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By

LEWIS N. THOMPSON



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**"LEWIS CRAIG"—A NEW BIOG-
RAPHY.**



Rev. Lewis N. Thompson.

We are glad to announce that this biography, a valuable contribution to our Baptist history, is now ready for delivery. Lewis Craig was a Baptist pioneer in Virginia, the incarnation of the spirit of those early days, a man of convictions, clear thinking and fearless actions. Religious convictions smote him as a storm, and he wrestled in spirit with the problems which came to his theological untutored mind. He

followed the traveling preachers from one section of the country to another, until he found himself, until he knew, and until he was converted. Speedily he became a minister, a noted and striking revivalist, a mighty foundation layer. The flame of fire within drove him onward; he organized church after church, and finally took up a church and led it forth into and across the wilderness and planted it in Kentucky, the now famous "Moving church". He organized Elkhorn Association, now covering Lexington and a half-dozen other Blugrass towns, which in turn became the mother of a number of other associations. If Kentucky Baptists should ever canonize a saint there is no question that Lewis Craig would have no competition for that honor. He was a man of gentle spirit, tactful, of wide sympathies, and untiring energy. He preached all the better when behind prison bars. The biography tells a story full of thrilling interest and adventure, and every Baptist should read it.

We wish to thank the author for the work he has done. Bro. Thompson, of whom we give a good picture, is one of the best and strongest of our Kentucky born pastors. The book contains 90 pages and is paper bound; price, 35 cents postpaid. It is from the press of the Baptist World Publishing Company.

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North Fork, Ky.

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BY

LEWIS N. THOMPSON

NORTH FORK, KY.

LEWIS CRAIG

The Pioneer Baptist Preacher

HIS
LIFE, LABORS AND CHARACTER

By
LEWIS N. THOMPSON

PASTOR
Lewisburg and Ewing Baptist Churches
North Fork, Mason County, Ky.

1910

1910
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NOTICE

The proceeds from the sale of this sketch of the life of our illustrious Baptist pioneer are to be given, by the writer and the Woman's Missionary Unions of the Lewisburg and Ewing Baptist Churches, as a contribution toward the erection in his memory of a proposed monument. I wish to express here my appreciation of the interest shown by the ladies of these two Unions in this undertaking and to extend my thanks for their promised aid.

LEWIS N. THOMPSON.

With Admiration and in Honor
of the
True Heroism of Those who Fought the Great
Battle for
RELIGIOUS and CIVIL LIBERTY—
and for the full
SEPARATION of CHURCH and STATE—
The BAPTIST HEROES
of
other days—
one of the Most Illustrious of whom
was the
REV. LEWIS CRAIG
This Little Book is
Affectionately Dedicated

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“I tell you ’twere better to cherish that soul—
That soldier that battles with thought for a
sword,
That climbs the steep ramparts where wrong has
control,
And falls beaten back by the rude, trampling
horde.
Ay, better to cherish his words and his worth
Than all the Napoleons that ever cursed earth.”

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FOREWORD

At the meeting of the Bracken Association of Baptists, held at Millersburg, August, 1909, the writer and the Hon. John H. Jackson, of Minerva, and Mrs. Adrian B. Ratliff, of Sharpsburg, were appointed by that body as a committee to solicit funds for the erection of a suitable monument at the grave of the Rev. Lewis Craig, whose body lies buried near Minerva, Mason County.

Naturally we became anxious to know something about Lewis Craig, for we had heard little of him, and we must confess that our ignorance was somewhat embarrassing. Who was I to ask money to rear a monument to one of whose life and labors I knew so little? On making inquiry here and there I found that others knew no more than I, and so I sat about gathering such information as would assist me in presenting my cause in a way that would gain the attention of our Baptist brethren. Then, as I proceeded with my investigations, the thought came to me that these things should be written and published, in order that all Baptists, who wish to know, may have, in brief form, a sketch of the life, labors and character of one of our mighty heroes of faith.

In pursuance of this thought we have decided to place before you the facts as gathered from many sources. We indulge the hope that, as you read, your zeal may be renewed, your in-

terest in true heroism be kindled anew, and that, if no more, you may gladly assist us in this work of honoring "our dead", who, though dead, yet speaks to us of the great mission of life—that of publishing the Glad Tidings of Good News, and of living and laboring for the churches of God.

This monument should be raised to that grand old Baptist hero—should have been raised long ago, for it is not to our honor as Baptists—as lovers of that soul-liberty for which Lewis Craig fought and suffered—that his grave remain unmarked. We should do this not only in his honor, but for the sake of the glorious cause that fired his very soul, the proclamation of which led his persecutors to hound him to jail, in an effort to silence his mighty voice in the great conflict for religious and civil liberty.

You may say—men do say—

"Each man makes his own Stature, builds himself.
Virtue alone outbuilds the Pyramids;
Her monuments shall last when Egypt's fall."

Lewis Craig built his own monument, and it shall "last when Egypt's fall"; but let us build one that the eye of man may see, and call to mind the glorious life of our most illustrious dead; and it may chance that the one who sees may be awakened to higher things in life, for—

"The aspiring soul is fired to lofty deeds
By great men's monuments, and they make fair
And holy to the pilgrim's eye the earth
That has received their dust."

HIS LIFE AND LABORS

Lewis Craig was born in Orange County, Va., about the year 1737, according to Dr. J. H. Spencer; about 1740 according to Dr. James B. Taylor. He was the son of Tolliver and Polly Craig. Tolliver was the only child of English parents, and was born in Virginia about the year 1710. At the age of twenty-two he married Polly Hawkins and settled in Orange County. These were the parents of eleven children, seven sons and four daughters. They all became Baptists; three of the sons were Baptist preachers—Lewis, Elijah and Joseph. Betsy, the youngest daughter and child, married Richard Cave, one of Kentucky's pioneer Baptist preachers.

We learn nothing regarding the early life of Lewis Craig, other than that he was reared on a farm, and that he received a very limited education. Early in life (how early we have not learned) he married Miss Betsy Landers. We find no record as to number of children born to them, but in his will, written June, 1821, he mentions four sons—Lewis, Elijah, John and Whitfield. Lewis and Elijah are named as his

executors. This will was probated in the Mason County Court at the September term, 1825.

According to Mr. George W. Ranck, author of *"The Traveling Church"*, he died in the summer of 1825, in his eighty-fifth year; according to Collins, the eighty-seventh.

We come now to the most important event in his life, that of his new birth. Up to the year 1765, or thereabout, he had lived, according to his own statement, "in all kinds of vanity, folly and vice", but now there came a change, an "awakening", which was wrought by the preaching of Samuel Harris. A deep sense of his guilt and condemnation came upon him. "He was convicted of sin"—his sin and his guilt. Of this period in his life Rev. John Taylor writes:

"Mr. Craig's great pressure of guilt induced him to follow the preachers from one meeting to another. And when preaching was ended he would rise up in tears and loudly exclaim that he was a justly condemned sinner, and with loud voice warn the people to fly from the wrath to come, and except they were born again, with him, they would all go down to hell. While under his exhortation the people would weep and cry aloud for mercy. In this manner his ministry began before he himself had hope of conversion, and after relief came to

him, he went on preaching a considerable time before he was baptized, no administrator being near, many being converted under his labors."

Shortly after his conversion, and before his baptism, he was indicted by the grand jury "for holding unlawful conventicles, and preaching the Gospel contrary to law". It is recorded by Dr. J. H. Spencer that "when the jury by whom he was being tried went to a tavern for refreshments, he treated them to a bowl of grog, and while they were drinking it, got their attention and spoke to them to the following purport: 'Gentlemen—I thank you for your attention to me. When I was about this courtyard, in all kinds of vanity, folly and vice, you took no notice of me; but when I have forsaken all the vices, and am warning men to forsake, and repent of their sins, you bring me to the bar as a transgressor. How is all this?'"

John Waller, who was so profane and reckless that he was known as "Swearing Jack" and the "Devil's Adjutant", was one of the jury and the "meekness and solemnity of manner" of Mr. Craig impressed him so deeply that he could not be rid of it, and was finally, in about eight months, says Spencer, converted, and became a Baptist preacher—"the most picturesque of the early Baptist ministers of Virginia"—a whole-souled defender of the people whom he had once so bitterly opposed

and reviled. Dr. Spencer says of him in this connection: "He subsequently became one of the most distinguished Baptist ministers of his generation, and, in his turn, endured persecution 'for preaching the Gospel contrary to law.' Mr. Craig was probably prosecuted no more in this case."

"On the 4th of June, 1768, Lewis Craig, John Waller and James Childs were seized by the sheriff while engaged in public worship and brought before the magistrates in the meeting-house yard. They were held to bail in a thousand pounds to appear at court two days afterwards. They were arraigned before the court as disturbers of the peace. In his speech the prosecuting attorney said: 'May it please your worships, these men are great disturbers of the peace; they cannot meet a man on the road, but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat.'"

"Mr. Waller, who had been educated for the law, defended himself and his brethren so ingeniously that the court was much puzzled. However, the prisoners were required to give security not to preach again in the country for the period of twelve months. This they refused to do, and were committed to jail. As they passed along through the streets of Fredericksburg, on their way to prison, they sang the old hymn beginning:

'Broad is the road that leads to death.'

A great crowd followed them and the scene was awfully solemn."—(Spencer.)

"During this confinement," says J. B. Taylor, "Elder Craig preached through the grates to large crowds, and was the means of doing much good". He remained in jail a month and was released. Hastening to Williamsburg, he soon secured the release of the others. The letter following was brought by him from the deputy-governor to the king's attorney :

"Sir—I lately received a letter signed by a goodly number of worthy gentlemen who are not here, complaining of the Baptists; the particulars of their misbehavior are not told, any further than their running into private houses and making dissensions. Mr. Craig and Mr. Benjamin Waller are now with me, and deny the charge; they tell me they are willing to take the oath as others have. I told them then I had consulted the attorney-general, who is of the opinion that the general court alone had a right to grant licenses, and therefore I referred them to the court; but on their application to the attorney-general, they brought me his letter, advising me to write to you. Their petition was a matter of right and you ought not to molest these conscientious people so long as they behave themselves in a manner becoming pious

Christians and in obedience to the laws—till the court, when they intend to apply for license, and when the gentlemen who complain may make their objections and be heard. The act of toleration (it being found by experience that persecuting dissenters increases their numbers) has given them the right to apply, in a proper manner, for licensed houses for the worship of God according to their consciences; and I persuade myself, the gentlemen will quietly overlook their meetings till the court. I am told they administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, near the manner we do, and differ in nothing from our church but in that of baptism and their renewing the ancient discipline; by which they have reformed some sinners and brought them to be truly penitent; nay, if any man of theirs is idle and neglects to labor and provide for his family as he ought, he incurs their censures, which have had good effects. If this be their behavior, it were to be wished that we had some of it among us. But, at least, I hope all may remain quiet till the court.

"I am, with great respect to the gentlemen,
sir, your humble servant, JOHN BLAIR.

"Williamsburg, July 16th, 1768."

"When this letter came to the attorney he would have nothing to say in the affair. Waller and the others remained in jail for forty-three

days and were discharged without any conditions. There is a report that Patrick Henry made one of his great speeches in their behalf. While they were in prison they continued to preach to the crowds that assembled. Mobs tried by their fuss and stir to prevent their being heard, but many did hear and were saved. The spread of the Gospel and of Baptist principles was equal to all their exertions. The Baptist cause became formidable to its enemies."

As was usual with these heroes of that day, and other days, their persecutions only served to increase their zeal, strengthen their courage and fired their hearts to larger efforts. They came forth from jail and went to work with greatly renewed energy. Like those of old, this servant had the spirit of his Lord, and he and his fellow-laborers knew that "the servant is not above his Lord".

Mr. Craig was baptized in 1766 or 1767, but was not ordained to the ministry until November, 1770. He had not been idle during this time, for he had gone "preaching abundantly in all the surrounding country", and many had been converted under his preaching.

On November 20th, 1767, the first Baptist church north of Rappahanock and James rivers was organized, the "result of the efforts of Lewis Craig". This church was called Upper Spottsylvania, afterwards called "Craig's", and con-

sisted of twenty-five members. For three years it was without a pastor. In November, 1770, Lewis Craig, having been ordained, became its pastor, and remained such till 1781.

In 1771 he was again arrested in Caroline County and placed in jail, and remained there for three months. "He had several times preached there and was quite successful. He continued to visit this place to cultivate the seed sown; believers were added from time to time; Satan took alarm and stirred up opposition to Mr. Craig. A warrant was issued and he was arrested."

During his eleven years' pastorate of Upper Spottsylvania Church he had succeeded in gathering at least three churches in Dover Association. These were Tuckahoe, Upper King and Queen, and Essex. Upper Spottsylvania had prospered under his leadership, and many had been added to its membership, there being over one hundred additions in the year 1776. He had evidently served this church well and wisely, as well as "preaching abundantly in all the surrounding country"; but a change is at hand for this pastor and his people. No hint of any disagreement between himself and his charge is heard of—far otherwise, as we shall see.

The mind of Lewis Craig had turned toward the wilderness of Kentucky, and the time had

come when the scene of his operations as preacher and church organizer was to be shifted. Capt. William Ellis had visited Kentucky in the year 1779. He had come, it is said, on this trip in the interest of the Craigs, Ellises and Wallers, there existing some kind of connection between these families. All of these were evidently satisfied with the investigations of Capt. Ellis, for all broke up their homes in Virginia and journeyed to the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky and settled near each other.

This change took place in the year 1781. Lewis Craig was "now in the vigor and strength of manhood"—being a little beyond the age of forty. He had been in the ministry about fourteen years; his success had been extraordinary; his experience was wide and varied—beyond that of most men—and he was now well fitted for this new field of labor. But was he going alone? Did he, like so many preachers, leave his church behind? The answer to these questions reveals one of the remarkable things in modern history. He was not going alone; nor were the Craigs, Ellises and Wallers the only families that came with him; neither did he leave his church, as so many do—must do. Almost the whole church had a mind to "go West and grow up with the country". One writer puts it thus: "So strongly was the

church attached to him that most of its members came with him."

So, one Sunday morning early in September, 1781, the church gathered with its beloved pastor for one final season of worship at the house where they had met so often and so long, and, also, to bid farewell to those whom they were to leave behind on the morrow, for on that day this congregation was to start in a body for Kentucky. We may be sure that that strange gathering created quite a sensation, for nothing like this had ever occurred. Gathered here was a whole flourishing church, pastor, officers, members, all ready for departure over the mountains, through bitterest hardships, into the then wild West. How this all came about—such singular unanimity—no writer tells us, but that such did happen is a fact, and a fact that meant much to the coming State of Kentucky—much every way; for, not only was a free church coming, but in it and with it were coming some of the best families of old Virginia to make homes here, and pave the way to freedom and civilization.

The day was set, the time for their departure was at hand, and this host of stout-hearted Baptists had assembled for the last time at their place of public worship—a very beautiful and fitting thing to do. What does that speak to us of love and devotion to the one spot where

they had met so often, to sit together in humble worship of the great God?

As they are all gathered it may be well for us to take a look at a few of the more prominent ones who are preparing to cast lot with those of the "Dark and Bloody Ground", either on this expedition or a later one. There were many Baptist preachers here of Spottsylvania and adjoining counties; among these we notice Lewis Craig, the leader; Elijah Craig, "the bold exhorter", who had known much jail service for conscience sake; Joseph Craig; Ambrose Dudley; William E. Waller; William Ellis, the aged; John Waller; Joseph Bledsoe, father of Senator Jesse Bledsoe, of Kentucky; William Cave; Simon Walton, and Capt. William Ellis. All these, excepting the aged William Ellis, either came at this time or shortly afterward. (William E. Waller came in 1783; Elijah Craig in 1785; Ambrose Dudley in 1786.) These were all mighty men of God.

Capt. William Ellis, son of the patriotic Ellis, who was imprisoned in 1775 for denouncing British tyranny, was chosen as the leader of this outgoing host. Having visited the new territory, he was familiar with the route and was chosen for this and other reasons. Lewis Craig was the religious leader, of course, and was the ruling spirit of this movement. What a won-

derful man he must have been! Well does Mr. Ranck speak of him as "the magnetic pastor of Upper Spottsylvania Church", for such he was.

But this Sabbath is preaching day at Upper Spottsylvania as well as "Farewell Sunday". The congregation was large—too large for the little meeting-house—and a pulpit was erected in the yard and their pastor arose to speak to them. Let us quote from Mr. Ranck, who gives a delightful account of this last worship here, as conducted by Lewis Craig:

"The man who arose to address them was then about forty-one years of age. He was not an Apollo in figure, for he was of ordinary stature and was stoop-shouldered, but his eye was expressive, his voice musical and strong, and his manner earnest and impassioned. They all knew him. Many of them had participated with him in the 'great awakening' which followed the efforts of the zealous Samuel Harris in 1765, and well remembered the day when he so boldly arraigned the famous grand jury of which 'Swearing Jack' was a member. Some of them had been arrested with him on that memorable fourth of June, 1768, when he was seized by the sheriff while conducting public worship in the very building they now surrounded and had sung with him 'Broad is the road that leads to death', as they moved toward the Fredericksburg jail, while others in the

crowd had not only witnessed this first case in Virginia of actual imprisonment for preaching contrary to the laws for the maintenance of the church establishment of England, but had heard the eloquent Patrick Henry, even then the acknowledged champion of popular rights in the colony—who had journeyed fifty miles on horseback to defend them. Many of them had heard the unflinching Craig preach through the grated window at Fredericksburg, others had ministered to him during his subsequent imprisonment in Caroline, and all had rejoiced in the prosperity of Upper Spottsylvania Church which had continued to grow from the time he became its regular pastor in 1770 until this autumnal Sunday in 1781.

“After the usual preliminary services he spoke. Only echoes of that farewell sermon have reached us. Tradition says that he recalled the sudden rise of the Baptists in Virginia ten years before the Revolution; their persistent struggle for religious liberty and their increase in spite of oppressive laws, royal power and a ‘roaring dragon’. That he claimed for his people that, though the opening of the Revolution had found them already worn and weary from the long campaign for conscience sake, they had fought as gallantly for their civil rights as they had battled for their religious freedom. That he reminded them of the encouraging fact that

now, when the country was scorched and wasted and impoverished by the war, the rich and illimitable acres of a western Caanan were offered to them almost 'without money and without price', and declared in earnest and impressive words that it was a higher power that had pointed out the way and that the same far-seeing Providence that had ruled all the events of their past was leading forth to the 'wilder-ness' and would lead them to the end. He is said to have closed with one of his characteristic exhortations and with farewell words of solemnity and feeling as only such an occasion could inspire. The eyes and hearts of all were full, indeed. How deeply they were moved we may faintly imagine when we remember that they believed as he believed, and that they had passed as he had through the days and the scenes he had depicted.

"Unfortunately, but one other feature of these last touching services has survived—the farewell tribute offered by John Waller, beginning with this stanza:

'Great sorrow of late has filled my poor heart,
To think that the dearest of friends soon must
part;
A few left behind while many will go
To settle the desert down the Ohio.'

“Mr. Waller’s powers as a poet were not Miltonic, but he had been to the people who heard him much more than a poet, and his sympathetic words brought many an answering sob.

“The remainder of the day, after the dinner that the neighbors had provided, was spent in tearful communings, agonizing embraces and heart-rending scenes, for the emigrants knew what this separation meant. Some of them were aged, some were feeble, many were helpless women and not a few were poor. A weary journey of nearly six hundred miles stretched out before them. * * * * * No wonder their hearts were breaking. They knew that for them there would be no return; that they were leaving home and old Virginia forever. * * * * * The crowd slowly dispersed. The sun went down upon a strangely silent camp. For the first time the emigrants slept in their wagons—slept after many a prayer and many a tear.

“Before daybreak the next morning Capt. Ellis was astir and giving orders, and the repeated blasts of a horn completely changed the scene. In a few moments all was noise and bustle and excitement. There was no time now for anything but a ‘campaign’ breakfast, the gathering of horses and cattle, a general hitching up and the storing away of pots and skillets and eating utensils, and at the rising of the sun a mighty sound of tramping feet, clattering

hoofs, creaking wagons and barking dogs announced that the start was made and the memorable journey commenced.

“This modern exodus was no small affair for its day and generation. The moving train included, with church members, their children, negro slaves and other emigrants (who, for better protection, had attached themselves to an organized expedition), between five and six hundred souls, and was the largest body of Virginians that ever set out for Kentucky at one time. And not only the members, but nearly everything else pertaining to Craig’s Church, was going. Its official books and records, its simple communion service, the treasured old Bible from the pulpit—nearly everything, in fact, but the building itself was moving away together—an exodus so complete that for several years Upper Spottsylvania Church was without either congregation or constitution. There were few in that long procession, as it moved out upon the old Catharpin road, who did not turn to give a last lingering look at that silent, sunlit sanctuary. How little the sad gazers dreamed that days would ever come when that quiet, unpretentious building would echo with the thunders of one of the most tremendous struggles that modern times was destined to know. The church was located in the region in which occurred the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancel-

lorsville and the Wilderness." (See "*The Traveling Church*", by G. W. Ranck.)

The church building was injured, but not destroyed, during the Civil War. Craig's Church of today occupies the same site as in 1781, and includes much of the original hand-made material that existed in Colonial and Revolutionary times.

We cannot attempt to follow this traveling church from the old meeting-house to its resting place in Kentucky, for that is foreign to our purpose, however interesting that may be, and it is very interesting, as you may see by reading "*The Traveling Church*".

At the close of the third week in September these Pilgrim Baptists rested on the Holston river at the place now known as Abingdon. Lewis Craig assisted in organizing a church here on the 28th of September. The records of the Providence Church show that there was a company of Baptists here. We give in this connection a copy of the record, as found in the *History of Kentucky Baptists*, by Dr. J. H. Spencer: "A company of Baptists came from the older parts of Virginia to Holston river in December, 1780. Robert Elkin, minister, and John Vivian, elder, and in 1781 they, with other Baptists, formed themselves a body, in order to carry on church discipline, and, in September, 28th, 1781, became constituted by

Lewis Craig and John Vivian. * * * Lewis Craig was at this time a Separate Baptist minister and was now on his journey to Kentucky, as known circumstances sufficiently prove, with the church that settled on Gilbert's creek, in December of that year."

Owing to the state of the weather there was a halt of some three weeks on the Holston river, but Mr. Craig was not idle. The church proceeded with its regular work, and the pastor was busy preaching, and this preaching brought forth fruit, for there were baptisms, as well as strengthening of faith to those who heard his hopeful preaching.

Late in October, or early in November, the church abandoned this halting place and moved forward, and about the first of December, some three weeks after leaving the North Fork of the Holston river, the travelers crossed the Cumberland Gap. They pressed onward, and before the middle of December they had reached the point chosen as a settling place—having decided to locate on a tributary of Dick's river, now known as Gilbert's Creek, two and a half miles southeast of the present town of Lancaster, Garrard County, which was at that time part of Lincoln county. The first thing done, now that the Pilgrims had reached their destination, was to make a clearing in the woods and establish "Craig's Station", "and there", says Mr. Ranck,

“in that lonely outpost, before the close of the second Sunday in December, 1781, they had gathered and had worshipped around the same old Bible they had used in Spottsylvania and had been preached to by their pastor, Lewis Craig, and by William Marshall, uncle of the celebrated Chief Justice Marshall of Virginia. And so met the first church that ever assembled in Central Kentucky—a church that had been organized long before and whose strange transplanting constitutes one of the most remarkable episodes connected with the early settlement of the Commonwealth”.

In speaking of the pioneer Baptists of Kentucky, Davidson, in his *History of Presbyterian Churches in Kentucky*, says: “To them belongs the credit of having been the first to inaugurate the regular public worship of God and the organization of churches.” And Capt. Ed Porter Thompson, in *Young People’s History of Kentucky*, says: “The first organized Baptist church was that of Rev. Lewis Craig, at Craig’s Station, on Gilbert’s Creek, in Garrard County, a few miles east of Lancaster. This church was organized in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, and the members traveled together to Kentucky—a church on the road, regularly constituted for business as well as worship. The first one organized in Kentucky (1783) was on South Elkhorn, five miles south of Lexington.” This

is the agreement, so far as I can learn, of all the historians.

Having finished the fort, the settlers proceeded to locate land and build cabins. One of the first buildings erected was a church. It was located on a hill some half mile from the fort. Here, "in spite of privations and in spite of the tomahawk and the scalping knife, Lewis Craig pushed on the work of his Master not only at Gilbert's Creek, but at other frontier settlements also, for in 1782, that year of Kentucky's gloom and sorrow, he gathered and constituted a church at the forks of Dick's river and preached at Squire Boone's Station, on Clear Creek, near the present Shelbyville, the first sermon ever delivered in Shelby County or in that part of the State. But the pioneer Baptists, thrifty as well as devoted, were soon attracted by the magnificent land in what is now so widely known as 'The Blue Grass Region,' where Capt. Ellis had already settled, and early in the fall of 1783 Craig and most of his congregation moved to South Elkhorn, about five miles from Lexington, where they established the first worshipping assembly of any kind organized north of the Kentucky river. This removal would have been a death-blow to the church at Gilbert's Creek but for the timely reinforcement from the old 'stamping ground' in Virginia. Craig and his party had barely reached South Elkhorn

when William E. Waller, brother of the long converted 'Swearing Jack', and himself a Baptist minister, with a number of others of the same faith arrived at Gilbert's Creek from Spottsylvania County, and about the same time the body of Baptists from the adjoining county of Orange, that Mr. Craig had constituted at the Wolf Hills (Abingdon), came safely through the wilderness and settled near the station. For the best part of three years they had watched and waited at the little post on the Holston for a favorable chance to set out on the blood-stained and Indian-haunted trail to Kentucky—a chance which came with the formal ending of the Revolutionary War in 1783. Later on in the same year John Taylor, the Baptist minister and historian, with his family and servants, also reached the settlement, after a three months' trip from Virginia, and thus alternately weakened and strengthened and sometimes reorganized the church at Gilbert's Creek, which existed during the period of immigration and with fortunes still varying for many years thereafter. It declined during the late great war between the States, and by 1865 the brick house which had succeeded the little log church on the hill had become a ruin and ceased to be used. Later on the congregation disbanded, and now little remains to mark the site of the most notable sanctuary of the early Kentucky pioneers

but the graves and gravestones of its departed members in the old church yard that surrounds it. Is there a spot in this Commonwealth more worthy of an enduring memorial than the silent hill top where finally rested the ark of 'The Traveling Church'—a memorial to perpetuate the story of that heroic march and in honor of those undaunted champions of civil and religious liberty, the Pilgrim Fathers and Mothers of the West?" (*Traveling Church.*)

We come now to the church at South Elkhorn, organized, as we have seen, by Mr. Craig in 1783. This was the first church organized in Kentucky. He was pastor here for nine years, but labored in the meantime "abundantly in all the surrounding country". During this period Elkhorn Association was formed, and many other Baptist preachers moved to that region of the State. Elkhorn Association was organized in 1785. Mr. Craig was the moderator of the preliminary meeting for the organization.

While he was pastor of South Elkhorn Church he organized, with the assistance of Rev. John Taylor, Great Crossings Baptist Church, May 28th, 1785; then in April, 1786, he organized a church at Bryant's Station; and in July, 1786, he organized Town Fork Church. It would seem that he was connected with the organization of most of the early churches of Elkhorn Association.

The year 1792 finds him ready for another change of field. Because of some unfortunate land deals he became embarrassed and decided to make this last change. He moved to Mason County and purchased a farm about three miles from Dover, on the road to Minerva. (This farm belongs now to Mr. Andrew Tobin.) He left his old home behind, but did not leave the spirit of an organizer, for he went to work at once, and by 1793 he had gathered and organized the Bracken Church, near the town of Minerva. He was the first pastor. He is recognized by his biographers as "the father of Bracken Association". "This is the eldest daughter of the old Elkhorn fraternity, and the fifth association constituted in Kentucky. According to an arrangement made by Elkhorn Association, messengers from eight churches met at Bracken meeting-house, near the present site of Minerva, in Mason County, on Saturday, May 28th, 1799. A sermon was preached by the venerable David Thomas. James Turner was chosen moderator, and Donald Holmes clerk. After proper consideration, Bracken Association was constituted in due form. Five of the churches, viz: Washington, Mayslick, Bracken (now Minerva), Stone Lick and Locust Creek, had been dismissed from Elkhorn Association. The ministers of the new fraternity were Lewis Craig, David Thomas, Donald

Holmes and Philip Drake. The venerable and illustrious Lewis Craig was regarded the father of this Association." (Spencer.)

He remained pastor of Bracken Church up to and including the year 1807. In the year 1808 he preached the introductory sermon at the Association, and in 1812 he was a messenger from Bracken Church. From that date his name is not found in the old minutes of the Association.

In 1808, when he preached at the Association, which met at Mayslick, his text was, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following". He was not a messenger that year, but the minutes make this statement: "Bro. Lewis Craig was invited to a seat with us."

In the year 1794 we find him at work on the first court house ever built in Kentucky—the old Washington court house. Washington was the first county seat in the State. It was established in 1786 by the Virginia Legislature, but was laid out the year before by Rev. William Wood and Arthur Fox. William Wood was a Baptist preacher. The court house was not built till 1794, and our church builder and church organizer did the stone mason's work on that historic old house. Early on the morning of the 13th of August, 1909, this old landmark

was struck by lightning and was totally destroyed by fire. Since 1848, the county seat having been moved to Maysville, the court house had been used as a school building. In the *Lexington Herald* of January 16th, 1910, we find the following in regard to this old landmark from the pen of Sue M. Caldwell:

“In 1794 the court house was built by Lewis Craig, who combined the professions of stone mason and preacher. A faithful pioneer of the Baptist church, the Bracken Association, at its recent meeting at Millersburg, took steps toward erecting a suitable monument over his grave at Minerva, Mason County, a movement more timely than the Association realized, since the monument erected by his own hands, which had stood for one hundred and fifteen years as a testimonial to the honest, enduring character of his work was so soon to be destroyed. Chiseled on a stone above the main door were the initials of the builder, L. C., and the date, 1794. The structure stood upon a slight elevation about one hundred and fifty feet back from the street.”

Lewis Craig brought the first Baptist church to Kentucky that was ever on her soil; he organized the first Baptist church ever organized in Kentucky (South Elkhorn); he organized the first Baptist Association in Kentucky; he built the first church house of any kind in the

State; he was the organizer of many of our first churches, and the "father of Bracken Association", and also built the first court house of our State. Nevertheless, no stone marks the grave of this wonderful pioneer preacher and builder. Have we honored him as he deserves to be honored? Really, have we honored him at all?

From the year 1812 we find no record of his doings up to his death. One writer says that he remained actively at work up to the day of his departure. This is the only conclusion that one could reach, for hitherto he had been a very busy man and his health remained good to the end. We cannot believe that he laid by to rust out. He died, as has already been recorded, at the home of his granddaughter, Mrs. Craig Childs, near Minerva, in the summer of 1825. His body lies in a grave on the road from Dover to Minerva, unmarked and unkept, and yet Lewis Craig was one of our most illustrious pioneers. Why have we thus failed to honor him? Let Baptist people lay this to heart.

HIS CHARACTER

AN ESTIMATE BY THE WRITER

I.

“As unto him by Chebar’s sacred stream
The angel came, with mandate from on high,
There came to one, a youth, the Spirit’s gleam
And bade him tell the wicked they should die;
And bade him watch upon the walls and cry
That woe should come to the impenitent:
O, son of man, if thou forbear, on thy
Unshriven soul the curse of blood is sent!
Then rise and warn mine erring people to repent.”

In the preceding sketch of the life of Lewis Craig, we have given all the facts that we have been able to gather. It is to be regretted that nothing more can be found, for a full history of the life and labors of such a man are well worthy of preservation.

While seeking for facts, dates and the like, my admiration for this Baptist hero has been awakened; and, at this late date, I have learned to love him for what he was as well as to admire him for what he did and suffered. In this spirit of love and admiration I come now to give any who may wish to read, my estimate of the man as a man among men. This may

not be worth while, but I shall, at any rate, gratify my own whim, if such feeling be a whim. I judge, however, that it is not a mere whim, for as I have looked into the history of Lewis Craig and his times, I have come into touch with many illustrious characters—fearless, faithful men, who loved the cause of their Lord and Master—Baptist heroes who stood out like mighty giants against all comers and braved all the evils and bitternesses of that remarkable age. Of these, Lewis Craig was not, by any sort of calculation, the least.

It is ever good for us to come into touch with these manly spirits, and to learn how they behaved in the midst of the great conflict, the greatest, perhaps, when all is considered, of any age—the battle for religious and civil liberty. Those men fought for the dearest and highest earthly boon. So, I do not consider it a whim to honor our “illustrious dead”, Lewis Craig, nor any true “soldier that battles with thought for a sword”.

From those who have written of him we have gotten such facts as lead us to the conviction that he was possessed of all those noble qualities that go to make a man truly a man. He is spoken of as the “unflinching Craig”, “Lewis Craig, the magnetic pastor of Upper Spottsylvania Church”, “the master spirit of the traveling church”, a “religious leader”, “a peace-

maker among contending parties", "the fearless leader", "the indomitable Craig", "the famous Lewis Craig", "the illustrious Craig", "the meekness of Mr. Craig"; and such like statements. Then, we have a man of lofty courage, abounding zeal, simple faith as that of a little child, meekness, free spoken and a great peacemaker. This is the man as revealed to us by his contemporaries and biographers. What other conclusion, then, can we reach than that he was "a remarkable man", whose life must have been truly noble? It is not in vain, then, that we record these things about him, for, in the language of a master writer, Mr. Thomas Carlyle (speaking of his father):

"It is good to know how a true spirit will vindicate itself with truth and freedom through what obstacles soever; how the acorn, cast carelessly into the wilderness, will make room for itself and grow to be an oak. This is one of the cases belonging to that class, 'the lives of remarkable men', in which it has been said, 'paper and ink should least of all be spared'. I call a man remarkable who becomes a true workman in this Vineyard of the Highest. Be his work that of palace building and kingdom founding, or of delving and ditching, to me it is no matter, *or next to none*. All human work is transitory, small in itself, contemptible. Only the worker thereof and the spirit that dwelt in him is significant."

The founding of churches, and calling of men to repentance, is not "transitory", nor "small in itself", for that is not mere "human work", for the spirit that dwelt in Lewis Craig was the spirit of a son of God, and the work that he did here, while about his Father's business, has remained and will remain; for his works were directed toward winning immortal souls to Christ, and he won many and paved the way that many more should come to Him. Mr. Carlyle was speaking of the building of earthly houses and of founding earthly kingdoms. Lewis Craig was a builder for eternity, dealing with that which is real and everlasting, and his works are not dead, nor shall they die.

"All that is real remaineth,
And fadeth never:
The hand which upholdeth it now sustaineth
The soul forever."

He was "a man healthy in body and mind, fearing and diligently working on God's earth with contentment, hope and unwearied resolution". And, "like a healthy man, he wanted only to get along with his task". We see clearly that his life was "no idle tale", but "an earnest toilsome" one, well worthy of honoring and of emulating, for the end in view was not that of selfishness, but of service to his kind—he lived for men, he lived for us.

"The man who lives for self, I say,
He lives for neither God nor man."

II.

“Ye children of men, attend to the word
So solemnly uttered by Jesus, the Lord,
And let not this message to you be in vain,
“ ‘Ye must be born again’ ”.

“And Jesus * * * said, Verily I say unto you,
Except ye be converted, and become as little
children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom
of Heaven.”

In considering the life and character of any true worker among men we must ever look into one particular event in their lives—one without which all others are in vain—The Spiritual New-Birth. There is too often the danger of overlooking this chiefest of all concerns here below. With this out all that is worth while is out, and the life of man here is but an empty dream, a breath of wind that passes away. This New-Birth is the dawning of the New Day and the coming of the New Name.

Spiritual light began to dawn on Lewis Craig in the year 1765, when he was about twenty-eight years of age. Under the guidance of the Lord, Samuel Harris was the preacher who brought this light to him. “The Lord gave the Word”—“His Word is Light”—and Harris, His messenger, brought it to young Craig.

Now, this dawning of Light, the rising of the

Sun of Righteousness, on the spiritual darkness of the man was the most important occurrence in his life. Without this all the rest, whatever good natural qualities he may have possessed, was in vain; for unless the light had dawned on his soul and exposed the evils there, he would have remained in darkness, which is, and ever is, Spiritual Death. From this time, then, 1765, we "may date his spiritual majority; his earthly life was now enlightened and over-canopied by a heavenly. He was henceforth a man". And with this, also, began his struggles with the Prince of the Power of Darkness—a conflict through which he passed and conquered, coming off more than victor, for he became a prince, being born a "son of the King".

By the coming of light to this benighted soul we see that he was thrown into a state of bitterest anguish, and that he passed consciously through a season of great sufferings, caused by his deep sense of guilt. He cried out in bitterness of soul, "I am a justly condemned sinner"! Just how long this lasted we are not informed, but it must have been a considerable time. To him the Word of God was a sharp two-edged sword, and more; it was a fire sent to burn into the heart of the man to consume the dross. "Is not my Word like a fire, saith the Lord: and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" He did not run from the fire, nor did he strive to

escape the hammering. He was willing to pass through the furnace to allow the fire to do its perfect work; he longed to be purified, that he might escape the wrath to come—that other fire that is not quenched unless a man repent of, and forsake his sins. Evidently he was not afraid of the light nor of the burning from Heaven, however painful they might be to his agonizing soul; for it is recorded that he followed the preachers from meeting to meeting, that more light might be turned on his inner darkness; and he hoped, too, that thus rest might come to his over-burdened spirit. In all this we get some measure of the genuineness of the man, and see much of the workings of his mind while under such deep conviction. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,” is the firm resolve of every true seeker after light and forgiveness; once awakened he cannot hide, and would not if he could. Deep down in him is the unquenchable desire that the whole infernal horde of evils lurking in him be routed, cost what it may. Knowing, as we do, the vast importance of genuine conviction of sin, we cannot but admire this spirit so markedly manifest in Lewis Craig, the self-confessed, “justly condemned sinner”.

In this deep agony, under the sense of guilt, we see that he was yearning for God in every cell of his being. He cried aloud. Thus it

ever is with the truly repentant and deeply earnest seeker after God: "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night." This cry of his was not in vain; it was not folly on his part; for, as said Phillips Brooks, "there is a gulf that separates man-life from God-life, and which no man ever yet crossed save as he stretched out both his helpless hands to God, and felt a hand, too powerful not to trust, clasp them and lift him, whither he knew not, till lo! the gulf was crossed and he had entered on the new life that they live who live in God"! This cry of Mr. Craig was the stretching out of both hands unto God, who reached down and lifted him above the waves into the Ark of perfect safety, and henceforth he could sing, "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

I must ask you to dwell a little longer on this particular event in the life of one who became such a wonderful power in the hands of God for calling men to repentance, for this event

made all of the rest possible. Seeing himself as a helpless sinner led him to look up and see the "justly condemned sinner's" Savior, and this glorious sight worked wonders in the life of Lewis Craig. "Self-revelation is at once the greatest blessing that can come to man—and that which casts him into deepest anguish." The Kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom of Light and Love, and when these two regenerating principles pour into an awakened soul, they stir up and put to rout the evils hiding there; the imperfections are brought to view, and more, for the man feels justly condemned, and comes into a state of great pain. All birth is through travail.

One very remarkable thing that I wish to call your attention to in the case before us is, that the light which came to him through the preaching of Samuel Harris was at once a revelation and a call, and almost instantly these two joined hands, and, in the midst of his bitter sorrows, he began preaching—and that before he was aware of it, and men were converted. The revelation and the call should ever go hand in hand—seeing what I am should be, and is, a call to what I ought to be. Our revelations and tribulations help to reveal our spots, those that must be washed out by the blood of the Lamb. Godly sorrows—those

“that work a repentance that needeth not to be repented of”—are the foothills to the everlasting heights of life. Lewis Craig moaned bitterly over his lost and seemingly hopeless condition, but this sorrow, this deep sense of guilt, was the work of a soul struggling upward and outward, from under his load of sin, into the new life—the new Day.

That he was greatly benighted is plain. He saw himself helpless, ruined, lost; and, seeing, cried for the light, cried for deliverance. He did not cry in vain, for to every humble, burdened, benighted sinner who cries, “God be merciful to me, the sinner”, “the Morning cometh”. His morning came. It is ever thus and ever will be with every regenerating soul; that soul must come up out of darkness into the Light of Life. There is comfort in knowing that—

“The flowers must lie buried in Darkness
Before they can bud and bloom;
And the sweetest and warmest sunshine
Comes after the storm and gloom.”

After bitterest grief and repentance Lewis Craig did emerge into the light of day and walked in that light, onward, steadily, faithfully to the end of a long and glorious life. Thus, it was with him, as it ever is with the lowly, the poor in spirit, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted”—shall be made strong for the labors and trials of the

journey through all the bitternesses, over all the obstacles of life, into true usefulness and peace, and on and on unto the perfect day. These wrestlings of his with terror and sorrow, because of guilt and night in his soul, brought at last the morning, and the New Name. As Jacob wrestled through the night, becoming fixed on a new basis by the morning, so, also, when "the sun rose upon" Lewis Craig, a prince of God was settled—fixed as a preacher of righteousness and as a servant of righteousness.

It is written, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy". "Shallow experiences, the heart slightly convinced of sin and weakness, have shallow consolations. But he who has stepped low, who has felt that deep, exquisite music of contrition, who has groaned down to the centers of self, feels under him the Everlasting Arms. There is rest in that uplift. There is a power there inexhaustible, reliant, jubilant."

We should learn a lesson of contrition from these by-gone heroes of faith, for theirs were not "shallow experiences". Their self-revelations led them to dig deep, in agony and tears, and lay their foundations on the Everlasting Rock. As I have read of the rending soul-agony through which so many of these men passed, I know not whether to weep or smile; but I remember that One who knew, and knows, said: "Agonize to enter in at the strait

gate; * * * * because strait is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Lewis Craig agonized; he entered in; he found the way, and walked therein, humbly, uprightly, never faltering, until he reached the heights of the Everlasting Hills. So, "Blessed are they that mourn: because they shall be comforted". To him this deep conviction was no mere "passing dream", a thing to be forgotten on the morrow, but it was the shaking of the whole man, for as the winds make the mighty oak to tremble and threaten to uproot it, so was he shaken to the very center of his being. This tearing up of the sub-soil was the work of God, the Divine Plowman, and then, as now, and as ever, with those who shall be truly "born again"—

"Deep driven shall the iron be sent
Through all thy fallow fields, until
The stubborn elements relent
And lo, the Plowman hath His will!
He ploweth well, He ploweth deep,
And where He ploweth, angels reap."

We have seen what all this deep plowing did for Mr. Craig. He was being saved, was saved; was being fitted, and was fitted, for the long, toilsome life in the Vineyard where he, too, should plow and sow; and, having put his hand to the plough, he did not turn back, nor even look back, proving thereby that he was "fit for the Kingdom of Heaven".

III.

“The soul is dead that slumbers; ease
Is fatal to a spirit made
To toil, to suffer, thus to seize
The prizes set. For each is laid
Some task to do, some height to win
Before the man can enter in
The realm of real light and joy,
Pain hath no pow’r so to destroy
The best in us as soft content,
For that corrodes which lies unspent.”

With the New-birth comes the New-day. Ah, such a day as it is! It is not a holiday, one in which we shall idle about, trying to be happy, suiting our newly-found religion to our fleshly love of ease—not by any sort of means. With this new morning comes a call to “don our working clothes”, to gird on the armor of a Christian soldier, and begin the work of that Day, the setting of whose Sun is not now, not ever, for it is the dawning of Endless Day, and thus of endless work and delight therefrom. The joy of joys is that born of doing well and wisely the task allotted us, here and hereafter.

Lewis Craig was born into the Kingdom of Heaven a worker, an organizer, a builder, a leader, and he went about this work at once. Before he was baptized men were converted under his preaching, and he had been impris-

oned for this preaching. With him, then, the New-Birth and the New-Day and the new-work were born together. Oh, that this were true of all who begin to build on the Rock! He did not wait for an education before going about the business of his life, that of calling men to repentance. It is recorded that his "education was limited", meaning that he had received little schooling. It was not necessary that he should be highly educated in order that he be noble in his life, lofty in his character, and inspiring in his soul. But it was necessary that he be true to the best that was in him, and this he was; and it was thus, too, that he became a true man, a true worker on the chosen line of his life. From all that we learn of him we find that he was no idler, but an organizer and a church builder, and, in the meantime, was farming, doing the work of a stone mason—whatever his hands found to do to advance the cause of man, that he did—and, though a peacemaker, he did "not go dancing in the weeds of peace", but stuck manfully, faithfully to his task. His religion, then, was no juiceless thing, without salt, or salt without savor, "fit only to be trodden under foot of men". We see that he had barely begun his ministry when he became a target for those who would crush out the power of his preaching. Almost instantly he became conspicuous, like a candle on

God's altar, like a city set on a hill, and must needs be silenced "for preaching the Gospel contrary to law". Happy that man who carries within a light so full that he need only to let it shine—happy, though he be "hailed" as a transgressor of the laws of men! What matter if he were thus slandered, and hounded to jail? This only proved him all the greater and more genuine.

"So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater."

He was not baptized when first arrested—a new convert preaching contrary to law, and preaching repentance, at that! He must be silenced!

"Malicious censures, which ever,
As ravenous fishes, do a vessel follow
That is new trim'd."

And, for this reason, this new convert, this mighty exhorter must be hauled to the bar as a transgressor. This young son of Thunder was a new and flaming light, and the enemies to freedom of speech must needs put him behind bars to silence him. How well they did it has been seen, and may be noticed again.

Beyond all doubt he was a man of sterling worth. He may not have been "considered

a great man", "a great preacher", but if one is to be judged by what he is and by what he brings to pass, surely he was a great man and a great preacher, though not so regarded by his contemporaries. In speaking of the organization of churches in his day, one of the writers said: "You may be sure that Lewis Craig was always at the front." "By their fruits ye shall know them," and by "the fruits" we pronounce him one of our great Baptist heroes, a worker that needed not to be ashamed, for his works were many and lasting—still last and will still be lasting to many ages.

Then he was great and good—great because good, and great because he was an ardent, humble worker in the Vineyard at a time that called for men of unflinching, heroic courage. He was a true hero and not a hero in any times of "piping peace". Foes were upon every hand—enemies to religious and civil liberty hounded his track; jails awaited him; sufferings were his lot, yet he did not flinch, did not hold his peace, but worked manfully on. He met all these and conquered them. He was a hero because, as a sincere man, he believed in his calling, believed in his work, and was willing to be tested. Let us reflect here, in the language of another: "If hero means sincere man, why may not every one of us be a hero? A world all sincere, a believing world: the like has been; the like will

again be—cannot help being.” The like was in the days of those gallant Baptist champions of the rights of men. No more heroic, more manly men than these are to be met with in all history—our Baptist heroes.

As a man, then, among men, Lewis Craig was a worker, a companion, a brother—not “a decayed log floating down the stream of misused destiny”, calling himself a Christian. He worked incessantly, but mingled with the world and was kind. “His company was very interesting.” It was thus, as a diligent, faithful working man, that he became attractive, and men followed him. He did not live in vain. No true work-brother lives in vain.

To so live, as he lived, that we may be a benediction to those whom we meet is one of the highest privileges of life. That statement is not mere sentimentality, but it is true to life; it is the royal road that leads to happiness, here and hereafter.

“That man who lives for self alone
Lives for the meanest mortal known.”

What men need is not a strained effort at being good or doing good, but manly living as a friend of men—all men. This man—this man of true stability and of loving meekness—that meekness which is the outgrowth of true

strength, was a blessing, not to his friends alone, but to his enemies, his persecutors, as in the case of John Waller and others who must needs hear the voice of God's preaching man—their fellowman and their brother.

Any man who loves men can follow this path that Lewis Craig followed, whatever his work may be. "It is the man who lives for all and not for himself alone who scales the heights of aspiration's lofty dream and finally gains everything that his heart has longed for, that his soul has earnestly prayed to possess."

"He comes among us; 'tis not ours to ask
Of buried years whate'er his past might be,
If he but vindicate in this, his task,
A claim to manhood's true nobility."

Lewis Craig, like every other true workman of the past, belongs to us; his history is a part of our own—in large measure helped to make ours possible. By the manner and in the spirit that he did his work,

"***** he vindicated in this, his task,
A claim to manhood's true nobility."

IV.

“Ere then, redeeming grace had warmed his heart—

O, joy untold! he knew his sins forgiven;
He loved all human kind, and longed t' impart
The peace he felt, and lead them up to Heaven;
And earnestness became the hallowed leaven
That made his godly calling all sublime,
And gave him pow'r to look, like holy Stephen,
Steadfastly up into the heav'nly clime,
And view what glory his, when done with fleet-
ing time.

“The coal from off the altar touched his lips,

And through his soul diffused the fire divine;
Then to the work, as strong man who equips
Himself to run, he bore salvation's sign.
'Twas not his thought that he himself must
shine,

Or e'er be lifted up with human pride;
But to be counted faithful his design,
And sow the Gospel seed both far and wide,
And for his Master's flock the heav'nly food pro-
vide.

“He gave himself unto the blessed work,

And studied much to show himself approved,
As one within whose heart no shame should lurk
For teaching ill the truth of him he loved;
And aye he felt that him it much behooved
To be ensample to the struggling few
Whom faith, and love, and glorious hope had
moved

To climb the Holy Hill they brought to view:
And cheering lessons from his walk the halting
drew.”

Mr. Craig seems to have begun preaching before he was aware of the fact that he was preaching. In the agony of his soul he cried for mercy and also called on his hearers to repent—"with loud voice he would warn the people to fly from the wrath to come, and except they were born again, with himself, they would all go down to hell. While under his exhortation the people would weep and cry aloud for mercy. In this manner his ministry began before himself had hope of conversion, and after relief came to him, he went on preaching a considerable time, before he was baptized."

As we said, self-revelation and the call came together, and with the New-Name came the new tongue, and he began preaching, warning and exhorting men "to repent of and forsake their sins". He made this his work and he prosecuted it vigorously. He could speak, and did speak, with telling effect. His power lay, seemingly, in his wonderful "gift of exhortation". Rev. John Taylor says: "Though he was not called a great preacher, perhaps there was never found in Kentucky so great a gift of exhortation as in Lewis Craig."

As a speaker he was said by one to be "impressive", but he was more than that, for "the sound of his voice made men tremble and rejoice". "Impressive," then, does not convey the true idea of him as a public speaker—he must

have been, he was, most truly eloquent. That kind of speaking, "with a man's voice", which carries conviction to the hearer and makes him "tremble and rejoice", is genuine eloquence. He led men to conviction and on to decision, and many men, too. We may even see him as he stands before the people, addressing them about the all-important matter of fleeing the wrath to come: "He was of medium height, rather stoop-shouldered, black hair, thick set and disposed to curl, a pleasant countenance, and a free speaker, his eye was expressive, his voice musical and strong and his manner earnest and impassioned." There is your picture of this most mighty exhorter that Kentucky had known—a man whom men will stop to hear—must stop to hear, and, having heard, turn away trembling and rejoicing, fear and hope and hope and fear mingling—and carry the sound of that voice for weeks, yea, months. Rev. John Taylor says: "The first time I heard him preach, I seemed to hear the sound of his voice for months." Then, Lewis Craig was a true orator, whose voice rang out clear and strong, though musical, warning men of the "wrath to come", and held them for days and weeks. What a wonderful thing this, that of man's voice—the voice of God's preaching man—ringing in your ears to warn you to repent and calling you to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"! And

what a glorious kindness, too, that the Lord sends to us our brother, our fellow-man, to bring us, not the warning only, but the Gospel of Hope and Peace—Words of Life! Our brother-man, having been snatched as a brand from the burning, comes to us in love, with Love's message, to show us the path of life and to take us by the hand and lead us out of darkness into light—into the right way. All this, too, by the human voice bringing God's words, saying, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"; "at hand" now, here, and at hand to you, just as you are; "repent ye". Lewis Craig was such a brother, bearing such a message.

We are glad to record that that eloquent tongue was not armed with mere battle-axe words to slay men with, but in "it was the law of kindness". He was a man who "dealt closely with the heart". He had a message of love, then, to bring to the hearts of those who stopped to hear him, and that was why they trembled and rejoiced as the sound of his voice fell on their ears. Dealing with the heart! Ah, that is the business of the preaching man; that the great duty of the churches of the land. Love is life, the life of men and of angels, for God is Love and God is Life. Rev. John Taylor says: "As an expositor of the Scriptures, he was not very skillful, but dealt closely with the heart.

He was better acquainted with men than with books. He never dwelt much on doctrine, but mostly on experimental and practical godliness."

We see, then, that as a preacher his aim was to "kindle a flame of sacred love" in the hearts of men, and thereby lead them into "experimental and practical godliness". High aim! High calling! Truly, the noblest work of the ministry is to lead men to love God and to live a life of godliness among their fellows. From this we see that Mr. Craig had something else to do than merely seeking to do what so many insist upon doing—"indoctrinating", stuffing the head with theories, and leaving the heart bare of divine warmth. Alas, for all such! Of course he dwelt on doctrines, for in no other way could he reach the heart, for to "deal with the heart" and lead that out of the love of self into the love of God, one must deal first with the mind of the man, and in dealing with man's mind he must deal in doctrines, for truth without doctrine does not appeal to the man who has no knowledge "concerning sin, righteousness and a judgment to come". The heart cannot be touched until the understanding is reached through the hearing. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." And Jesus said, "Go teach all nations"—"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command

you." "Faith cometh by hearing"—hearing the doctrines concerning the Lord, sin, righteousness and a judgment to come. Thus we judge that Lewis Craig dwelt much on doctrines, for under his mighty preaching many were converted, and his warm exhortations led the hearts of men to surrender to Him who gave Himself for them. No doubt the writer meant that he did not harp continually on what we call our "distinctive doctrines". This he may not have done—perhaps should not have done, for however well a man may be grounded—"indoctrinated"—in our distinctive doctrines, his mind may be void of saving faith, untouched by the healing rays of heavenly light, and his heart be cold and dead, because no divine love, heavenly heat, has penetrated it and kindled a flame of love to God and the neighbor. Too much of distinctive doctrines has often, alas, too often, blocked the way to simple child-like faith in the Savior, and that love which is life. It was the business, the high calling, of Lewis Craig to lead men to repentance, and this he did right well. His own deep conviction had made a lasting impression on his mind, and he believed, he preached, he warned men, in bold exhortations he persuaded them to repent; for to him the Kingdom of Heaven was a real kingdom, and, was at hand; and so, also, was the kingdom of hell a real kingdom, and it, too, was

at hand. Knowing men better than books, he knew what they needed, and he brought that: "Repent of, and forsake your sins, for unless you do you must sink down into hell." That was doctrine, distinctive doctrine, too. He said to the jury that was trying him: "I am warning men to forsake and repent of their sins."

As a preacher of the Gospel he did a great work; more, perhaps, than the most of his day. We must not pass this by without commenting on one remarkable thing, and that is that he labored with his own hands for the "altogether indispensable, for daily bread". There is something wonderful about all this, and worthy of pondering. We are amazed, as we look back and see what those pioneer preachers brought to pass. We are led to feel and say, "There were giants in the earth in those days"! We cannot refrain here from quoting Thomas Carlyle, and also a passage from Dr. John A. Broadus, as their remarks fit in so well.

Mr. Carlyle says: "Two men I honor, and no third. First, the toil-worn craftsman, that with earth-made implement laboriously conquers the earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand—crooked, coarse—wherein, notwithstanding, lies a cunning virtue indefeasibly royal, as of the Scepter of this planet. * * * * * Toil on, toil on; thou art in thy duty, be out of it who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread.

“A second man I honor, and still more highly: him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of life. Is not he, too, in his duty, endeavoring toward inward harmony, revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavors, be they high or low? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavor are one, we can name him Artist; not earthly craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who, with heaven-made implement, conquers Heaven for us! If the poor and humble toil that we have food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that we have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality? These two, in all their degrees, I honor; all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth.

“Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignitaries united; and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man’s wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimar in this world know I nothing than a Peasant Saint, could such now anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself; thou wilt see the splendor of Heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of earth, like a light shining in great darkness.”

Now, let us give the brief statement from Dr. Broadus:

“There is a famous passage of Chrysostom in

which he bestows generous and exuberant eulogy on the country preachers around Antioch, many of whom were present that day in his church. He says, in his high-wrought fashion, that their presence beautified the city, and adorned the church, and described them as different in dialect (for they were Syrians), but speaking the same language in respect of faith, a people free from care, leading a sober and truly dignified life. He says that they learned their lessons of virtue and self-control from tilling the soil. 'You might see each of them now yoking oxen to the plough, and cutting a deep furrow in the ground; at another time with their word cleaning out sins from men's souls. They are not ashamed of work, but ashamed of idleness, knowing that idleness is a teacher of all wickedness. And while the philosophers walk about with conspicuous cloak and staff and beard, these plain men are far truer philosophers, for they teach immortality and judgment to come, and conform all their life to these hopes, being instructed by the divine writings.'

"Not only in the first centuries, then, but in Chrysostom's day also, there were these uncultivated but good and useful men; and such preachers have abounded from that day to this, in every period, country and persuasion in which Christianity was making any real and rapid progress."

V.

“Of Jesus’ testimony not ashamed,
He told the godless man his daily sin,
And with his great commission fitly framed,
Appealed to mind, and plead the heart to win;
And, like Hilkiah’s son, he paused not in
A temporizing mood with high or low;
Imbued with Nathan’s candor he had been,
And to the guilty presence dared to go
To cry ‘Thou art the man!’ and all his danger
show.”

Rev. John Leland says, “The Baptist ministers were imprisoned and the disciples buffeted.”

James Madison, writing to a friend in Philadelphia in 1774, said: “That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some, and to their eternal infamy the clergy (of the State Church) can furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at the present time, in the adjacent county, not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for proclaiming their religious sentiments, which are in the main quite orthodox.”

Where they were not imprisoned mob law was resorted to, and everywhere congregations were broken up by one means or another. Howe says, “A snake and a hornet’s nest were thrown

into their meeting, and even in one case firearms were brought to disperse them."

In speaking of Baptist ministers, Taylor says that they were "Fined, pelted, beaten, imprisoned, poisoned and hunted with dogs; their congregations were assaulted and dispersed; the solemn ordinance of baptism was rudely interrupted, both administrators and candidates being plunged and held beneath the water till nearly dead; they suffered mock trials, and even in courts of justice were subjected to indignities not unlike those inflicted by the infamous Jeffreys."

Dr. Amritage says: "For three months in succession three men of God lay in the jail at Fredericksburg for the crime of preaching the glorious Gospel of the blissful God—Elders Lewis Craig, John Waller and James Childs. But their brethren stood nobly by these grand confessors. Truly, in the words of Dr. Hawks, 'No dissenters in Virginia experienced for a time harsher treatment than did the Baptists. They were beaten and imprisoned; and cruelty taxed its ingenuity to devise new modes of punishment and annoyance. The usual consequences followed. Persecutions made friends for its victims; and the men who were not permitted to speak in public found willing auditors in the sympathizing crowds who gathered around the prisons to hear them preach

from grated windows. It is not improbable that this very opposition imparted strength in another mode, inasmuch as it at last furnished the Baptists with a common ground on which to make resistance.' ”

One of the battles fought by Baptists was that for separation of Church and State. In this conflict they stood almost alone, humanly speaking, but stood firmly, based, as they believed, on a principle of eternal right. They wanted no human authority for preaching the Gospel, believing that theirs was a divine authority. They needed no license from any earthly court, governor or king to allow them to worship God when and where they would. Their license was from Heaven, signed and sealed by the King of kings. Believing this, they went boldly about the work of calling men to righteousness; this these early heroes did, too, with most wonderful vigor, without fear and without doubt. And all this is a remarkable chapter in the history of this “sect” once despised among men.

Now, as you have seen, Lewis Craig began preaching before he was baptized (there being no administrator near), and at once he became an offender against certain laws of men, and, therefore, must be called to account—as he said, “you bring me to the bar as a transgressor”. Being a bold and mighty exhorter, he attracted

attention and became conspicuous almost instantly. He was arrested, tried and sent to jail on charge of 'being a disturber of the peace'. Baptists had a wonderful knack at being disturbers of the peace by their preaching individual freedom in those days, as in some others. It was during this first trial that he so boldly arraigned the jury of which John Waller was a member. Part of his speech is preserved to us, which is as follows:

"Gentlemen: I thank you for your attention to me. When I was about this court yard, in all kinds of vanity, folly and vice, you took no notice of me; but when I have forsaken all the vices, and am warning men to forsake and repent of their sins, you bring me to the bar as a transgressor. How is all this?"

His question, "How is all this?" is rather interesting. Hitherto, while living "in all kinds of vanity, folly and vice", they took no notice of him, but now that a change had come over him he is noticed by being pulled up to the "bar as a transgressor". Now, "How is all this?" Well, it is thus: a true Soldier of the Cross had waked up and enlisted against the powers of evil, and had also joined in the battle for true liberty, civil and religious, for those Baptists, as those of all ages, stood for these, and his persecutors knew it right well. He is too bold, too mighty with that new tongue; he must,

therefore, be put to silence. He had not become a transgressor, for he had repented of and was forsaking his sins, and warning others to do so. No; he was not an evil doer, but a burning and shining light, and must be placed under a bushel. To this end they put him in jail, for he refused to give bond to hold his tongue. All they asked was that he be silent twelve months. This he would not, could not, do, and so must be jailed. They cared nothing for living in "all kinds of vanity, folly and vice"; as to that, he could do as he pleased, but when it came to preaching "that way", he must be silenced. How miserably did his persecutors fail in silencing him! All that they could do was to lock him up; beyond that they had no further control of him; they could not silence him. This fire from Heaven—Baptist love of Liberty—cannot be crushed out by man, not by nations of men.

"Juletta: Why, slaves, 'tis in our power to hang ye."

"Master: ***** very likely,
'Tis in our power, then, to be hanged, and scorn ye."

Lewis Craig had no fear of that earthly court, with its power to jail him, for it was in his power to be jailed, and, not "to scorn ye", but to scorn imprisonments, to love his enemies

and to preach to them, through iron grates, the Gospel of love and liberty. It is manifest that there was no manner of fear, nor the faintest idea of remaining silent—preach he must, and, by God's good grace, preach he would. See him, after his second trial, going with John Waller and James Childs through the streets of Fredericksburg to jail. Are they silent then? Nay, verily; they are singing—singing an old song that men seem to have forgotten—a song that made one feel, as a writer says of the scene about that jail, "awfully solemn":

"Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveler.

* * * * *

"The fearful soul that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
Is but esteemed almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure."

We see from this that he was not silenced, nor was he "almost a saint", nor was he in the least deterred from the work of proclaiming the Word, for although he was locked in

"a felon's cell—
The fittest earthly type of hell!"—

he turned that cell into a pulpit and began to preach boldly to the crowds that flocked after him and his comrades, warning those who were in the "broad road that leads to death" to repent and turn and find the "strait gate and narrow way". Silence him! How? Crush a spirit like his! Who could do that? Reader, friend, does this stir your heart and lead you to think of what they did and what they were, and inspire you to wish to be more valiant in the great cause of life?

Did this imprisonment injure Craig? Did his friends desert him? He was not injured thereby, but made the more useful. "Persecution is rather a badge of honor than an evidence of disfavor. It is a call to **STAND UP AND RECEIVE RECOGNITION.**" These stood up and were recognized as heroes. "Trials and persecutions are tests of character." "The things which may abide the fire must be made to go through the fire." "Good men bear trials, and, in them, lose their natural weakness."

"The good are better made by ill,
As odors crushed, are sweeter still."

Being a true man, having dug deep and laid his foundation on the Rock, and being possessed of that enduring quality common to true heroes, he manifested a willingness to "stand like

an anvil", while his persecutors hammered on him, adhering steadfastly to those cherished principles, for whose proclamation and defence he believed himself to have been called.

As to his friends deserting him—no, never! William Hickman, in speaking of those times, said:

"Baptists were despised, which caused Christ's sheep to huddle closer together and love each other better than when there was no opposition. A little before this time eight or nine Baptist ministers were put in jail at different times and places."

They "huddled closer together"! Mark the word, and lay it to heart, Oh, ye who read! How different that from much that we see and hear in these days of much boasted peace! How vastly different to be despised by others, and to despise each other! The one "causes Christ's sheep to huddle closer together, and love each other better"; the other "scattereth the sheep and the wolf catcheth them".

Nor did these imprisonments fail of good to others besides these sheep that "huddled closer together". That, as you may see, was, and is, a wonderful blessing, but others were blessed also, for there were conversions from this jail-cell-pulpit preaching. Men were led to repentance and through this the Baptist cause grew in power. The lawyer who was prose-

cuting Elijah Craig said: "The Baptists are like a bed of camomile; the more they are trodden the more they spread." This first treading of Lewis Craig meant much spreading, as is seen in the case of John Waller, "Swearing Jack", "The Devil's Adjutant", as hé was called because of his profanity and extreme recklessness, who was one of the grand jury, as you have seen, that indicted Craig in the year 1765. Mr. Craig's bold arraignment of the jury and his words of deep earnestness so impressed Waller that they resulted in his conversion, and he became a Baptist preacher—"the most picturesque of the early Baptist ministers of Virginia". From being "The Devil's Adjutant", he was led to be the Lord's whole-souled messenger of the Light of Life. Thus the indictment of Lewis Craig before men became the indictment of John Waller before God and before himself, and, in the end, proved a great blessing to Craig, Waller and many hundreds more. (Waller baptized over two thousand in Virginia and organized eighteen churches.) "Happy the persecuted on account of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mr. Craig was "not the convict with the officers of the law on his track", but the shining mark at which the shafts of persecution were aimed, all of which fell at his feet, doing him no harm. In all this he was having "fellowship with the

World-Redeemer", and was doing His work. "The servant is not above his Lord."

As Jesus "returned from (the desert) in the power of the spirit into Galilee", so Craig came forth from prison with renewed zeal. The persecutors would silence him, but he would not be silenced. "We must obey God rather than men." And God had called him to go and speak to the people "all the words of this life". Well may our Baptists be proud of those old heroes, whom no threats or jails or burnings could terrify—could silence. "Had they each a thousand lives" they would no doubt have given them gladly for the cause of their Master. The spirit of the dauntless Craig could not be crushed. He had a mission that he must fulfill, and full well he knew that, though "imprisonment for crime is the shadow of hell; imprisonment for character is the gateway to glory". His courage was the rather increased than diminished. "Courage and Christianity are identical." He became the more effective, because both zeal and courage were strengthened and his desire to do more good was inflamed.

"So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater."

We should notice, briefly, the spirit manifested by Mr. Craig while under persecutions.

Though a man of unflinching courage, he exhibited a spirit of meekness, and accepted his persecutions in the spirit of his Master, and thus was he blessed and proved a blessing to others. Here we may learn a much-needed lesson. Meekness is not weakness, not want of courage, but the evidence of the highest courage. Lewis Craig was not weak. He was strong—strong to do and to bear. Our Master was not weak, but He was meek. He said, "I am meek and lowly in heart", and we must learn of Him. He places meekness in that catalogue of qualities that go to make up true manhood—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." This spirit as manifested in Craig was one reason why the Baptists spread so; not, because they were persecuted simply, but because of the spirit awakened under persecutions. The meek possess the earth. If, as Baptists, we ever possess the earth, it will not be with the battle-axe or the sword, but with that meekness that finds its way to the hearts of men, and leads them to say, "These men have 'been with Jesus'."

The meekness of Mr. Craig was greatly blessed in the awakening of John Waller, for it is recorded that "he was so deeply impressed by the meekness of Mr. Craig and the solemnity of his manner, that he did not recover from the awful impression until he found peace in Jesus,

about eight months afterwards. He subsequently became one of the most distinguished Baptist ministers of his generation, and, in his turn, endured persecutions, 'for preaching the Gospel contrary to law.'" (Mr. Waller was in jail one hundred and thirteen days, besides being subjected to other abuses.)

And who knows where all this devotion to principle, love of men, spirit of meekness will lead? When will the effects ever cease? "His works do follow him."

"The truly brave are truly meek,
And bravely bear both shame and pain.
They slay, if truly brave men ever slay,
Their foes, with sweet forgiveness day by day."

How much all this meant for us! How grateful we should be for what we today enjoy of civil and religious liberty! How greatly should we honor those by-gone heroes, who fought our battles for us! Beyond all question the persecutions of Lewis Craig and his fellow-laborers means a great deal to us. It is said of Jesus, "With his stripes we are healed". It may be said by Kentucky Baptists, in a sense, by the suffering of those old heroes we are free.

"While centuries dawn and die away
The world still keeps their record vast,
And gathers ripened sheaves today
From seeds that fell in ages past."

We shall give you here a quotation on the duty that lies before us in our day in "bearing our Cross", as this is an ever-present duty and *privilege*:

"The early Christians bore their cross midst persecutions, imprisonments and death. They showed us that Christianity is not effeminate, but heroic, virile, noble. Christianity has won for us religious liberty so that no longer do we have to bear the cross of persecution, imprisonment and death as they did. Yet the same courage and equal fortitude is demanded of Christians today in bearing their cross amidst the hosts of lusts, anxieties, doubts, worldliness and unrighteousness. 'In the world ye shall have tribulation', will always be true. Evils will always strive to imprison spiritual joy and gladness, and there will always be danger of remaining dead in sin. There must be conflict in gaining the Christian victory for ourselves, but it is on the highest plane in making the heart clean and the mind pure. Courage, fortitude and sterling virtue are exercised as much in the Christian life today as in the time of the Lord. And as an everlasting and graphic picture of what each must do to become a genuine Christian, it is written that Jesus himself took His cross and bore it to the place of crucifixion.

"Our crosses may differ. One may be the ap-

parent loss of great gain in being strictly honest. Another may be to bear the burden of always being bright, gentle and true to those who are ungenerous, unappreciative and brutal. Another may be to bear up with faith in perpetual adversity. Yet for our encouragement let us know that, whatever our cross may be, the virtues of Jesus will win out in every trial if they are not forsaken, if we patiently bear the cross to the end."

The great battle for religious liberty was fought for us; that other for personal liberty from the besetments of sin, we must fight for ourselves, and that battle is ever before us, for "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," demanding that we know the truths of that kingdom, and, knowing, be free. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth will make you free." The test of one's sincerity is his willingness to obey the Lord, and He says, "If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me daily".

VI.

“There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that pilgrim band—
Why had they come to wither there,
Away from their childhood’s land?

“There was woman’s fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love’s truth;
There was manhood’s brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.

“What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?—
They sought a faith’s pure shrine!

“Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod;
They left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God.”

Wherever civilization would come there must come a pulpit; more important is the pulpit than armies and navies, however needful these may be.

In those early days of our State mighty men came to prepare homes for their loved ones and to open the way for coming generations, and the most mighty among those pioneers were the lowly preaching men—Tinsley, Hickman,

Lewis Craig and many more. There is nothing more important than this matter of man speaking to his fellow-man of his soul's eternal welfare; and so, in the Providence of God, arrangement is made to this one great end—churches are founded, preachers are ordained, and man is pointed to a home beyond, and the voice of God is heard “concerning sin, righteousness and a judgment to come” through the preached Word. These “men fan the flames of human love and raise the standard of civil” and religious “virtue among mankind”—and more, win the hearts of men to Christ.

Craig and his church were outposts of civilization. They brought the Ark of the Covenant with them. The most sacred thing in that camp of pilgrims was their old church Bible. Hitherto this had been a light to their way and a lamp to their feet, and its divine truths were to lead them on and on till at last they should be gathered, one by one, on that eternal camping ground, into that one fold of the one Good Shepherd.

It was no new thing, nor is it yet a new thing for a man, or set of men, to move from their native land to possess new territory, but it was a “brand new thing” for a whole church “to pull up stakes” and move away to a strange land, and pitch tent there and begin to sow

seeds for an endless harvest. This was what Craig's church did.

Now, as we are speaking of that, let us try to see if this "brand new thing" throws any light on the character of our old hero. Does it? Was he a Moses? In a sense, he was—God's chosen leader, to lead a free people into a field that must be conquered and held for the Lord of hosts; to plant here a church in whose very soul was the love—undying love—of civil and religious liberty. He was the leader of a free church to the territory where true freedom should reign. This love of God and love of liberty led to this movement—really did it all. This church was to be, and was, a mustard seed that came to grow and grow, and overshadow other territory and start other trees to growing. Then, as to leadership, we see that he was a true leader—of necessity, must have been, for those intelligent people would not have followed him in a body through all the hardships that came upon them. There were strong preachers among them. Intelligent people will not follow a weakling simply because they are attached to him. Lewis Craig was no weakling, but a strong man, and those who came with him knew him to be such and trusted him as such, and loved him because he was strong. And another thing should be remembered, they trusted him not only as a true

leader, but as a brother and a companion. "His company was very interesting."

He was a man, then, that men could love and did love. No wonder that we read, "So strongly was his church attached to him, that most of its members came with him".

The question comes naturally, Why did they leave their old homes? Was there not room in that land for preaching Baptist doctrines? Was there no need of work there? There was need of work there, and that work was done, and well done. But these had turned their faces to a resting place from bitterness and persecutions, not that they feared these, but because they were led—led of a will to be free, but also led of Him who ruleth over all, for the good of all.

Now, it is more than manifest that Craig was not seeking ease simply by this move from Virginia, nor seeking to shirk the responsibility of preaching righteousness that he might possess a Blue Grass farm, for he did not stop preaching, never ceased till his eighty-seventh year; did not leave off founding churches, for he followed that on to the organization of old Bracken; and one writer says that he founded others after the organization of Bracken, but of these we find no account. What was he seeking, then? Tradition says that he said it was because he believed that the Providence of

God—that which had led him through trials, persecutions, imprisonments, church-building and soul-winning, to September, 1781—was leading him out to the wild West and would lead him and them on to the true Canaan above. That this was a fact is beyond dispute.

He came as a worker, a pathfinder, an organizer—"a voice crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight". This was what he did; this was what he came to do, and ah, how well he did it! He was simply being led, and he recognized the good and constant leadership of the Lord. That his desire was to be located in a land where he might be free, and worship God according to the ruling passion of his heart—in freedom—is very manifest. That he should prefer the open fields to jails is very natural. The Lord made him and all others of that spirit, and that in him, we have seen, no jails could crush, nor prevent him from exercising his God-given right to preach the Word, whether in jail or out.

The Rev. W. H. Milburn, D.D., in his book, "*The Lance, Cross and Canoe*", in speaking of the tide of immigration that set in toward Kentucky about the close of the Revolution, says:

"The Baptists, who had long been trampled upon and persecuted by the State Church in the 'Old Dominion', and had waged a manly

war against the tyranny of parsons and church wardens, now victorious by the abolition of the establishment, were glad to find an 'ampler ether, a diviner air', among the canebrakes and woods of Kentucky, where they could not only be free to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, but also from the supercilious airs and opprobrium with which the 'first families' of the tide-water districts were used to treat them; and they often sought their new homes in large numbers embodied as churches and congregations, and as such formed other settlements."

The traveling church was a symbol, in a sense, of what every church should be—an army, whether small or great, seeking to capture new fields, and found an earthly home where souls may be born anew and fitted for that house of "many mansions".

VII.

“He’s the Noble—who advances
Freedom, and the cause of Man.”

“Is’t death to fall for Freedom’s right?
He’s dead alone that lacks her light!”

“God lives, God creates, God reveals his truth,
God bows the heavens and comes down that
man may be free.”

Freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom
of mind, has been from the first the trophy of
the Baptists.—Bancroft.

The article on religious liberty in the amend-
ments to the American Constitution was intro-
duced into it by the united efforts of the Bap-
tists in 1789.—Dr. H. M. King.

In the infinite wisdom and mercy of the
Lord he created man free, in order that He may
lead him in freedom to the highest possible
good. True freedom is this, having power to
choose between that which is good and that
which is evil, the freeman chooses the good
and follows that regardless of all the sufferings
that may come upon him in the attainment of
his object. It is the true freeman who suffers
persecutions, railings, imprisonments, even
death itself, that he may follow that which is

truly good, so that, in the end, he may confirm the good and true in himself, and lead others into the light of life, and lead them to be truly free. It is the freeman that makes sacrifices, who buffets his body that he may keep it under, for the purpose of bringing a knowledge of true goodness to men.

In the wisdom of the Lord He leads us gently by that which He has planted within us—love of liberty. He has ever led men thus and not otherwise—to force him is to destroy the man, for, to be responsible, man must be free.

Now, for the love of liberty, Lewis Craig was imprisoned. You will say that he was free to choose to not preach the Kingdom of Heaven as he was preaching it—he might have heeded the judge and left off preaching for a year or indefinitely. That he had the liberty to make such a choice is true, but such having been made, Lewis Craig ceased to be a freeman, ceased to be a hero, and so ceased to be a son of God; for being set for the defense of the Gospel meant that in all things they, and “we should obey God rather than men”. True freedom means, in the largest sense, implicit obedience to God. For him to be silent, then, meant for the hero to throw down his arms and turn traitor—turn to be the worst of slaves.

By the love of freedom the heroic Craig and his gallant church turned their faces toward

the wilderness and braved all the dangers and hardships incidental to a final location on soil where no judges, with blood-hounds, would hound them to jail or hinder them from worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences. The Lord was leading him and them from within, by the love of that which is man's dearest boon—liberty. And thus, also, God was planting this tried and true hero of the Baptist faith in a land where true freedom should become the reigning principle among the people and make of them, for generations and generations, the most devoted and mighty advocates of liberty among men, both as to civil and religious freedom.

He came to our State the leader of the first organized church of any denomination, the first Baptist church of the State, a free church, holding to all the principles of true liberty of conscience—a believer in a “free Church in a free State”. He labored, even struggled, to gather and maintain such a church. This was the work of his life. Steadily he followed this one thing on to old age—on till he had founded Bracken Church and Bracken Association of Baptist Churches. When we speak of him as “the father of the Bracken Association”, we speak of a wonderful thing, for this has been a great organization—greater for real and lasting good than any mere earthly army in any

land, for many sons and daughters of the King have been born here. Little did this lowly Lewis Craig know of the mighty forces that he, as father of this body, was setting in motion. He hoped, to be sure, and believed, but did not know. Let us believe that he knows now and that he can and does visit in spirit these chosen ones upon whose shoulders rests the task that he laid aside so long ago.

My brethren, the works of Lewis Craig should not be forgotten. For the benefit of our children and those who come after them, they should not only be recorded, but graven in stone. How can we forget and fail to honor our heroes of the past who opened the way that the light of life might shine in upon our souls?

VIII.

“ ‘Through suff’ring perfect,’ stern decree!
 It frights the coward heart of man;
 Till he, from carnal mind is free,
 His blessing seems a ban.
 And ‘whom God loves’—O high estate!
 ‘He chasteneth him’; his fires are lighted
 To burn the dross that lies innate,
 To rouse the soul that rests benighted,

Thou sacred ministry of pain,
 By thee high Pisgah’s top we gain;
 O ministry of sorrow, lo!
 Through thee our angels come and go
 With messages of love and truth—
 From struggle, strength; and joy from ruth:
 To that pure light that shall abide
 We rise by something crucified.”

“And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation. * * * For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to make perfect * * * * through sufferings.”

One thing in the character of Craig we must not pass over lightly, for it is a matter of importance, and gives us a pleasing view of the man, as to his inner life, and his dealings with his fellowmen.

That one most beautiful characteristic is

summed up in one word—Peacemaker. Rev. John Taylor says of him: “He was a great peacemaker among contending parties.” This, then, was his mission, and it is clearly to be seen that, in his case, peace “grows by what it feeds on”. The business of his life was that of peace-making—between man and man and man and God. He was a man of peace bringing a knowledge of the God of peace to his fellows. Surely, “The beauty of the Lord our God” was upon him. “He was a great peacemaker!” Was not this a real test of his character? He was not learned, not brilliant, perhaps, but was a great peacemaker. “As an expositor of the Scriptures, he was not very skillful, but dealt closely with the heart. He was better acquainted with men than with books.” He was a man, then, that dealt with the heart, dwelling but little on church doctrines, “but mostly on experimental and practical godliness”. That was how he made peace, between man and man and man and God, and how he founded churches, and why so many of them lived and still live—heart-religion being the only religion that lives and makes peace. All this in the life of that lowly worker in the Lord’s Vineyard is well worthy of pondering. “There are the brilliant, who exhilarate, charm and exhaust; the beautiful, the fair, who suggest invidious comparison, sow emulation. There are the learned, who im-

press with a mass of facts that impose too great burdens upon the mind; ponderous tomes of thought, innumerable problems, syntheses that startle with their evidence of toil. * * * *
But how much greater is artless wisdom and love? * * * * * *He who brings the peace of the Lord brings the results of all high processes.*"

This last was what Lewis Craig did—he brought the peace of the Lord, thereby making others happy and learning in large measure what this meaneth, "Happy the peacemakers, because they will be called sons of God"—not be sons of God simply, but shall be called such, shall be recognized among men as such. They knew him to be a peacemaker and knew also that he was a son of God.

"Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To silence envious tongues."

It is written, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself". Mr. Craig had been busy through life sowing seeds of peace and goodness; and he was reaping the harvest, peace of soul, and the honor of his fellowmen; "practical godliness" was coming home to his own heart and life, more and more, as he was making for the end of his long journey.

Dr. J. B. Taylor says: "His last days were distinguished by increased spirituality of mind. His trials had been greatly sanctified to his good, and like a little child he yielded quietly to the will of his Father."

Thus we see that he had conquered and was coming off more than victor, for he was reaping a harvest of good to his own soul; he was becoming like a little child, getting ready for entrance into that home prepared for those who gain the spirit of the little child.

"Rightly indeed he fares, who, all his days,
With heart elate and purpose fixed and true,
Turns not aside in devious, aimless ways,
But fronts the life-work he has planned to do."

IX.

“O, view him down the vista of the years,
When, like the vision seen on Patmos’ Isle,
His locks are white as snow; and now he bears
The weight of age with the benignant smile
Of one whose heart a stranger is to guile;
He sees his starry crown laid up in heav’n—
His earthly days well o’er, in which, erewhile,
He in his Master’s cause has nobly striv’n,
And to apostate man the holy warning giv’n.

“His course is finished; ’tis enough, and now
He lays him down, with tranquil heart, to die;
With glory’s prelibation on his brow,
He bids his weeping household all draw night,
And speaks a blessing to them from on high—
Then falls asleep, to wake in paradise,
’Mid sweet acclaim of thousand souls, who, by
His work of love were led to seek the skies,
And over sin and death triumphantly to rise.”

Lewis Craig, having lived well—living manfully, heroically—living and laboring for his fellowmen—knew well how to die. So it is not surprising to learn that this aged man should say, shortly before the dying hour, “I am going to the home of my granddaughter to die”, and then go on, “with solemn joy”, to the place designated, and, in a few hours, pass on, “with little pain”, to that home prepared

for all who live and labor as he did. This occurred in the summer of 1825. Rev. John Taylor says that he was forewarned of his departure. He was so tranquil, so perfectly at peace, so beautiful in soul, that we may see a halo of light about that good, gray head, as he went, "with solemn joy", in the twilight of his life, down to the "River of Rest".

We may say that he was taken home "like a shock of corn fully ripe". He "had finished the work that was given him to do", and finished it, too, as we have seen, very much as became a true man—a genuine workman and no idle time-server. Having done his day's work, he had the end in view, and was looking forward with joy to the last great change, that of laying aside his earthly tabernacle for the one "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens". As said one, "He looked forward into an everlasting country, where through the immeasurable deeps shone a solemn, sober hope".

That garment that he wore, by which he was recognized among men, was laid away in a grave near Minerva, Mason County, to moulder back to dust. It had served him well and served him long, but, as all things must change here and be cast off, that the wearer may put on a new garment—"he clothed upon with his house

from Heaven"—he, too, must put off his earthly tabernacle and pass out of sight of men.

“And is he dead, whose glorious mind
Lifts thine on high?
To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die.”

Having fought his battle and conquered, in the spirit of a little child, and yet as a brave man, we see him

“* * * * Sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach the grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to peaceful dreams.”

“One life is continued into the other, and death is only the passage.”

“How tells upon the destinies of men
Th’ influence of a single holy one!
His words and way lead up to Heav’n, and when
He sleeps in death, th’ effects are scarce begun;
‘His works do follow him,’ and as upon
The mount of God he stands, his struggles o’er,
'Tis bliss to know what he in Christ has done—
His crown is gemmed with those who’ve gone
before,
And those who still will come till time shall be no
more!”

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