

LAYMEN'S EDITION

TAR HEEL PREACHERS

THEIR ORDER AND THEIR SUPPORT

BY

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An adapted reprint (by permission of Bethany Press, St. Louis, Mo.)
of chapters 19 and 20 in Ware's "*History of the Disciples
of Christ in North Carolina.*"

"Nothing in the past is dead to the man who would learn how
the present came to be what it is."—OLD ENGLISH SAYING.

DEDICATED TO THE LAYMEN,
NORTH CAROLINA DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

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I. THE MINISTRY—ITS ORDER

As the Disciples developed they faced their greatest problem, that of leadership. Their pioneers were necessarily all adopted leaders. That is to say they came over from other Communions. A ministry indigenous to the body, and otherwise qualified was of first importance, if they were to come permanently to be a great people. Naturally this required a generation to mature. In the meantime the melting pot for their preachers was of prime concern to the Cause.

An evangelist coming to the North Carolina Disciples from Kentucky in 1850, was Jesse P. Nevill. He was employed as their first general evangelist in 1854. His salary was to be twenty-five dollars per month. He did good work. The records do not disclose any dissatisfaction with him until 1857. He was then summarily dismissed from their fellowship by the following resolution adopted in their Annual Conference at Antioch (Farmville): "In-as-much as Elder Jesse P. Nevill has recently published to the world certain untaught speculations concerning the origin and increase of Devils, the perpetuity of the Earth, and offering that both Heaven and Hell are in this world: All of which we consider as directly and indirectly subversion of the Christian Faith, he be, and hereby is, expelled from this Conference."

The Disciples had continued the Baptist order of a stern and active discipline in the local church. They had also continued the General Conference Method of the Free Will Baptists in calling the roll of preachers in annual executive session in an open, democratic, free-for-all, determination of the current roll. They were intensely democratic, but they took great pains at this point to see that their democracy was not abused. They were so democratic they would not have disfellowshipped Nevill for his peculiar opinions if he had held them in reserve and continued preaching the Gospel in its purity and power. Nevill, however, gave persistently his peculiar views as the burden of his message. This was shown in a characteristic conclusion to a sermon which he preached at Raleigh June 14, 1857.¹ The text was Ecclesiastes 1:4: "The earth abideth forever." His proposition was that heaven and hell were to be found only in this present life, and that after death all people were to return to the earth. He concluded:

This is my view of the subject and not that of any church known to me. I am now fishing with my own hook and select my own bait from the Bible for the great Gospel Field where there are many fish. Let us live with the fond and pleasing hope of appearing again in the ages to come among the children and men on earth. Let us spend the remainder of our life in making arrangements for our reappearance in the land of our nativity. O let us remember that our felicity and honors on our return to our race will be determined by what we now do.

Other cases of discipline arose in the annual meetings. It was necessary that the procedure be given a concerted and explicit form in order that the method might be regular, and fair, and simple. When the initial Constitution was adopted in 1857, no provision was made for this. But in 1859, John P. Dunn, Alfred Moye, and Dr. John T. Walsh, were asked as a Committee to submit a revision of the Constitution. This was the last conference service of John P. Dunn, as he died soon after. The last three articles of the revised constitution as adopted had teeth in them. They were as follows:

ARTICLE 12. No person proposing to unite with the Disciples of Christ as a preacher from other religious parties, shall hereafter be received without first exhibiting his credentials, and giving satisfactory evidence of his good moral character.

ARTICLE 13. The names of all the ministers belonging to this Conference shall be called over at each session for the examination of Christian character; and should the name of any minister be stricken from the list of preachers, for immoral conduct, or conduct unbecoming a Christian minister, it will be the duty of all the churches composing the Conference, to carry out the wishes of said Conference, in reference to such minister or ministers; and any church receiving, countenancing, or licensing any such minister to exhort in public or to preach, without ample evidence of repentance and reformation, shall be remonstrated with, and if she persists in her course, shall be expelled from this body.

ARTICLE 14. As all the preachers belonging to this body are received and their names enrolled by the action and authority of the Conference; so it is not competent for any preacher to withdraw from this body except by a petition presented at its regular sessions.

It is obvious that Article 13 was the one likely to create the greatest opposition; especially from preachers without the State who with the excessive democracy of the Disciples had suffered no ecclesiastical control. But Disciple leaders were determined that North Carolina Churches of Christ should not be victimized by unworthy preachers. Much sacrificial energy and deep devotion had gone into the building of the Kingdom. It must be safeguarded. The regulation might not always have been wisely applied, but viewed comprehensively, it was an outstanding factor in protecting the Churches against catastrophes in their ministry.

The effect of this constitutional provision was clearly wholesome in the maintenance of ministerial rectitude, honor, and morale. That mistakes should sometimes be made was inevitable. What ought to have been done was not always clear, even to the most representative Disciple counsel. Perhaps the most impressive instance of this was the case of Amos J. Battle. Battle came to the Disciples from the Missionary Baptists in 1852. He was a strong man. He had been Recording Secretary of the Baptist State Convention. He was from one of the leading families of Eastern North Carolina. In common with all pioneer preachers of his day he was forced to earn much of his sustenance from

service aside from the ministry. In 1857, he was charged with malfeasance by the Adams Express Company, at Hertford, while in their employ. It was alleged also that he did not return some borrowed money. In the Annual Conference a Committee of seven leading Disciples reported that "his errors are of sufficient magnitude to justify the conclusion that it is inexpedient for him to exercise his gift as a minister of the gospel." Thirteen years later, Josephus Latham who kept the old "Conference Book" in which this is recorded added the significant footnote: "Elder Battle lived to satisfy all of his excellence and we think the above was too hastily agreed upon."

Coincident with the suspension of Battle an estrangement arose between him and Peter E. Hines, another preacher of the Disciples, continuing for several years. Battle found refuge in Christian Hope Church. They received him, and he became their pastor. In the 1859 Conference, Hines sought to exclude Christian Hope from fellowship by reason of this breach of the ministerial regulation. John M. Gurganus pled good faith on the part of Christian Hope and promised to set the Church straight. So her delegates were "seated." This promise was not kept, and in the next year's Conference Christian Hope was cast out. At the same time, Gurganus was "merely suspended for one year, or until he severs his connection with A. J. Battle." He was off the roll until 1864, at which time Christian Hope was also "received back into the Conference." Two years afterward Battle wrote asking for return to the Conference. His loyalty and humility were alike notable. He was told to come to the next Annual Meeting. He came armed with the request of Corinth Church that he be reinstated. Whereupon he was "unanimously received," and was given his old job of general evangelizing. His estrangement with Hines continued through the years. Moses T. Moye stepped in as peacemaker, and they were joyfully reconciled. Josephus Latham wrote Moye about this, April 12, 1870, and said:² "I have now seen Bro. Hines and he seems so different, so much more devoted, and his prayer was so beautiful and forgiving, and he seems to have no animosity at all against Elder Battle. Surely my dear brother you have accomplished one of the greatest deeds of your life."

The Disciples with courage and vision faced a baffling problem and practically solved it. In 1867 the Annual Meeting passed unanimously the following resolution offered by Dr. Walsh:

"That we regard it as disorderly and subversive of the peace and union of the churches, for anyone who has been excluded, to be received or countenanced as a Christian or Christian Preacher by any other church or congregation until all difficulties are adjusted and said person fully restored to the church from which he was excluded."

The conviction grew that there should be state-wide concert in the Disciple fellowship in supervision of candidates for the ministry. In the Kinston Convention of 1872, the Committee on Order of Business, which prepared agenda for the meeting, submitted an experimental policy for adoption in the eleventh item of their report as follows: "A committee of five or more experienced ministers to examine candidates for enrollment on the list of preachers, and applicants from other religious parties desiring to unite with us, but nothing in this report is to be construed as depriving the churches of the right to authorize any pious and qualified brother among them to preach the gospel." This Examining Committee was composed of J. J. Harper, Jno. T. Walsh, M. T. Moye, Josephus Latham, Jos. H. Foy, and Gideon Allen. In their report after giving their recommendations as to particular applicants they concluded:³

Hereafter, from the ministers, it will be seen and generally understood, that all candidates for enrollment on our list, shall undergo a rigid examination on the elements of the Gospel by the Committee appointed for that purpose. It should be understood, brethren, that your committee do not consider it a part of their function to instigate an inquisition into the moral character of applicants, considering that that essential prerequisite has been attended to by the congregations which accredit them to your body. If the congregations have been imposed upon, and the Annual Meeting wishes to protect its own honor, it should do so in a collective capacity, and not by the bare fraction of a committee. We therefore construe our just powers to be limited solely to the examination of candidates upon the truths of Holy Writ. As we stated before, several brethren of undoubted worth for whose capacity and probity members of the committee were willing to vouch, have been passed without examination. This is not intended as a precedent for future irregular action, but as a matter of justice to parties who would be aggrieved by the operation of a rule, with whose requirements they cannot comply of necessity.

As might be supposed this was certain to create unfavorable reaction among some conservatives. In the Kinston convention, of 1872, there were only three who actually voted against the adoption of the report. They were Augustus Latham, Jr., J. R. Robinson, and Winfield Muse. Robinson explained his vote by saying that he saw in the measure no provision for any worthy candidate who might be unavoidably kept from attendance at the Annual State Meeting. Latham proceeded to stir up a revolt to the plan in the First District embracing the area now known as Albemarle District. He had a lengthy controversy about it with Dr. Walsh in *The Watch Tower*. Latham said: "I have labored faithfully against that order of last conference and am glad to be able to say that it is an unpopular thing here and elsewhere; the churches down here, I think, will not regard it at all." In defense of the plan Walsh said:⁵ "In the estimation of old, wise and experienced brethren among us it is regarded as one of the best things we have done." A "Subscriber" from Craven County warmly congratulated the Disciples that they had at last

taken a stand for "an educated ministry."⁶ Latham said he was not opposed to education, but did not think it his "duty to learn to take an ipse dixit from any uninspired person."⁷ He added: "Humility does adorn a preacher, but abject servile submission to the decrees of any body of men does not. We have enjoyed the freedom that is in Christ too long for that." Walsh answered with a scriptural argument in favor of the plan. Latham headed his final article "The Convention and Church Independence."⁸ He argued that the Convention was arbitrary, assuming a function belonging only to the local Church. Walsh replied:⁹

The doctrine of absolute Church independence is not in the word of God, nor is it held by the Disciples generally. There are a few like Bro. Lipscomb, whom Bro. Latham quotes approvingly, that hold this view; but Brethren Campbell, Dunn, and Battle did not. The Church of the Living God is one—not many. It is one Sheepfold, one Temple, one House, one Body. It is compared to, and illustrated by the human body. All the members—the hands, feet, eyes, nose, and ears—are all parts of one body. In one sense they are independent and in another they are dependent parts of one whole. . . . We do not claim for Conventions that they always do right, but we do say that local congregations err and do wrong, just as often, and we think more frequently.

Latham's revolt was effective with most of the Churches in the First District. In their Union Meeting at Old Ford all of the Churches of the District were lined up with Latham in opposition to the Convention plan except Oak Grove, Mt. Pleasant, Macedonia, and Old Ford. J. R. Robinson said of this meeting:¹⁰ "I was present and there told the brethren to act with discretion, prudence and moderation, for I regarded it as a matter that needed not to be troubled." With his counsel they drafted "a memorial expressive of the sentiment of the Union Meeting" to be laid before the next Annual Meeting at Hookerton in 1873. Robinson said: "The Annual Meeting did consider our memorial and change the thing." The same Committee which had reported the measure of 1872 presented the following resolution in 1873 at the Disciples' Annual Meeting:

Resolved, As the sentiment of this Convention, that while we acknowledge the prerogative of the local congregations to seek out and train men for the work of the ministry, that nevertheless, according to the teachings of the New Testament, no Christian congregation has any right to set apart or ordain anyone to the work of the Gospel Ministry, unless he has been first "proved" or examined by an Evangelist, or a competent Presbytery, touching his knowledge of the Gospel, and his moral character or Christian faithfulness: and that when the name of any new preacher is sent up to be enrolled on the list of preachers, the congregation of which he is a member shall certify to this fact in a letter addressed to the Convention, and signed by all of the officers of the church, Elders and Deacons, and the Evangelist who examined and ordained him. And furthermore, That when anyone, claiming to be a Minister, and coming to the Church of Christ from any of the sects, shall propose to unite with us, he shall first unite with some one of our local congregations, and if he has not been previously ordained, or if his ordination is not satisfactory, he shall in like manner be examined and ordained and in like manner

come recommended to our Convention. For proof see the following Scriptures: 2nd Tim. II:2; 1st Tim. III:2; Titus I:9; 2nd Tim. I:13; 1st Tim. III:10; Titus I:5, and II:7, 8.

As soon as this resolution came from the press it stirred up the violent opposition of *The Gospel Advocate* in Nashville, Tennessee. David Lipscomb, the editor, said:¹¹

The North Carolina Convention assumes the right to keep a list of evangelists of the State, prescribe the qualifications of the evangelist and examine him and pronounce his fitness for the work. It is a gracious favor toward the churches, that the convention admits their right to seek out and train men for the ministry, but they cannot be accepted unless by the will of the convention. In order that they may be able to control this matter fully, they require that the name shall be sent up to them for enrollment, and that the elders of the churches shall certify that their rule has been complied with, and shall give the name of the evangelist who examined and ordained him. Then no man can preach Christ in North Carolina, no church can send a man out to preach Christ unless first some one of the ordained clergy, examine, ordain, and recommend, and this Sanhedrin of clergy approve.

Tell us, will you, where a kingdom of the clergy can be found, if not here?

Walsh asserted that this was a misrepresentation, since the service of a delegate Convention was the "representative action" of the Churches themselves. As to Lipscomb's accusation of the restriction of ordination to the "Sanhedrin of Clergy," Walsh said:¹²

So far from this being correct, we hold that every disciple has a right to preach, to warn, and exhort his fellow men, if he conceives it his duty to do it; but whether the Churches, or the Convention, representing them, will endorse and bid every such man "God speed," without regard to his qualifications, mental and moral, is quite another matter. . . . Every Christian congregation in North Carolina has, or may have, a voice in their Convention. We do not call them "Consultation Meetings," as you do; but there is nothing clerical in our Convention. It is not a legislative body, but seeks by wise counsel, and sober consultation to advance the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . North Carolina in some respects is behind her sister States, but in others she is in advance of them; and in nothing perhaps, does she so signally excel as in the systematic and Scriptural manner in which her religious meetings are conducted.

It is interesting to observe that this agitation of Walsh and his colleagues for an effective ministry eventually won universal support of Disciples in the State. Augustus Latham, Jr., who had stiffly opposed the idea, himself offered a resolution in the Convention of 1893 and had it adopted. It was as follows: "Resolved, That no one coming among us and claiming to be a minister of the Gospel shall be recognized, aided, countenanced, counseled, or comforted as such by any member of this Convention, except such an one shall have produced good and properly authenticated evidences that he is in good standing, and of good report."

In the Convention of 1876, C. W. Howard offered a resolution which provided for a committee on Ministerial Character composed of five laymen. It was thought their character as laymen

would qualify them for effectiveness in such a difficult function. The first to serve in this capacity were James W. Draughan, Isaac Brown, Simon E. Hodges, Josiah Dixon and Levi Jackson, Jr. From 1876 this service has been through a Standing Committee. This is available any day of the year as required, and upon the call of the Chairman of the Board of Managers of the Convention.

Among Disciples of Christ in America, North Carolina stands altogether unique in this supervision of her ministry by her Convention. In their democracy North Carolina Disciples are unquestionably a true cross-section of their American brotherhood. In their modern State Conventions experienced observers from outside commend warmly the evident harmony and effectiveness of the meetings. Yet on the outside there has been some misunderstanding of the Articles of their Constitution relating to their ministry.¹³ These were adopted in 1893 and are as follows:

ARTICLE XIII. All who contemplate entering the ministry, and becoming members of the North Carolina Christian Missionary Convention, shall be examined by a Committee of five on examination for ordination, appointed by the President of the Convention, and duly ordained by said Convention.

ARTICLE XIV. Any church, minister, or member of any organization, taking part in the deliberations of the Convention, shall be subject to the authority of the Convention; and any congregation or individual member who will not submit to the authority of the Convention shall be considered disorderly.

An editorial in *The Christian Guide*, Louisville, Kentucky, John T. Brown, editor, quoted these Articles in its issue of March 17, 1899, and said they were "nothing more nor less than ecclesiasticism." He continued: "In the spirit of Christ let us condemn all such proceedings, not the motive which prompted them, but the departure from God's word. We have won all our victories along this line, and for us to indorse the proceedings of the North Carolina Convention, would be to give up the ground for which we have so long fought, and upon which, as a people, we stand or fall." He further contended: "No convention or body of men outside of the local congregation has a right to ordain ministers. The congregation may call in help, but the convention cannot ordain a minister. There is no law in the New Testament that gives a convention the right to ordain a minister or to discipline a minister or any other member of the church. The government of the local congregation is the highest church government known in the New Testament."

John J. Harper answered this by pointing out that in the North Carolina practice the local church always must take the initiative in leading the candidate to ordination, and must stand by him all the way through; that the convention is but a democratic advisory body, and, by its delegate character is a kind of sublimated servant of the whole church within its bounds. As

to the scriptural warrant for this, Dr. Walsh had long before pointed it out acceptably and irrefutably. Harper concluded: "These rules were established for good and sufficient reasons, and they have had the effect of saving us many times from gross imposition by tramp preachers from other States. . . . Our organization has been to us a great breakwater and means of protection, and has done much to develop, elevate, and render efficient our ministry; so much so that it will compare favorably with the ministry in other States."

NOTES:

¹Fifteen page Pamphlet in Carolina Collections, University of North Carolina, bound in a volume entitled "Sermons," Card Catalogue C252S48. ²From letter in collection of Mrs. J. C. Eagles, Wilson, N. C. ³Minutes, 1872. ⁴Watch Tower, June 1873, page 270. ⁵Ibid., page 271. ⁶Ibid., July, 1873, pages 283-284. ⁷Ibid., Sept., 1873, pages 347-349. ⁸Ibid., April, 1874, pages 241-243. ⁹Ibid., pages 250, 251. ¹⁰Ibid., May, 1874, pages 300-302. ¹¹Ibid., Jan., 1874, page 127. ¹²Ibid., pages 128, 129. ¹³Otey-Briney Debate, pages 184-190: 195-197: 202, 207, 216, 221, 225.

II. THE MINISTRY—ITS SUPPORT

The Disciples have always needed a ministry whose time and strength should be consecrated wholly to the building of the Kingdom of God. In North Carolina this demand was not appreciably supplied for decades. Almost at the beginning of the Movement in this State one of their strongest personalities spoke boldly and clearly on this issue. Their Convention of 1846 met at Post Oak Church, where Vanceboro now stands. John P. Dunn according to appointment wrote the Circular Letter. It was based upon I Corinthians 9:14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the Gospel." It was one of the best of the Disciples' early papers. He was aware that some would disagree with his stand on the support of the ministry. He rejoiced, however, that he addressed a group who had avowed their reliance upon "divinely appointed means." From that vantage point he urged with special power that his fellow Disciples should practice what they preached. He was also free from any self-interest in this exhortation, since he had the personal resources of a large estate.

He said:¹

The duty of supporting the Gospel ministry is apparent, both from reason and the Scriptures. If it is the duty of the Minister of the Gospel to give himself wholly to the work, it is evident that he cannot derive his support from his own efforts in pecuniary matters. That he must have food and raiment for himself and his family, if he has one, is equally clear. That the preacher of the Gospel has been doomed by his Master to a mere pittance for life, while the education of his children, and the

necessary provision for his family are neglected, no rational man can believe. Who then is bound to support the minister of the Gospel, and enable him to do justice to his family. Reason answers—the government that employs him as its minister—the Church of Christ. . . . Many pious young men, with the requisite gifts and qualifications for preaching and teaching are now confined to some honest avocation, for the support of themselves and families. They are not able to devote themselves to the ministry of the Word, without pecuniary aid. Most of our preaching brethren are past, are on, or near the meridian of life, and cannot be expected, in the common course of human events to continue much longer in the Gospel field.

Beloved Brethren, what shall be done in this matter? Shall the cause which we love so much, languish and pine away among us for want of our pecuniary aid? We trust it shall not. We hope that our hearts and purses shall be freely opened, and our hands will liberally contribute to sustain a faithful Gospel Ministry. We are so much bound by the law of Christ, to pay this debt, as we are by the laws of North Carolina to pay taxes for the support of government. If this be not so the writers of the New Testament have misguided us on this subject.

We found no record among Disciples of North Carolina of any stated amount paid by any church to her respective minister in the first decade. Tradition had it that the first minister paid a regular definite amount was John Dupree of Mill Creek.² His salary was twelve dollars per year. His name first appeared on the Minutes of 1848.

In 1855 Dr. R. Hooker wrote to *The Christian Friend*, edited by Dr. Walsh, that there was “a Crisis with the Reformation.”³ He declared this was because the ministry was not duly sustained. He put it in vivid language: “Honest and pure hearted preachers in all ages have resembled the Camels of Arabia, which, while they carry spices and jewels to others feed on shrubs and thistles.” This stirred James A. Butler of Okolona, Mississippi, a staff contributor of *The Christian Friend*, to write of another side of the problem. He said:⁴

Churches are seldom on the gospel line as regards the support of their ministers. Sometimes the salaries are beyond the learning and abilities of the preacher, and in this harm is done. A preacher, with a large stipend, is tempted to adopt a style proportionate, and in consequence becomes inaccessible and unprofitable to the poor of his flock, who are the numerous and better part of it. . . . There is a place somewhere between the palace and the alms-house where the ministers of the gospel ought to reside.

If our zeal depends for its pulsations upon the jewels and bracelets of a brother or sister, or our own, then, sir, our crown will dim! “Ichabod” will be written. We had better go to heaven in rags, than to hell in embroidery. . . . We must establish high schools for the training of our youth, under the tutelage of competent and God-fearing men. Then we can send men into the vineyard who can so speak as to make attention hang upon their sentences and conviction close their periods; men who can hold their audience in willing captivity by facts and arguments; men who will not “bow the supple knee that thrift may follow flawing.”

As the War Between the States approached, living expenses increased. Writing in October, 1855, Dr. Walsh then located at Kinston, confessed and exhorted as follows:

Provisions have been so high during the current year, our income for preaching will hardly meet our expenses. At the present rate for living, the salaries of preachers should be doubled; otherwise they must fall behind-hand, or be forced from the field to some other more profitable employment. What is the reason that professed Disciples of Christ in North Carolina are behind all other denominations in this respect? There are some liberal brethren; but where is the brother who gives in proportion to his means? Where is the brother who gives to the Lord as much as he does to the State? I know some wealthy brethren, who, if they give \$10 or \$15, think that they have done wonders. They should blush.

In December, 1857, Dr. Wm. H. Hughart, who had located at Wilson, wrote a "Discourse," on "Support of the Gospel Ministry," which ran in some issues of *The Disciples' Advocate*, the state paper edited by Dr. Walsh. In an introductory word to this the editor said:⁵ "We suppose the covetous will not relish it very well, but those who love God more than gold will, we trust, appreciate their obligations in the matter of sustaining the Gospel. We know by experience that Churches are often slow to promise, slower to pay, and slowest of all to pay all they pledge." The next summer Dr. Hughart submitted an article on "The Divine Rule for raising funds to support the Gospel Ministry." This came in response to a request from a generous subscriber. The editor commented on it, out of his experience, as follows:

It is difficult for rich men to realize the wants of those who are poor, and as a majority of the preachers belong to this class, they very often fail to have the sympathies of their rich brethren. They do not know what it is to want for anything, and they can scarcely realize how anyone else can. They never voluntarily offer anything for his support, but wait to be solicited to give something; and then, after it is subscribed, they wait to be called on for it; and hence it very often remains unpaid till the end of the year, and, in the meantime, the preacher has been paying interest on what he owes!

In 1859, a querist with the signature, "A Preacher," asked Dr. Walsh, through his *Christian Baptist*, the following question:⁸ "Is it right for those preachers who are wealthy, or able to live on their own means independently, to accept the care of the churches, or preach generally without any remuneration, when the churches are able to pay?"

The editorial reply was an emphatic "No!" Dr. Walsh said:

It is not right for any preacher to accept the care of a church, without any remuneration, when such church is able to pay. If such preacher is wealthy or can live independently on his own means, and does not need what the church is able and willing to pay him, he should nevertheless receive it, and appropriate it to benevolent objects. Not to receive it encourages the church to do nothing, and so long as they can secure the services of a preacher for nothing they withhold from the cause that aid which is due from every Christian Church. In a word, this plan cultivates the covetousness of the brethren, and is a real injury to all the parties concerned. . . . In all love and kindness we are compelled to say that this very plan has seriously injured the cause with us; for some of our good and able brethren have preached so long for nothing, that the churches have well-nigh come to the conclusion that all preachers should do so!

During the War Between the States the service of the ministry was increasingly sporadic. This was due to the economic as well as the military situation. In a news letter to the *Millennial Harbinger* shortly after the close of the war, John J. Harper spoke of the "extreme destitution" of his people. W. K. Pendleton, as editor of the *Harbinger*, led a benevolent movement called "Contributions for the South." For North Carolina Dr. J. T. Walsh, then living at New Bern, served by Pendleton's appointment as dispensing agent for his State for this fund.

In the summer of 1870, Joseph H. Foy became full-time pastor at Kinston. He was the first Disciple in the State to serve in such a capacity. His salary was eight hundred dollars per year. He did not continue this long as he was soon engaged in school work to which he gave so much of his life. He was a gifted man. He was called to the Central Christian Church, St. Louis, Missouri, where he located in March, 1878. Dr. Walsh expressed regret at Foy's leaving, and said:⁹ "The Disciples in North Carolina have not in the past, nor are they now doing their duty. The preachers are poorly paid, and their minds are necessarily burdened with the cares of this life; and so long as this is the case the probability is that some, if not the majority, of our best preachers will leave the State. We have some as good preachers as they have anywhere, but not one among them all is sustained in the work."

The State Evangelist of 1873 resigned after a few months' service for lack of support. A contributor to *The Watch Tower* said of this:¹⁰

Wherever he labored during the short time, he gave universal satisfaction; and it was conceded if he continued, the simplicity of the Gospel would have been wafted triumphantly. But not wishing to be "worse than an infidel" he has discontinued his labors and gone home to enjoy the association of those who are dear to him. . . . We number in this state over 4,000 Disciples and 46 preachers; not one of them giving himself "wholly" to the work. Everyone that wars "entangles himself with the affairs of this life." Brethren let us be aroused to a stronger degree of action; let us manifest our faith by our works. Let us retain the money we spend for circuses and ardent spirits and place it in the Lord's treasury, and there will be no occasion for our evangelist resigning.

Confronted with the fact that the Disciples' support of the Evangelist had failed, Dr. Walsh reacted with a caustic comparison. He said:¹¹

Is not the gospel of more value than rabbits, foxes, and deer? Are not the preachers of more worth than the dogs? And yet the dogs cost more than all the preachers put together! Poor preachers! Worthless dogs! God will judge your relative value. But in this world the dogs stand higher, are better cared for, and consume more than the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ! From this standpoint, it were better to be a dog than a preacher! What a pity the preachers cannot be dogs all the week, and turn preachers on the Lord's Day. Then they would all be sustained.

A minister in 1874, facing the current financial crisis, in speaking of himself, confessed:¹² "God is our witness and so are all the Disciples that our whole public life has been one of self-abnegation. We have ignored our pecuniary interest and sought to live by doing good to others. The labors of the mind are as onerous as those of the body, and indeed more so; but too many think they amount to nothing, and hence withhold all compensation."

Foy was a gifted speaker and teacher but also brilliant as a writer. The following was a characteristic passage from one of his appeals in the *Watch Tower*:

I venture the assertion, that but for the self-sacrificing spirit of our preachers, many of whom I know and am proud to call my friends, the cause today in North Carolina, piling and sickly though it be, would be in a far worse condition. I am in a condition to speak boldly, for I preach without stipulated compensation, and would preach whether I ever received another dollar for my services, so long as I feel the stirrings of an impulse to communicate to others that blessedness which I have myself shared. Latham is teaching, I hear; the amiable Harper is merchandizing; Wilson (tell it not in Gath) is blasting rock! A man of power, capable of measuring strength with giants, but oppressed by a large and dependent family, is engaged in a toilsome calling, honorable indeed, but far from lucrative and surely repugnant to one of intellectual tastes and culture; one who continually hears the inquiry ringing in his ears: "What shall I do with this Jesus?" . . . Our venerable brother, Walsh, after a quarter of a century's toil, never adequately requited—in his old age, surrounded by a lovely group—but alas! a dependent group—knows what it is to eat the bread of carefulness, and too often, I fear, to moisten it with his tears. Bro. Moyer was seriously injured in business, to my certain knowledge, by his burning zeal—until he was forced to abandon measurably his efforts by the pressing necessities of his family. . . .

Paul's injunction to Timothy was to give himself wholly to the work—and we never shall secure the highest order of the ministry until "they who preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel." Men whose time is divided and whose influence is crippled by worldly complications, can never throw themselves into the current with that resistless vigor which should characterize the bearers of the cross. The church should say, "Go ye, and your families shall be taken care of. You, yourself, after age and decrepitude have fastened upon you, shall not be turned out to pick the scant grass of the world's cold common, like a disabled and worn-out stage-horse, but you shall then be tenderly cared for, until you go up to receive your reward from the Master's hand."

This distress among the preachers seems to have been universal at this period. Dr. Walsh had a letter from a friend in the ministry in Missouri, who said:¹⁴ "This is the hardest time on fearless preachers of the word that I have ever known. Satan's strongest dependence to crush the Primitive Faith is to starve the Defenders of Truth and Righteousness—a result that is now being reached." Walsh agreed and added: "Covetousness is one of the great sins of this time; and if the devil can starve out the preachers, and so silence them, his work is done."

As a matter of course the ministry in the other communions suffered as did the Disciples. In the spring of 1883, the following editorial appeared in *The News and Observer*:¹⁵

"A writer in the *Church Messenger* calls attention to the fact that there are quite a number of Episcopal ministers in the State of North Carolina whose average pay appears to be \$265, but it is understood that the average pay of the ministers of that denomination in the State is less than the pay of either the Presbyterians or the Methodists. How can a man who has to provide for a family on \$265, be satisfied that he is performing his duty to his family?"

This was copied in *The Watch Tower*. It suggested to the editor, J. L. Winfield, to state: "The salary of Disciple ministers in the State ranges from \$100 to \$600 and they are giving their time and talent nearly exclusively to the work. We publish the above item to let our Evangelists know that while they are receiving a lean support, they have sympathizing friends in other communions who are sharing the hardships of life."

A conscience was slowly developed among North Carolina Disciples for taking care of needy aged ministers and their dependents. Foreshadowing their Brotherhood-wide Pension Fund, which began to function in a large way in 1931, in the Wilson Convention of 1902, the following measure was adopted:

Resolved 1st. That the President appoint a committee of five brothers, who shall be called a committee on the aged and needy preachers of the gospel.

2. That the committee shall organize by electing a Chairman and Secretary, and shall meet one or more times during the year, if deemed necessary by the Chairman.

3. The duties of said committee shall be to ascertain and find out the condition and necessities of the aged preachers.

4. That each and every congregation of Disciples of Christ are requested to take one or more collections for said purpose, and send the amount to the Financial Secretary, who shall forward 25 per cent of said collection to the "National Board of Ministerial Relief," and the balance to be paid out as recommended by the committee.

5. That the pastors of the various churches be requested to preach one or more sermons urging the collection.

6. That the said committee shall report these proceedings to the next Convention.

Appointed to serve on this Committee were: P. S. Swain, S. W. Sumrell, Fernando Ward, and N. D. Myers. They reported in the 1903 Convention that during the year only one offering had been received, that of \$3.25 from Albemarle Church. As an independent State enterprise it had been given a feeble start indeed. Later it was absorbed by the National Ministerial Relief of the Disciples and later adequately enlarged by a comprehensive Pension System.

The Disciples moved slowly but surely to a more intensive ministry. The President of the Belhaven Convention of 1907 said with candor:¹⁶

The fact that we have more than 150 vacant pulpits in this State each Lord's Day in the year, and that other fact, that we only have eight churches in the State able to employ a pastor full time when they are able to secure one at all, should certainly cause the brotherhood of the State to sit up and take notice. These eight churches are Washington, Wilson, Kinston, Asheville, Winston-Salem, Belhaven, Greenville, and Wilmington. Of these, Washington is at present without a pastor. Wilmington's pastor is supported entirely by the State Board and the Pamlico Union, and Asheville can only keep a man when aided by the State. This is certainly a deplorable condition. It is so pathetic indeed, that it should cause everyone who truly loves the cause to rally to its aid, and seek to swing every dollar possible into line.

With the World War I there was radical increase in the cost of living. So much so that in the Wilson Convention in 1917, it was resolved that "the churches wherever possible should increase the salaries of their ministers, and that the State Secretary should advise official boards of Churches that this hearty and deliberate suggestion is commended to their serious attention." For a few years there was a steady large increase, and in later years a consistent small increase. Within ten years the average annual salary of the entire ministry within the State had been increased one hundred and twenty per cent. This large gain was for North Carolina Disciples a substantial improvement in this aspect of their church life—a concrete sign of a better day.

NOTES:

¹Circular letter, Minutes, 1846. ²H. Williams, most aged member of Mill Creek Church, in personal interview with the author. ³Christian Friend and Bible Unionist, April, 1855, page 331. ⁴Ibid., pages 331, 332. ⁵Disciples' Advocate, Dec., 1857, page 84. ⁶Ibid., Aug., 1858, page 342. ⁸Christian Baptist (Walsh) March, 1859, page 87. ⁹Watch Tower, April 1878, page 86. ¹⁰Ibid., June, 1873, pages 263, 264. ¹¹Ibid., Feb., 1874, page 172. ¹²Ibid., page 180. ¹⁴Ibid., June, 1878, page 136. ¹⁵Ibid., May 15, 1883, editorial page. ¹⁶Minutes, 1907.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The foregoing historical statement giving the factual foundation of the long-established polity in effect among North Carolina Disciples of Christ, has been reprinted, as slightly revised, to adapt it to present service, as an agreed project of the executive session of the Board of Managers, North Carolina Christian Missionary Convention, meeting at Kinston, N. C., June 6, 1946. Later on the same day, it was unanimously approved in advisory session with a significant cross-section of ministers and other leaders, who there counseled deliberately on this constructive proposal for a dynamic education of responsible leaders in local

churches, looking to effectual application of these cherished concepts for an availing ministry. This background study so illuminates the present situation, that we fervently hope that it will be read and reread by every elder, deacon, deaconess, and other responsible leader in North Carolina Churches of Christ. The need for this is vital.

Following are the two articles of the Constitution now in effect bringing into focus the thought of generations, past and present, as applied to the stated issue:

ARTICLE XIII. All who contemplate entering the ministry, and becoming members of the N. C. C. M. Convention, shall be examined by a committee of three on examination for ordination, appointed by the President of the Convention, and duly ordained by said Convention. But the Board of Managers may examine and ordain such applicants or appoint a committee to do so when the Convention is not in session.

ARTICLE XIV. Any church, minister, or member of any organization taking part in the deliberations of the Convention, shall be subject to the authority of the Convention, and any congregation or individual member who will not submit to the authority of the Convention shall be considered disorderly.

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