 the Bryan's Station pastor received L35, 2s, 6d.⁶¹

The last entry referring to the pastor's salary was made in 1806. At that time the members were told that for the year 1805 their pastor had received L36, 19s, 2d.⁶²

Severn's Valley Baptist Church, the oldest constituted church in Kentucky, made no mention of a salary until the tenure of Josiah Dodge, their third pastor.⁶³ Dodge was ordained in 1791 and immediately afterwards was chosen pastor of the Severn's Valley Church.⁶⁴ Severn's Valley membership was distributed over a wide territory. In an effort to be fair to all, there were two meeting places for the congregation. One was at the Valley and the other at Nolin. The pastor was to spend one-third of the time at the Valley and the other two-thirds at Nolin. This practice of an alternate holding of meetings

61 Bryan's Station Church Minutes for 1805, p. 141.

62 Bryan's Station Church Minutes for 1806, p. 146.

63 Ella Cofer, History of Severn's Valley Baptist Church: 1781 to 1931, (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p. 7.

64 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 187-188.

was continued until 1803, when by mutual agreement, the Nolin Church was separately constituted.⁶⁵ The call issued by the Severn's Valley Church specified one-half of the pastor's time.

A motion was made Respecting giving Brother Dodge (being now agoing to be ordained) a call for one half of his time to officiate amongst us as a gospel minister and go in and out before us for the term of one year --- It was agreed that a call should be given him for the sd part of his time providing he complies with the terms viz that for his servises for sd term we shall pay him L30 in convenient traid to be paid by our Brothers . . . and he shall be at liberty to Soply any part of Sd time he may be absent with the attendance of any other minister of the same order to Soply his room.⁶⁶

When the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church first mentioned salary, William Hickman was the pastor. In 1789 the church set a salary and threatened exclusion to non-paying members.

Agreed that the sum of thirty pounds be raised for bro Wm. Hickman and to be Levied on the members agreeable to their abilities and any member failing to pay his part is to be dealt with and not giving Satisfaction is to be excluded from Society.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Cofér, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

⁶⁶ Severn's Valley Baptist Church Minutes for 1791, I, 16.

⁶⁷ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1789, p. 8.

One author stated that the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church was among the leaders in paying a stated salary.⁶⁸ However true this may have been, the records of the church failed to mention pastoral help for several years at a time. Then when salary was mentioned, often there was no stated amount.

The second reference to salary at the Forks of Elkhorn Church was found in 1798, at which time the church agreed to raise a subscription "for the purpose of making provisions for Bro. Wm. Hickmans necessities the ensuing year."⁶⁹

Five years elapsed before the minutes revealed anything else about the salary. In 1803 an entry was made. "A motion made & seconded whether there should be anything raised by Subscription for the Support of Bro. Hickman or not."⁷⁰ The church decided the clerk should draw up a subscription and present it to the next meeting.⁷¹

By 1808 the Forks of Elkhorn Church had a new pastor, John Shackelford. In May of that year the church clerk

⁶⁸ E. J. Darnell, Forks of Elkhorn Church (Louisville: The Standard Printing Co., 1946), p. 24.

⁶⁹ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1798, p. 27.

⁷⁰ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1803, p. 58.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 59.

turned over to Shackelford twenty-four dollars and twenty-five cents which had been collected. By December eleven dollars and thirty-three cents more had been turned in by the members and it was given to the pastor.⁷² Thus the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church paid thirty-five dollars and fifty-eight cents for pastoral care in 1808.

In 1809 John Shackelford was given money upon two occasions, once in September and once in December. The total amount which he received for the year was forty-two dollars and twenty-five cents.⁷³

The next entry found in the minutes of this church dealing with salary occurred in 1812 when a committee of three was appointed to superintend the business of furnishing supplies for the pastor.⁷⁴ No specific sum was mentioned. At this time William Hickman was again pastor of the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church.

The church agreed to contribute sixty dollars for preacher Hickman in 1813.⁷⁵ In 1814 the salary was the same as the year before, being set at sixty dollars.⁷⁶

⁷² Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1808, pp. 98; 103.

⁷³ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1809, pp. 108-109.

⁷⁴ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1812, p. 129.

⁷⁵ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1813, p. 135.

⁷⁶ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1814, p. 142.

References to the pastor's salary were intermittent for the next ten years. Committees were appointed for the years 1816, 1820, 1823, and 1824, and the members were directed to raise by subscription funds for pastoral support.⁷⁷ During those years there was no intimation whether the salary was set at sixty dollars, as had been the practice in 1813 and 1814, or whether the members simply contributed according to their desire and discretion.

The latter part of 1824 revealed an interesting inclusion in the records of the Forks of Elkhorn Church.

The commissioners that was appointed at our last church meeting to raise by Subscription made thare report amounting to \$72.50 and the church has directed to said commisions to pearchis 1500 pounds of pork, out of the money fer the use of Bro. William Hickman.⁷⁸

It can easily be imagined that, for a time at least, preacher Hickman and his family ate heartily of pork. However, if the wishes of the pastor had been considered it is quite probable he would have preferred the money, thus enabling him to make purchases according to the needs of the family. That Hickman's salary for the entire year of 1824 consisted of only one item would be amusing if it did not so

⁷⁷ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1816, 1820, 1823, 1824, pp. 153, 175, 187, 191.

⁷⁸ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1824, p. 191.

completely ignore the needs and wishes of the frontier preacher.

The subscription committee collected ninety-seven dollars in 1825 and gave it to pastor Hickman.⁷⁹ The last entry in the records showed that in the year 1828 Hickman received twenty-five dollars and fifty cents from the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church.⁸⁰

Great Crossing Baptist Church minutes were more detailed, especially in relation to salary, than were many others. Each year the names of the members and the amounts they gave were entered into the record book. The first list appeared in 1804.⁸¹

The following is a statement of what was give to our minister for his services the past year not only as a token of our Friendship to him but from a belief that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel

Wm shoolridge -----	0	12	0
Richard gains -----	0	15	0
Jas Drake -----	0	12	0
Harry Davis -----	0	15	0
John Davis -----	0	6	0
old sister Davis -----	0	1	6
John Hrgeton -----	0	12	0
Aron Runnels -----	0	4	6
Calep Patton -----	0	6	0
Thos Davis -----	0	6	0
spencer Peake -----	0	12	0
Preffury Peake -----	0	12	0
Pame Fomison -----	0	9	0

⁷⁹ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1825, p. 195.

⁸⁰ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1828, p. 204.

⁸¹ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1804, I, 112.

Joshua Orr -----	0	6	0
James Johnson -----	1	4	0
Wm Suggette -----	1	1	0
Elijah shipp -----	0	6	0
Lewis White -----	0	6	0
Wm Quinn -----	0	6	0
Wm Davis -----	1	1	0
Lewis Nuckets -----	0	12	0
Christopher Neale -----	0	4	6
Elijah Brock -----	0	3	0
John Suggette -----	1	4	0
Robert Johnson -----	0	18	0
John Bradluy -----	0	12	0
Jas Barlow -----	0	12	0
saml Fomison -----	0	6	0
James Prichit -----	0	3	0
John Campbell -----	0	6	0
	15	10	6
Lewis Flnagen -----	0	6	0
Robert Taylor -----	0	6	0
	L16	2	6
Bro Jackson -----	0	6	0

Thus in 1804 the Great Crossing Church paid the minister L17, 10s, 6d. To gather this amount, thirty-three people had contributed, the largest gift being L1, 4s, Od. At least three of the brethren were tardy in making their contributions, thus making it necessary to add their names after the list had been completed.

For the year 1805 the Great Crossing Baptist Church paid seventy-two dollars and seventy-nine cents. This year the contributions were entered in dollars and cents rather than pounds as had happened the year before. The money was given by forty-seven people. The average gift was one dollar, the highest being five dollars.⁸²

⁸² Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1805, I, 122.

In 1806 the listing again reverted to pounds. Thirty-six people contributed to the support of their pastor. The amount paid for the years labor was L18, 5s, 3d.⁸³

Twenty-six people gave forty-eight dollars and thirty-seven cents for pastoral support in 1807.⁸⁴ The largest single contribution to the Great Crossing Church that year was six dollars.

Great Crossing Baptist Church gave pastor Joseph Reding forty-nine dollars and twenty-five cents for 1808. Twenty-six members had contributed, the largest being six dollars.⁸⁵

James Suggette, the pastor of Great Crossing Church in 1810, received fifty-one dollars and eighty-seven cents for that year. Four dollars was the largest single contribution and a total of thirty-seven people contributed.⁸⁶

In 1814 Suggette's salary from Great Crossing was considerably less. This year he received only twenty-nine dollars and forty-four cents, which had been contributed by

⁸³ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1806, I, 129.

⁸⁴ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1807, I, 135.

⁸⁵ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1808, I, 141-142.

⁸⁶ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1810, I, 158.

only eleven people.⁸⁷ No individual contribution less than one dollar was reported.

The salary rose upward the next year and the number of people contributing increased. For his work in 1815 the Great Crossing Church paid Suggette sixty-four dollars and twenty-five cents. Fifty cents was the lowest contribution, while five dollars was the highest.⁸⁸

For the year 1816 two subscription lists appeared in the minutes. Pastor Suggette received forty-five dollars and eighty-three cents from twenty-two people. The largest single contribution made was for ten dollars.⁸⁹

Again in the year 1818 two subscription lists appeared on the records. The salary paid to the minister was sixty dollars and seventy-five cents. Twenty-five members had given the money, the top contribution again being ten dollars.⁹⁰

Upon three occasions in 1819 Suggette received money totaling forty-two dollars and fifty cents. It is noted

87 Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1814,
II, 15.

88 Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1815,
II, 23.

89 Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1816,
II, 30-31.

90 Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1818,
II, 52-53.

that Thomas Henderson, a preacher and a member of the church, though not considered a co-pastor with Suggette, was given five dollars by three persons.⁹¹

By 1820 the church at Great Crossing did not seem to have as unified or as definite a method of collecting as formerly. The seeming indefinite nature of the collections could indicate that the task of keeping the financial records changed hands and that the new person was not as systematic and orderly. At any rate there are to be found individual contributions listed in the minutes. This had not occurred before.

Sister Sytha Johnson give to Brother James Sugget our preacher one dollar and 50 cents in property.⁹²

Later in the year Suggette received an additional twenty-four dollars from six church members.⁹³

In 1821 Suggette received contributions totaling fifty-three dollars from twenty-one people. By this time Great Crossing Church seemed to be regularly receiving money for Thomas Henderson. During 1821 Henderson received

⁹¹ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1819, II, 62-64.

⁹² Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1820, II, 72.

⁹³ Ibid., II, 79.

twelve dollars which had been given by eight people.⁹⁴

Suggette received eleven dollars from the Great Crossing Baptist Church in 1822.⁹⁵ That year more was given to Thomas Henderson, who no doubt was attending to many of the affairs of the church, though Suggette was considered the pastor. Henderson received twenty-six dollars.⁹⁶

It is possible in these records of the preacher's salary to tell something of the crops harvested by the farmers. If the year was lean and the crop yields were small, the preacher was one of the first to feel the pressure. The congregation could not and did not give so much. On the other hand when the crops were bountiful and full, the frontier preacher noticed the fact of a greater liberality of the people.

If any judgment can be made concerning the salary paid pastor Suggette, 1823 was an excellent year for the farmer. That year thirty-nine people gave a total of two hundred eighty-three dollars and fifty cents. The largest single contribution was twenty-five dollars.⁹⁷ There was

⁹⁴ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1821, II, 79, 85-86.

⁹⁵ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1822, II, 87.

⁹⁶ Ibid., II, 94-95.

⁹⁷ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1823, II, 111.

no record of Thomas Henderson's receiving any money during the year.

By 1827 Silas Noel had become pastor of the Great Crossing Baptist Church. For 1827 he was given one hundred and thirty-two dollars. Thirty-seven people had contributed in raising this amount. Ten dollars was the largest single gift.⁹⁸

During these years covered the Great Crossing Church was considered a strong frontier Baptist church, both in numbers and material possessions.⁹⁹ However, with the exception of the years 1823 and 1827, the pastor's salary was considerably less than one hundred dollars per year, usually being only forty or fifty dollars.

The Hazel Creek Baptist Church, which belonged to the Green River Association, had as its pastor in 1811 Benjamin Tolbart. In that year, though the church had been constituted a number of years earlier, the first account of any pastoral support was made. At the time the church agreed to hire a hand to work for pastor Tolbart. In 1815 Hazel Creek Church gave him sixteen dollars and twenty-five cents. For the year 1816 he received only eight dollars. In 1817 the contributions amounted to fourteen dollars and

⁹⁸ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1827, II, 166-167.

⁹⁹ J. N. Bradley, History of the Great Crossings Baptist Church (Georgetown, Kentucky: Great Crossings Baptist Church, 1945), p. 22.

thirty-seven and one-half cents. For the years 1818 and 1819 he received twenty-five dollars each year. Though his call extended on a number of years, one can no longer ascertain what the church may have given him.¹⁰⁰

Harrod's Creek Baptist Church, whose pastor at the time was B. Allen, voted to appropriate a salary in 1819.

The church agree to appropriate \$100 to the Benefit of Br. B. Allen to be raised by Subscription and if not made up in that way she will pay the ballance out of her Church funds.¹⁰¹

In 1822 the Church on the Twins noted that they were considerably behind in payment to their pastors.

The Brethren appointed to settle with the Trustees report that the Church ows to the following Brthn the Sum annexed to their names viz. -- w. Blanton \$35 - 50 to J. Scott \$170 - 83 to N Baker \$11 - 50 - Sum total \$207 - 83.¹⁰²

At this time the Church on the Twins apparently had two pastors, as was the practice of several of the frontier Kentucky Baptist churches. John Scott and W. Blanton served as co-pastors.

By 1824 the Church on the Twins was still in debt to the two laborers.

100 Wm. J. Johnson, History Hazel Creek Baptist Church, the Oldest Baptist Church in the State of Kentucky West of the L. & N. R.R. (Greenville, Ky: Banner Print, 1898), p. 25.

101 Harrod's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1819, p. 24.

102 Church on the Twins Minutes for 1822, p. 124.

The reference as it respects a settlement with the trustees was taken up and the Brethren report that the Church owes to Bro J. Scott \$48 - 93 to Bro W Blanton \$30 - 50.¹⁰³

The Beech Creek Baptist Church agreed to pay their pastor, Brother Cook, twelve dollars for the year 1824.¹⁰⁴ Soon thereafter the Beech Creek Baptist Church began the practice of having two pastors. Their names were Harvey and Hall. They agreed to "give Brother Hall and Brother Harvey twelve dollars. Each per year for part attendance."¹⁰⁵

In 1827 a committee upon inquiring into the church funds found a small surplus. As a result they turned over nine dollars and forty cents to Brother Harvey. At this time the church agreed to do away with the rule or "act of assessing her numbers in any way whatever."¹⁰⁶

The foregoing cross-sampling of salaries paid by some of the frontier Baptist churches has thus far included only churches about which it was possible to secure materials and facts over a number of years. It is now necessary to consider several churches about which it was possible to find only one reference concerning the pastor's salary.

103 Church on Twins Minutes for 1824, p. 137.

104 Beech Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1825, II, 17.

105 Beech Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1826, II, 35.

106 Beech Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1827, II, 39.

Whereas the above study of the salaries paid was based almost wholly on the church records or minutes themselves, the following accounts, with the exception of the first entry, are from the brief histories of the individual churches.

By far the most interesting was a copy of a subscription list of the help pledged to pastor John Shackelford by the South Elkhorn Baptist Church in 1798. Copied verbatim this subscription list is presented in the table found on the following page.

Several things are revealing concerning this subscription. It is noted, by the X by the names of the ministers, that seven out of the fourteen could not sign their names. The help received from the church by Shackelford consisted mostly of produce, with very little cash being given. Also, apparently three of the brethren were distillers, as twenty-seven gallons of whisky were subscribed for the year.

During the pastorates of the first two men to lead the New Salem Baptist Church there is no mention about salary or compensation. It is 1819 before a financial item is mentioned. At this time it was agreed by the church body that each male member pay annually to the moderator in October the sum of fifty cents "as a deposit for the use of the church and that the moderator gives anuly and account monies Received and Expended agreed the minister to be

Exempt."¹⁰⁸

In 1827 when the Columbia Baptist Church was constituted with only nine members, the pastor, D. S. Colgan, received one hundred dollars for one-fourth of his time.¹⁰⁹

Benjamin Talbott was pastor of the Walton's Creek Baptist Church from 1814 until 1832. It was only as his ministry drew to a close there that any reference was made to the pastor's salary. Even then the amount was not stated. However, the Walton's Creek Church did seem to recognize its obligation. In 1829 the church took a special collection to pay a balance of twenty-five dollars due the pastor.¹¹⁰

The frontier Baptist preacher's salary has thus far been studied through the papers and records of the churches. Attention is now focused upon some instances of salary as seen through the writings of the ministers themselves. The materials relied upon for this new approach are found in a diary, two autobiographies and several biographies. Here much is discovered about the frontier Baptist preacher's attitude toward the financial help given him. Unlike the bare factual records of the church accounts, here the

¹⁰⁸ W. O. Carver, History of the New Salem Baptist Church, Nelson County, Kentucky: 1801-1901 (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p. 22.

¹⁰⁹ James Garnett, History of the Columbia Baptist Church (Columbia, Kentucky: n.n., 1927), p. 5.

¹¹⁰ J. A. Bennett, Sketch History of Walton's Creek Baptist Church (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p. 7.

personality and color of the frontier preacher himself is added.

During 1795 David Barrow traveled Kentucky as an itinerant evangelist. He preached at Bryan's Station on the fifteenth of July. For this service he received no pay.

I again returned to and lodged with Elder Dudley, a pious and heavenly man well satisfied with this world's goods, his wife religious and surrounded with 10 promising sons and 2 daughters. His liberality as the church had not contributed anything to bear my expenses, led him to bestow a dollar, which I took from the hand of a minister with reluctancy. . . .¹¹¹

On July 17, 1795, Barrow preached at the South Elkhorn Baptist Church. The crowd was large and the collection amounted to 11, 9s, 1d.¹¹² Two days later Barrow preached at Buck Run Baptist Church. Two ministers, Rucker and Dupuy, contributed to Barrow's expenses. Though it was against his desire, at their insistence he accepted from them 18s, 9d.¹¹³

William Hickman, many years pastor of the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church, related his experience of receiving

¹¹¹ David Barrow, "Diary of David Barrow Pioneer Baptist Minister Va. - Ky," (a typed copy in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, from the original now in possession of descendent, Thomas Marshall Barrow, St. Louis, formerly of Owensboro, Kentucky), p. 19.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹³ Loc. cit.

money for funerals.

In those times I was called upon to preach a funeral sermon on the death of an old lady of the name of Reed. I was applied to by her son-in-law, and have the appointment and attended. The old lady was buried on the Church acre, and when I went I was not permitted to preach on the holy ground; I had to go out of the lot, but ventured near the Church wall to make a finish of the grave. I then stepped to the spring to get a drink, and when about to start home, the gentleman that invited me met me and told me he was much obliged to me. I told him he was welcome. He handed me a six dollar bill. I told him I never charged in my life. He said he knew that but wished me to accept it as a gift. I took it, and he handed out another; it was the first penny I ever received in my life in that way, and I was particular to let him know if I took it at all it was a gift and not a charge, though it did not count so much, I suppose the whole twelve was not more than five dollars. I went home with many thoughts -- What! a money preacher? I looked and felt so little like it. Soon after, a poor young man spoke to me to preach his father's funeral; I told him I would, and set the time; previous to which I had a night meeting in the same neighborhood, where I saw the same young man; he took me out and told me he had heard I charged five pounds for preaching funeral sermons, and he was not able to give it. I asked him for his author, but he did not give it to me. I told him I had never charged a penny in my life, and then mentioned the above circumstances; well, he said if I did not charge, I might preach it; which I did. . . . 114

William Vaughn said that the first money ever paid to

114 William Hickman, "A Short Account of My Life and Travels, For More Than Fifty Years; a Professed Servant of Jesus Christ," (a typed copy in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, from the original owned by W. P. Harvey), p. 9.

him for preaching was a one-dollar bill handed to him by a gentleman after he had preached the funeral of a member of his family.¹¹⁵ During his ministry Vaughn once served a church for two years. The church members then decided that they should raise some money for their pastor's support. They gave him ten dollars, considering it a large sum.

On my way home I had to travel an hour or two after night, and so as I was jogging along through a strip of woods, my horse stumbled and fell, and threw me over his head, and I rolled over and over upon the ground. My money, which was in one of my pockets, dropped out into the road. Then came the difficulty. It was after dark and there was no light at all save from the silent stars. I got down on my knees and went to work scratching among the leaves and dirt. After awhile I succeeded in finding every dollar but one, and this I could not find. I hunted for it a long time and finally gave up the search, mounted my horse and went on home. I said to myself, here are nine dollars in my pocket, the reward of two years' labor. If it was 'poor preach,' it certainly was 'poor pay.'¹¹⁶

Then, as now, the minister oftentime received financial aid from assisting in revival services. In the fall of 1814 Vaughn spent two or three weeks in Bracken Association preaching at several points. During this visit he received as compensation for services two hundred dollars.¹¹⁷

115 Vaughn, op. cit., p. 66.

116 Ibid., p. 67.

117 Ibid., p. 88.

In 1815 Vaughn received a unanimous call to the pastorate of the Lee's Creek Baptist Church. Because the church did not consider it right to pay a specified amount, there was no agreement with the pastor for a stipulated salary. However, they gave him about thirty dollars a year for his pastoral work.¹¹⁸

Vaughn was always a popular preacher. He frequently had calls for funerals and marriages. Although the fees for this kind of service were usually small, they helped his financial condition considerably. Money given him for marriages or funerals never exceeded five dollars per service.¹¹⁹

William Calmes Buck, who began in the pastorate at Little Bethel and Highland Churches, had a long and useful life. In looking back over his experiences, Buck stated that for the first twenty-four years of his ministry he received altogether seven hundred and fifty dollars. Most of this salary was in the form of produce or merchandise.¹²⁰ This salary was an average of thirty-one dollars and twenty-five cents a year.

Not all the ministers were satisfied with the

118 Ibid., p. 89.

119 Vaughn, loc. cit.

120 Arthur Yager, Sketch of the Life of William Calmes Buck (Louisville: C. T. Dearing Printing Company, [n.d.]), p. 18.

financial help given by the churches'. Reuben Smith was pastor of the Elk Creek Baptist Church about 1797. Because he had always lived in poverty, he sometimes murmured about his church not supporting him. Once he was arraigned before the church for saying that in all the nineteen years he had served the church they never paid him enough to pay for the pins that fastened the clothes of his children. Later Reuben Smith invited the brethren of his church to visit him at his home. When dinner time came he invited them to the table. There was only one item on the table. In the center there was a large pone of corn bread. Smith apologized to them by saying, "Brethren, the fare is rough, but it is the best I have." A large supply of provisions was sent to his home the next day.¹²¹

During the latter years included in this survey salaries paid to the ministers became more specific and stable. Also they were somewhat higher. Several factors account for this better condition. For one thing the first few years in which most of the peoples' time had been spent in settling had passed. The land was cleared, the house and barns were built and the crops were being harvested. Church members had more time and were more financially able to help the frontier preachers. Another

¹²¹ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 214.

reason was the fact that the churches were increasing in membership. As the years passed, people kept coming to the Kentucky frontier and when they arrived many of them were brought into the churches. Thus a larger membership made possible a better salary for the preacher.

Indicative of this trend was James Fishback. He was the first pastor of the Mount Vernon Baptist Church. He was elected to serve "as long as his labors were profitable" at a salary of one hundred dollars per year to be paid semi-annually.¹²² While working there Fishback was called in 1819 to the pastorate of the Lexington Baptist Church at a salary of four hundred dollars a year.¹²³ At this time such an amount was quite extraordinary for a minister's salary.

VII. METHODS USED BY THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHERS TO SUPPLEMENT INCOME

It was necessary that most of the Kentucky frontier Baptist preachers have some method of supplementing their income. Most of the churches did not pay enough for the minister to live without additional or supplementary income.

122 The Lexington Leader, July 30, 1922.

123 George W. Ranck, History of Lexington, Kentucky: Its Early Annals and Recent Progress (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Company, 1872), p. 120.

Then, too, because of the prejudice existing among many concerning financial assistance to the minister, many of them preferred to labor in some secular avocation rather than risk the possibility of being tainted as a money preacher. As a result, there was no concerted action or pressure exerted upon the members of the churches to lead them to be progressive in their giving. Instead, the frontier preacher expected mainly to derive his living from a secular work. It has been suggested earlier that a shortage of ministers often existed. Perhaps one reason for this situation was the fact that the early ministers were compelled to support themselves, and could therefore give only a part of their time to the ministry.¹²⁴ They found that to provide for a wife and children by farming or teaching or otherwise absorbed much time and greatly reduced the time available for "preaching the word."

By far the largest portion of the frontier preachers supplemented their income by being what David Benedict called "literary farm preachers."¹²⁵ They were men who grew up on the farm and who intended to farm for a living. It was the only way they knew to make a living. However at some time in their lives they felt "the call of God" to be a preacher. Though they took up their new calling, it

124 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 49.

125 Benedict, Fifty Years Among the Baptists, pp. 59-60.

was only natural that they should continue to farm. These Baptist preachers lived and labored the same as did their church members. They cleared ground, split rails, planted corn, and raised cattle and hogs.¹²⁶ John Taylor gives an account of a typical day's work in his life.

I will state one of my days work - I went out in a cold morning late in October or early November - when I counted my ground work I found fifty pannels were laid - this, I thought to myself I must put up, and fifty more today - the rails all lying where they were split at different distances, at it I went, with nimble step, I only put up the fence six rails high, but this I found a full days work - I concluded I had often put my strength and activity to very bad purposes in my days of wickedness, but that it was a very good work to get my fence up - about sun set I finished my task, as I called it, in one day I had a hundred pannels of fence put up, with my own hands, and the newly split logs moved from one to fifty steps, through the brush and fallen timber, except the fifty pannels of ground work first laid, the rails were of a size for six of them to a pannel to make a safe fence. In this early day, their length was eleven feet - I name this days work that it may be accounted for, how I have cleared near four hundred acres of land, in the heavy forest of Kentucky, besides making other good improvements.¹²⁷

Because of his industrious nature Taylor gathered

126 Theodore Roosevelt, The Winning of the West, an Account of the Exploration and Settlement of our Country (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896), III, 101.

127 Taylor, History of Ten Churches, p. 45.

from his land that first year about two hundred and fifty barrels of corn. He also had about one thousand pounds of pork for family use.¹²⁸

It was often hard for the pioneer preacher to keep up with his farm work because of frequently being away on preaching engagements. Edmund Waller supplemented his income by farming. It is said that often, after returning from a tour, Waller could be found in the cornfield plowing by moon light.¹²⁹ This was necessary in order to gain back some of the time lost while being away preaching.

If the frontier preacher was a fervent gospel preacher and took advantage of every opportunity, it meant neglecting the crops and livestock. Many times his farm work was left unfinished and the fields grew weeds. Because of this chronic neglect the yield from the frontier preacher's acreage was more likely than not below that of his neighbor. Jeremiah Vardeman supported his family by farming.¹³⁰ Being an untiring pioneer preacher Vardeman seldom stayed at home more than half the time. He continually and tirelessly rode by horseback, from community to community,

128 Ibid., p. 46.

129 S. H. Ford, "Edmund Waller," The Christian Repository, Vol. V (January, 1856), 22.

130 J. M. Peck, "Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman," The Christian Repository, Vol. III (August, 1854), 467.

preaching almost every night.¹³¹

An early pastor of the Christiansburg Church, Abraham Cook, supported his family from their farm. He was persistent in his refusals of allowing the churches to pay him a stated salary.¹³² He felt his ministry was more effective by such a refusal and that people would respect him more for earning his living by the sweat of his brow.

William Calmes Buck farmed for years after becoming a minister. While pastor of the Highland and Little Bethel Churches, an important source of income for Buck was the farm.¹³³

However, supplementing the income by farming did not always mean that the pioneer preacher would have a sound financial standing. Thomas Downs was a pastor of the Green Brier Baptist Church. His family was large. He was so extremely poor that he traveled mostly by foot, often being barefoot. Frequently, after plowing all week, Downs walked the twenty-five miles from Green Brier to Rock Spring without coat or shoes. Though there were not many to listen to his sermons, he would preach for two hours. Once he walked the twenty-five miles to speak to three people.¹³⁴

131 William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1865), VI, 426.

132 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 434.

133 Yager, op. cit., p. 9.

134 Spencer, op. cit., II, 571.

The next most popular occupation used by the frontier preacher for supplementation of income was the school teaching profession. If the early frontier preachers were not part-time farmers, they were probably part-time school teachers.¹³⁵

When David Barrow announced his Lubbegrad School in 1800, he also made known his fees.

For an in Consideration of which, he shall receive from the Subscribers, for each Scholar entered the Sum of 40/ One Fourth to be paid in Cash, the Remainder in Property, Corn at 7/6, Pork at 18/, Wheat 4/6, Sugar at 1/, Six hundred Linen at 3/, Dressed Flax at 7/, Dressed Hemp 1/3 and other Property as may be agreed on, to be paid and delivered at the sd. Barrow's House on or before the last Day of December 1801.¹³⁶

William Vaughn became a school teacher during the week and a preacher on Saturday and Sunday.

Some may smile when they think of one of his limited education undertaking to teach others, but let such persons remember that this was at an early date in Kentucky, and then scarcely anything was taught but the elementary branches of an English education. There were very few classical scholars in the state at that time. The branches he taught were spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and grammar.

¹³⁵ Otto A. Rothert, A History of Unity Baptist Church: Muhlenberg County, Kentucky (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1914), p. 10.

¹³⁶ Asa C. Barrow, "David Barrow and His Lubbegrad School, 1801," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. VII (April, 1933), 88-89.

In these he was well versed, his pupils learned well, and so far as he could ascertain, he gave satisfaction to his patrons. It was necessity that compelled him to embark in this business; he had an increasing family, and they must be sustained.¹³⁷

At least one frontier Kentucky Baptist preacher taught singing schools. Augustine Clayton became pastor of the Sinking Creek Baptist Church about 1820. In his school days he had learned to read and write. Somewhere he had studied the "science of vocal Music." Spencer says that Clayton "taught singing-schools and preached from house to house exhorting the people to repent and turn to the Saviour."¹³⁸

Several of the preachers divided their time between the ministry and the practice of medicine. William White Penny served the Unity and Shawnee Baptist Churches. He later became pastor of Goshen Baptist Church. Penny had studied medicine under an "Indian Doctor" from Shelbyville whose name was Richard Carter. Upon practicing, he soon acquired a considerable reputation. He was known as a "Root and herb doctor."¹³⁹ Peter Bainbridge was another early preacher who practiced medicine while preaching.¹⁴⁰

137 Vaughn, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

138 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 390.

139 Ibid., I, 373.

140 Ibid., II, 115.

Isaac McCoy, at one time employed by the Long Run Association as a missionary to the Indians, had in his youth become quite adept at the trade of wheelwright. When pressed financially this skill served him to good advantage. In later years, whenever unable to secure by preaching sufficient funds to maintain his family, he would "manufacture a few wheels."¹⁴¹

Lewis Craig sometimes worked as a stone mason to help support his family. In 1794 Craig did the stone mason's work on the first courthouse in Kentucky. This was the Washington County Courthouse.¹⁴²

VIII. SPECIAL GIFTS OR SERVICES RENDERED TO THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER

Numerous accounts are available of special help given many of the early preachers.¹⁴³ Members of the flock were to be found helping their pastor free himself from the encumbrances of the world in order to devote his time more

¹⁴¹ Walter Sinclair Stewart, Early Baptist Missionaries and Pioneers (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1925), I, 202-203.

¹⁴² Lewis N. Thompson, Lewis Craig, the Pioneer Baptist Preacher: His Life, Labors and Character (Louisville: Baptist World Publishing Company, 1910), p. 30.

¹⁴³ Wendell H. Rone, A History of the Daviess-McLean Association in Kentucky: 1844-1943 (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p. 13.

fully to spiritual considerations. A biography of Reuben Ross, written by his son James Ross, which was addressed to his grandchildren, reveals this fact.

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 most needful assistance.¹⁴⁴

John Smith, who grew up to be a frontier preacher, as a lad often went over to Isaac Denton's, the pastor of Clear Fork Baptist Church, to assist at seed time and to harvest the crops.¹⁴⁵

Occasionally the churches would procure someone to help the minister with his secular tasks. At different times the Mays Lick Baptist Church hired help to cultivate the pastor's crops.¹⁴⁶

Sometimes several churches would pool their resources

¹⁴⁴ James Ross, Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross (Philadelphia: Grant, Faires and Rodgers, /n.d./), p. 294.

¹⁴⁵ Williams, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁴⁶ Z. T. Cody, History of Mays Lick Baptist Church (Mays Lick, Ky: /n.n./, 1890), p. 10.

and secure domestic help. The Christiansburg, or Six Mile Church, did this at least once.

Resolved unanimously by the Church at Six Mile that they will in conjunction with Beech Creek Buffalow lick and Indian Fork Churches pay their equal proportion of a sum of money that will be requisite to hire a male Servant to aid Bro Cook in the prosecution of his domestic business the ensuing year.¹⁴⁷

Occasionally the frontier Baptist preacher was favored with special gifts which somewhat alleviated and softened his financial condition. Years before the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Forks of Elkhorn began to settle, the church decided upon William Hickman as their preacher. Upon Hickman's settling among them, they made him a present of a hundred acres of land.¹⁴⁸

In 1809 Edmund Waller was called to the pastorate of the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. When Waller settled among them, the church generously purchased for him a small farm.¹⁴⁹

That same year, when the David's Fork Baptist Church called Jeremiah Vardeman, they aided him with considerable

¹⁴⁷ Christinsburg Baptist Church Minutes for 1822, p. 135.

¹⁴⁸ Hickman, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁴⁹ S. H. Ford, "Edmund Waller," The Christian Repository, Vol. V (January, 1856), 25.

liberality in purchasing a farm.¹⁵⁰

In 1822 the Bethel Baptist Church, Bucks Creek Baptist Church, and Burks Branch Baptist Church agreed to raise among them a thousand dollars with which to buy their pastor, George Waller, a place of residence.¹⁵¹

In different ways the preachers were helped. In 1825 the Great Crossing Baptist Church raised ninety-five dollars and twenty-five cents and paid off a bank note incurred by their pastor James Suggette.¹⁵²

The riding horse was an essential need of the frontier preacher. In 1811 the Christiansburg, or Six Mile Church noted the pastor's need.

The Church agrees to Raise property
by Subscription for the purpose of
purchasing of Br. J. Rucker a Riding
horse.¹⁵³

Moses Scott, pastor of the Buffalo Lick Baptist Church, was given a great coat in 1814.

Motion made by Br Lee and Seconded
for the Church to assist Br. Scott in
getting a great coat - the Church agreed
to do So, and to Do it by Subscription.¹⁵⁴

150 Vaughn, op. cit., p. 74.

151 West Fork Baptist Church Minutes for 1822, p. 45.

152 Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1825,
II, 127-128.

153 Christiansburg Baptist Church Minutes for 1811,
p. 28.

154 Buffalo Lick Baptist Church Minutes for 1814,
p. 39.

William Tandy was pastor of the West Fork Baptist Church for years. In 1821 the church decided to buy their pastor a suit. This was the first mention in the minutes of anything being given him, though he had been their pastor for some time.

Agreed to present Elder William Tandy with a genteel suit of clothes, and that the money be raised by voluntary subscription by the July meeting and that bro Buckner be requested to attend the selection of sd clothes and present the same, on behalf of the church, to bro. Tandy.¹⁵⁵

Later that year, after the suit had been presented, the church voted to give their pastor the money which had been collected which was over and above the cost of the suit. This amounted to seventeen dollars and eighty-seven and one-half cents. Also there were five more dollars pledged, which had not yet been collected.¹⁵⁶

IX. THE FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHER AND THE ACCUMULATION OF WORLDLY MATERIALS

In spite of the prejudices against paying preachers and the lethargy of the people toward giving, the frontier preacher did not usually suffer. This did not mean, to be sure, that there were not times when he was sorely pressed

¹⁵⁵ West Fork Baptist Church Minutes for 1821, pp. 84-95.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 104.

to meet his financial obligations. However, when the pressure eased somewhat, the frontier preacher was the first to admit that the Lord had graciously met his needs.¹⁵⁷

David Benedict found that among the frontier Baptist preachers of Kentucky very few were actually poor.¹⁵⁸ In fact Benedict was somewhat disappointed to find such a large portion of the frontier preachers in such comfortable circumstances. A few of the preacher-laborers were wealthy, when compared to the flock-members about them.¹⁵⁹

John Taylor was one of those whose possessions had accumulated beyond those of his neighbors. Soon after his marriage Taylor had received an inheritance from an uncle.

Having a little leisure, after I was married, and before I went to house keeping, I took a tour of preaching and to visit my uncle, then about sixty years old. When I got into the neighborhood I heard of his death, I also heard of a will he had left in the hands of an executor and that myself was another; when the will was opened we found he had made me his heir; his estate was then worth about three thousand dollars, consisting of land, negroes, stock of various kinds, household furniture, and several hundred dollars in money, this was about ten times as much as I had ever owned before.¹⁶⁰

157 Cf. D. Dowden, "The Baptists of Kentucky and Missions," Memorial Volume Containing the Papers and Addresses That Were Delivered at the Jubilee of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky. (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1888), p. 67.

158 Benedict, A General History of Baptist Denomination, II, 251.

159 Benedict, Fifty Years Among the Baptists, p. 60.

160 Taylor, History of Ten Churches, p. 40.

Later, when an opportunity presented itself, he purchased three thousand acres of land near the Ohio River.¹⁶¹ Not too long afterwards, Taylor was able to write smugly of his security.

. . . when we had been at Mount Byrd two years we had seventy acres of cleared land, twenty more enclosed, living in the house I have described, [a two story brick dwelling with a cellar] and a very great orchard, of apples, peach, and other kinds of fruit, so that in Gallatin County, I was a little like Job when he lived in the east, in the early days of his prosperity. It is probable, I was the richest man in the country, where I lived. . . .¹⁶²

At his Mount Byrd home, though the family had considerable sickness in the early days of residence, and though there was a great deal of labor attached to life even by those in more comfortable circumstances, John Taylor steadily added to his possessions.

. . . prosperity attended our efforts for a number of years, till with my fine Mount Byrd, and two thousand acres of valuable land on the River connected with it, I owned about twenty slaves, clear of debt and had a considerable amount of stock in different banks. . . .¹⁶³

Elijah Craig was another of the earlier preachers who prospered financially. Arriving in Kentucky in 1786,

161 Ibid., p. 76.

162 Ibid., p. 117.

163 Ibid., p. 125.

Craig became the first pastor of Old Crossing Baptist Church. After his arrival in Kentucky he had bought a thousand acres of land. It seemed suitable for speculation; so Craig laid off the town, which afterwards became Georgetown. He is remembered for having erected the first saw and grist mill, the first fulling mill, the first rope works, and the first paper mill in Kentucky.¹⁶⁴ Craig never seemed to have had any intention of abandoning the ministry. However, his engrossment in his numerous enterprises seriously impaired his ministerial usefulness.¹⁶⁵

David Chenault, the pastor of Unity Baptist Church was an extensive farmer, and for about twenty years held the office of Justice of Peace. Spencer says that at his death he left a fortune of not less than \$100,000.¹⁶⁶ Often Chenault was guilty of neglecting his ministerial duties.

His piety and zeal, however, were not uniform. Sometimes for a year or two he would be very zealous, and would labor with great success, and then he would grow cold, would do but little, and have but little enjoyment in religion. This no doubt grew out of the fact that he possessed a considerable amount of property, much of which was in money, and the management of it required a great deal of care and attention. The love of money and the desire to increase it would sometimes get the upper hand of him,

164 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 87-88.

165 Semple, op. cit., p. 241.

166 Spencer, op. cit., I, 207.

and this produced on him as it always¹⁶⁷
does on others, spiritual declension.

It has been seen that the frontier Baptist preachers sometimes accumulated material possessions. This result would appear to have been inevitable. With low salaries and some deep seated prejudice against paying ministers which necessitated the supplementation of income, it was only a matter of time until some would begin to be exceedingly prosperous. As they became financially successful, it was only natural also that a few would confuse their values. These few spent more and more time with their farm or business and less and less time in preaching.

167 Vaughn, op. cit., p. 79.

CHAPTER VI

A STUDY OF THE FRONTIER PREACHER'S RELATION TO
THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT

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The evil is now spreading, In
Kentucky, - a garden planted in the
wilderness, - a land, where liberty
dwelt for six thousand years, there
are herds of slaves.¹

Such was the observation of Estwick Evans while making a pedestrian tour of Kentucky in 1818. However, the inceptions of this evil which he observed were begun much earlier.

I. THE INTRODUCTION AND GROWTH OF SLAVERY IN KENTUCKY

The exact date of the introduction of slavery into Kentucky is not known. Yet as early as March 25, 1775, there is a record of a Negro's being killed on the Wilderness Road by Indians.²

Slaves are to be found almost from the first settlements.³ Daniel Boone owned at least three slaves. A Negro

1 Reuben Gold Thwaites, editor, Early Western Travels 1749 - 1846, (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), VIII, 278.

2 Thomas Speed, The Wilderness Road, (Louisville: John P. Morton and Co., 1886), pp. 31-32.

3 Samuel M. Wilson, History of Kentucky (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1928), II, 207.

girl, Easter, had been secured from John Grant, a relative, in 1784. In 1786 Boone had bought "one negroe gurle names loos."⁴

Virginia had slavery beginnings as early as 1619.⁵ Because the main stream of immigration was from Virginia, it was only natural that slavery should spread to Kentucky. Early settlers who were wealthy enough to own them brought their Negroes with them. The settlers found slaves profitable and helpful in clearing fields, building houses, and opening up the Kentucky frontier.⁶ However, the majority of the pioneers were poor and had no slaves.⁷ Few families owned more than two or three slaves.⁸ Slavery did not materially increase until after the Indian menace had disappeared and the plantation system had begun to develop and to press for commercial activity.⁹

4 J. Winston Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1940), p. 4.

5 Loc. cit.

6 J. Winston Coleman, Jr., "Lexington's Slave Dealers and Their Southern Trade," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. XII (January, 1938), I.

7 Asa Earl Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky Prior to 1850 (Louisville: The Standard Printing Company of Louisville, 1918), p. 6.

8 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 4.

9 Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p. 6.

In 1777, when Captain John Cowan of Harrod's Fort made the first census report of the new country, he found that out of a total of one hundred and ninety-eight persons in the Fort, nineteen were Negro slaves.¹⁰

A rough census in 1790 revealed that there were 61,133 white people, 12,430 Negro slaves, and 114 Negro freemen in Kentucky.¹¹ The increase in slaves is tremendous during the next ten years, for in 1800 the figure for Kentucky is 40,343. The census for 1810 reveals an almost doubled number of 80,561. From this time onward the rate of increase is steadily slower.¹²

Slaves were to be found in greater numbers in the central part of the state, the blue grass region, which was devoted mostly to the cultivation of tobacco and cotton. In 1806 in Lexington there were 2820 inhabitants. Of this number 1165 were Negro slaves, a percentage of over one-third.¹⁴ The mountain sections of Kentucky, in the east and southeast, were populated with the smallest number of slaves. Often, however, the farmers of these sections were small slaveholders.¹⁵

10 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 4.

11 N. S. Shaler, Kentucky, a Pioneer Commonwealth (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1886), p. 108.

12 Wilson, op. cit., II, 207.

13 Ibid., II, 212.

14 Thwaites, op. cit., IV, 185.

15 Wilson, loc. cit.

The pioneer inhabitants of Kentucky did not have as much class distinction between the white and the black as existed in many of the older states.¹⁶ The isolation of the settlements and the inherent gregariousness of man helped to build the relation between master and slave upon a basis of comradery.¹⁷ The master and his slave cleared and cultivated the fields, fought back Indian opposition as one, and often slept side by side in the family cemetery.¹⁸ Cotterill,¹⁹ the Kentucky historian, feels it would be no exaggeration to say that the slavery system as found in Kentucky was the mildest form of servitude mankind had ever witnessed.

Yet, in spite of Cotterill's rosy attitude, not all of the Kentucky slaveholders were men of tender conscience and uprightness. Many times the owners were cruel and dictatorial in dealing with their slaves.²⁰ Consequently, there were numerous runaways. Sometimes they left because they felt the work was too hard. At other times they rebelled against excessive punishments.

16 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 15.

17 Z. F. Smith, The History of Kentucky (Louisville: Courier Journal Job Printing Company, Publishers, 1886), p. 367.

18 R. S. Cotterill, History of Pioneer Kentucky (Cincinnati: Johnson and Hardin, 1917), p. 245.

19 Loc. cit.

20 Coleman, Jr., op. cit., p. 245.

Fortescue Cumings, who was touring in Kentucky between 1807-1809, noted a search for runaway slaves.

On the road we met a Mr. Ball and another man, both armed going in search of four negro slaves, who had run away from him, and two of his neighbors near Boonsborough, seven had ran away, but three had been apprehended that morning.²¹

After the Revolutionary War the chief problem presenting itself to the new country was the regulation of slavery.²² The doctrines of the natural and inalienable rights of man had been warmly espoused during the Revolution. With the cessation of hostilities, it was possible for slave trade, which had been interrupted during the war, to be vigorously renewed. Parallel to this revival of slave trade was the gaining momentum of world-wide humanitarian and reform movements which compelled an examination of slavery and made its regulation imperative.²³

II. THE BEGINNINGS OF ANTI-SLAVERY SENTIMENT IN KENTUCKY

There was no definite emancipation movement among

21 Thwaites, op. cit., IV, 174.

22 William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 77.

23 Loc. cit.

Baptist leaders until after the Revolutionary War. Sweet feels that three factors caused this tendency. First, Baptists were stronger in the territories where slave holding was at a minimum. Second, Baptists had committed themselves to non-interference in civil affairs. Third, they were engaged in the more important objective, the attainment of ecclesiastical freedom, during these years.²⁴

In pre-revolutionary and Revolutionary days the Baptists were fired with the desire for ecclesiastical freedom. At the time it was the most important objective. Until this matter was satisfactorily settled all other matters, regardless of their inherent worth, were relegated to positions of secondary importance. However, after their ecclesiastical freedom had been attained, Baptists were soon stimulated to action against slavery. One area which was stimulated was Kentucky.²⁵

As long as Kentucky had remained an integral part of Virginia no division on slavery had arisen. Whatever legislation Virginia chose to adopt the District of Kentucky submitted to.²⁶ However, when Kentucky began to frame her first constitution and to apply for statehood, men who

²⁴ Sweet, loc. cit.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 78.

²⁶ John Mason Brown, The Political Beginnings of Kentucky (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1889), p. 223.

believed that the institution of slavery was morally wrong began to clamor to be heard. It is to the credit of the church that many of these disturbed men were the frontier preachers.

David Rice, the father of the Presbyterian church in the West, became the first champion of freedom for the Negro. In April of 1792 Rice gave a vigorous speech before the convention in Danville. He denounced the evil of slavery, and deplored the future of the state if slavery were allowed to exist.²⁷ He had published his sentiments three months before the constitutional convention in a pamphlet entitled Slavery inconsistent with justice and policy. He signed the work "Philanthropos."²⁸ This was the first anti-slavery tract published in Kentucky.

The opponents of slavery at the Danville constitutional convention in 1792 attempted to prevent the adoption of Article IX, which left slavery undisturbed in the newly formed state.²⁹

Of the forty-five members sent to the Danville convention seven were ministers. These men believed that if slavery were to be prevented from spreading, it could not

27 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 290.

28 Robert Davidson, History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky (New York: Robert Carter, 1847), p. 68.

29 Coleman, Jr., loc. cit.

be given a foot-hold in the new territory. Three of the ministers, Bailey, Smith, and Garrard, were Baptists. The Presbyterians among the group also numbered three consisting of Crawford, Swope, and Rice. One minister, Kavanaugh, was a Methodist.³⁰ In the convention these men voted solidly against slavery. When the vote on the measure to restrict slavery was taken, the pro-slavery party won by only six votes.³¹ The closeness of the vote denoted one of two things; either the anti-slavery block was strong in Kentucky, or the pro-slavery block was poorly organized. This was as near as Kentucky ever came to the abolition of slavery by state action.

The anti-slavery leaders did not give up after their first defeat. From 1792 until the second constitutional convention in 1799 the slavery opponents continued the agitation, hoping to write an anti-slavery clause in the second constitution.³² During these years the leadership of the opponents of slavery centered more and more in the Baptist and Methodist clergy.³³ The Presbyterians remained

30 Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p. 17.

31 Mary Kaltenbrun, "The Negro Colonization Movement in Kentucky," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Louisville, Louisville, 1941), p. 15.

32 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 291.

33 James P. Gregory, Jr., "The Question of Slavery in the Kentucky Constitutional Convention of 1849," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. XXIII (April, 1949), 90.

somewhat cautious. Catholics, Episcopalians, and Disciples, or Reformers, never participated prominently in the slavery controversy.³⁴ Between the two conventions many religious groups sponsored some type of anti-slavery program.

The elections of 1799, which were held for the selection of candidates to the second constitutional convention, were heated. Close contests between the anti-slavery supporters and the pro-slavery supporters were revealed in many sections of the state.³⁵

Each side had strong backers. Henry Clay, then a young man, favored emancipation. George Nicholas and John C. Breckinridge cast their influence on the side of slavery.³⁶ When the second constitutional convention had adjourned, it was found that the second constitution contained practically the same provisions for slavery as the first. The anti-slavery forces had been rebuffed again. This did not mean, however, that the matter would be quietly dropped. It meant only that the anti-slavery followers would have to turn to other channels rather than constitutional conventions to try to bring about their aims.

34 Coleman, Jr., op. cit., p. 292.

35 Kaltenbrun, op. cit., p. 16.

36 William Birney, James G. Birney and His Times (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890), p. 209.

III. THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT BEGINNINGS AMONG THE BAPTISTS

The history of the anti-slavery movement after 1830 is well known, whereas the three or four decades before this date are covered with not a few shadows. Many anti-slavery writers have characterized the period from 1800 to 1830 as the "neglected interval" or the "period of stagnation."³⁷ Yet Spencer says that of all the questions which arose to agitate the Baptist churches of Kentucky from 1788 until 1820, slavery "was by far the most fruitful of mischief."³⁸

The Baptist literature of the time, the associational minutes, individual church records, pamphlets from the preachers and private correspondence reveal a profound agitation. Ministers began to preach the anti-slavery position. Debate grew warm. Many began to desire to go further than quietly to confess that slavery was morally indefensible or politically undesirable. Soon the Baptists were divided into several positions. There were those who advocated abolition and non-fellowship with slave holders. Others favored a gradual system of emancipation of the Negroes then in slavery and the immediate freedom of those

³⁷ A. E. Martin, "Pioneer Anti-Slavery Press" The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. II (March, 1916), 509.

³⁸ Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 484.

born in the near future. Still others denounced all discussion of the slavery question in the churches. They felt this only tended to confuse politics with religion.³⁹ Each of these groups will be observed in the following pages. The minister's participation in the issue will also be seen.

The Baptists took a stand on the anti-slavery question as early as 1788. In the annual meeting of the Baptist General Committee of Virginia the subject was introduced. Kentucky, not yet admitted to statehood, was still a part of Virginia. After discussing the question pro and con all action was deferred until the next meeting. When the next annual meeting was held at Richmond, a resolution was adopted.

That slavery is a violent deprivation of the rights of nature, and inconsistent with a republican government, and therefore we recommend it to our brethren to make use of every legal measure to extirpate this horrid evil from the land; and pray God that our honorable Legislature may have it in their power to proclaim the great Jubilee, consistent with the principles of good policy.⁴⁰

Thus the Baptists took an early and strong position on the question. This resolution was one of the first declarations

³⁹ Brown, op. cit., p. 225.

⁴⁰ Robert B. Semple, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Pitt and Dickinson, Publishers, 1894), p. 105.

in favor of the abolition of slavery made by any religious group in the South.

Baptist associations in Kentucky, as long as Kentucky was a district of Virginia, kept in close contact with this General Committee of Virginia Baptists. By correspondence and by messengers they were advised of all their proceedings. The Baptists of Kentucky and of Virginia during these years were intimately related.⁴¹ It was only natural then, that shortly after anti-slavery agitation began in Virginia, a like feeling spread among the Baptists in Kentucky.

Opposition to slavery at this time, though generally scattered through out Kentucky, was not organized as a political movement. It existed almost entirely among and in the churches.⁴²

The agitation against slavery is first noted in the Baptist church in the associational minutes and the individual church records. Queries are to be found on the records, usually worded in such a way as to make the church body or associational body take a stand on the matter. During the last decade of the eighteenth century these questions concerning slaveholding were usually treated conservatively. This policy was prevalent because many of

41 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 183.

42 Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p. 12.

the people felt slavery was entirely a political question and not one of religion. Furthermore, they shied away from what might be construed as interference in civil affairs. Thus the churches soon moved away from the liberalism of the Revolutionary period.

The first church record among Kentucky Baptists concerning slavery is found in 1789, when the Rolling Fork Baptist Church sends a query to the Salem Association.

The following Query from the Rolling Fork Church was laid before this Association It is lawful in the sight of God for a member of Christ to keep his fellow creatures in perpetual Slavery
 Answer - The association judge it improper to enter into so important and critical a matter at present.⁴³

In 1793 the Severn's Valley Baptist Church presented a query to the Salem Association.

The Church at Severn's Valley enquired of the Association whether it was not the duty of us freemen to present a memorial to the Legislature on the Subject of Slavery in order to procure their emancipation. The Association replied that every individual in the commonwealth has this privilege and each one in this thing can use his own pleasure but that it was improper for the Association to present a Memmorial of any kind to the Legislature.⁴⁴

The 1795 Salem Association minutes reveal a query from the Mill Creek Church of Jefferson County. Here the

43 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1789, p. 6.

44 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1793, p. 9.

question had to do with the slave's right to participate in the activities of the association.

Has a black Slave a right to a seat in the Association - Yes provided he is sent as a messenger from a Church.⁴⁵

During this period of conservative treatment of the slavery question there were indications that the church realized that it was difficult to have fellowship with people who held that slavery was an acceptable institution. In 1796 the Severn's Valley Baptist Church discussed their attitude to those who held to the righteousness of slavery.

Question can we as a church have fellowship with those that hold with the riteoussess of perpetual Slavery it was answered in the affirmative they could not ⁴⁶

Sometimes the slavery issue was beclouded with other issues. An amusing incident is found in regard to the discussion which took place at the East Hickman Baptist Church in 1799. In the heat of the controversy the pastor, whose name was Price, accused those who favored emancipation and yet held slaves of being Deists.

Bro Price moved a Question. Desiring to know of this Church whether Slavery was a morral Evil, or whether slave holding be a sin against God - to which it was agreed that the Church should not take it up at this time -

45 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1795, p. 10.

46 Severn's Valley Baptist Church Minutes for 1796, I, 33.

As Bro Price had declared that such as was in favour of Emancipation & yet held slaves, was Deists The question was put, whether the Church could have fellowship with such members as were of the Deistical opinion - this gave rise to much conversation on the Tenants of a Deist, [and then dropd] 47

The accusation of pastor Price obviously did not meet with the approval of many of the members of the church. A brother Fryar had become grieved at the statements of Price. At the next monthly meeting brethren from other churches had been called in to help straighten out the matter.

The charge stated last meeting Br. Fryar vs. Br. Price being read it was agreed that the helps [to wit, the South Elkhorn, Brians & Boones Brethren] should sit together with the church & hear the matter. . . and then draw and sum up their opinions and Report it to the church, which was accordingly done,

We the helps of the church at Marble Creek, are of opinion that Br. John Price has acted Imprudently charging the brethren & Presbyterians of being Deists, that it was unfriendly, when we believe there is a number of both Baptists & Presbyterians that are in favor of Emancipation, that are not Deists, though there may be some of both that are, -

Also that Bro. Bryan was wrong in the matter today in saying it was a false charge, as such language unbecomeing the gosple and ought not to be used among Christians.

The Report being Read and Received by the Church and the Question put whether the

Church was satisfied with Br Price's acknowledgement. (Answered by a majority is satisfied - 48

Evidently the congregation did not become too disturbed by John Price's action as he continued as their pastor.

Agreeable to a reference made at Last meeting concerning the continuing of Br. Price as Pastor. The matter was taken up and after much debate on that Subject it was agreed by a majority that he should continue.⁴⁹

However the very fact that this was agreed upon only "after much debate" hints pungently at the fact that Price's ministry at East Hickman was never the same after the incident.

In 1805 the Elkhorn Baptist Association took a conservative stand toward the slavery controversy.

This Association judges it improper for ministers Churches or associations to meddle with emancipation from slavery or any other political subject and as such we advise ministers and churches to have nothing to do there with in their religious capacities.⁵⁰

The Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church considered a query on slavery in 1806.

48 Ibid., p. 38.

49 Ibid., p. 39.

50 Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1805, p. 104.

The Query refered from last meeting taken up and an amendment proposed & agreed to which reads as follows. Query does this Church think that Baptist Preachers are authorized from the Word of God to preach Emancipation of negroe Slaves, the above Query voted out.⁵¹

In 1807 the Long Run Association considered ministers who had withdrawn over the slavery issue.

Query - from Saltriver Church - is it consistent with good order, for the Baptist Churches of our union, to invite those preachers to preach among us, that hath withdrew from us on account of Slavery -
 Answ - It is considered imprudent (under the present state of things) to intermeddle therewith - ⁵²

The Long Run Association also discussed the Negroes' right to full fellowship in the churches in 1810.

Query - from Beargrass; Is it right to receive Negroes, that are the property & Slaves of other men, into Churches, as members in full fellowship or not. -
 Answer yes, by the consent of their owners. - ⁵³

Cumberland River Association minutes of 1815 revealed the churches of their fellowship grappling with the question of hereditary slavery. In answer, the association admonished caution.

51 Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1806,
 p. 81.

52 Long Run Baptist Association Minutes for 1807,
 p. 21.

53 Long Run Baptist Association Minutes for 1810,
 p. 31.

Query from Pleasant Point - Is it right to uphold hereditary and repeated slavery amongst the Baptist society in our free government, or not? Answer -- Brethren, we conceive that all nations by nature have a right to equal freedom; but as we are involved in our nation with hereditary slavery, we think it would be best to wait on the dispensation of Providence, and pray to God for the happy year of their deliverance to commence.⁵⁴

These were the queries framed and the conservative answers given in the church meetings and the associational meetings. Everywhere there was a cautious approach and hesitant discussion of the question of slavery in church meetings. It was a time when some individuals had begun to become dissatisfied with the conditions of the Negro. At this time it was an individual matter. Persons might question their church or association about the disturbing matter, but the churches were not ready to act as a body or legislate a group opinion against slavery. Here and there were gleamings that the matter would not be settled simply by acting as if it did not exist. It was impossible that such verbal agitation over the subject of slavery could long exist without leaving in its wake discord and withdrawal from the Baptist fellowship.

⁵⁴ Cumberland River Association of United Baptists Minutes for 1815, p. 2.

IV. DISSENSION OVER THE SLAVERY ISSUE BROUGHT WITHDRAWALS

The records of the Baptist churches in Kentucky at this time begin to reveal many local contests and bring to light the activities of many bold exhorters in behalf of anti-slavery. Many individuals moved away from their former conservative attitudes, becoming more liberal and at the same time more blatant. Debates became sharp and caustic. The absence of centralized ecclesiastical machinery in the Baptist church gave opportunities for the controversies to find local expression in the associations rather than before a larger body.⁵⁵

Often slaveholders were brought before the church sessions and associational meetings for questions relating to their views on Negro slavery or their activities related to it. Many times individuals were censured by the churches or associations for their beliefs or practices.⁵⁶

A number of frontier preachers spoke from their pulpits in favor of emancipation. As some slaves belonged to almost every Baptist church on the frontier, the Negroes heard the appeal. Often this made the slaves restive and insubordinate. Emancipationist preachers were bitterly assailed for their dissemination of the anti-slavery

55 Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p. 37.

56 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 293.

position.⁵⁷

Emancipation parties were formed in many of the churches. The party members believed slavery to be contrary to the principles of the Christian religion and refused to commune with those who practiced slavery.⁵⁸ For a time the believers in emancipation worked and remained in their local churches attempting to change them from within. Finding it impossible to accomplish their aims in this manner, the anti-slavery forces began to withdraw from the churches and associations and to form their own fellowships.⁵⁹

In 1794, because the Salem Association refused to pronounce slavery an evil, the Mill Creek Church in Jefferson county withdrew from the association.⁶⁰

Dissatisfaction arose over the issue of slavery, and in 1796, all but three of the members of the Rolling Fork Church withdrew from the Salem Association.⁶¹

Frontier preachers who were leaders in the anti-slavery movement at this time were Joshua Carmen and Joshia Dodge. Feeling unable to accomplish anything within the Salem Association, they withdrew from its fellowship

57 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 293.

58 Martin, op. cit., p. 20.

59 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 184.

60 Loc. cit.

61 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1796, p. 10.

along with the Mill Creek and Rolling Fork Churches.⁶²
They soon constituted another church which they located six miles north-west of Bardstown. Though the name of this church is not discovered in the contemporary materials, it is known that the members of this newly constituted church were drawn from the Cox's Creek, Cedar Creek and Lick Creek Baptist Churches, which held emancipating sentiments. Spencer lists this church as probably the first emancipationist church in Kentucky.⁶³

About the same time, the exact date being unknown, John Sutton with some dissatisfied members from the Clear Creek Church united with another factor from the Hillsboro Church under the leadership of Carter Tarrant to form an emancipationist church which they called New Hope. This church, located in Woodford county, is named by John Taylor as the first emancipation church in Kentucky.⁶⁴

Regardless of which church came first, the important fact is that the withdrawals over the slavery controversy, which were to continue for a number of years, had begun. The seams of the democratic Baptist fellowship, after being strained in many places, were beginning to be pulled apart

62 Spencer, loc. cit.

63 Loc. cit.

64 John Taylor, A History of Ten Churches (Frankfort, Kentucky: J. H. Holeman, 1823), p. 79.

in discord.

By 1804 the movement had gathered momentum, and Kentucky historians were speaking of those who had "gone overboard" on the subject of slavery.⁶⁵ The opponents of slavery, by now considered a "formidable movement," began to have more direction. They went beyond holding that Christians should not have fellowship with slave holders. Many felt that the practice should be abolished. They considered slavery a sinful and abominable practice which bred misery and unconcern for humanity. It was an enemy against which every Christian should have the courage to stand and condemn.⁶⁶

V. FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHERS DECLARED PERSONAL CONVICTIONS ON THE ISSUE

No longer could the problem of slavery be ignored by the churches. The agitation became so heated that many leaders in the churches found it necessary to declare their personal convictions. The results of these public declarations often caused much unpleasantness and severed long existing friendships.

65 William B. Allen, A History of Kentucky (Louisville: Bradly and Gilbert, 1872), p. 178.

66 Smith, op. cit., p. 368.

David Barrow was one of the foremost frontier preachers to condemn slavery, and his advocacy of emancipation in Kentucky aroused intense opposition.⁶⁷ In 1805 the Bracken Association preferred five charges against Barrow concerning his support of emancipation and presented them before the North District Association by messenger.

The charges from Braken Association, against Brother David Barrow, were taken up, and after hearing the messengers from Braken Association, and such auxiliary and corroborating evidence as they thought proper to adduce in support of their charges; and after haring Brother David Barrow in his own defence, his explanations of his intentions, such evidence as he produced, and such apologies as he thought proper to make, This association is of opinion, that Brother David Barrow gave cause of hurt to the Bracken Association by meddling with emancipation, and that his explanations and apologies are satisfactory.⁶⁸

Thus in 1805 the charges were dismissed. However, at the next annual association meeting the charges were brought forward once more. This time Barrow was expelled and a committee appointed to deal with him in his Mount Sterling Church.

Brethren Robert Elkin, Moses Bledsoe, James Quessenberry, James Haggard, and Leonard Turly reported, That, agreeable

67 Asa C. Barrow, "David Barrow and His Lulbegrud School, 1801," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. VII (April, 1933), 92.

68 North District Association Minutes for 1805, p. 2.

to the provision mad last association for the trial of ministers, they had been dealing with Brother David Barrow, for preaching the doctrine of emancipation, to the hurt and injury of the feelings of the brotherhood. And the association, after considering the foregoing report, and hearing what brother Barrow had to say in justification of his conduct on that subject, and brother Barrow manifesting no disposition to alter his mode of preaching, as to the aforesaid doctrine, they proceeded to expel him from his seat in this association, and appointed brethren Edward Kindred, Robert Elkin, Moses Bledsoe, Thos, Mosely, Leonard Turly, and James French, or a majority of them, a committee to deal with brother Barrow in the Church of Mount Sterling at their next monthly meeting, and report to next association.⁶⁹

The following year, 1807, the action was rescinded in the associational meeting.

On the motion of brother James French, the association proceeded to annul and revoke the act of last Association, in expelling elder David Barrow, from his seat in association, and appointing a committee to deal with him in the Church at Mount Sterling, and to reverse the decision of the council of five ministers in the case of said Barrow - ⁷⁰

But the breach in fellowship had occurred. Barrow did not choose to return.⁷¹

69 North District Association Minutes for 1806, p. 3.

70 North District Association Minutes for 1807, p. 2.

71 Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, pp. 38-39.

In 1806 the controversy over slavery in the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church began to affect another pastor, William Hickman.

A charge against Bro. William Hickman for Inviting Carter Tarrant to preach at his house after being Excluded for disorder in the Hilsborough Church - The Church took up the Question, is it right to Invite an Excommunicated minister to preach? Answer'd by a majority of three fourths it is not - 2ndly five said Bro. Hickman had Erred by so doing, Eight said he had not.⁷²

That all this agitation had its bearing on the Negro slave is seen in an entry of 1807 at this same church.

Complaint brought against Sister Ester Boulwares Winney - 1st for saying she once thought it her duty to serve her master & mistress but since the lord had converted her, she had never believed that any Christian kept negroes or Slaves - 2nd For saying she believed there was thousands of white people wallowing in Hell for their treatment to negroes - and she did not care if there was as many more - refer'd to next meeting - ⁷³

When the matter was considered at the next monthly meeting, Winney, the Negro slave, was excluded from the Forks of Elkhorn Church.⁷⁴

Toward the middle of the year 1807 William Hickman preached an anti-slavery sermon to the Forks of Elkhorn

⁷² Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1806, p. 84.

⁷³ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1807, p. 85.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 86.

Church. His text was Isaiah 58:6, which reads "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" In this sermon, which Theodrick Boulware characterized as "disingenuous and offensive," Hickman advocated non-fellowship for all slaveholders.⁷⁵

Shortly afterward, in September of the same year, Hickman gave up his church because of the controversy over slavery.

Bro William Hickman came forward and informed the Church that he was distressed on account of the practice of Slavery as being tolerated by the members of the Baptist Society, therefore declared himself no more in union with us, or the Elkhorn Association - therefore the Church considers him no more a member in fellowship.⁷⁶

At the same time, another member of the church followed Hickman's example.

Bro Plewright Sisk came forward and declared himself no more a member with us, for similar reasons with brother Hickman - Therefore the Church considers him no more a member in fellowship.⁷⁷

Thus William Hickman placed himself among the opponents of slavery, as a conscientious person willing to take a stand

75 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 185.

76 Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1807, p. 93.

77 Loc. cit.

against an evil contrary to the best interests of mankind. However, after a little over two years, because he felt the agitation was premature and efforts against it were doomed to hopelessness, Hickman returned to the fold of the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church and resumed his pastorate. This he did without apology or retraction, feeling that such action was necessary for the sake of peace among the churches and for his own usefulness.⁷⁸ The church recorded his action simply in 1809.

Bro Wm. Hickman came forward and offered his membership and after some conversation he was restored to membership and his former standing.⁷⁹

William Buckley had been ordained by William Hickman and George Smith. Though the church records do not say so, Buckley seems to have served as pastor of the Glen's Creek Baptist Church prior to 1808.⁸⁰ During the latter part of the year Buckley ceased to serve as moderator. An undated insertion found in the minutes explains this fact.

Br. William Buckley came forward & relinquished all his priviledges in this Church and the Elkhorn association

⁷⁸ W. P. Harvey, "Sketch of the Life and Times of William Hickman," Publications of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, Vol. I (1910), 19.

⁷⁹ Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for 1809, p. 109.

⁸⁰ W. J. M'Glothlin, The Baptist Church of Christ on Glen's Creek, In Woodford County, Ky. (/n.p., n.n., n.d./), p. 6.

saying she tolerates perpetual and unmerited and hereditary Slavery with all its concomitant evils and is no longer under our care - 81

Buckley then united with the Gilgal Baptist Church, which was emancipationist. Because he was unhappy in the new church, and because he was charged by the Gilgal Church "with departing from the truth and intoxication," he soon returned to Glen's Creek Church and asked readmission.⁸²

The great jarr and mortification that took its breath on the day of _____ of Br William Buckley leaving this Church in a disorderly manner with the high Spirit of charging this Church and the Elkhorn association of evils and corruption as fr letter as his resignation in communing with us and joined himself to a people calling themselves _____ and continued with them sometime and there was charged with departing from the truth and intoxication by the gilgal Church. But to our satisfaction with certificates from a number of members in high standing together with his recantation for the treatment of the Church at his departure general satisfaction was given to this Church and he was restored to full fellowship.⁸³

While a number of the Kentucky frontier Baptist preachers who opposed slavery were leaving the churches, the laymen were likewise declaring non-fellowship.

The Mount Tabor Church had some of these lay with-

81 Glen's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1811, p. 24.

82 M'Glothlin, op. cit., p. 7.

83 Glen's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1811, pp. 24-25.

drawals in 1808.

2nd The church took into consideration the case of bro. John Murphy, from last meeting, where upon he declared non fellowship with the church on account of slavery, and considers himself not more of us. 3rd bro Elijah Davidson doth this day declare non-fellowship with the church upon the same principle an is no more of us.⁸⁴

Five months later another lay withdrawal occurred.

Bro. Wm. Murphy, withdrew his membership from the church on account of slave holding.⁸⁵

Buffalo Lick Baptist Church also noted the inroads of the slavery controversy in 1810.

On motion the church considered the case of Br Wm _____, disafection on account of Slavery and his having joined the Emancipators, the church considers him as no more of us.⁸⁶

Conviction against slavery had begun to lead individuals out of the circle of their respective church fellowships. Where would they now go? The question was already being answered as will now be seen.

VI. THE FORMATION OF THE BAPTIZED LICKING-LOCUST ASSOCIATION, FRIENDS OF HUMANITY

As the pioneer preachers and the laymen withdrew from

84 Mount Tabor Baptist Church Minutes for 1808, p. 42.

85 Ibid., p. 44.

86 Buffalo Lick Baptist Church Minutes for 1810, p. 26.

their respective churches because they felt it was incompatible with their principles to worship with fellow Christians who held slaves, they began to organize emancipation Baptist churches. In order to qualify as an emancipation Baptist church these newly constituted churches either excluded slaveholders or refused them the right of communion.

Assuming a position of leadership over a number of these emancipating Baptist churches situated in the North Central part of Kentucky, David Barrow and Carter Tarrant led them in forming an association or society of their own. The first meeting of these different churches was held in August of 1807, with eleven Baptist ministers and nineteen laymen in attendance.⁸⁷ In September, at the New Hope Meeting House in Woodford county, a permanent organization was effected. They called the new association the "Baptized Licking-Locust Association, Friends of Humanity."⁸⁸ The members composing this body had formerly belonged to the Elkhorn, North District, and Bracken Associations.⁸⁹

87 Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p. 39.

88 Asa C. Barrow "David Barrow and His Lulbegrud School, 1801," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. VII (April, 1933), 93.

89 David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World (New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1848), II, 245.

Benedict lists some of the queries discussed at this September meeting which reveal something of the purpose or attitude of the organization.

. . . Can any person be admitted a member of this meeting, whose practice appears friendly to perpetual slavery?⁹⁰

This query was answered in the negative. Another dealt with the possibility of the slave holder's being admitted to fellowship.

. . . Is there any case in which persons holding slaves may be admitted to membership in the church of Christ? Answer. No; except in the following, viz. - 1st. In the case of a person holding young slaves, and recording a deed of their emancipation at such an age as the church to which they offer may agree to. 2 d. In the case of persons who have purchased in their ignorance and are willing that the church shall say when the slave or slaves shall be free. 3 d. In the case of women, whose husbands are opposed to emancipation. 4th. In the case of a widow who has it not in her power to liberate them. 5th. In the case of idiots, old age, or any debility of body that prevents such⁹¹ slave from procuring sufficient support. . . .

Another query was answered when it was stated that no member could purchase slaves except with a view to ransoming them from the bondage of slavery. This could be done only after the approval of the church had been sought and obtained.⁹²

90 Ibid., II, 247.

91 Benedict, loc. cit.

92 Ibid., II, 247-248.

Records concerning this Baptist anti-slavery association in frontier Kentucky are scant. There is nothing to indicate its size except Benedict's estimation of three hundred members being their strength at the time of organization.⁹³

Though these early anti-slavery believers possessed zeal and conviction, it was not long before they began to moderate their beliefs. In the very year that the association was organized, at a meeting later in the year, the emancipators resolved "That the present mode of Associations or Confederation of churches was unscriptural and ought to be laid aside."⁹⁴ Even as the association was born, it also began to die.

VII. THE BIRTH OF THE KENTUCKY ABOLITION SOCIETY

As a result of this trend, in 1808, a number of the members of this anti-slavery association, while acting independently of the churches, organized a distinctive anti-slavery society called the "Kentucky Abolition Society!"⁹⁵ This organization did not replace the Friends of Humanity, or the Emancipators, as they were sometimes called. This

⁹³ Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p. 40.

⁹⁴ Benedict, The General History of the Baptists, II, 248.

⁹⁵ Loc. cit.

group continued in existence until 1813.⁹⁶ The Abolition Society did, however, take over the anti-slavery work of the association.⁹⁷

The Kentucky Abolition Society was composed largely of the nucleus of the Baptist Licking-Locust Association, Friends of Humanity. Still, the membership included a number of anti-slavery advocates from other religious groups scattered throughout the state.⁹⁸

When the constitution was adopted at their first meeting, each member pledged himself to certain purposes and work which the society delineated.

1. To pursue such measures as would tend to the final constitutional abolition of slavery.
2. To appoint persons to prepare sermons, orations, and speeches on slavery which were to be delivered at given times and to publish such of them as the annual meeting might desire.
3. To look after the interest of free negroes and mulattoes and to inculcate morality, industry, and economy among them. This was to be accomplished largely by means of education.
4. To amelioriate the condition of slaves by every means in their power according to the constitutional laws of the state.
5. To seek for justice in favor of such Negroes and mulattoes as were held in bondage contrary to the constitutional laws of the commonwealth.
6. To seek to secure the constitutional abolition of the domestic slave trade.⁹⁹

96 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 294.

97 Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p.40.

98 Coleman, Jr., loc. cit.

99 Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p.43.
As quoted from Abolition Intelligencer and Missionary Magazine, Vol. I, No. 6, p. 81.

As with the Friends of Humanity, the number of members composing the Kentucky Abolition Society in 1808 or the years following is not known. Martin states that most of the ministers who had been or were associated with the Friends of Humanity went into the new organization, and that they led or influenced a majority of the members of their churches to follow suit. These were then augmented by other persons who, though not connected in any way with the Baptists, desired to join in the fight to abolish slavery.¹⁰⁰

With the society situated in a slave-holding area, it was only natural that the Kentucky Abolition Society should incur severe criticism. The membership was vehemently accused of speaking against slavery and slave-holders in the presence of and "to multitudes of ignorant negroes" who might "prevent the most proper reasonings to improper purposes."¹⁰¹

In spite of much public criticism, the society expanded. In 1821, pleased with the results they were obtaining, the Kentucky Society decided to expand its activities into the field of journalism. The group began an attempt to mould public opinion and to educate the public

100 Ibid., p. 44.

101 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 294.

through a newspaper of their own.¹⁰² This step seemed necessary because Kentucky newspapers were generally closed to all discussion of slavery abolition.¹⁰³

On November 29, 1821, The Indiana Gazette and Lundy's Genius of Universal Emancipation for March, 1822, carried proposals for the issue of a semi-monthly paper emanating from Shelbyville, Kentucky, under the patronage and control of the Kentucky Abolition Society.¹⁰⁴

The first issue of the paper, the Abolition Intelligencer and Missionary Magazine as it was named, issued from the press in May of 1822 as a monthly paper instead of a semi-monthly journal as had been proposed.¹⁰⁵

It declared the great object to be aid to suffering humanity so far as within their power; to meliorate the situation of the free people of color by giving them aid and encouragement in the discharge of the great duties of morality and religion; to aid those unlawfully kept in bondage; to prepare the public mind for the gradual constitutional abolition of slavery, and to convince the people that the institution was a national, an individual and a moral evil, hostile to the spirit of government, ruinous to the prosperity of the nation, destructive to social happiness and subversive to the great principles of morality.¹⁰⁶

102 Kaltenbrun, op. cit., p. 17.

103 Coleman, Jr., loc. cit.

104 Asa Earl Martin, "The Pioneer Anti-Slavery Press," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. II (March, 1916), 525.

105 Loc. cit.

106 Ibid., p. 526.

The Abolition Intelligencer and Missionary Magazine contained sixteen pages each month. The first eight were devoted to a discussion of slavery, the last eight to missions.¹⁰⁷

Because this paper did not receive the support its backers envisioned, only thirteen issues were printed. Publication ceased in April, 1823. When it was discontinued the paid subscribers in Kentucky and Tennessee numbered less than four hundred, and the Kentucky Abolition Society itself had less than one hundred and seventy-five members on its rolls.¹⁰⁸

VIII. EFFORTS AT AMICABLE DISCUSSIONS OF THE ISSUE OF SLAVERY

During the years in which the anti-slavery agitation continued there were some attempts on the part of both sides to get together and amicably discuss the matter. In 1812 the Mount Tabor Church decided to meet with the Emancipators and discuss the situation.

Agreeable to an application, made by the emancipating brethren, to meet them at some time and place, for the purpose of holding a conference, have agreed to sen brethren Lock, Logan, E. Davidson, Dodd, H. Davidson, W. Davidson,

107 Ibid., p. 526.

108 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 294.

J. Owen, Buster, J. Walters, to meet at John Mutphys sr. on the last Saturday in this month, and to make report of the proposition to our next meeting.¹⁰⁹

That the meeting accomplished very little is indicated by the record of the next meeting.

Agreeable to directions of Mt. Tabor Church bre. Lock, Logan etc. to meet with the emancipating friends, for the purpose of holding a conference with them the propositions being read in the church, the church decided that they had nothing to do with that business.¹¹⁰

It was impossible to expect that either side would relinquish its convictions or compromise them. Certainly the opponents of slavery were not going to give in. Neither were those in its favor.

IX. THE IMPORTANT PIONEER ANTI-SLAVERY PREACHERS

Many people have thought all persons connected with the anti-slavery movement were radical, vituperative and violently abolitionist. This idea is partly explained by the fact that there were people of this nature connected with the abolitionist forces in the later years, just prior to the Civil War, when the problem became so explosive. Yet it was not true in this earlier, precursory anti-slavery

¹⁰⁹ Mount Tabor Baptist Church Minutes for 1812, pp. 66-67.

¹¹⁰ Loc. cit.

movement.

A number of prominent frontier Baptist preachers were associated with the emancipation churches and the anti-slavery movement. Most of these men were not simply radicals but were men of conviction, piety, and Christian devotion who had been convinced that perpetual hereditary slavery was unmerited and morally and religiously indefensible.

Elder Joshua Carmen was perhaps the first Baptist preacher on the Kentucky frontier to speak out against slavery. As early as 1785 he began a movement for the liberation of slaves. For many years he preached the emancipation of slaves and non-christian fellowship with all slave holders. Elder Carmen, described as "an easy, fluent, and pleasant speaker" made numerous converts to his anti-slavery views, many of whom were the most zealous and efficient preachers of the Baptist denomination.¹¹¹

Josiah Dodge was another early anti-slavery preacher who was influenced by and connected with Joshua Carmen. Spencer lists Dodge as among the first preachers in Kentucky to refuse fellowship to slave holders. He had been ordained by the Severn's Valley Baptist Church, and served as their pastor, succeeding Carmen, until about 1800. About this time Dodge and Carmen began their emancipation enterprise

¹¹¹ Birney, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

which was independent of the churches and associations.¹¹²

John Sutton, another of the frontier ministers, had definite convictions about slavery. He settled in Woodford county and became a member of the Clear Creek Church about 1790. Spencer says that while a member of this church Sutton "commenced a warfare against slavery, and became so turbulent that he was arraigned before the church for his abuse of the brethren."¹¹³

Carter Tarrant was another active preacher among the emancipators. He wrote and published a history of the emancipationists in Kentucky, which, as far as can be ascertained, is no longer extant. For years he was active in promulgating anti-slavery views, until in 1812, being financially embarrassed, he accepted a position as chaplain in the American Army during the war with England, 1812-1815.¹¹⁴

Donald Holmes was a brilliant and intellectual minister, but "unstable in all his ways." Before coming to Kentucky, he had been enamored of the Universal Restoration movement. Upon reaching Kentucky, he united with the Clear Creek Church. While there, he was influenced by John Sutton and became an emancipationist.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 187-188.

¹¹³ Ibid., I, 188-189.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., I, 189-190.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., I, 190.

Jacob Gregg, who became pastor of the Mays Lick Baptist Church in 1802, was also opposed to slavery. Shortly after settling at Mays Lick, Gregg began to espouse the cause of the emancipationists. Until he moved to Ohio, about three years later, Jacob Gregg gave much of his energy and ability to the movement.¹¹⁶

George Smith, another frontier anti-slavery preacher, was a close friend of William Hickman. After 1804, when he settled in Kentucky, Smith bought land next to that owned by Hickman. George Smith reached Kentucky just when the excitement on the slavery question was at its peak. Though it rendered him unpopular among many of the churches, he gave his support to the anti-slavery group and vigorously defended its tenets.¹¹⁷

David Barrow, according to Spencer, was the most distinguished Baptist preacher among the emancipationists in Kentucky, and, with the exception of John Gano, probably the ablest preacher.¹¹⁸

While fighting in the Revolutionary War, Barrow came to believe that liberty was the inalienable right of the Negro as well as the white, that enslavement of a human being was against the law of God. Backing up his con-

116 Ibid., I, 190-191.

117 Ibid., I, 191-192.

118 Ibid., I, 192.

victions with appropriate action, David Barrow emancipated his slaves and preached the doctrine of emancipation from the pulpit.¹¹⁹ Benedict, though not knowing the exact number of slaves emancipated by Barrow, says they were of a considerable number.¹²⁰

In Virginia, his native state, Barrow became one of the principal reform leaders and was known as the "Wise Man."¹²¹ Barrow visited Kentucky before settling in the state. He was not unmindful of the condition and bondage of slaves in Kentucky. As he crossed over to Cincinnati leaving Kentucky, he commented in his diary concerning slavery.

We crossed over to Cincinnati. . . .
Here I felt rejoiced that I had once the
privilege to set my foot on a land where
hereditary slavery, the lasting and degrading
curse of the eastern states should never come.¹²²

In 1798 he moved to Kentucky, settled in Montgomery county, and became pastor of the Mount Sterling Baptist Church.¹²³ Barrow preached from the pulpit his views on

119 Asa S. Barrow, "David Barrow and His Lulbebrud School, 1801," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. VII (April, 1933), 92.

120 Benedict, General History of the Baptists, I, 249.

121 S. J. Conkwright, History of the Churches of Boone's Creek Baptist Association of Kentucky: With a Brief History of the Association (Winchester, Kentucky: /n.n./, 1923), p. 70.

122 David Barrow, "Diary of David Barrow Pioneer Baptist Minister Va. - Ky.," (a typed copy in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, from the original now in possession of descendants, Thomas Marshall Barrow, St. Louis, formerly of Owensboro, Kentucky.

123 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 195-196.

emancipation. Several of his anti-slavery sermons, which had been preached at Danville prior to 1808, were later favorably remembered by James G. Birney.¹²⁴ Barrow was an emancipationist from principle, not easily given to radicalism. Because he was the most distinguished anti-slavery advocate, he met with bitter opposition.

While engaged in the cause of emancipation, Barrow wrote and published a pamphlet entitled, Involuntary, Unmerited, Perpetual, Absolute, Hereditary Slavery examined, on the principles of Nature, Reason, Justice, Policy and Scripture.¹²⁵ This pamphlet consisted of sixty-four pages and was diversified in its dissection of the slavery issue.¹²⁶ Benedict speaks well of this publication.

This piece is written in a grave and manly style, and with those nice discriminations, those candid and weighty reasons, which certainly deserve the attention of all who are concerned in slavery, and is worth the perusal of those who are desirous of making inquiries on the subject. . . . The pamphlet above mentioned shews him /David Barrow/ to be a man by no means deficient in abilities, either natural or acquired.¹²⁷

In the pamphlet Barrow speaks clearly and plainly, using Christianity and the inevitable judgment to justify

124 Birney, op. cit., p. 148.

125 Benedict, General History of the Baptists, I, 248.

126 Spencer, op. cit., I, 197.

127 Benedict, op. cit., II, 248.

his statements as he pleads for the emancipation of Negroes.

To see a man (a Christian) in the most serious period of all his life - making his last will and testament - and in the most solemn manner addressing the Judge of all the earth - In the name of God, Amen - Hearken to him - he certainly must be in earnest! - He is closing all his concerns here below! - He will very shortly appear before the Judge, where kings and slaves have equal thrones! - He proceeds:

Item. I give and bequeath to my son _____, a negro named _____, a negro woman named _____, with five of her youngest children.

Item. I give and bequeath to my daughter _____, a negro named _____, also a negro woman named _____, with her three children.

Item. All my other slaves, whether men, women or children, with all my stock of horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs, I direct to be sold to the highest bidder, and the monies arising therefrom (after paying my just debts) to be equally divided between my two above named children! ! !

The above specimen is not exaggerated, the like of it often turns up. And what can a real lover of the rights of man say in vindication thereof?

Suppose for a moment, that the testator, or if the owner, dies intestate (which is often the case) was even so humane a person, who can vouch for their heirs and successors? This consideration, if nothing else, ought to make all slave-holders take heed what they do, "for they must give an account of themselves to God."¹²⁸

X. FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHERS WHO OWNED SLAVES

It was not unusual in frontier Kentucky to find a Baptist preacher who owned a slave or slaves. This does

¹²⁸ Ibid., II, 250. As quoted from David Barrow, Involuntary, Unmerited, Perpetual Absolute, Hereditary Slavery, examined, on the principles of Nature, Reason, Justice, Policy, and Scripture.

not mean that every time a preacher was found who owned a slave that he was whole-heartedly in favor of slavery.¹²⁹

To them there were reasons which mitigated their ownership of slaves. Oftentimes a minister held on to his slaves because he abhorred the idea of selling them. The very thought of disposing of a human being as one might dispose of a horse or a cow was distasteful. Then again because he felt that his Negroes or slaves enjoyed economic advantages which would be denied them as freemen, the minister kept his slaves.

The slaves were acquired many times as part of an inheritance. John Taylor, who has been so frequently noted in this study, received his slaves from the inheritance of an uncle.¹³⁰ At the time Taylor began his journey to Kentucky to settle, he listed his slaves as four. They consisted of one man and three young ones.¹³¹ Some years later it is noted that the number of slaves owned by Taylor had increased to about twenty.¹³²

James Suggett, who was for years pastor of Great Crossing Church, had at least two slaves. This is revealed

129 Otto A. Rothert, A History of Muhlenberg County (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1913), p. 338.

130 Taylor, History of Ten Churches, p. 40.

131 Ibid., p. 10.

132 Ibid., p. 125.

by the church minutes of 1819 when complaints were brought against the slaves for misconduct.

Also complained of Hanna a woman belonging to Br. Jas. Suggett Wm Harris appointed to cite Sd woman to our next meeting.¹³³

Later that same year another complaint was lodged against a slave of the pastor named Wat, who was excluded from church fellowship.

Bro Brot a complaint against Wat a black man the property of Bro James Suggett for swearing and other outrageous conduct toward a white man, as well as divers species of wickedness and wat having been dealt with by Wm Davis and he failing to answer to the church he is therefore excluded from her fellowship.¹³⁴

XI. THE RESULTS OF AND REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT

The anti-slavery movement in early Kentucky did not grow as its leaders had anticipated. Though the movement was attractive to a considerable segment of the people, it was not possible to sustain their interest. Before long its influence was on the wane.

¹³³ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1819, II, 55.

¹³⁴ Ibid., II, 57.

The earliest emancipating effort of the Baptist preachers and laymen was the Licking-Locust Association, Friends of Humanity organization. This group remained small, being able to muster only twelve churches to its support.¹³⁵ Several years after its organization in 1807 the group began to lose its influence, though it continued in existence until 1813.

The Kentucky Abolition Society, begun in 1808, grew out of this former distinctive Baptist movement, and was made up of numerous religious denominations. Their paper, the Abolition Intelligencer and Missionary News, begun in 1821, was discontinued for lack of support after only thirteen copies had been issued. The work of the Kentucky Abolition Society during the middle eighteen-twenties failed to receive the support of a widespread or crystallized public sentiment necessary for the success of such a movement. By 1827 the Society had died a natural death.¹³⁶ As the years covered by this dissertation draw to a close the abolition movement is on the decline, where it is to remain until, some years later; the burning issue culminated in the Civil War.

¹³⁵ Ivan E. McDougale, "Slavery In Kentucky 1792-1865," The Journal of Negro History, Vol. III (July, 1918), 99.

¹³⁶ Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 295.

It is difficult to assess the degree of influence of these early anti-slavery movements on the slavery question as a whole. It is a fact that the advocates of emancipation and abolition greatly disturbed the Baptist churches in Kentucky for more than thirty years. Groups like the Licking Locust Association, Friends of Humanity and the Kentucky Abolition Society, though small in numbers, were nevertheless to be reckoned with. These movements caused people to see that there were two sides to the slavery question. The examination of the slave problem had the effect of making individuals hesitate to accept the institution without first asking some questions. If this were true, then it is here that the contribution of these groups is to be found. They performed invaluable service in keeping alive the anti-slavery discussion.¹³⁷

This movement, as studied in the previous pages, usually took the form of a gradual emancipation to be brought about by individual slave holders, with the exception of the attempt at prohibitive legislation as seen in the constitutional conventions of 1792 and 1799. Sometimes they used the word emancipation, sometimes they used the word abolition, but they almost always meant the same thing - the freeing of Negro slaves from hereditary bondage.

¹³⁷ Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, p. 47.

David Barrow, even went so far as to say, that he did not know of one among the Kentucky anti-slavery workers who advocated an immediate general emancipation. He seemed to indicate that the problem could only be solved in a process of gradual education and preparation.

. . . those who have considered the subject know that it is a matter of very great importance and that it will require time to prepare those sons and daughters of wretchedness to receive the blessings of liberty as well as to remove the prejudices.¹³⁸

The reasons for the collapse of the anti-slavery movement in frontier Kentucky were several. However, it is first necessary to consider the status of slavery as it existed at this time.

Due to the conditions of settlement, it was inevitable that slavery should have been introduced into Kentucky. Before long however it became apparent that holding slaves in Kentucky was unprofitable. Differing from many of the other states, the system of agriculture in Kentucky was not conducive to slave labor. Cotton was never produced in great quantities. The crops grown, tobacco, hemp, and cereals, were not profitably raised by slave labor.¹³⁹ As a result, great plantations never developed in Kentucky.

138 Ibid., pp. 47-48.

139 J. Winston Coleman, Jr., "Lexington's Slave Dealers and Their Southern Trade," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. XII (January, 1938), I.

Neither were large numbers of slaves imported to till the fields.¹⁴⁰ At the same time the number of slaves in Kentucky did increase rapidly and the slave owner had a big problem in trying to dispose of extra slaves without suffering financial loss.¹⁴¹ However, in the far South slavery was extremely profitable, as the people were engaged in the growing of cotton which kept the slave busy the year around.¹⁴² Before long, Kentucky began to sell slaves down South.

Just when Kentucky began her slave trade with the Cotton Kingdom is not known. As early as 1818 Fearon, the English traveler, noted the trade.

Observing a great many coloured people, particularly females, in these boats, I concluded that they were emigrants, who had proceeded thus far on their route towards a settlement. The fact proved to be that fourteen of the flats were freighted with human beings for sale. They had been collected in the several states by slave-dealers, and shipped from Kentucky for a market. They were dressed up to the best advantage, on the same principle that jockeys do horses upon sale.¹⁴³

140 Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1941), p. 80.

141 Coleman, Jr., Slavery Times in Kentucky, p. 143.

142 Wilson, op. cit., II, 207.

143 Henry Bradshaw Fearon, Sketches of America (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), pp. 267-268.

Estwick Evans observed and bore testimony to the same fact.

They [slaves] are a subject of continual speculation and are daily brought together with other live stock from Kentucky and other places to Natchez and the New Orleans markets.¹⁴⁴

Lexington became the center of the slave trade in Kentucky. As a slave market was objectionable to many Kentuckians the slave traders seldom advertised openly. However, because of the huge amount of profits in the business, there were always available men to barter and sell.¹⁴⁵

Because slave-holding failed to grow in Kentucky to the extent it did in many other states, the people were not as sensitive to the slavery question. Consequently, the advocates of anti-slavery positions were unable to arouse the populace to take a strong position against slavery. This factor must be kept in mind when one notices the impotence and collapse of the anti-slavery movement in frontier Kentucky.

William Warren Sweet gives five reasons for the failure of the Baptist emancipation movement in Kentucky.

First, he thinks the anti-slavery agitation was

144 Thwaites, op. cit., VIII, 216.

145 J. Winston Coleman, Jr., "Lexington's Slave Dealers and Their Southern Trade," The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. XII (January, 1938), 2-3.

begun at an inopportune time, causing difficulty in stimulating popular interest. For example, the Embargo Act of 1807 and the War of 1812 over-shadowed purely domestic affairs. Also, from 1807 to 1820 anti-slavery propaganda through out the entire nation was going through a relatively quiescent period. It was not until later that the "manifest destiny" of large abolition societies was observable.¹⁴⁶

Second, Baptists were interested in practical union, and they looked with suspicion on any action which might lead to schism. This accounts for the conservative attitude on the part of the associations, which was seen in the earlier part of this chapter. Individual ministers were hesitant to burn all their bridges behind them and to renounce completely their churches and associations.¹⁴⁷

Third, Baptists desired to adhere to their basic tenet of the non-interference of the church in political matters. Because of this tenet, churches and associations outside the Friends of Humanity were loath to discuss the subject of slavery.¹⁴⁸ Many people began to believe that slavery was the problem of the state, not that of the church.¹⁴⁹

146 Sweet, The Baptists, p. 85.

147 Ibid., pp. 85-86.

148 Loc. cit.

149 E. J. Darnell, Forks of Elkhorn Church (Louisville: The Standard Printing Press, 1946), p. 30.

Fourth, the movement, in order to be a success, needed support from neighboring free states. No such aid was received.¹⁵⁰ The emancipation movement among the Baptists in Kentucky was due to a few men of courage and ability. When the men died, so did the movement.¹⁵¹

Fifth, the economic consideration was probably the largest single contributing factor. From the beginning Kentucky Baptist laymen, as well as some ministers, were slave owners.¹⁵² Being personally involved it was difficult for them to accept a view which would mean the rapid sloughing off of portions of their economic strength.

But though the movement largely failed, it is to the honor of many Baptist frontier preachers that they faced the problem with courage. They met it with intellectual honesty, religious sincerity, and a sense of public duty.

150 Sweet, loc. cit.

151 Ibid., p. 81

152 Ibid., p. 86.

CHAPTER VII

A STUDY OF THE FRONTIER PREACHER'S RELATION TO THE
ANTI-MISSION MOVEMENT

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A STUDY OF THE FRONTIER PREACHER'S RELATION TO THE ANTI-MISSION MOVEMENT

For thirty years after the founding of the first settlements in Kentucky there was unanimity among the Baptists concerning the mission enterprise. From the inception of the first church and association until the year 1816, the Baptists were missionary minded and spirited.

I. ANTI-MISSION BAPTISTS UNKNOWN IN EARLY KENTUCKY

Previous to 1816, there was not an Anti-mission Baptist in Kentucky, so far as known. In every association, where a missionary enterprise was proposed, it met with universal favor. . . . It is abundantly evidenced by church and associational records, that the Baptists of Kentucky were imbued with the spirit of missions, from the beginning.¹

Spencer refers to this period as the "golden age of missions among the Kentucky Baptists," feeling that though many of them had little more to contribute than their prayers, none of them would have thought to oppose the cause.²

¹ J. H. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists from 1769 to 1885, Including More Than 800 Biographical Sketches (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumes, 1885), I, 570.

² Ibid., I, 488.

II. METHODS EMPLOYED IN SUPPORTING MISSIONS

During these years there were three different emphases, or methods, employed in supporting the mission cause.

The first emphasis is to be seen as independent church work in the mission fields. Individual churches carried on a mission program unaided. The Buck Creek Church, of Shelby county, sent William McCoy and George Walter to preach to the first Indiana church. It is thought that Ambrose Dudley and John Taylor were probably sent by their respective churches to build up the first church in middle Tennessee.³

Often the churches would establish new worship centers by sending ministers to more remote and undeveloped communities. These missionary stations were referred to as "arms." If and when the "arm" became sufficiently strong, it became a church in itself.

An example of this type of missionary endeavor was the White Water Church. About 1800 the Bullittsburg Church of the North Bend Association extended an arm to the White Water settlement in Indiana, several miles north of the

³ D. Dowden, "The Baptists of Kentucky and Missions," Memorial Volume Containing the Papers and Addresses That were Delivered at the Jubilee of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1888), p. 69.

Ohio River. The ministerial office was performed for this group by the ordained and licensed ministers, as well as by consecrated laymen. They preached the gospel, heard the experiences of converted persons, and administered the ordinance of baptism. At the various meetings of the Bullittsburg Church these workers reported the results of their labors and the unfolding prospects.

In 1802 the missionary station at White Water became strong enough to merit the organization of the group into the White Water Baptist Church. For several years afterward the Bullittsburg Church maternally watched over the newly formed church, offering encouragement and care.⁴

For a number of years after the settling of Kentucky and the founding of the first Baptist churches on Kentucky soil, this was the type of missionary work engaged in by the Baptists. They did not call their efforts missions, but rather thought of it as preaching the gospel to sinners in the neighboring communities and more distant parts of the state. There was no over-all plan or stratagem, except such as suggested itself to the mind of each worker.⁵

The second emphasis in the mission work on the Kentucky frontier is seen as a period of associational work.⁶

⁴ J. A. Kirtley, History of Bullittsburg Church (Covington, Kentucky: Printed by Davis, 1872), p. 12.

⁵ Dowden, op. cit., p. 68.

⁶ Ibid., p. 69.

It was not long before the men of leadership, who had vision, saw that if they were to enlarge their field of activities it would be necessary to have an enlarged combination of cooperating workers. Consequently, instead of each individual church promoting some missionary enterprise, all of the churches of an association would combine their efforts and work as one unit.

Perhaps the first associational missionary enterprise in Kentucky occurred in 1793 when the Elkhorn Association raised a subscription fund to be used by the workers sent to the church in Tennessee which had been organized by Ambrose Dudley and John Taylor.

On motion agreed to take up the case of the church at Tennessee and try to engage some of our ministering Brethren to assist them - Brethren James Suttan and John Mason agree to pay a visit the 1st of July and continue with them 6 weeks and at their return John Suttan and F. Adam will also visit them and continue with them a like term. A subscription was proposed in the association to defray the Expenses of the above brethren on their journey and the sum of L10, 5s, 8d was raised by the members. Agreed that said money should be put into the hands of the Treasurer and that L3, 5 out of the fund be added to the above sum and that and that he pay the same to said Brethren by the moderators orders.⁷

The third missionary emphasis that gripped the hearts

⁷ Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1793, pp. 49-50.

of the Baptists of Kentucky was that of Indian missions. The white men became concerned over the need of their red brothers and made an attempt to give them the very best they had.

As early as 1796 the Elkhorn Association appointed a missionary to the Indians.⁸ In 1801 at the insistence of the South Elkhorn Church this association reaffirmed its obligation to the Indians.

Request from South Elkhorn missionaries to the Indian nations. Agreed to appoint a committee of five members to hear and determine on the call of any of our ministers & if satisfied therewith to give them credentials for that purpose: To set subscriptions on foot to receive collections for the use of said Mission and it is recommended to the Churches to encourage subscriptions for said purpose and have the money lodged with the Deacons to be applied for that purpose wherever called for by the committee. . . .⁹

For this missionary endeavour John Young was chosen leader.¹⁰ There is no intimation to be found as to whether his mission succeeded or failed.

That the early Baptists of Kentucky were interested in the Indians is seen by the references in their church and associational minutes to the subject. Typical of the insertions is the one pertaining to the subject which

⁸ S. H. Ford, "History of the General Association of Kentucky," The Christian Repository, Vol. VIII (July, 1859), 480.

⁹ Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1801, p. 85.

¹⁰ Dowden, op. cit., p. 69.

appeared in the Long Run minutes in 1810.

Brother Starke Dupuy's letter at the request of several Churches was read, & referred for the consideration of the Different Churches forming the Association - Said letter being on the Subject of Sending Missionaries to the Indians.¹¹

III. THE RISE OF MISSIONARY SOCIETIES IN KENTUCKY

Up to the year 1813 there were no Missionary Societies as such functioning in Kentucky. The cooperative enterprise at its largest capacity had consisted of the associations working as a unit. However, over the nation State Missionary Societies were being organized. Feeling the need of such an organization in Kentucky to assist the furtherance of the work and to cooperate with similar societies in other states, the Gospel Herald carried an announcement proposal in 1813.

Missionary Society. - We would call attention to the proposed meeting at South Elkhorn Meeting - house (near Lexington), on the last Friday in February, 1813. Should it be asked, What is the object of this institution? We reply, It is to cooperate with similiar societies, in other States, in the great work of delivering uncivilized man from 'painful and sanguinary rites;' to rescue the devoted nation from the wheels of Moloch's tower; to snatch the tender infant from the jaws of the alligator; to save the aged parent from premature death in the Ganges.¹²

11 Long Run Baptist Association Minutes for 1810, p. 30.

12 S. H. Ford, "History of the General Association of Kentucky," The Christian Repository, Vol. VIII (July, 1859), 480.

At this meeting the Baptists organized The Kentucky Society for Foreign Missions. The aim of the society was expressed as "having an eye to our own frontier settlements."¹³

In this same year the minutes of the Elkhorn Baptist Association reveal that interest was spreading to places abroad, as well as in native America.

The laudable Institution established by a Missionary Society in India for printing & circulating the Bible in different languages erected at a vast expense has lately been destroyed by fire. The address published in the Gospel Herald for relief is earnestly recommended to be taken up by the churches and such steps taken by them as may best tend to raise contributions as speedily as possible. Brother Samul Ayres of Lexington will receive any money for that purpose and send it to the general agent in Philadelphia. . . .¹⁴

In 1814 an organization of nation-wide scope was inaugurated when The Baptist General Convention, which was later called The General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions appointed a Board of Managers, known as the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. The Board was located in Philadelphia. Dr. William Staughton was elected Corresponding Secretary, and Luther Rice was to act as General Agent for the Board.¹⁵

13 Ibid., p. 481.

14 Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1813, p. 144.

15 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 569.

When the Board printed its first annual report in 1815, several copies were sent to each association in Kentucky with an invitation to each group to correspond with the Mission Board and to send possible contributions.¹⁶ At this time most of the associations readily agreed to the correspondence, and some of them sent in offerings.

IV. THE LIBERALITY OF KENTUCKIANS IN EARLY MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS

In this same year Luther Rice visited many of the churches and associations in Kentucky, bringing before them the subject of foreign missions. Spencer¹⁷ says that the contributions made for missions were larger in Kentucky and Tennessee than in any other states visited by Rice.

Benedict bears witness to the cordiality with which Rice was received in the early days of this work.

. . . I have often been agreeably struck with the tone of cordial approbation of the mission then on foot, and of the encouragement held out to this new agent and solicitor. Here, and there, and everywhere, he was invited to spread the cause before the people, and ask for contributions for its support. Probably never was an important undertaking set in motion among our people with so much unanimity, or

16 Spencer, loc. cit.

17 Ibid., I, 571.

under circumstances so auspicious.¹⁸

The Journal entries of Luther Rice himself, for August, September and October of 1815, bear eloquent testimony to the early success of missions.

Sab: 13: Town Fork, Ky - go to meeting - Hear Br Steavens - then preach a missionary sermon, upon which was contributed \$147.75 -

Sab: 20: Near Harrodsburg, Ky. Hear Brs Taylor and Creath - Preach a missionary sermon, at the close of which was contributed for the mission the sum of \$47.75 -

Mon: 21 Near Harrodsburg - The Associations enter into the missionary scheme with zeal -

Sabbath, 27: Crabb orchard, Ky. go two miles to meeting - Hear Br. Taylor - Preach a missionary sermon, after which was collected for the mission the sum of \$36.25 -

Sab: 17: green Co. Ky. - Hear Brs. Waller and Creath - Preach a missionary sermon at the close of which was contributed the sum of \$76.00

Sab. 3: Washington - Ky - Hear Brs. Wilson and Vardeman - Preach a missionary sermon and receive for the mission \$91.25.

3 Tues - Davids Fork - Fayette Co. Ky.
 . . . also received of Br. David Barrow for collection at the emancipating Society \$14.06. . . .¹⁹

The minutes of the Elkhorn Baptist Association for 1815 tell of the visit of Rice before their body.

A Circular letter from the Revd Luther Rice Agent to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions for the United States addressed to

¹⁸ David Benedict, Fifty Years Among the Baptists (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1860), pp. 125-126.

¹⁹ Luther Rice, "Journal of Luther Rice," (loose and assorted photostatic pages in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky).

the Moderator of this association and was handed in by himself read and contents considered . . . Elder Silas M Noel was appointed the secretary - and pamphlets called reports were distributed to each Church thru the messengers and paid for which the association hope will be satisfactory to the Churches as they contain much useful information on the state of society.²⁰

Later during this associational meeting Rice preached to the brethren.

On each day their was preaching at the stand and the Missionary Preacher Luther Rice having arrived after the election for preachers elder Warder gave place to him . . . (Rice) addressed a large congregation which from the good order and attention that was paid and the liberal contribution of 150 to 200 dollars collected for missionary purposes proved that they pleased their hearers!²¹

Many churches and associations either received Rice in person or helped in some way in the support of the missions movement in the years following.

In 1815 Salem Association received a visit from Rice.

Received the circular letter from Bro Luther Rice Agent for the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and Bro Rice was invited to take a seat with us.²²

The Boone's Creek Church purchased some missionary literature in 1815.

²⁰ Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1815, p. 159.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 160-161.

²² Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1815, p. 98.

On motion of the Church agreed to pay for 2 Pamphlets upon Missionary Subjects & they are to be kept by the Church & the Deacons directed to pay Bro. G. G. Boon 2/3 for the same.²³

In the same year the Mount Tabor Baptist Church received missionary material.

One copy of the first report of the Baptist board of foreign missions was received by the Church and paid for at 37½ cents.²⁴

Buffalo Lick Baptist Church decided to support missions in 1815.

. . . took up the Case, Respecting Contributions for Missionary purposes, and agreed that Br Henry M. Baskett be appointed to take the Subscription paper and make what Collection he can, and make return to the Committee at their next meeting.²⁵

When the Long Run Association met that year they dealt with two items of business which show their support of the mission enterprise.

A letter from Bro. Luther Rice was rec.d on the Subject of foreign missions, and agreeably to a request in S. letter, Brother George Waller is appointed a Corresponding Secretary, for the purpose of obtaining such information from the

23 Boone's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1815,
p. 33.

24 Mount Tabor Baptist Church Minutes for 1815, p. 93.

25 Buffalo Lick Baptist Church Minutes for 1815,
p. 42.

board of S. missions, as may be necessary to diffuse thro the Society

· · · · · Agreeably to a proposition made by Bro. Isaac McCoy on the subject of missionary preaching, the following Brethren, Wm Ford, Wm Kellar, Robert Tompkins, Zacheus Carpenter, Isaac Forbes, John Jones and James Bartlett are appointed a Committee, a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum, whose duty shall be to open Subscriptions, and receive contributions, which they shall appropriate according to their wisdom, for the Support of Missionaries on our Western Frontiers, and the S. Committee shall seek for such ministers, as they may deem best qualified, for such service, and request them to visit those Settlements on our frontiers, as are most destitute of preaching, the Committees are requested to make a report of their proceedings to our next ass. and are to receive no Compensation for their Service.²⁶

In the following year, 1816, the cause of missions continued to receive staunch support. Mount Tabor Church changed its meeting time to be accommodating to the missionary effort.

Agreed that the next April Meeting be changed from the third to the second Saturday and to commence on Friday in order to accomodate the missionary meeting at the same time and place.²⁷

Northbend Association reported funds raised in 1816 for mission purposes.

²⁶ Long Run Baptist Association Minutes for 1815,
pp. 49-50.

²⁷ Mount Tabor Baptist Church Minutes for 1816,
p. 96.

The Committee appointed at last association to raise by subscription or otherwise a fund of money to be appropriated to the spread of the gospel, reported that they had received \$78.37½ cents which sum is put into the hands of Brother Moses Scott, who is requested to put the same out on interest for one year - 28

Long Run Association also contributed financially to missions during the year 1816.

The Committee of Domestic Missions made report of their proceedings which was satisfactorily rec.d it appearing that \$209.6 had been rec.d by them, for the Support of Missionary preaching, and that \$63:24 still remained in the Treasurers hands unappropriated, which sum the Ass.c agreed, should be appropriated to the support of Missionary preaching on our western frontiers - 29

In 1816, though the Russell's Creek Association collected no money to be given to missions, it did promise its support in prayers.

Agreed to unite with the missionary societies in America, Europe, and Asia, to set apart the evening of the first Monday in every month in prayer to almighty God, that he crown with success, every honest attempt to send the Gospel to the ends of the earth and recommend the same to the Churches under our care.³⁰

That same year the North District Association agreed

28 Northbend Association Minutes for 1816, p. 2.

29 Long Run Baptist Association Minutes for 1816, p. 52.

30 Russell's Creek Baptist Association Minutes for 1816, p. 5.

to a correspondence with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and appointed James Mason as their secretary.³¹

The year 1817 found the cause of missions still liberally supported by many associations and churches. That year the Elkhorn Baptist Association specified how its money should be spent.

The Mission business was called for and taken up. Silas M Noel president of the Board, reported that seventy six dollars nineteen cents had been contributed. On motion agreed to deliver the same into the hands of the Treasures of the Kentucky Board with a request to that Board to pay the amount to Brother James Welch (a missionary from the Baptist Board of foreign Missions for the United States) to promote Western Missions.³²

Also, in 1817 the Northbend Association received a second number of contributions for missions.

The committee appointed at the last association to receive contributions for missionary purposes, reported that they had received \$49.87½ cts. which is put into the hands of brother Moses Scott, and to be by him, with what is already in his hands, put on interest until the next association.³³

When the Baptist Triennial Convention met in Philadelphia in 1817, the Kentucky Missionary Society sent as its two messengers William Warder and Isaac Hodgen.

31 North District Association Minutes for 1816, p. 2.

32 Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1817, p. 177.

33 Northbend Association Minutes for 1817, p. 2.

They made the trip, traveling horse-back, in order to be able to preach on the way. It is said that, though the trip was more than a thousand miles, Hodgen and Warder preached almost every night.³⁴

In 1818 the Elkhorn Baptist Association noted with pride the relationship between the Missionary Societies and the association.

The Committee to whom was refered the papers of the missionary import - beg leave to report that the assn is highly gratified with the attention paid her by the Missionary Societies and wish them success in the highly important cause in which they are engaged.³⁵

Salem Baptist Association recommended missions to its churches in 1818.

A letter from the Corresponding Secretary of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions read and attended to in answer to which we say that this association has no fund under its control nevertheless we hope we are on the Lords side we do earnestly recommend to the churches of our association to contribute to missionary purposes.³⁶

In 1818 the Northbend Association, which had received contributions for missions for several years but had not distributed any of it, turned over to the Kentucky Baptist

34 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, II, 377.

35 Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1818, p. 192.

36 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1818, p. 115.

Mission Society one hundred and thirty-nine dollars.³⁷

The Bracken Association also advocated missions, recommending in 1819 that all of the churches of the association aid the mission cause.³⁸ In 1823 they recorded in their minutes, having heard a "pleasing" report of the progress of missions.³⁹

The Salem Association requested that a missionary sermon be preached at its 1824 meeting. .

Resolved that Bro Hodgen be requested to preach a missionary Sermon this afternoon after which a collection be made . . . The Mission Sermon was delivered by Bro. Hodgen from Psalms 37th 30 after which a collection of \$66.75 cts currency was made for missionary purposes. . . .⁴⁰

Thus it is seen from a study of associations and churches scattered through out frontier Kentucky that they endorsed and supported the mission enterprise. This they continued to do for thirty years after the first settlements in Kentucky.

37 Northbend Association Minutes for 1818, p. 2.

38 Bracken Association Minutes for 1819, pp. 5-6.

39 Bracken Association Minutes for 1823, p. 4.

40 Salem Baptist Association Minutes for 1824, p. 135.

V. THE BEGINNINGS AND GROWTH OF ANTI-MISSIONISM

In the latter half of the second decade of the nineteenth century, the virus of anti-missionism found its way into the bloodstream of Kentucky Baptists and threatened to disrupt, if not perhaps kill, the work of the missionary supporters. By 1820 the leading question discussed by members of Baptist churches in Kentucky was the question pertaining to missions.⁴¹ Would they, or would they not, support home and foreign missions?

How infectious was this virus of anti-missionism is soon discovered as one sees the mounting opposition as recorded in the minutes of the churches and associations. The Baptists began to refuse to correspond and participate with the Mission Societies. There seemed to be an almost complete reversal of policy. Many groups that had already pledged their allegiance withdrew their support.

In 1817 the Providence Baptist Church in Clark county, one of the oldest churches constituted in Kentucky, decided negatively on the mission question.

A motion made by br. Davison Haggard respecting Corresponding, with the bord of furren mishon again taken up and the church desided She is not willing to Correspond and that the Same Shall be

⁴¹ Otto A. Rothert, A History of Unity Baptist Church: Muhlenberg County, Kentucky (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1914), p. 26.

inserted in her next letter to the association.⁴²

At the July meeting of the Cassey's Fork Baptist Church in 1818 it was decided to drop the missionary correspondence.

2nd the Church ordered the Clark to piticion the association in the Church letter to drop her out of the missionary Correspondance.⁴³

That all missionary business was becoming more and more unpopular among the Baptist churches is seen in the West Fork Baptist Church minutes of 1818.

The letter to the association was called for and read. It was recd with the exception of a clause respecting the missionary business, which was stricken out.⁴⁴

The Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church during this time, also reversed the decision concerning mission commitments.

The Church tuck up the Request from the Elkhorn Association and have agreed to Discontinue the Correspondance with the ferrean Board of Missions.⁴⁵

In 1821 the Great Crossing Baptist Church found themselves in disagreement over the matter, but for the sake of

42 Providence Baptist Church Minutes for 1817, p. 94.

43 Cassey's Fork Meeting House Minutes for 1818, p. 8.

44 West Fork Baptist Church Minutes for 1818, p. 55.

45 Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church Minutes for p. 178.

peace decided to discontinue correspondence.

Dear Brethren we have on the minutes of the last association a request to the churches composing that body to state in their letter to the association whether they wish the correspondence with the missionary board to be continued or not, In the investigation of the subject we discover a difference of opinion amongst our selves, we therefore wanted advise the association for the sake of peace to drop the Correspondence.⁴⁶

The Glen's Creek Baptist Church agreed in May of 1821 "to consider a request of the Elkhorn Association respecting a Correspondence with the furin board of mitions of Philadelphia."⁴⁷ However, in July the church, upon considering the matter, thought that all correspondence with the "furrin Board of Mitions" should be stopped.⁴⁸

Thus many of the churches discontinued their missionary support. This they did either directly through stopping their correspondence and help or through the indirect channel of petitioning the associations to withdraw support. As a result, many associations, which only several years before had admonished their supporters to give to the cause of missions, now opposed it or practiced a hands-off policy.

⁴⁶ Great Crossing Baptist Church Minutes for 1821, p. 82.

⁴⁷ W. J. M'Glothlin, The Baptist Church of Christ, on Glen's Creek, in Woodford County, Ky. (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p. 9.

⁴⁸ Glen's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1821, p. 93.

The North District Association reveals the changing attitude that came to exist in 1817.

The following Churches, (to wit:) Providence, Friendship, Upper Howard's Creek, Unity, Log Lick, Mount Tabor and Goshen, by their letters, oppose a correspondence with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.

From the dissatisfaction expressed by a number of the Churches composing this association, her having entered into a Correspondence with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, it is therefore resolved that all correspondence with the said Board cease.⁴⁹

In 1818 the Long Run Association had made preparations to aid in the instruction of Indians. They had also voted to continue their correspondence with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions and the Kentucky Baptist Mission Society.⁵⁰ Yet by 1819 there was a reversal of policy. They had changed their minds.

The subject of corresponding with the board of Foreign Missions was considerably discussed, and finally discontinued.⁵¹

Elkhorn Baptist Association in its annual circular letter of 1819 viewed with concern the new and destructive anti-mission spirit among the Baptists and penned words in

⁴⁹ North District Association Minutes for 1817, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁰ Long Run Baptist Association Minutes for 1818, p. 59.

⁵¹ Long Run Baptist Association Minutes for 1819, p. 62.

defense of the Missionary Societies. Its language is that of the preacher and the writer flourishes his literary acumen.

With respect to the Missionary and Bible Societies permit us to say that their interests embrace the most important concerns which can be engaged the attention of morrels. They are directed to the very purpose which occupied the time of the apostles and the Saints in all ages on which their hearts have been set and for which many of them have laid down their lives. It has been the employments of angels ever since the morning stars sang together before the eternae - Yes it is the very same which the only begotten Son of God was engaged in while on our earth for which he suffered on the cross an to which his love is now directed in Heaven viz the salvation of souls.

We are afflicted to find that the missionary cause has opposers even in the Western country.⁵²

At the insistence of the Lick Fork Baptist Church in 1820, the Gasper River Baptist Association discontinued correspondence with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. Correspondence with the Kentucky Baptist Mission Society was suspended earlier in 1817.⁵³

By 1820, the Elkhorn Baptist Association, which only the year before had espoused the cause of missions in a circular letter, was faced with the same disunity as other

⁵² Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1819, pp. 205-207.

⁵³ F. M. Welborn, Gasper River Associational Record (Louisville: Caperton and Cates, 1878), p. 8.

associations over the missions question, according to a Committee which had felt out the matter. This Committee was composed of Jacob Creath, James Suggett, James Fishback, James Johnson and Thomas Henderson.

We your Committee to whom was assigned the duty of writing to the Churches composing our Body on the subject of Missionary matters submit to your serious consideration the following remarks.

Two or three of the Churches belonging to this association express in their letters a disposition to drop further correspondence with the Missionary board. . . .

The Churches to which we have reference, and which have expressed the dissatisfaction alluded to are respectable Churches of high standing containing members of talents, virtue, piety and sound divinity - We view them as a part of our selves as members of our own family. . . .

But if we drop correspondance with the Missionary Societies, one great object of the associations will be lost for doubtless to receive religious intelligence from a distance is one great object of the association. . . .

Some part of the association with ourselves are extremely firm in the cause of missions while others have some consentious scruples on the subject - We wish if possible to affect more unanimity in the Churches on this important question. . . .⁵⁴

Though the Committee advised caution, and felt a reluctance to pass any resolutions, in the following year in an effort to keep the fellowship of the group peaceful

⁵⁴ Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1820, pp. 215-217.

the Elkhorn Baptist Association dropped its correspondence with the Mission Board.⁵⁵

The Little River Baptist Association espoused the cause of missionary operations until 1821. At this time there appeared in the association a determined anti-mission element which threatened the body with schism, even though the majority of the membership probably favored missions. To avoid a possible schism the association judiciously decided to drop all correspondence with the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.⁵⁶

It has been seen how in only three or four years the practical unanimity of Baptists on the mission subject had been broken. Unity and cooperation among the churches gave way to discord and suspicion. As the years passed, opposition to missions became steadily more widespread. It is now necessary to consider the leaders and causes back of this frontier Baptist phenomenon.

VI. FRONTIER BAPTIST PREACHERS BEHIND THE ANTI-MISSION MOVEMENT

Sweet feels that considerable responsibility for the

⁵⁵ Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1821, p. 225.

⁵⁶ "A Brief History of Little River Baptist Association of Kentucky" (unpublished manuscript in the Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky), p. 4.

birth and growth of the anti-mission sentiment is traceable to three ministers. They are John Taylor, Daniel Parker, and Alexander Campbell.⁵⁷ B. H. Carroll, Jr., says the opposition to missions as it developed in every state goes back either directly or by inference to Parker and Campbell.⁵⁸ Samuel Wilson states that the Kentucky anti-mission agitation was led by Taylor and Parker.⁵⁹ Of these three men John Taylor will be given the closest scrutiny because he is typical of the Kentucky frontier preacher. Daniel Parker will be considered, but not thoroughly, because most of his anti-mission work was done in Illinois and other states, though he often preached in Kentucky. Alexander Campbell is by-passed because his ministry extends mainly beyond the scope of this thesis. This causes his ministry and influences to be not germane to this study.

John Taylor, as has been noted in the previous pages of this dissertation, was a respected and sincere frontier preacher of Kentucky. However, before the cause of missions in Kentucky had gained much momentum, John Taylor began

57 William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Baptists (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), p. 67.

58 B. H. Carroll, Jr., "The Reflex Effect of the Foreign Mission Movement Among American Baptists," (unpublished Doctor's thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, 1901), p. 125.

59 Samuel M. Wilson, History of Kentucky (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1928), II, 362.

to speak vehemently against it. In 1819 he published a pamphlet entitled Thoughts on Missions.⁶⁰ Though many of his friends attempted to persuade him to withhold this fruit of his acid pen from the press, he released it.⁶¹ That he avidly distributed the work is revealed in the minutes of the churches and associations in 1820. Thus the Northbend Association received a copy for study.

Brother John Taylor presented to the association a pamphlet written by himself, on the subject of missions, which was received for the purpose of examining the same.⁶²

In November of the same year the Glen's Creek Baptist Church acknowledged the same pamphlet.

On the motion of Br. James Ford the Church Received Br. John Taylors Pamaplet as a present to this Church.⁶³

John Taylor in this pamphlet reveals vividly his disturbance and anger over the supposed assumption on the part of the eastern missionaries that there had been no real religious work done in the West prior to their coming.

60 Sweet, The Baptists, p. 68.

61 William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit's or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1857), VI, 158.

62 Northbend Association Minutes for 1820, p. 2.

63 Glen's Creek Baptist Church Minutes for 1820, p. 81.

To read or hear the Reports of Peck and Welch, it would seem as if the whole country was almost a blank as to religion.⁶⁴

In strong words Taylor denounces Missionary Boards, as well as Conventions, Societies, and Theological Schools.

But great as this evil may be in religious society, there is another in my belief much greater, though bearing the semblance, and innocence of a lamb, by which advantage is taken of many of our greatest men, and which has made a general sweep among Baptist associations, bearing all down before it. The deadly evil I have in view, is under the epithets or appellations of Missionary Boards, Conventions, Societies, and Theological Schools, all bearing the appearance of great though affected sanctity, as the mystery of iniquity did in the days of Paul, when the man of sin was in embryo.⁶⁵

Taylor gives a classic description of Luther Rice as he appeared to him when the latter spoke before the Elkhorn Association in 1815 in behalf of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.

. . . Mr. Rice made his first appearance in Kentucky, at Elkhorn association, near Lexington. He got to the place on Saturday evening after meeting had adjourned, and though a year before, the association had decided that there should be no collections made on the Lord's day, a few leading men

⁶⁴ John Taylor, Thoughts on Missions and Biographies of Baptist Preachers (n.p., n.n., 1820), p. 12.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

encouraged Luther, in the prime part of the day to preach a Missionary sermon, and make a collection. When Luther rose up, the assembly of thousands, seemed stricken with his appearance. A tall, pale looking, well dressed young man, with all the solemn appearance of one who was engaged in the work of the Lord, and perhaps he thought he was. He also being a stranger, every eye and ear was open; his text was "Thy Kingdom." He spoke some handsome things about the kingdom of Christ; but every stroke he gave seemed to mean MONEY. For my own part I was more amused with his ingenuity than edified by his discourse, and more astonished at his art in the close, than at any other time. He had the more pathos the nearer he came getting the money, and raising his arms as if he had some awfully pleasing vision, expressed without a hesitating doubt, that the angels were hovering over the assembly, and participating in our heavenly exercise, and just ready to take their leave, and bear the good tidings to heaven of what we were then about, in giving our money for the instruction and conversion of the poor, heathens; and as if he had power to stop Gabriel's flight, in the most pathetic strain cried, stop angels, till you have witnessed the generosity of this assembly. About this time, perhaps twenty men, previously appointed, moved through the assembly with their hats, and near two hundred dollars was collected. - Though I admired the art of this well taught Yankee, yet I considered him a modern Tetzal, and that the Pope's older orator of that name was equally innocent with Luther Rice, and his motive about the same.⁶⁶

66 Ibid., p. 9.

Such was the nature of John Taylor's bitter and sarcastic opposition to missions. Some have suspected that Taylor relished a controversy, preferring to state the issues involved plainly so as to leave no vagueness as to his convictions.⁶⁷

Others have attributed his spirit of opposition to this matter to ignorance, feeling that he had failed to make himself familiar with the design and plans of the mission enterprise.⁶⁸ They have felt that had he studied with an unprejudiced mind the entire range of the mission enterprise, it would have caused him joyfully to give his entire life and influence to the cause.⁶⁹

It is believed, by some, that in later years John Taylor changed his opinion of missions and perhaps regretted this release of his pamphlet which came at such an inopportune time. In 1830 James E. Welch saw Taylor at the Long Run Association being held at New Castle, Kentucky. Welch expressed a desire to speak with Taylor about the pamphlet. To his inquiries Taylor replied, "Oh,

67 Dorothy Brown Thompson, "John Taylor of the Ten Churches," The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, Vol. XLVI (July, 1948), 567.

68 James B. Taylor, Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers (Richmond: Yale and Wyatt, 1837), I, 197.

69 Loc. cit.

Brother James, I hope you do not doubt that I believed I was telling the truth, when I wrote that thing." To this Welch retorted, "How could you?" Taylor answered, "Oh, never mind, let it sleep in silence. . . ."70

But regardless of what prompted Taylor's initial opposition to missions, and whether or not he later changed his mind, the fact remained that he had done irreparable harm to Kentucky frontier missions. However one may feel about the usefulness of this unusual frontier Baptist preacher, it is impossible not to lay at his feet much of the blame for the retarded, stunted growth of missions in Kentucky.

B. H. Carroll, in one of a series of sermons on Baptists and Their Doctrines speaks of Daniel Parker's attitude toward missions.

He will uproot the tender missionary gardens like a wild boar. He will oppose missions, education, Bible and temperance societies, prayer-meetings, Sunday-schools and all other evangelizing agencies with indescribable fury. He will take advantage of the prejudices of ignorance and the prevalent hyper-Calvinism and push his war into all the Southwest until in many associations of Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee the late-blossoming gardens of missionary work shall be as if a cold, chilling frost of death had been breathed upon them. Who is this man? His

70 Sprague, op. cit., VI, 158.

name is Daniel Parker.⁷¹

Spencer⁷² considered Daniel Parker the most effective anti-mission leader in the Mississippi Valley. When the cause of missions began to be advocated and supported in Kentucky, Parker was living in Tennessee within a few miles of the Kentucky line. He preached in both states, being always in controversy with the Methodists and New Lights. Though at first somewhat favorable to missions, he soon changed his mind and spoke against the subject.⁷³ "For several years he traveled extensively in Kentucky, as well as in other sections of the country, sowing seeds of discord with an unsparing hand."⁷⁴

A contemporary with John Taylor, Daniel Parker claimed to be the first opponent of the mission system.

It makes me shudder when I think I am the first one, (that I have any knowledge of) among the thousands of zealous religionists of America, that have ventured to draw the sword against the error, or to shout at it and spare no arrows.⁷⁵

71 B. H. Carroll, Baptists and Their Doctrines (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1913), pp. 94-95.

72 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 575.

73 Ibid., I, 575-576.

74 Loc. cit.

75 B. H. Carroll, Jr., The Reflex Effect of the Foreign Mission Movement, p. 55. As quoted from A Public Address to the Baptist Society by Daniel Parker.

There is some room to doubt this statement, as Taylor wrote in 1819 and Parker wrote in 1820.⁷⁶

As a result of his work Parker soon had many of the frontier preachers of considerable local influence in accord with his anti-mission views.⁷⁷ Moving to southeastern Illinois in 1817, Parker spent most of the remainder of his life in that state, actively working against missions.⁷⁸ It was while in Illinois, in 1820, that Parker wrote a thirty-eight page pamphlet entitled A Public Address to the Baptist Society. As would be expected, he vigorously opposed in this work the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.⁷⁹

VII. THE CAUSES AND RESULTS OF THE ANTI-MISSION MOVEMENT

It is an interesting discovery to notice that anti-mission sentiment did not appear in frontier churches of other denominations. There is not a trace of opposition to missions found in either the Methodist or Presbyterian frontier churches. It seemed to be a distinctive Baptist peculiarity, and its causes are found by an examination of

76 Carroll, Jr., loc. cit.

77 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 376.

78 Loc. cit.

79 Sweet, The Baptists, p. 69.

the factors which are peculiar to the Baptist denomination.⁸⁰

It has been said many times that a difference in doctrine was largely responsible for the divisions over the mission question.⁸¹ The advocates of this hypothesis felt that the prominence of the hyper-Calvinistic doctrines with their tendency to anti-nomianism made opposition to missions natural.⁸² Though this undoubtedly entered into the picture, it will be seen that other factors were more largely responsible.

B. H. Carroll, Jr., states that the opposition to missions was led by men:

. . . of small mental calibre but with sharp, acute and suspicious minds. They have as a rule lacked education themselves and were violently opposed to those who had it. But while not educated in books, they had thoroughly understood that type of human nature which surrounded them and whose sympathies they desired to enlist for themselves or whose antipathies they wished to arouse against others.⁸³

Carroll sees these leaders as making a skillful appeal to the prejudices, both good and bad, of an un-

80 Ibid., p. 67.

81 S. H. Ford, "History of the Kentucky Baptists," The Christian Repository, Vol. VI (December, 1857), 742.

82 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 572.

83 Carroll, Jr., The Reflex Effect of the Foreign Mission Movement, p. 125.

informed people.⁸⁴ He lists three prejudices which were appealed to with unusual effectiveness by the anti-mission forces. First, there was the appeal to sectional animosity. Missions were vehemently denounced as being a "Yankee" institution.⁸⁵ Second, the Yankee missionaries were pictured as living out of the horn of plenty and eager to separate the frontiersman from his hard-earned coin in order that they might continue to live in luxury.⁸⁶ John Taylor in his Thoughts on Missions compares the missionaries to the horse leech "ever crying, give, give!"⁸⁷ Third, Carroll notes the appeal to social conditions. The missionaries were described as vain and learned men, who despised the ignorant and endeavored to outwit them to procure their money. The laymen were told, by those opposed to missions, that the missionaries attempted to organize laymen as a means of obtaining official superiority and power over them.⁸⁸

As one views the entire problem, it appears that, regardless of the many different ramifications and possible

84 Carroll, Jr., loc. cit.

85 Ibid., p. 127.

86 Loc. cit.

87 Taylor, Thoughts on Missions, p. 12.

88 B. H. Carroll, Jr., The Reflex Effect of the Foreign Mission Movement, p. 127.

nuances, there appear to be two primary causes for the anti-mission movement among the Kentucky frontier Baptists.

First, Baptists objected to what seemed to them a centralization of authority.⁸⁹ Baptists have always believed in the autonomy and independence of the individual worshipping congregation. It has been noticed previously in this chapter that early Kentucky was favorable to missions. This was true as long as mission enterprises were conducted locally and individually. However, as soon as the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions was formed, along with the Kentucky Society for Missions, and the field representative, Luther Rice, made his appearance, the trouble began. Many Baptists considered agreement to such practices a contradiction to their convictions. Others were swayed by the leadership of such men as Taylor and Parker.

John Taylor, in his pamphlet, goes into the matter in detail.

I consider these great men are verging close on an aristocracy, [i.e. the Missionary Society] with an object to sap the foundation of Baptist republican government. The highest court Christ has fixed on earth, is a worshipping congregation, called a Church. An association is a creature of the churches, whose power is only self government while together, and whose work, as to the churches, is to settle differences if possible, and that

89 Sweet, The Baptists, p. 72.

only by advice, without any kind of coercion. But these men foolishly conclude, if they get the associations to correspond with them, they at once grasp the whole society, consisting of hundreds of thousands, and would fondly make their advisory council a great court of appeals to the society. But a Baptist association, from their native style (advisory counsel) had no right to go into a permanent correspondence with any set of men, but by direction from the churches, and especially such a motley tribe as the Board of Foreign Missions, or their committee, which consist of almost all characters of men.⁹⁰

That Baptists resented all encroachments upon local church autonomy is seen in frontier Kentucky in 1808. George Stokes Smith, an early preacher, wrote a letter to a friend urging him to wield his influence against the query of North Fork Church which would give the associations the power of deciding against the churches in matters. He goes on to explain to his friend that the original intention of the association was only as an advisory body, and that now the association was on the verge of usurping power not within its jurisdiction.

The things to some may appear scarcely to be worth their notice, but I consider it the greatest stride of power ever taken by that body since its first establishment . . .⁹¹

90 Taylor, Thoughts on Missions, p. 10.

91 Unpublished personal letter from Rev. George S. Smith, dated Jessamine County, Kentucky, 1808, The Filson Historical Club, Louisville, Kentucky.

Daniel Parker agreed with John Taylor, feeling that the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions would have the tendency to destroy the democracy of the Baptist church government. He believed that the very title of the Mission Board indicated its intentions to commandeer the government of the ministry and to usurp the authority which Christ gave to his church.⁹²

Many Baptists feared lest the Missionary Societies might grow and come to take over control of their churches, causing them to lose their religious liberty and to become more like an established church.⁹³

To support their convictions, anti-mission leaders introduced an objection to missions which found wide acceptance on the Kentucky frontier. This was the argument that Missionary Societies and all other man-made organizations were contrary to Scripture.⁹⁴ Daniel Parker attacked missions on the ground that it was unscriptural. "It has neither precept nor example to justify it within the two lids of the Bible."⁹⁵ As a result of such actions, said Parker, the "Board . . . have rebelled against the King of Zion, violated the government of the gospel church

92 Sweet, The Baptists, p. 69.

93 Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, I, 572-573.

94 Sweet, op. cit., p. 74.

95 Ibid., pp. 69-70.

and forfeited their right to the union and brought distress on the church of Christ."⁹⁶

The second cause for the anti-mission movement among Kentucky Baptists was their opposition to an educated and salaried ministry.⁹⁷ During this frontier period the Baptists were basically a rural people. Though there were at this time a few towns in Kentucky, with some Baptists in each town, they were still largely found in the rural areas.⁹⁸ Missionaries coming from the East were usually far better educated workers than were the farmer-preachers of the frontier. Then, too, these men were always paid for their services. It was quite natural for many of the frontier preachers, who were largely unpaid, to accuse these missionary workers of primarily preaching for the money.⁹⁹ John Mason Peck verifies the prevalence of this attitude when he states that sheer selfishness was a cause of anti-missionism among a certain class of preachers.¹⁰⁰

The effect of the anti-mission movement in Kentucky

96 Ibid., p. 70.

97 Sweet, The Baptists, p. 72.

98 Arthur Yager, Sketch of the Life of William Calmes Buck (Louisville: C. T. Dearing Printing Company, [n.d.]), p. 19.

99 Sweet, op. cit., p. 73.

100 Loc. cit.

was without a doubt harmful to religion in general and to the Baptist progress. However, throughout the controversy over the matter many labored on, giving of their support and money to missions. It was felt that, once the issues were clearly defined and the problem correctly understood, the opposition would cease and that all Baptists would rally to the cause. Revealing this sentiment is a portion of a circular letter included in the Elkhorn Association minutes in 1819.

This opposition will cease when correct information shall be generally diffused. If improprieties in the management of the missionary concern of injudicious selections of missionary laborers are discovered let us endeavour by wise and proper means to have them rectified and not to destroy them. So far from releasing our efforts under existing circumstances we ought to unite with renewed dilligence an zeal in advancing this the most momentary of all interests at the same time exercising charitable viligence over the conduct of those who are immediately employed in its management and proving by our conduct that the (enemies) to the extension of the Redeemers kingdom have no advocates amongst us.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Elkhorn Baptist Association Minutes for 1819, p. 207.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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This thesis has been an attempt to study the religious leadership of the Baptist denomination on the early Kentucky frontier. The methodology adopted has been to study certain selected and salient features of the frontier preacher's make-up such as his education, morals, salary and some of the controversial movements of his times. The features selected have resulted in chapter studies. The purpose of the thesis has been of a three-fold nature. First, a part of the purpose has been to discover the degree of preparedness of the frontier Baptist preacher in meeting the challenge involved in presenting the gospel of Christ to the inhabitants of a virgin-like territory. Second, it has also been a part of the purpose to consider how well the frontier preacher adjusted himself to frontier life and times. Another important part of the purpose has been the bringing to light of many examples, illustrations, and incidents in the life of the frontier preacher which are of interest to the student and the general reader. It is hoped that the materials presented in the foregoing pages have been varied enough and in sufficient volume to enable the reader to achieve

a somewhat reliable perspective of the Kentucky frontier Baptist preachers' contribution to American Baptists and American church life in general.

As a result of this study, there have arisen certain self-evident conclusions. It is now germane to review them.

1. The frontier Baptist preacher found the need of religious instruction in Kentucky very great. Early Kentuckians were not distinguished for their religious piety. Organized law upon the frontier was conspicuously absent. Among the people of the frontier were to be found many individuals who were undesirable from the standpoint of any citizenship possibility. The "Continental Sabbath" idea had found much favor among them. It was in this atmosphere that the frontier Baptist preacher found himself.

Baptists had come into Kentucky with the first immigrants. Their numbers, both of members and ministers, were surprisingly large. They came to a new territory when life was dangerous and unhygienic. Transportation facilities were practically non-existent. Farming was almost the only occupation.

On June 17, 1781, the first Baptist church in Kentucky was formed. It was called the Regular Baptist Church of Severn's Valley. As this organized Baptist work

was begun it was felt that the general moral and civic laxity of the Kentucky frontier imposed a plenitude of exacting work upon every minister available.

2. As a general rule, the frontier Baptist preachers did not possess the learning which comes mainly from constant perusal of books. Frontier Kentucky has been charged with being equally distinguished for its lack of schools as for its disregard of religion. During this period of settlement there were no public schools. The only schools were fort schools or old subscription schools. The length of the school sessions was extraordinarily short lasting only several months each year. The teachers were often opportunists and transient. There was also a scarcity of books. At times the only book available from which to read was the Bible.

Added to the fact of inadequate school opportunities there was the fact that some prejudice against education existed among the Baptists. It was a prejudice which caused many to be opposed to theological education for Baptist preachers.

The median degree of educational preparedness is found in those frontier preachers who had attended a school or schools long enough to learn to read and write sufficiently to use these tools in their ministry.

The Kentucky frontier Baptist preachers were the

products of their times and environment. The westward-facing pioneer had found that in the simple conflict with nature book learning was of little service. On the frontier, the requirements for preachers had been steadily lowered until they could be met by almost anyone with native talent and an ability to persuade church-goers that he had received a call from God.

3. Any study of the morals of the early frontier Baptist preacher must state unequivocally that by and large the character of the minister was of a lofty nature. Members belonging to the frontier Baptist churches usually kept an eye on one another and discipline among the churches was commonplace. Men or women, white or black, laymen or clergy, all were disciplined if necessary. In the beginning all ministers had free and easy access to the churches and meetings of the frontier. Soon because some of the ministers abused their freedom and standing, this freedom was greatly curtailed and the ministers were more closely watched. Some deviations from expected clerical action were found.

Intoxicating liquors were used by almost everyone on the early Kentucky frontier. Most Baptists of this period as well as a majority of all the people seemed to have no objections to liquor-drinking when it was conducted in moderation. As a result of its common-place acceptance,

it was inevitable that there should be Baptist preachers who would become a great deal more than moderate users of liquor. There is abundant evidence of the degrading effect liquor had upon a number of the frontier Baptist preachers.

There were at times delinquent relations between the frontier Baptist preachers and members of the opposite sex. However, considering the number of Baptist preachers upon the Kentucky frontier, the number of sexual aberrations was few.

Some of the frontier Baptist preachers were not able to discover a basic cleavage between right and wrong when it was related to their own personal business transactions. On different occasions a few of these leaders became involved in questionable business transactions which marred their influence.

Yet it was highly impossible for a large number of ministers to labor upon a frontier and to walk among the men to whom they ministered without some of them soiling their ministerial garments. There were some deviations from the current mores and customs. The minority who lagged in moral sensitivity bear mute testimony to the frailty of human nature. The majority who lived exemplary lives as pastors bear witness to the richness of their Christian experience which they tried to pass on to others.

4. Almost every frontier Baptist preacher found it necessary to have some method of supplementing his income. He believed that it was his sacred duty to preach to the best of his ability whether he received any remuneration or not. At the turn of the nineteenth century prejudice against a salaried ministry prevailed among many Baptists in Kentucky. The frontier preachers themselves had helped to educate the laymen into the erroneous belief that it was sinful to pay men for preaching the gospel.

Several harmful results accrued to the Baptists of frontier Kentucky as a result of this popularized misconception of the relation between money and Christianity. For one thing, there was an almost entire withdrawal of money from the instrumentalities to be used in the Kingdom work. This was seen in its blighting effect on missions. Another result was the failure of most churches adequately to support their pastors. It was thus necessary for many preachers to supplement their income. More often than not, the frontier preacher was a "literary farmer" who ploughed the Kentucky "new-grounds" during the week-days and preached on Sundays. Few of these ministers were actually poor. Several acquired some degree of wealth.

5. Quite a few of the frontier Baptist preachers taught and worked for the emancipation of slaves. Slaves appeared in Kentucky with the first settlements. They were

extremely useful in clearing the "new-grounds" and building the log cabins. After the Revolutionary War the chief problem presenting itself to the new country was the regulation of slavery. This was made necessary by the gaining momentum of world-wide humanitarian and reform movements which compelled an examination of slavery and made its regulation imperative.

Anti-slavery sentiment had begun in Kentucky as early as 1792 when efforts were made to regulate slavery in the state constitution then being formed. Sentiment against the institution is henceforth found in the Baptist churches. At first the slavery discussions were conservative in nature. Later dissension over the issue brought the matter to a head and withdrawals from the fellowship began to occur. Not a few of the Kentucky frontier Baptist preachers took the side of opposition to slavery. They formed an association made up of emancipation churches in 1807. Later they helped form a large organization, the Kentucky Abolition Society.

Yet the emancipation movement in early Kentucky did not grow as its leaders had anticipated, and before long its influence was on the wane. However, the advocates of emancipation and abolition greatly disturbed the Baptist churches in Kentucky for more than thirty years. The Licking-Locust Association, Friends of Humanity and the

Kentucky Abolition Society, though small in numbers, performed a valuable service in keeping alive the anti-slavery discussion.

6. The anti-mission movement in frontier Kentucky was the result of ministers and laymen who objected to what seemed to them a centralization of authority. Anti-mission Baptists were unknown in early Kentucky. Missions were approved and supported by all. During these years there were three different emphases or methods, employed in supporting the mission cause. The first emphasis was the work as done by individual churches while the second emphasis was a period of associational work. The third emphasis was the work of Indian missions.

In 1813 missionary societies began to be organized in Kentucky. At first the missionary contributions were liberal. About 1816 there began to be signs of anti-missionism. By 1820 one of the leading questions discussed by members of Baptist churches in Kentucky was the question pertaining to missions. Several frontier Baptist preachers helped cause this controversy.

The presence of hyper-calvinistic doctrines with their tendency to anti-nomianism made opposition to missions natural. Another cause for the anti-mission movement among Kentucky Baptists was their opposition to an educated and salaried ministry. The biggest reason, however, seemed to

be the Baptist objection to a centralization of authority. They objected to all encroachments upon local church autonomy. Anti-missionism did not begin until after the mission enterprise discontinued being a local church work and became a more organized work of the Baptist denomination. Strangely enough the movement was strictly a Baptist phenomenon, other denominations not being affected.

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