Local Preachers in Old Times in Kentucky

By Lucius P. Little

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Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 26 March 1905, p.1:

AN INTERESTING ADDRESS

Methodist Publishing House Prints
Judge Little's Production

Last fall at the Methodist conference in Franklin, Ky., Judge L. P. Little delivered an address on “Local Preachers in Old Times in Kentucky.” It deals principally with local preachers of this section especially “Uncle Joe'’ Miller and Rev. Hiram Kellum, of this county The character sketches and anecdotes are very fine, being in Judge Little’s best vein.

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Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Wednesday, 29 March 1905, p.2:

VERY NEAT BOOKLET

Of Which Judge L. P. Little Is the
Author Just Been Issued.

A very neat booklet of thirty-two pages has been issued from the publishing house of the M. E. Church, South, the title of it being "Local Preachers in Old Times in Kentucky." The author is Judge Lucius P. Little of this city and the matter contained is that of an address delivered by him before the Historical society of the Louisville Annual Conference of the M. E. Church, South, which was held at Frankfort, Ky., last year. The subjects are all selected from Daviess and McLean counties, where Judge Little has always lived. There are eight chapters or sketches in the book and every line is written in that excellent English. The frontispice is a picture of the late Rev. Hiram Kellam, who was well known in Daviess and adjoining counties and who was the grandfather of Mrs. Robert Littell and Hon. W. T. Ellis, of this city, and of others in the county.

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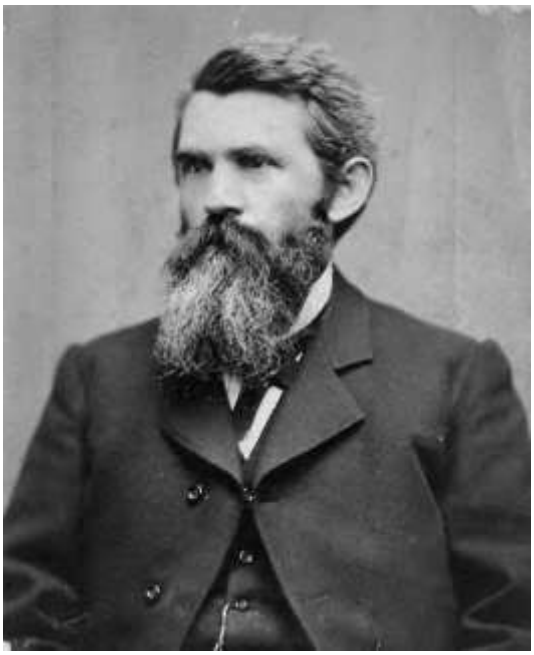

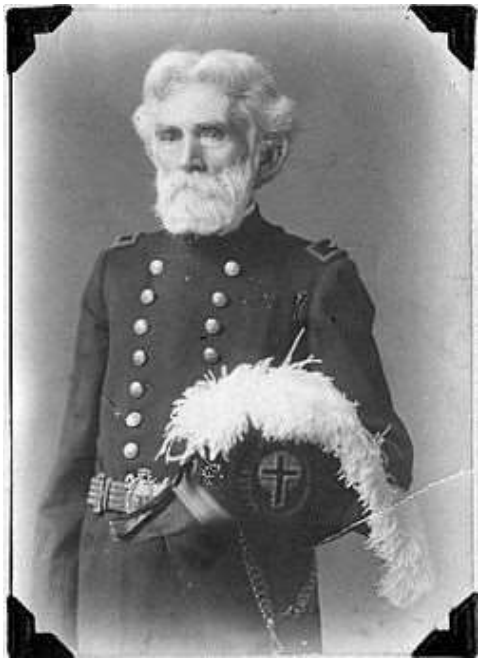

Lucius Powhattan Little (1838-1918) – Judge & Author

Local Preachers in Old Times in Kentucky:

Address Before The Historical Society of the Louisville
Annual Conference of the M. E. Church, South,
Delivered at Franklin, Kentucky, in 1904.

By Lucius P. Little

Nashville, Tenn.; Dallas, Tex.:
Publishing House of the M. E. Church, South,
1905, 32 pages:

TOPIC

FOREWORD.

The local preacher was one authorized by the Quarterly Conference to exercise his spiritual gifts. Although connected with the Annual Conference, he had no traveling relation. Neither he nor his family was entitled to financial aid from the Conference funds.

A second class of local preachers belonged to the itinerancy, but for various causes were located. These might he called by the Conference into active service again.

Local or lay preachers (both terms are used) were employed by Mr. Wesley, and alluded to in the earliest American Conferences—in the days of Coke and Asbury.

At the present hour the great part of Church work in the Wesleyan Conference, in England, is performed by lay brethren who preach the gospel. Lay preachers were known in New Testament times. One of these—Ananias---first visited St. Paul after his conversion and baptized him. The banner of Methodism was unfurled in Kentucky the year before the coming of Ogden and Haw by Francis Clark, a local preacher.

An account of the local Methodist preacher is a simple story. It tells of a class that may not measure high by worldly standards. He was a sort of militiaman in that glorious host divinely commissioned to help save a world from its sins by the foolishness of preaching.

He was zealous, but frequently not learned; earnest, but not always eloquent. He was rarely a great writer, but at times wrote to good purpose. He was not widely famous, but where known revered; usually poor in this world's goods, but rich in spiritual things; not a philosopher, but had a profound insight into divine truth; often a man of but one book, but that the Book of books. He was deeply sensible that he was called of God to proclaim the gospel message and the unsearchable riches of grace. Divine grace was not a freer gift than his own services. He was most efficient in old-fashioned revivals, where the conversions were of the through-and-through and shouting kind. At quarterly meetings and camp meetings, in exhortation and in song, in prayer, in rejoicing, as the seekers' adviser, he made himself of noble use in the Master's cause. He administered the baptismal rite to adults and infants, confident of his authority to do so in the mode he did it. He solemnized matrimony and gave his blessing to young husbands and wives, whom death alone ever parted. He visited and prayed for the sick, comforted the dying, and preached their funeral sermons. He built church houses, often working with his own hands, and out of his substance helped pay for them. He knew and loved the doctrines of his Church; taught them to his brethren, and defended them when attacked. Providence usually vouchsafed him long life, and always at last a happy hour in which to die.

Such in part, at least, was the local preacher a half century ago. But he is not that important factor today he once was in our ecclesiastical economy. 1 state the fact sorrowfully. I shall not argue it. I do not know why it is so, but sure I am that God has so ordered.

It may be that the local preacher has had his day. The place he once filled is, to some extent, otherwise supplied. The Church societies, the Epworth League, the Sunday school, the professional evangelist and his singer—these or something have crowded him out, and with him his class meeting, and made unfashionble, I sometimes fear, the "old-time religion."

Of these I shall speak this evening. I may not deal with the subject entirely to the taste of my hearers. I may say some things I should suppress.

To my thinking, one of the great charms of holy writ and powerful proofs of its verity is that it does not mark out the dark lines in the lives of Jehovah's trusted saints; but shows us the dark to make the light all the more splendid.

My subjects and scenes are confined to the counties of Daviess and McLean, in Kentucky, where I have always lived. I shall begin with the first Church ever organized, and the first church house ever built in that region, with some notice of its membership.

LOCAL PREACHERS IN OLD TIMES IN KENTUCKY.

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I. An Old-Time Church.

The earliest Church of any faith organized in Daviess or McLean Counties was that at Anthony Thompson's house, at Van Meter Springs, near Fort Vienna (now Calhoun). Before the year 1804 there were numerous Methodists in that neighborhood —a neighborhood at that day embracing a radius of ten to twenty miles. Besides the Thompsons were the Handleys, the Griffiths, the Littles, the Johnsons, the Robertsons, the Leachmans, the Hunts, the Worthingtons, the Kincheloes, the Bairds, and others. It was not long after this Church was organized before a house of worship—the old log church at Van Meter Springs was erected. Sometime between the years 1820 and 1830 this was abandoned, and a new site chosen and a new church built at Oak Grove, two miles distant, where it and the structures that succeeded have sheltered congregations of Methodists from that day to this. The old church. long unused, was still standing at Van Meter Spring, half roofless and dilapidated, within the earliest recollection of one of Anthony Thompson's surviving grandsons, in 1836.

Anthony Thompson,, a native of the North of Ireland, had emigrated to America in youth and settled in Western Pennsylvania. He had been bred in the Presbyterian faith. His kinsman, Samuel Finley, a learned clergyman of that Church, was also a fellow itinerant. It was in Pennsylvania he had met and married Rachel Handley, also a native of the North of Ireland. Rachel Handley and her sister, Mary, became devout Methodists. While Anthony Thompson and his wife were both Scotch Irish, yet the volatile Irish blood predominated in the husband, while his wife had more of the intense earnestness and yielding steadfastness of the Scottish character. Rachel's contribution to the marital leaven eventually leavened the whole lump.

Mary Handley became the wife of Alexander Douglass, a merchant, and after the latter's death her daughter intermarried with Isaiah Hunt and Jonas Little, and from them descended subsequent generations of Methodists.

The Thompsons came to Kentucky in the last decade of the eighteenth century, and the Littles and Hunts in the early years of the nineteenth.

While Daviess County was yet part of Ohio County, Anthony Thompson was appointed justice of the peace. He became also associate justice of the Quarter Sessions Court, and his official duties called him to the county seat in term time. He was very social in his disposition, was a fluent talker, and abounded in incident and anecdote. The late Harrison D. Taylor, of the Hartford bar, son of Rev. Thomas Taylor, thus spoke of him several years ago: "Squire Thompson was sometimes betrayed into partaking more freely of liquor than was becoming, but at all times there was a rare charm about his conversation, He had a wonderfully flexible and melodious voice that

was an attraction of itself. It was capable of expressing every shade of feeling, and his powers of mimicry were the rarest."

In convivial moments the Squire so far forgot the proprieties of his official position, as well as his religious profession, as to sing songs not found in any authorized edition of psalms or hymns of that day. He had a rich, mellow voice, and was a good singer. One of these songs, "The Ballad of Daniel Blue," was of Irish importation, and was one of the Squire's prime favorites. The late Dr. James Thompson Wall, possessing himself fine literary talent and taste, made long and diligent, but unavailing, effort to find the words and air of his grandfather's favorite song. The Squire never indulged these objectionable strains in the hearing of his good wife or in the vicinity of Van Meter Springs. But in the remoteness of Hartford taverns, on occasion, he laid aside restraint and sang with enthusiasm and to the great delight of his hearers the melodies of old Ireland. A day of reckoning came at last, and Brother Thompson was summoned to appear before the constituted authorities at Van Meter Springs Church, and answer the serious charge of being guilty of "conduct unbecoming a Christian by singing a certain carnal song, which was not sung to the glory of God, called 'The Ballad of Daniel Blue.'"

This incident grieved his pious wife far more than it did the Squire. The latter at first was disposed to stand his ground, maintaining that he had committed no offense. his wife, however, shrank from such a contest, and finally, in deference to her wishes, the culprit agreed to appear before the Church tribunal and confess his fault, promise amendment, and ask pardon. It was not doubted the matter would be thus easily and happily settled. The day of trail came on, and the Squire and his wife mounted their horses and took their way to the church. They had gone but a short distance, when he discovered that he was without a handkerchief. "In making my confession it is possible I may weep," said he, "so you ride on while I return for a handkerchief." He retraced his way, dismounted and went to the shelf in a closet in the house, and found the desired article. But his attention was unluckily caught by a decanter in which Rachel kept some spirits for use in case of sickness. What his mental operation was is not known at this distance of time, but any way the first use of the handkerchief was wiping his lips after setting down the decanter. He went out, and was in the act of mounting his horse when an idea apparently struck him. He again entered the house, and the decanter's contents were again tasted. This time he succeeded in mounting and set out in pursuit of his confiding wife. Reaching the church, the case of Anthony Thompson was soon called for trial, and the accused was asked what he had to say. Somehow it had been generally expected that acknowledgments would be made, and the erring brother returned to fellowship; and so it was a great surprise and shock when he informed his accusers that, while it was true that he had sung "Daniel Blue" for the entertainment of some friends, yet it was not a carnal song. On the contrary, he asserted, it was a sentimental song, which any Christian might properly sing. The Church authorities admitted they had not heard it, but knew its character only from the statements of others. The Squire thereupon proposed to sing the song before the assembled congregation in order to prove his assertions true. To a proposition so entirely reasonable, there could be no valid objection. Now he never sang "Daniel Blue" except when a certain number of potations stimulated his fancy, and caused him to forget the weary miles of land and sea that parted him from the "green isle" where he was born. The contents of Rachel's decanter had done fairly well in getting the supposed penitent in trim. So he sang "Daniel Blue" to his own enjoyment and edification, but to the undisguised horror of the brethren and sisters and the great grief of his disappointed and sorrowing wife. It is needless to say that when the song ended it was as if the songster had been caught red-handed, and he was mercilessly expelled.

Rachel Thompson was kneeling and praying in a grove near her home, at Van Meter Springs, when she first experienced religion. To commemorate the event, she piously planted a rosebush on the spot, which she cared for as long as she lived. When she died, her youngest daughter, Julia, succeeded to the old home farm, and dwelt there until she entered into rest, an octogenarian. After her mother's death she kept the roses in bloom every spring and summer at the spot where the Master had spoken peace to her mother's troubled heart so many years before.

From the same Oak Grove Church, in the early years of last century, three brothers joined the Western Conference. They were sent on missions to the territories of Indiana and Illinois. There they remained, and during their lives laid broad and deep the foundations of Methodism, and in green old age went to their reward. These brothers were the sons of Anthony and Rachel Thompson. [* The late Mrs. Rachel Stirman a lifelong Methodist, wife of the late Dr. W. D. Stirman, of Owensboro, was a granddaughter.]

II. A Pioneer Preacher.

In 1810 a Methodist class was formed at John Pinkston's residence, near where Pleasant Grove Church was subsequently built, nine miles southeast of Owensboro.

John Pinkston was undoubtedly the special seed from which sprang this vigorous old Church. He was born in Rowan County, N. C., July 26, 1782, whence at two years of age he was removed to Georgia with his parents. He was converted at a Georgia camp meeting, and soon afterwards removed to Tennessee, but remained only a short while. He came to Kentucky, and in 1809 settled in that part of Ohio (subsequently Daviess) County, where he dwelt to old age. In September, 1812, he was licensed to preach by Presiding Elder James Axley. In 1841 he removed to Indiana, but on a visit to his daughter in Kentucky the following year death suddenly and unexpectedly ended his career. He arose about two o'clock in the night complaining of indisposition, and called for a cup of tea, which he was unable to drink. He knelt by his bedside, saying "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Being again placed on the bed and asked if he would have medicine, he said: "No; Jesus is my physician." He then prayed for his family and, corn-mending them to God, immediately expired.

In a career covering thirty years he was an active and important factor in Christianizing this region of country. Dr. Redford pronounced him " One of the most devoted and faithful local preachers he had ever known." (Methodism, III., 34.)

His early education had been limited, but for this loss he was amply compensated by strong, native sense. He knew the Bible and that other and unwritten volume, the book of human nature. He was a camp meeting preacher, and in his day camp meetings were in vogue. He not only preached to surrounding country Churches, but did missionary work in Owensboro, where gospel seed was slow in finding root. As evidence of his standing, the public records show that he performed the rites of matrimony for thousands of all classes, and more frequently than any of his contemporaries of any Church. He was a farmer and worked on his farm all the week; but on Sunday he always preached the gospel, He was a strong man in the pulpit. Dr. Redford, who knew him well and had heard him often, described his preaching as " hortatory and appealing directly to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. In exhortation he was overwhelming, while in his public prayers he seemed to talk with God. In every act of his life, as well as in every word he uttered, he appeared to feel that he was in Jehovah's presence. As a class leader we never knew his equal, nor as the leader of the prayer meeting his superior. While in the altar imparting instruction to impenitent sinners he was eminently successful in leading them to Christ." (Methodism, Ill., 325.)

III. An Old-Fashioned Preacher.

Joseph Miller — afterwards called Old Joe," or "Uncle Joe," yet always Joe— was of German ancestry; but of his origin nothing more is known. He removed from Shelby County to Daviess County in his young manhood, while the latter was still a wilderness. Farming, the building and operation of grist mills, and serving the Lord were his lifetime occupations. It is said that he spent a fair fortune erecting milldams and mills on North and South Panther creeks. Owing to their low-lying banks and muddy beds these streams were ill adapted for mill sites. By his labor and enterprise, however, he supplied a public need in his day, but it did not prove remunerative to him in the long run. His residence on South Panther, near Crane Pond, was, perhaps, in Ohio County, though not far from the line between it and Daviess. A monument to his memory is an important old highway in the southeastern part of the latter county, known to this day as the "Miller's Mill Road." His ministerial labors occurred in Daviess, Ohio, and McLean Counties. Dr. A. H. Redford speaks of his good work at a camp meeting at Pleasant Grove, and another at Noe [sic] Creek, in the year 1836. (Western Cavaliers, 193.)

He reared a numerous family of boys, who, grew to maturity, but were short-lived. He himself lived to a green old age, and died a few years after the close of the Civil War, strong in the faith to the end, he lived plainly and frugally, but was hospitable in his home. His homespun clothing was more comfortable than graceful. Far from violating the General Rules as to "costly apparel," starched collars and neckwear and Uncle Joe were strangers to each other. After all, however, there was nothing odd in his outer man, considering the day and region in which he lived and labored.

It is hard to describe him, lie was a composite and original type. There was in his rugged physical makeup a suggestion of one or two to the Grecian gods. He had the strength of Hercules and the voice of the Thunderer. Small, piercing eyes, under cavernous brows, a thin-lipped, firm-set mouth, a sharp, projecting nose and chin, a heavy jaw, a high development of head, and a wilderness of short, wild, iron-gray hair, half hiding what brow he had; short neck, round, thick shoulders, and a powerful frame – with it all he had a most benignant expression when in repose.

All his life he was a devout Methodist, and for a great many years a local preacher. He pleased his congregations in the pulpit; was in request at revivals, and at a camp meeting was in all his glory. Dr. Redford classed him among the best local preachers he ever knew. (Western Cavaliers, p.193.) He was like a locomotive that was sidetracked – always had steam up ready to start any moment at a mile a minute. The practice of his religion to him was food and drink—the food of angels and the nectar of heaven. His critics and enemies might smile at his grammar and sneer at his oratory, but even these never questioned his sincerity, his vigorous and abiding faith, and the fruitfulness of his labors.

He sought neither riches nor fame, lie never concerned himself about what the world said of him, and yet he was not its enemy. A favorite text he often quoted told much: "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." And so he did, as all believed.

He was especially fond of his neighbor and contemporary, Rev. Hiram Kellam, and not less was Hiram fond of Old Joe. They had conducted many revivals together, and had much religious experience in common. Mr. Kellam's house was a regular preaching place in a churchless neighborhood. A large room was used for religious services. On one occasion Uncle Joe happened at Mr. Kellam's, and arrangement was made for preaching. By "early candle-lighting" the congregation gathered, filling the house. The wintry weather was cold, and a roaring wood fire was in the broad, open fireplace. Brother Miller preached with "liberty and power," in more senses than one, he had the full sympathy of his audience, and the responsive "Amens" urged him to his

highest effort. His excessive exertion, and the overheated room so far overcame him in the course of an hour, notwithstanding he took the precaution of removing his coat, that he turned to his host and said: " Hiram, exhort awhile till I step out and cool off." The exhortation followed, and soon the orator returned to his task, and closed his sermon quite as successfully as if no hiatus had occurred. That wonderful voice was unimpaired to old age. Loss of teeth and rapidity of utterance made him somewhat difficult to understand, but he preached and prayed and exhorted on an ascending key, and his hearers caught enough to be sure that he still proclaimed a free salvation.

IV. A Praying Preacher.

Sometime in the forties and after, Joseph L. Gregory dwelt on his farm, then in Muhlenberg (afterwards McLean) County, in the neighborhood of the present town of Sacramento, and in a few miles of that old Methodist citadel—Short's Camp Ground. Here he remained until after the Civil War, when he removed his residence to the north side of Green River, McLean County, where he continued farming until his death, twenty years later. He was never in the itinerancy, but what his hands found to do in the Master's service, that he did faithfully. Worthington Chapel and Sacramento Church were chiefly the scenes of his labors. Worthington Chapel was on the land of Thomas Worthington, and so it was named.

Camp meetings and revivals anywhere in his region he always attended, preaching, praying, and singing, heart and soul in the work. his house was everybody's home at such times, although at all times no one was more "given to hospitality." He was beloved by his neighbors, and every one who knew him esteemed him a good and godly man. Of a cheerful disposition, slow and deliberate in speech, with a nasal intonation, warming to his theme as he talked, he spoke with the unction and power of the Spirit. He was rather above medium height, with an open countenance, on whose lineaments showed visibly the index marks of inward grace. Illustrating his good sense was his advice to a beginner in the ministry. "Seeing I was timid," wrote R. T. Stevens, "he urged me to make no apologies. 'Never let on but what you are a bishop. If you don't preach much, your congregation may not discover it, and you need not tell them. If you tell them you can't preach, they will expect nothing; and although you do pretty well, you will not be appreciated. Be earnest , speak out and make yourself heard, for half the people are impressed by the power of a stentorian voice, even where the sermon is inferior.'" Like other praying Christians before his time, his intercessions at the throne of all grace were to some extent stereotyped. There was one item he never omitted, no matter when or where lie prayed, "Grant, O Lord, that we may have a happy hour in which to die;" and then he always added, "and we earnestly beseech thee that we may die in our right mind." In view of this oft-repeated supplication his death, which came in old age, was pathetic. A year before he died he was prostrated with disease, and the last six months of his life his faculties were so impaired that he could not communicate with any one, nor did he seem to have reason or mind enough to realize his condition. But the last day came, and that morning the family were startled to hear from the room where he lay alone the voice that had been silent for months: "Tom! Tom! Come here, Tom!" His son Tom hastened to him, and as he entered he said : "Tom, tell your brother and sister to come quickly." The family gathered, delighted to witness such a sudden and wonderful change. "No, no, my children," said he, "my end is at hand, and my blessed Master is permitting me to die in my right mind." As the day was ending, full of bright hope, his spirit passed from this world to a better.[*Rev. Thomas Gregory, a local Methodist preacher of Marshall County, is his son.

V. An Introspective Preacher.

R. Thomas Stevens was born in Ohio County August 31, 1819. His parents were emigrants from Maryland, of which they were natives.

His parents died in the spring of 1825, leaving five children unprovided for. In finding homes they were separated. Mr. Stevens was committed to the care of a pious uncle, with whom he continued until his nineteenth year. He then went to live with his older brother, then but recently married. After the lapse of something more than a year his brother died, to his great sorrow. He found a home with another brother. One day a few months afterwards, while laboring in the field, Mr. Stevens was stricken helpless by sudden sickness, without a moment's warning. Borne to the house, for several weeks he lingered between life and death, with little prospect of recovery. He was warned by a pious sister-in-law, who attended him, that his case was critical. "I told her," he afterwards wrote, "I could do nothing then toward preparing for death, but that if the Lord would spare me I would amend my life. I never forgot this vow, regarding it as made on the threshold of eternity."

From this sickness he slowly recovered. He resolved to become religious the first opportunity. He shortly afterwards attended a meeting near by, conducted by a Baptist minister at a private house, and in response to an invitation went to the mourners' bench. "I had little or no hope of obtaining religion at that time," he afterwards said. He did not in fact truly and sincerely seek "the pearl of great price." It was only in the closing service of the second camp meeting he attended that he found

"The sweet comfort peace
Of a soul in its earliest love."

This supreme event occurred in the year 1840, when Mr. Stevens was twenty-one years of age. He joined the Methodist Church at Noe [sic] Creek without loss of time. It was not long afterwards until he felt impressed that it was his duty to preach the gospel. This impression (so he expressed it) "grew into a solemn conviction." Yet he felt that he could not preach. Even in attempting to pray in public, he was overwhelmed with embarrassment and could utter only a few broken sentences.

A quarterly meeting was approaching, and he desired to relate his experience at the love feast. He was apprehensive, however, that overpowering embarrassment might prevent. He said: "I presented the matter to the Lord in prayer. I promised that if he would give me utterance to relate my experience I would regard it evidence of my call to the ministry." The quarterly meeting came. " I spoke with freedom," he said, "and my soul was happy. The Lord had given me the evidence I had asked."

Soon, however, he was doubting again. The sense of duty grew strong and weak by turns as the years went by. In this interval (June 5, 1843) he was married and settled on a farm in a new part of the country. His pious wife was a Methodist, and family worship was conducted regularly in their new home. He was not in the established bounds of any circuit, but in a sort of *terra incognita* between Hartford and Owensboro Circuits. The nearest Methodist church was eight miles away. The intermediate country was almost entirely under Baptist influence. The denomination in that region gave no welcome to those of another faith. It allowed no intercommunion with Methodists, and held to the unqualified and extreme doctrine of election. This caused him and his wife to feel cut off from Christian privileges. At length, by happy chance, Rev. N. H. Lee, of the Owensboro Circuit—a power in the itinerancy – visited the neighborhood, and gathered a few Methodists into a class, appointing Mr. Stevens as their leader. Mr. Lee also preached at a schoolhouse in the neighborhood occasionally, and always with marked effect. Rev. Allen Sears (known as the singing preacher) succeeded Mr. Lee, and preached at Mr. Stevens's

house. Other preachers of the circuit followed from year to year, and Methodism grew in numbers and strength in that quarter.

In 1852 he sought subscriptions to erect a Methodist church, and with these and by the manual labor of himself and others a house of worship was erected, and thus "Pleasant Hill" (McLean County) had its origin.

In April, 1853, Mr. Stevens received license to exhort. He made few attempts at exhortation, but at the suggestion of friends began preaching. An occasional failure, growing out of his overmastering timidity, greatly disheartened him. On the other hand, the stimulus of helpful advice and the encouraging words of other preachers caused him to struggle on. In November, 1854, he was authorized by the Quarterly Conference and licensed by the presiding eider, James I. Ferree, as local preacher. He did, however, little preaching until 1856, when he commenced taking part in revivals. In one of these, at Pleasant Hill, he assisted the pastor, Joseph Maxwell, and was greatly encouraged by its results. Thereafter he took part in all the revivals in that part of tile country. "It was not until after I had been engaged in many protracted meetings," he subsequently wrote, "that I became fully convinced that it was my duty to preach the gospel. When, as the result of my feeble efforts, I saw sinners crowd the altar for prayer, I no longer doubted."

In the fall of 1859 he conducted a successful revival at a schoolhouse not far from his residence, and a new Church was organized. A house of worship was erected, which he christened " New Bethel," in honor of his father's old church. About this time Rev. Gabriel Hardison, who had been appointed to the Calhoun Circuit, was disabled by sickness, and soon after died. Mr. Stevens was sent as a supply, and his labors were fruitful of good. This was the only pastoral work he ever performed in the itinerancy, but as the years went by he omitted no opportunity for working in the Master's vineyard.

He kept a journal of the last illness of his only daughter, to whom he was greatly attached. He made daily records of her condition, and of his own religious experience—his hopes and fears. This record continued for some time after her death. It was a wonderful memorial to his faith and Christian character, and few things have been written more touching and tender.

In his last years he was afflicted with deafness, and this to a great extent disabled him from preaching, but the peace that passeth understanding never left him. Though measurably cut off from the pleasure of listening to human speech, he heard all the more distinctly the whisperings of the "still small voice" that all was well.

On the afternoon of November 1, 1900, he was watching the cutting down of a tree on his home farm. Although on the side opposite to that on which it fell, and apparently free from all danger, in falling the body of the tree split and struck him, causing instant death. His work was done, and God called him. His old-time friend, Dr. George H. Hays, preached the funeral discourse, and in the conduct of the services he was assisted by Dr. Charles W. Byrd, Pastor of Settle Chapel. He sleeps his last sleep at Pleasant Hill, where in early manhood he planted the standard of Methodism, and where for fifty years he stood as sentinel for the Master, and contended for the faith "once delivered to the saints."

VI. A Happy Preacher.

Diodes Whitescarver was a native of Logan County, became religious at an early age, and united with the Methodist Church. He spent his early manhood at Rumsey, where he came to reside in 1847. Afterwards he removed with his family to Glenville, and united with Pleasant Grove Church. Active in prayer meetings, revivals, and class meetings, he came finally to exercise his gifts as exhorter, and was widely esteemed for his fervent piety. At Glenville he pursued his trade

of wagon-making; but soon after the close of the Civil War he removed to a farm in the Mount Vernon neighborhood, west of Calhoun, where he spent his remaining days.

He was licensed as a local preacher, and, as opportunity offered, proclaimed the word of life. He was full of zeal for the Church and the spread of religious truth; and was always an active and efficient helper of the circuit rider. Not educated in a bookish sense, he was learned in Bible truths, and fluent and earnest in their presentation. Religion was the substratum of his daily life. The witness of the Spirit was constantly with him. He saw all the good about him and discerned the brightest promise for the future – a laughing rather than a weeping philosopher. Sympathetic, ready to go to the house of mourning and weep with those who wept, if left to his inclinations "Brother White" (as he was familiarly called), saw the bright side of life. He rejoiced that his Maker had placed him in a good world, with the promise of a better one after a while. A cheerful, good-humored Christian, he always sang with unction:

"Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less."

To one who asked him if he had received the second blessing, "Yes, my brother," was his quick and emphatic response; "yes, a thousand!" He went to his reward as full of bright anticipations as a child returning to the old home. Who can doubt his welcome there?

VII. A Brother In Black.

Nathan Bordley was a negro slave of Rev. Hiram Kellam's, and, like his master, also a Methodist preacher. Nathan was sufficiently educated to read, and had studied the Bible to good purpose. Without the benefit of commentary or theological instruction, his own unaided interpretation of the Scriptures evinced marked acumen. It often happened that his exposition of the sacred Word followed the learned commentators so closely that it might have been suspected he had been instructed by them.

In that day, as in the subsequent years of freedom, the negro in Kentucky seemed to have a natural leaning for the faith and practice of the Baptists. lie was not satisfied with a baptism which was merely the outward sign of an inward grace He wanted something more overt and substantial. He regarded the discomfort and perils of immersion as a sort of mortification of the flesh and abasement of the spirit, tending to the glory of God.

Aside from other reasons urged for baptism by immersion, the negro had one especially his own, notwithstanding its free use by his white brethren. The apostle Philip sat in the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch and taught him the Scriptures; and when baptism was suggested by the latter, it was in deference to his views as to the proper mode that Philip immersed him, or at least the negro so construed it. The colored race in Kentucky, to a large extent, regarded itself committed to this precedent, furnished by the only negro whose baptism is mentioned in the sacred writings.

A colored Baptist preacher, not fully realizing the nature of his task, on one occasion challenged Nathan to debate the doctrines of his Church. The challenge was accepted, and the debate occurred at Hawesville. As is usual in such cases, the adherents of each claimed victory for their champion. Impartial white folks, however, who heard it declared that Nathan completely overwhelmed his adversary.

The relation of Nathan as servant and Mr. Kellam as master was regulated by the code of St. Paul in such cases provided. That relation may he illustrated by a slight incident. One morning Nathan's personal services were urgently needed, but he delayed when called because eating breakfast. Mr. Kellam grew impatient. " It seems to me, Nathan, that I could go to New York and

back while you are eating breakfast." The meek response was: "The Lord forgive you, Marse Hiram."

Said one to the writer: "Some years after the war ended, I was a youthful pupil in a school taught by an intelligent grandson of Hiram Kellam. Nathan came one Sunday and preached in the schoolhouse. The teacher and many of his pupils were present. The latter were not a little surprised, and could not understand it, when, soon after the sermon began, the school-teacher burst into tears, which he was unable to restrain till it ended. What it was," said my friend, "we never knew, but evidently some tender chord in the teacher's heart had been touched by the dusky orator."

VIII. A Brave and Faithful Preacher.

Hiram Kellam was born in Breckinridge County, Ky., January 5, 1798, and grew to manhood in the home of his pioneer parents. The early residence of the family was on one of those thoroughfares frequented by emigrants from Virginia and the Carolinas bound for the new and fertile West.

One evening a white covered wagon loaded with movers craved hospitality of his father. There was nothing providential in granting it; for then, as long afterwards, hospitality was the rule. The early Kentuckians did not forget the time when they were strangers in the land.

The movers hailed from North Carolina—father and mother and children. Among the latter was a well-grown girl whose beauty caught young Hiram's eye and heart at first sight. She on her part could not be unmindful of the impression she had made on the tall and handsome son of the host. While others slept, these reckless youngsters listened to each other —albeit she listened most—and the short, dark night (sadly short, they thought; though not so dark, being illuminated by love's wonderful aurora borealis) quickly passed.

Next morning the wagon moved off on its western journey, but lighter of load. Those were primitive times. That very day the Carolina beauty became the wife of young Hiram. Jane Boucher was a faithful wife, and the love she won so quickly was all her own till death parted them. Generous hospitality was a lifelong characteristic of Hiram Kellam. To him the injunction of Holy Writ had a more than sacred meaning: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

In his youth he became it professing Christian and joined the Methodist Church, and ever lived in that faith. On his marriage he opened a farm in Daviess County, a mile northwest of the present site of the village of Knottsvile. Seeking larger opportunities than farming afforded a poor man in that day, he established a tannery. In early times boots and shoes were manufactured by home workmen. In fact, a large proportion of the farmers made shoes with their own hands for their families. By and by the home-made shoe was superseded by the more artistic output of the professional shoemaker. It was in those earlier times that Kellam's tannery had its highest prosperity. Its business had greatly declined in the decade preceding the breaking out of the Civil War. On the occurrence of that event he abandoned the business, and also his farm, and took up his residence in Knottsville, where he remained until the close of his life.

Mr. Kellam was a many-sided man. In the first half of the century militia duty was exacted of all white male citizens of Kentucky from eighteen to forty-five years of age. The people of the several counties were divided into companies, battalions, and regiments, and these were placed under command of officers commissioned by the Governor. In 1828 Governor Metcalf commissioned him as captain of a company of militia. On assuming his new duties he so familiarized himself with military tactics as to become a skillful drillmaster, and his company soon found that militia duty was something more than a mere formality. His reputation subsequently

gained for him a commission as colonel of a Daviess County regiment, a position he held until the militia organization was superseded by the State Guard.

Like all busy men, he found time for many things. At one time he held the office of constable, and at another he served as justice of the peace. The Whig party was dominant during his active manhood, and he was always faithful and diligent in support of its policies and leaders. During the Civil War his sympathies were with the South, and, save as restrained by weight of years and a sense of ministerial duty, his martial spirit would have led him to draw his sword for the cause that was lost.

The dwelling house erected on his farm at his marriage grew by additions with the years, and as family exigencies required. It was originally built of logs, and was two stories high, but finally ells were added, and, in deference to advancing architectural taste, the whole was weatherboarded. The house had not been built long before the Methodist itinerant gravitated thither. There was no Protestant church in the neighborhood, but a room in Hiram Kellam's house served the purpose. Here a few of the faithful from time to time gathered to hear preaching and join in other religious services. He manufactured benches, which were placed in the room for use during worship and removed at other times.

It was not only a preaching place, but it was literally a preacher's home. The presiding elder, the weary itinerant, the local preacher, the devout brother or sister, and all of that "way" found shelter beneath his roof, refreshment at his board, and a welcome heartier and warmer and better than all.

He was a high priest in his household. Morning and evening the family and the "stranger within his gates" assembled, while he or another read a lesson from the sacred Scriptures. The songs of Zion were sung, and prayers ascended to the throne of all grace

He was an affectionate father, but especially did he set his heart upon his only son he christened him, as a devout Methodist naturally would, John Wesley, and trained him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The only plan of life his father ever had for him was that he should enter the ministry. His education all looked to that end. Asbury University was a noted scat of learning in that day, and thither the young man was sent. He was bright and diligent, and distinguished himself in his classes. In his senior year the consumption that had lurked in his system developed. With an unusually handsome person and grace of manner, added to bright talents and lofty traits of character, the father had dreamed dreams of a glorious future in which his son would achieve great things for the Master's kingdom. But an inscrutable Providence had decreed otherwise. The young man came home and rapidly declined, and soon died The stricken father bore this supreme affliction as only those can bear it who realize that here they have no continuing city. Shocked and sorrowing, he repeated with Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

His first thought was to repair the disaster by hews service for his Master. The voice he had hoped to hear proclaim the riches of grace was forever silent he would do his best to carry the message himself. His early education had been limited. He felt that he was at disadvantage in attempting to express himself in public with propriety and accuracy. At this period, though advanced in mature life, for the first time he mastered English grammar. He made the Bible his constant study, and, with the aid of Clarke's "Commentaries" and such other works on theology as came within his reach, equipped himself as a religious teacher. Ile had always been fond of reading, but now read more constantly in view of the task for which he was preparing. He acquired enough of American and French history to talk entertainingly about it. He indulged a taste for belles-lettres, Shakespeare and Milton became his friends. He cultivated an acquaintance with

Young's "Night Thoughts" He, however, felt nearer to William Cowper than any other poet, because his songs so often expressed his own religious emotions. He was fond of repeating the lines beginning

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform,"

and did so with unconscious dramatic effect.

He was licensed by the Quarterly Conference as a local preacher when about forty-five years of age, and, after the prescribed course of study, received deacon's orders from the Annual Conference. In the outset of his ministry he found abundant room for the exercise of his gifts.

He combined many of the elements of an effective orator. In conversation his voice was pleasantly modulated, soft and mellow; but, aroused by his theme or the emotions of the occasion, his tones grew deep and resonant. Several have said to the writer that in pulpit ability he was far above the average. His logic and persuasive powers were of a high order.

In the social circle he was genial and good-humored, appreciated a good joke, and joined in the innocent hilarity of his companions.

There was no uncertainty about his beliefs. His faith was part of himself, and with it he inspired others. He conducted a revival meeting in the autumn of 1865 at Beech Valley Church, in Ohio County, during which numbers were added to the membership. Of these, there were two – Mr. R. and wife — who desired baptism by immersion. On the clay appointed the congregation repaired to Rough Creek, near by, and Mr. Kellam administered the rite. As he ascended from the water he was met by the aged mother of Mr. R. She had been it lift long Methodist. "Brother Kellam," she said, "I was baptized in infancy; but I have always had doubts as to whether it is sufficient, and I desire that you baptize me by immersion." Standing on the edge of the stream, his tall form erect, he stretched his right arm toward the heavens, and while his whole frame trembled with emotion in thrilling tones lie exclaimed: "No! Before I would do so, I would suffer my arm torn from my body. Your baptism is all-sufficient. To baptize you again would be blasphemous, and I will not do it."

Said one who was present: "From that day forth no one in the Beech Valley congregation was heard to question the efficacy of infant baptism."

In person he was of strikingly handsome appearance, having the bearing, manner, and address of a gentleman of the old school. He was full six feet in height, of strong and stalwart build, straight as an arrow, with raven-black hair, cold steel gray eyes, and regular and expressive features.

He died April 1, 1880, having entered his eighty-third year. The unfaltering faith in the Christian religion which had been his most marked characteristic from youth to age sustained him in the last hour. To his descendants and to his brethren in the faith he left as a priceless heirloom the testimony of his saintly life, to the truth of revealed religion.

Note — Among his grandchildren are the following well-known people: Robert L. Ellis, of Daviess County; Mrs. Robert Littell and Hon. William T. Ellis, of Owensboro; and Dr. J. W. Ellis, of Masonville.

Courier and Journal, Evansville, IN, Sunday, 22 July 1928, p.6:

That the relatively unimportant Kentucky town of Hodgenville should ever been called "the center of the world," may be & a surprise to many readers of this column, and it may be still more surprising to learn that the fame of Abraham Lincoln was in no degree involved in such claim, humorously made by the noted Kentucky orator, Ben Hardin. The anecdote is an amusing one, whose lighter vein may be sufficient apology for its introduction during the warm summer months, as variation from more ponderous historical data often given space in The Pocket Periscope.

For preservation of the story, posterity is indebted to the Judge Lucius P. Little of Owensboro, in his admirable biographical work, "Ben Hardin, His Times and Contemporaries; 1784-1852; With Selections from His Speeches", (Courier-Journal Company, Louisville, 1887). It would be, however, an injustice to Judge Little, dean of the Daviess county bar at the time of his passing away in 1918, were one to quote a disconnected episode from the appendix of a volume that is far more than a mere biographical sketch of a great pioneer lawyer. Had Judge Little done naught else than write the life and times of Ben Hardin and his contemporaries, it would have given him high rank among Kentucky historians. It is an accurate history, delightfully told withal, of the most notable men of public life in Kentucky, from the days of sturdy pioneers who founded an enduring commonwealth upon the "dark and bloody ground," down to the middle of the Nineteenth century.

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For an example of masterly prose writing, a reviewer could desire nothing more luminous than the prefatory paragraphs whereby Judge Little forestalled possible query as to how he came to write the book which followed.

"On the Christmas Eve of 1884, as the author sat alone by a bright and cheerful coal fire in the small town (Calhoun) where his youth had been spent, reflection was busy with the sad vicissitudes of things. Among other matters it was recalled how many men of genius, talent and virtue had risen, flourished and passed away in Kentucky, leaving no adequate monument or record to perpetuate their memory. Orators, statesmen and heroes not second to any that have adorned any age or country, with names worthy the brightest pages of history, were being forgotten in the state that held their dust. Somewhat illogically, a resentful feeling arose against Boston, for no better reason than because that city was continually calling the muster-roll of its great and worthy children in the hearing of the world. Why should these New Englanders, it was soliloquized, be thus perpetuated, while the memory of Kentucky's great sons hastens to oblivion?

"The sober second thought however, acquitted the city of poets and philosophers, for indeed it was no more than faithful to its own offspring. – the highest of maternal virtues. Moreover, it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge the debt which all Americans owe to that great fountain of American thought. What earthly reason, indeed, had Kentuckians to complain?

True, they were not ready writers, nor adept in the arts of literature, but still they could at least take mallet and chisel, like 'Old Mortality,' and freshen and carve again the fading names on tottering and moss-covered gravestones.

"As a sequel of this cogitation, the author, feeling his humble share of responsibility in the matter, resolved to essay something for the rescue of his dead countrymen."

How successfully Judge Little performed his self-imposed task, the forty-one chapters of his book reveal to an appreciative reader. Whoever peruses the volume attentively will not only become familiar with the life and character of its central figure, Ben Hardin, but will at the same time make the acquaintance of other great lawyers who shone at the bar during the long period when Hardin was the most conspicuous. Not only this, but the reader will gain a comprehensive outlook upon the character of the general public as it existed and developed during an important period of Kentucky history.

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Even an incident so purely diverting as the "center of the world" story is valuable, inasmuch as throwing its own strong sidelight upon political conditions in the Kentucky of long ago; recited by Judge Little with some apt reflections upon the evils of gerrymandering toward personal gain and preferment. On pages 637-383-39 one finds this episode described under caption, "The Center of the World."

"The following solution of the above important question was originally embraced in Chapter XXI. The speech was first published in the 'Editor’s Drawer' of Harper's Magazine prior to the War Between the States, and was attributed to Mark Hardin. There were two Mark Hardins in Kentucky at the period the speech is supposed to have been delivered, both of good ability; but, without detailing the reasons for such a conclusion, it is sufficient to say that intelligent persons, in a position to judge, have decided that neither of these, but Ben Hardin, was its author.

"While this work was in press, an intelligent friend has communicated his doubts as to this conclusion, expressing his opinion that John E. Hardin was more probably the orator on the occasion. That this suggestion is erroneous could be easily shown by unpleasant reminiscences of that gifted but greatly erring man. The speech is very much in the vein of Ben Hardin, and from internal evidence might reasonably be attributed to him; but since the matter is in question, it has been translated to the Appendix and its paternity is submitted to the decision of the critical readers of this work.

"By way of introduction, it may be observed that no greater folly has marked the legislation of Kentucky than the needless multiplication of counties. The only imaginary apology for it is that it springs from an over-zeal in behalf of the principle of self-government. Neighborhood becomes arrayed against neighborhood, or an enterprising village seeks to rival the village that is the county seat, and therefrom originates a new county scheme. The 'project' (and so it is usually designated) becomes an issue in county politics, and small but earnest and energetic statesmen make it their hobby. The matter is rolled round and round like a schoolboy's snowball, accumulating astonishing bulk in a small area, until what at first was arrant pretense assumes the proportions of inevitable reality.

"'We all know how this thing is started,' said Mr. Hardin in the Constitutional Convention,' and there is no end to it when it is started. A man wants to be a county clerk, and he will press it; and here is a man out of office, and he will press it; and then there are men who want the seat of Justice nearer their town, and they will press it; and where there is a little miserable town at the cross-roads, the people there will press it, so it is that a thousand little petty interests are brought to bear in making new counties.'

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"When the formation of Larue county was being agitated, (1843), Mr. Hardin opposed it. He spent some time at the state capital during the sitting of the legislature, seeking to defeat the measure. Hodgenville was the prospective seat of Justice of the new county and its citizens were not unnaturally disposed to 'press it.' Happening in that town on the occasion of a political gathering, when the new county project was receiving a most favorable consideration, Mr. Hardin, not waiting invitation, took the stand for a speech. His known hostility to the project caused his audience, at the outset, to give him the cold shoulder.

"Not at all discouraged, however, he proceeded with his remarks as follows: 'Fellow-citizens, I hear everywhere that there is a decided wish to divide Hardin county, and some, I regret to say, oppose it. Why? I ask. Why, fellow-citizens? Look at this end of Hardin. It comes out of the way. It is detached naturally from Hardin. It projects like the toe of a boot; and, fellow-citizens, the toe of that boot ought to be applied to the blunt end of any candidate who opposes this just, proper and natural division. (Cheers).

'Having shown you that this end of the county is thus by nature, and should be by law, divided from the other, my next consideration is the county seat. To gentlemen as intelligent as you, and as familiar with the section to be divided off, I need not point out that Hodgenville will be the center of the proposed county; and where but at the center should the county seat be? (Cheers). Gentlemen, you have doubtless heard the removal of our state capital spoken of. As it is, it is tucked up in a north corner of the state, where it is about as convenient a situation for the capital of the whole state as Elizabethtown (the county seat of Hardin) is to be the county seat of your proposed new county. The same reasons that induce us to separate this part of the county from the other, should make us move the capital. We must move it, and to the center of the State.

'Now take a map. Kentucky is four hundred and twenty miles long, by about one hundred and forty wide in the center. Now the new county will be on a perpendicular line just seventy miles from the Ohio river, and two hundred and ten from each end of the state, and Hodgenville is the center of the new county. I have thus mathematically demonstrated to you that the State capital should be removed to Hodgenville. (Enthusiastic cheering).

'Fellow-citizens, I have been inadvertently led into these questions, but I will proceed further. In the late war (the War of 1812) Washington City was burned by the British, and why? Because it was on our exposed border. The National capital should be removed from the Atlantic coast, and to center of the Union. Kentucky is the great seal set in the center of our mighty Republic, as you will see by enumerating the surrounding states, and, as I have already shown you that this is the center of Kentucky, it follows that the National capital should be removed to Hodgenville.' (As some had begun to smell a large Norway by this time, the cheering was not quite so loud).

"'Nay!' said orator, in a burst of enthusiasm, 'Hodgenville is the center of God's glorious and beautiful world!' 'How in the devil you make that out?' said an irritated voice in the crowd. The speaker, drawing himself up, and sweeping his forefinger in a grand circle around the horizon, said, 'Look how nicely the sky fits down all around!'"

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Judge Little lived to the ripe age of four-score years, and his fellow-citizens rated him as ones of the brightest men and most lovable characters it was ever Owensboro's good fortune to possess; a learned historian on local affairs and a most entertaining conversationalist because of his rare knowledge of those things. He had intimate acquaintance with the reasons for naming most of the city streets, as an example, and could relate much attractive history attached to them. At the

outbreak of the War Between the States. he enlisted in the Confederate army, was captured and paroled, then going to Mexico and California until hostilities were ended, when he returned home to Kentucky. He was a lifelong Democrat until the party became divided on the sound money issue in 1896, when he supported the Palmer and Buckner ticket and thereafter affiliated with the Republican party.

In his religious convictions, Judge Little was a devout Methodist, and wrote much on the history of Methodism in Kentucky. In 1905 the Southern Methodist publishing house (Nashville and Dallas) printed his "Local Preachers of Old Times in Kentucky", wherein he comprehensively set forth the lives and labors of eight pioneer evangelists: Anthony Thompson, "An Old Time Church"; John Pinkston, "A Pioneer Preacher"; Joseph Miller, "An Old-Fashioned Preacher"; Joseph L. Gregory, "A Praying Preacher"; R. Thomas Stevens, "An Introspective Preacher"; Diocles Whitescarver, "A Happy Preacher"; Nathan Bordley (Colored), "A Brother in Black"; and Hiram Kellam, "A Brave and Faithful Preacher." The character-drawing in each instance portrays the man described as a type, and the author's foreword modestly says that "an account of the local Methodist preacher is a simple story. It tells of a class that may not measure high by worldly standards. He was sort of militia-man in that glorious host Divinely commissioned to help save world from its sins by the foolishness of preaching.

"He was zealous, but frequently not learned; earnest, but not always eloquent. He was rarely a great writer, but at times wrote good purpose. He was not widely known, but where known revered; usually poor in this world's goods, but rich in spiritual things; not a philosopher, but had a profound insight into Divine truth; often a man of one book, but that the Book of Books.

"He was deeply sensible that he was called of God to proclaim the Gospel message and the unsearchable riches of grace. Divine grace was not a freer gift than his own services. He was most efficient in old-fashioned revivals where the conversions were of the through-and-through and shouting kind. At quarterly meetings and camp meetings, in exhortation and in song, in prayer, in rejoicing, as the seekers' adviser, he made himself of noble use in the Master's cause. He administered the baptismal rite to infants and adults, confident of his authority to do so in the mode he did it. He solemnized matrimony and gave his blessing to young husbands and wives, whom death alone ever parted. He visited and prayed for the sick, comforted the dying, and preached their funeral sermons. built church houses, often working with his own hands, and out of his substance he helped pay for them, He knew and loved the doctrines of his church: taught them to his brethren, and defended them when attacked. Providence usually vouchsafed him long life, and always at last a happy hour in which to die.

"Such, in part at least, was the local preacher a half century ago," observes Judge Little, "but he is not that important factor today that he once was in our ecclesiastical economy. I state the fact sorrowfully, I shall not argue it. I do not know why it is so, but I am sure that God has so ordered it. It may be that the local preacher has had his day, The place he once filled is, to some extent, otherwise supplied. The church societies, the Epworth League, the Sunday School, the professional evangelist and his singer, – these or something, have crowded him out, and with him his 'class meeting,' and have made unfashionable, I sometimes fear, the 'old-time religion'."