

THE
RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
OF
THE COLORED POPULATION.

A SERMON,
PREACHED BY THE
REV. JOHN B. ADGER,
IN THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
CHARLESTON, S. C.
MAY 9TH, 1847.

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REV. JOHN B ADGER :

DEAR SIR—The undersigned Committee, on the part of the Congregation of the Second Presbyterian Church, would respectfully solicit a copy of your Discourse, delivered Sabbath, May 9th, believing that its circulation and perusal will be productive of great good to the cause in which you are so zealously engaged.

Yours, respectfully,

WM YEADON,
S. S. CLARKE,
E. W. BANCROFT,
JOHN ANDERSON,
JOHN DEWEES,
T. R. VARDELL, } *Committee.*

CHARLESTON, S. C., MAY 12, 1847.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF THE COLORED POPULATION.

“And the poor have the gospel preached to them.”—MATTHEW XI. 15. “The poor shall never cease out of the land.”—DEUT. XV. 11.—“The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, he bringeth low and raiseth up.”—I SAM. II. 7. “The rich and the poor meet together. The Lord regardeth not the rich more than the poor. They are all the work of his hand.”—PROV. XXII. 2. and JOB XXXIV. 19. “The poor ye have always with you.”—MATT. XXVI. 11. “Hearken, my beloved brethren! Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom? but ye have despised the poor.”—JAMES II. 5.

THESE and other similar passages of God’s word affecting-ly teach us that it is a part of the divine arrangement to have ranks and orders in human society, and that God expects the higher and more favored sons of Adam to care for their poor brethren. These ranks and orders, and their mutual relations and obligations, have been from the beginning, and shall continue to the end.

When, however, God was pleased to be manifested in human flesh, for human redemption, no other form did he choose for Himself to wear but the form of a *servant*. The incarnate Word is emphatically a friend and associate of the poor—nay, of publicans and sinners. He calls the penitent poor his brethren; nay, he says, that at the last day He will consider every thing done to the least of them as done to Himself. Yes! and so great is the regard He has for His poor, that He institutes one particular class of officers in his church—the Deacons—on purpose to see after their temporal wants. As for their spiritual necessities, He chose them as the special subject of His own personal attention when on earth; nay, He puts down the preaching of the gospel, by Himself, to the poor, as the most distinct and peculiar mark of His divine mission. “Art thou he that should come, (said John’s messengers,) or do we look for another?” “Go (said Jesus) and shew John again

those things which ye do see and hear. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and (to cap the marvellous climax) *the poor have the gospel preached to them.* And blessed is he who shall not be offended in me." As if He had said, "Blessed is he who shall recognize, in all these tokens, the proofs of my divine authority. Blessed is he who can, by a spiritual discernment, give to each its absolute, and to each its comparative, weight and importance. Blessed is he who has an eye to see that the chief glory of the gospel is not those miracles wherewith it was introduced, but its testimony to God's free, sovereign, all-humbling, all-equalizing love for the poorest; its testimony to Christ's compassion and friendship for the poorest; its testimony to the regard had, in the plan of salvation, for the very poorest; its testimony to the immortality of the poorest; its testimony to the priceless value of the souls of the poorest, for whom Christ shed his blood, and to whom, emphatically, Christ preached; its testimony to the grand duty of the church and the ministry, to see that *the poor have the gospel preached unto them.*"

The grandest and most distinctive peculiarity of the gospel dispensation is, therefore, its adaptedness to the state of the most miserable, and the attention it pays to them in particular. Not those that are whole, but the sick; not the righteous, but sinners; not many wise, or mighty, or noble, but the foolish, the weak, the base, the despised, hath God chosen, that no flesh should glory in his presence. The gospel is for those who have nothing and deserve nothing. It is for *the poor* in every sense of the term. But, alas! those who need do not always desire. "The blessings dispensed by the gospel possess no charm for men morally and spiritually dead."* They will not come to the gospel; it, therefore, goes to them. To the poor the *gospel is preached.* As the great peculiarity of the gospel is its *adaptedness* to the poor, so the great duty of its friends and receivers is *to carry it to the poor.* Where the greatest destitution of the gospel is, thither its lovers most earnestly seek to send it. The Christian delights in hearing the blessed sound himself, but he is no Christian if he will not sacrifice its music for his own ear to that mercy which it may and can convey to the ear of the poor and guilty and wretched around him. No Christian man, therefore, and no Christian church, acts up to the spirit of the Christian dispensation, if he or they will not sacrifice time, toil, ease, money, every

* Dr. Chalmers.

worldly good—nay, even their own religious privileges and enjoyments—in order to extend the word of life to perishing souls; in order that *the poor may have the gospel preached to them.*

My Christian Brethren! I appear before you this morning as one of yourselves, asking your fraternal counsel and assistance. More than twelve years ago you sent me forth as a missionary to the Armenians. I thank God for much happiness and for some success in that interesting field. But, brethren, my mind had previously been strongly drawn to another missionary field, lying nearer at home, and into that field nothing then prevented me from entering but the want of an "open door." Providence has brought me back, and the claims of this field have pressed again—nay, they have, during the whole twelve years of my absence, been pressing strongly upon my mind.

Various considerations have presented themselves in favor of a transfer of my relations from that foreign to this domestic missionary work. One is, that the impaired condition of my eyesight unfits me for further labors, as a translator, in that parched climate, and under that brilliant sky. Another is, that when I went forth it was with the sympathy and support of the Presbyterian church, and of the Southern churches in particular; but, this sympathy and support, naturally of great value to me, has long been withdrawn, and I have felt myself cut off and isolated. Strong and agitating influences, meanwhile, have been at work, drawing me centrewards, and leading me to feel that it is time for me to cast in my lot with my own people.

But, the strongest consideration has been the natural obligation which I feel, and have always felt, to do something for these destitute people, coupled with the fact that I consider the door of access to be now set open before me. It is with reference to this point, my Christian brethren, I come to ask, this day, your counsel. Has the time come when I may succeed in the attempt to gather these wanderers into a Christian fold? If, with the aid of my own private friends, I am able and willing to give my personal services without charge, will this community provide a suitable building for this purpose? And, in particular, will you, as a church—as the church of my childhood, the church in which I was baptized, the church in which I was educated, in which I was ordained—will you give me a practical, generous and liberal testimony that you do believe the enterprise important, and that you do consider me called to undertake it?

“THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.”

I shall now call your attention, *First*, to the enquiry, *Who are among us “the poor”?* Then, *Secondly*, I shall endeavor to shew you that *Our poor have not the gospel preached to them.* And, *Thirdly*, I shall produce some *Reasons why we should awake and rouse ourselves to the duty of seeing that the gospel be preached to our poor.*

I. WHO ARE OUR POOR?

The poor of this city are easily distinguishable. They are a class separated from ourselves by their color, their position in society, their relation to our families, their national origin, and their moral, intellectual and physical condition. Nowhere are the poor more distinctly marked out than our poor; and, yet, strange to say, nowhere are the poor so closely and intimately connected with the higher classes as are our poor with us. *They belong to us. We, also, belong to them.* They are divided out among us and mingled up with us, and we with them, in a thousand ways. They live with us—eating from the same store-houses, drinking from the same fountains, dwelling in the same enclosures, forming parts of the same families. Our mothers confide us, when infants, to their arms, and sometimes to the very milk of their breasts. Their children are, to some extent, unavoidably, the playmates of our childhood—grow up with us, under the same roof—sometimes pass through all the changes of life with us, and, then, either they stand weeping by our bed-side, or else we drop a tributary tear by their’s, when death comes to close the long connection and to separate the good master and his good servant.

Such, my friends, are those whom we consider the poor of this city. There they are—hehold them! See them all around you, in all these streets, in all these dwellings—a race distinct from us, yet closely united to us; brought, in God’s mysterious Providence, from a foreign land, and placed under our care and made members of our households. They fill the humblest places of our state of society; they serve us; they give us their strength; yet, they are not more truly ours than we are truly theirs. They are *our poor*—our poor brethren; children of our God and Father; dear to our Saviour; to the like of whom He preached; for the like of whom He died; and to the least of whom every act of Christian compassion and kindness, which we shew, He will consider as shewn also to Himself.

II. OUR POOR HAVE NOT THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

The colored population of this city and its suburbs are not much less than 20,000 in number. Let us see what provision is made for their spiritual necessities. The galleries of all the evangelical churches in this city, put together, could not, by any possibility, be made to receive more than one-half their number. But, whether those places, closely packed, would or would not contain more than ten thousand people, we may safely say that not more than 6000 of this people do actually find their way into those galleries. How large a proportion of these 6000 do you suppose are qualified to comprehend and to profit by the sermons preached to the white people? Is it one-half—is it even one-third their number? How small a fraction, then, of the whole mass, can be said to have the gospel preached unto them! Two thousand of them are thus favored! Eighteen thousand of them are thus neglected!

I know that some in this community would say that our poor servants are provided for in this respect. Yes! they are *provided for*, as a hireling shepherd might be said to provide food for his master's sheep, who should retire into a small enclosure with their provender, well knowing that not one half of them could crowd in after him. Yes! they are *provided for* as that hireling might be said to have provided food for that hungry moiety of his master's flock, who, after he had been pursued by them into that narrow stable, should then hold up their food so high as to be quite beyond their reach!

Do you ask whether I mean to reproach the pastors of our white churches for not preaching in a more simple style? I answer that my object is neither to approve nor to condemn the conduct of ministers in this city. It is not them, *as individuals*, I compare to the unfaithful hireling shepherd. It is the ministry and the church, *in general*, who have neglected to see that the gospel is preached to our poor. The conduct of the individual ministers may be excusable, or it may be inexcusable. They might be able to preach, in a suitable manner, at the same time, to both classes of their hearers, or they might not be able so to preach. I am not concerned, at present, to decide that question. The individual minister is but the creature of the present prevailing system. I am dealing with *facts as they are*. I say, the present plan of preaching the gospel to our poor is a failure. These sheep of our Master are not supplied with spiritual food. The truth, as now dispensed, does not reach them, and they cannot reach it. Nor, *on the present plan*, can we ever hope to do our duty to them.

We never can have galleries enough for them; and we never could gather them all into galleries, if we had them; and, unless a great change, in various particulars, shall take place in the feelings of both our white preachers and white congregations, we never can expect the ordinary and settled ministry of this city to satisfy and to supply both classes of their hearers. We must, therefore, collect these people, so far as they are yet unprovided for, into churches built for themselves; and we must devote certain men exclusively to their thorough religious training and discipline.

I would have you, Christian brethren, to cast your eye over this gallery, when your pastor is eloquently discoursing in your ears the sweet music of the gospel. I would have you cast your eyes, if possible, over this gallery, and see whether it is music to the comprehension, the taste, the satisfaction, the edification, the profit, of his less educated hearers.

But, no! this is saying far too little! I would not have you look to *this gallery*, where we must expect to find some intelligence as well as piety; but I would have you cast your eye over the mass of our colored population, in their ignorance and their destitution. I would have you consider whether you can ever hope to have the gospel preached to those poor wanderers by gathering them into churches like this, or under a ministry like that which you enjoy. I would have you converse with all your servants—both those who attend here and those who go elsewhere—respecting the sermons heard by them, to see how well they understand. Yes! I would have you examine all your servants, those humble members of your family circle, and see what they can intelligently tell you of the doctrines of the gospel, or of the facts of its history. And here do not point me to those few remarkable cases which certainly do exist, wherein, notwithstanding every disadvantage of circumstances, even their intellect has worked itself out into the light of truth, as though a block of marble should chisel itself into a statue; but, ponder seriously and solemnly the moral and religious condition of the great mass of this population. Reflect, I beseech you, how few of them come within actual reach of the truth, and yet how many temptations are clustering thick around their path in this crowded city. Take your evening walk over the suburbs, and see what dens of iniquity those are at almost every corner of the streets. A minister of the gospel, now in this city, who makes it his constant practice to visit those shop-keepers, told me, that, when he calls on some of them.

on the week days, to speak with them of their souls, they have not time to talk with him, because they have so many customers to wait on, but that when he goes to see them on the *Lord's Day*, for the same purpose, the same difficulty still meets him. So many customers to wait on both on Sundays and on all the other days of the week, that the shop-keeper himself has no time to attend to his own religious interests! Do you know who those customers are? *Your poor!* Do you know what they are buying? The waters of *Fire* and the distillation of *Death!* Do you know how they obtain the means of procuring this indulgence? *You can better answer than I, and you are ignorant, indeed, if unable to answer.* My friends, our poor are learning intemperance, and they are learning dishonesty. They are being corrupted and destroyed, both soul and body. One of our wealthiest and most intelligent planters lately told me that he loses every year \$1000 or \$1500 in the destruction of his servants by intemperance. The master is thus robbed of his servant, while the poor servant, alas! is equally robbed of his immortal soul! Yes, my brethren, this is the process that is going on in this community, under our very eyes, and yet some vainly imagine that our poor are supplied with the preaching of the gospel, and that no new and special efforts are needed for their good!

Let me tell you what is necessary, in order that we may be able to say that to our poor the gospel is preached. Give them suitable church room and a suitable ministry devoted entirely to their good. Let them be induced, by such allurements as these, to crowd the place of worship; yet, be careful how they are suffered to crowd into the spiritual church. Invite them all to hear the gospel, but receive them only after careful and thorough examination into the membership. Let those who are admitted be built up in the faith, not only by suitable preaching, but by the laborious and persevering catechetical teaching of them, in private. Indoctri- nate thoroughly, their class leaders, that they may communicate sound doctrine to the others. Pay great attention to the youth; and, with reference to the whole congregation, aim not at *exciting* them, but at *instructing* them. Thoroughly imbue their minds with the principles and precepts of the Bible, and store them with the facts and narratives of its history. At the same time, watch over them, as far as possible, both directly and by means of their leaders, as a faithful shepherd watches over his sheep. Let the discipline of the church

be firmly and faithfully administered upon them. This is what we need. Such a course as this, quietly and perseveringly pursued for ten years, would shew the most delightful results. Different, alas! very different, is the present state and character of our efforts to do them good. Our poor have not the gospel preached to them.

And now I proceed to bring forward :

III. SOME CONSIDERATIONS WHICH SHOULD ROUSE US TO THIS MUCH NEGLECTED DUTY.

And, FIRST,

God has committed the gospel to us, as Christians, for the very purpose of our seeing that it is preached to the poor. Our business in this world, our very object in living, and God's purpose in keeping us alive, is that we may promote this end. If it were not for this purpose of God's, my brethren, you would not be alive this day. If it were not to aid in this and other similar works of benevolence, the property you now hold would have been placed in other hands. By being faithful to this duty, and not otherwise, our own Christian graces will flourish. Christ was a friend of sinners, the associate of publicans, the benefactor of the poor. If we do not seek the benefit of our poor, how can we be like Christ? An interest, a deep and lively interest, in the spiritual well-being of this population, would be of incalculable spiritual advantage to ourselves. The missionary spirit is an element of the utmost life and potency in the moral constitution of any church. But a spirit of concern for the salvation of these our poor would be the missionary spirit. What Dr. Chalmers says to his friends in Edinburgh, I may say, with far greater propriety and emphasis, to you: "Do not think that it is necessary that you should travel thousands of miles, or that you have immense oceans to traverse, before you can engage in a missionary work. There are wretched creatures in many parts of this town who are at as great a moral distance from the gospel, and from all its lessons, as if they had been born and lived all their days in the wilds of Tartary."

SECONDLY,

The grand distinction of the gospel is, that it is designed especially for the poor. This is its leading object and end. Why seek to confine it to the rich, the intelligent, the great, the virtuous, when it is given to be preached especially to the poor and wretched and sinful? "I don't want to superficialize,

(says Dr. Chalmers,) I want to go to the very bottom of the pool and fish up the very lowest. Go (he says) to the very humblest in society, and let me see the Christian church performing its functions and letting down its services to the very meanest and poorest."

Again, he says: "I am sure that the ruder and the rawer the material out of which the finished goods are worked, the greater is the triumph of the manufacturing art." Oh, my Christian brethren, would not the salvation of our poor be a glorious trophy of our gospel? As ransomed souls—as justified and perfected spirits in Heaven—would they not be bright stars in our crown of rejoicing, and also in our blessed Saviour's diadem of glory—stars all the brighter for the thick gloom of that night in which they were wandering before?

THIRDLY,

Is it not a most attractive and inviting circumstance that these poor are, in themselves, of such inestimable value as immortal beings? To preach the gospel successfully to our poor, is to save so many souls from death. "Honor all men," says the Apostle. Why honor all? Because God made all—because all have one common origin, nature and destiny—because all have capabilities for endless and unmeasurable improvement—because for the redemption of all God made His Son a sacrifice—and because the common nature of all God's Son united with His own, and now every one of them, even the poorest, has an Elder Brother seated on Heaven's throne. For these reasons we must not neglect to have the gospel preached to our poor.

FOURTHLY,

The faithful preaching of the gospel to these poor will be followed by great advantages to our own children. These people are in our very families, and their ignorance and their irreligion must inevitably affect the morals of our own offspring.

Great advantages will also follow *to ourselves*. This, my brethren, is no new experiment which we propose to try. It has already been fairly tried, in various parts of this and our neighboring States; and the conviction has been forced, more and more, upon all observing minds, that the more thoroughly these people are imbued with the principles of divine truth the better they become, in every respect. These rough diamonds, worn, as they must necessarily be, on the bosom of our domestic life, the more perfectly they are freed from their natural incrustations of ignorance and corruption,

will all the more enrich and adorn. Inertness, incapacity, untractableness, untrustiness, wastefulness, supineness,—these are very great evils, affecting not only the particular individuals who exhibit these moral incrustations, but ourselves, with whom these individuals are so closely connected. Now, it is the gospel, and the gospel only, which will entirely remove from this people all these remains of their former barbarous and uncivilized condition, advancing to the very highest perfection those to whom, as operatives, we must necessarily look, in all our domestic and civil economy.

Great advantages will follow, also, *to the community at large*. Dr. Chalmers says, of the system of schooling and preaching in Scotland, that it has “conferred the highest benefits on the one or two uppermost strata of society, but, overlooking and neglecting the lower, has left a smouldering fire among the very foundations of the commonwealth.” In this city, too, as in every other Christian country, there are masses of practical Heathenism. “In our large cities, (says a Scotch periodical,) there is a dreadful collection of ignorance, of ungodliness, of gross sin, and, as a consequence, of heart-rending misery. The State has enacted laws, and appointed judges, and organized its police force, and built jails, and erected gibbets, and rid society of many a ship-load of convicted felons, and still the masses of godlessness, and crime, and wretchedness, have remained undiminished; nay, have gone on fearfully accumulating.”

Now, so far as this description applies to our community, it may be safely said that the gospel is our remedy for all these evils. Moral restraints are a mightier means of governing mankind than mere force. Bring the influence of religion to bear upon the masses, and you relieve the body politic of a dead weight and disembarass the government of that which clogs and oppresses its whole machinery.

Great advantages *to the church* will also accrue from the diligent preaching of the gospel to our poor. “The assiduities of Christian principle,” in this work, will bring their own blessing with them. Here is a wide field for church extension in the South. Here is a missionary field which is competent to rouse the enthusiasm of many a pious youth, who does not feel pressed into the ordinary service of the ministry, because the call to that work is not loud enough. Here is **THE WORK**, my brethren, which will raise up a **SOUTHERN MINISTRY**. This business of preaching the gospel to our poor is what will fill your recently endowed seminary with stu-

dents. Providence has been preparing our way. Brighter days will surely dawn on you, if you will but see that the gospel is preached to your poor.

FIFTHLY and FINALLY,

The great reason for rousing ourselves to this work is, that this is *our bounden duty*. To our poor the gospel ought to be preached. Christ's command has been given. We must answer to God if we neglect it. There is no possible excuse. All things are ready, if your hearts are ready. You have a duty to do as a church. Your Presbytery and your Session urge it on you. Good and wise men in this city unanimously approve. For the performance of this work, on your behalf, I offer you my services, if thought equal to their price. That price is nothing more than a place in which to operate, and a very few helpers in the work. This work is for the benefit of your poor. Yes, they are yours—they are ours. They are not like the poor in Ireland, having claims on all the world; the claim of these is on us, for we claim them as ours. They claim us, therefore, as theirs. And God knows the justice of the claim: and if we despise it God will judge us. The blood of these souls will be on us, if we neglect it any longer. We put the invincible might of Christianity against us and our institutions, if we refuse. God's curse will come not causeless. Blight on our country, blight on our church, and blight on our own souls and those of our children, will be the inevitable and direful consequence.

My Brethren, I urge on you to meet the pressing demands of this subject, for the sake of a whole continent lying in Pagan darkness and wretchedness. Ethiopia stretches forth her hands unto God and unto you. Give to her children here the gospel, and let some of them arise to carry it over to her!

I urge you to meet the subject, for the sake of the ignorant and perishing at your own door. Providence gives you a foreign missionary work in your own families. Can you turn your back on a subject which appeals to you on behalf of your own servants? Figure to your minds your dying servant, in humble but affecting tones, accusing you of having neglected to have the gospel properly preached to him! Figure to your mind the meeting you will have with them all, before the bar of their Master and of yours!

Do what I urge on you, because the country is waking up and looks to Charleston to take the lead.

Do it because this city is arousing to so many other public improvements.

Do it for the glory of it, and with an eye to the recompense of the reward. It is for *Christ*; for the least, indeed, of His brethren—but it will be noticed at the last day. The money will not be lost to you, but transmuted into the gold of Heaven.

Do it because it will be worthy of the Christian dispensation—a carrying out into its glorious completion of that which Christ died to begin.

Do it because it will be a fruit of faith and love acceptable to God—a thank-offering for the great mercies of your last revival.

You are hard pressed, at present. Yes! but think of the Free Church, how she did most when hardest pressed. Who shall put limits to the power of Christian benevolence in one single church?

You are hard pressed! Yes—but think of the Church of Macedonia, how, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality, and so, to their power, yea, the Apostle bears record, and *beyond their power* they were willing—nay, even pressing, with their gifts.

Ask Flinn and Henry and Ashmead to say what ye shall do! Take counsel of your buried children—your buried parents.

Ask the Master how he would have you meet this call, and may He give you grace to give, and may He accept and reward your gifts!

APPENDIX.

I.—*Extract from the Charleston Courier, of May 13th.*

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF THE COLORED PEOPLE.

A LARGE and respectable meeting was held at the Second Presbyterian Church, on Sabbath morning, May 9th, after a discourse by Rev. J. B. Adger and an address by Rev. C. C. Jones, D. D. on the best mode of securing, in an efficient and proper manner, the religious instruction of the colored people. After the reading of the resolutions adopted by the Session of the Church,

On motion of W. C. Dukes, Esq., the Hon. R. B. Gilchrist took the Chair, and introduced the subject with some most appropriate remarks, expressive of the importance and interest of the occasion. Mr. William Miller was requested to act as Secretary.

The following resolutions were then introduced in a very full and able speech by Hon. F. H. Elmore, and seconded, with some additional remarks, by Alexander Black, Esq.:

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this meeting, the proper religious instruction of the colored population is a duty pressed upon us by considerations of sound policy, as well as Christian obligation.

Resolved, That we concur entirely in the opinions expressed by the Session of this Church and by the Presbytery of Charleston, that, in order that such instruction should be given efficiently, and, at the same time, with proper safe-guards, it must be afforded by thoroughly educated ministers, of sound principles, who are devoted to the welfare of that people, and who understand our institutions.

Resolved, That the offer of the Rev. John B. Adger, to devote himself gratuitously to this work of piety and usefulness, embodying, as he does, in himself, all the qualifications desirable for this delicate and responsible office, should be accepted, and the funds be immediately subscribed for the erection of a Church for a colored congregation under his ministry.

Resolved, That a subscription for this object be now opened to raise the funds necessary, to be received by the committee appointed by the Session, and expended under their management.

The meeting then having given an opportunity to all present of subscribing, the meeting was adjourned.

R. B. GILCHRIST, *Chairman.*

WILLIAM MILLER, *Secretary.*

II.—*Extract from the published Minutes of the Presbytery of Charleston, at their late meeting at Barnwell Court House, April, 1847.*

The Special Committee, (Rev. Drs. Thornwell and Howe,) to whom was referred the propriety of establishing a Church for the colored popu-

lation in the city of Charleston, presented the following Report, which was adopted :

"The Committee to whom was referred the matter in relation to the establishment of a Church for the colored population in the city of Charleston, beg leave to report : That, in their opinion, public sentiment has undergone a very great change in the State of South-Carolina, in reference to the religious instruction of our colored population. Providence has opened a wide and effectual door to missionary effort among them, which it is the duty of the Church to enter, and, though some difficulties still exist, these, it is hoped, will gradually be removed by Christian zeal, patience, prudence and perseverance. This department of labor belongs exclusively to the Southern Church. Our brethren in other lands and other portions of our own country are exposed, and, for the most part, justly exposed, to so much suspicion and distrust that they cannot have free access to the slaves of the South. Unacquainted with the nature of our institutions—strangers to the prejudices, habits and peculiarities of the negro—incapable of appreciating his peculiar sympathies and associations—ministers from abroad, even if they were permitted to enter the field, could not be expected to cultivate it with the same success which is likely to reward the labors of our own men. The Committee, therefore, believe that God has imposed upon the churches and Christian people of the South, in a pre-eminent degree, the duty of spreading the Gospel among the colored population, whether slave or free. This class of the community is committed to us ; and leanness and barrenness must be—will be—entailed as a curse upon our Churches, if they suffer the multitudes of these poor, whom God has settled among them, to perish for the bread of life. From the very nature of their position they are dependant upon us. They cannot form Churches among themselves, call pastors, and support the Gospel. Without property, without concert, without the means of co-operation and united effort, they must be supplied with God's word, as they are supplied with their daily bread, by the hands of their masters. They seem to be a sacred trust, which is to prove the faith, the charity, the self-denial and spiritual zeal of the Southern Church : and the most effectual answer which can be given to the calumnies of Abolitionists and misguided Philanthropists will be persevering diligence in training this people for glory, honor and immortality. The tendency of the gospel is to soften all that is harsh in the relations of master and slave, to prevent the one from being a tyrant and the other a rebel ; it will sweeten their intercourse—authority will cease to be severe and obedience cease to be a task.

Your Committee are delighted to learn that the attention of Brother Adger, of Charleston, has been turned to this subject, and that he seems to be disposed to embark in an enterprize to give more efficient religious instruction to this class of the community. So numerous are the blacks in this city, that whatever efforts are made must, to be successful, contemplate congregations separate and distinct from those of the whites. The colored people need teachers exclusively devoted to themselves—men who know their character, habits and associations and, at the same time, of large and liberal views—who can adapt the instructions of the pulpit to the intellectual condition of this benighted race. The tendency of the colored people to mistake fervor for piety, passion for devotion, and zeal for faith, is so strong that too much care can hardly be exercised by the Church in selecting ministers to labor among them. Your Committee rejoice to believe that this Brother is, in many respects, admirably fitted to enter upon this sphere of labor. He is a native of the State, exposed

to none of the jealousies and suspicions which would attach to a stranger. At his first entering upon the ministry his mind was deeply impressed with the importance of this subject; and, when he found no open door, he turned his eyes to the destitute and degraded of another land. At the end of twelve years God has brought him back to the scenes of his youth; his bowels still yearn for the slave, and the door which he once lamented was closed, and prayed to have opened, is now marvellously wide and effectual. The Providence of God seems to shut him up to enter and work. Your Committee are persuaded, from the view which they have been able to take of the facts, that Brother Adger, who is reported still to have some lingering doubts on the subject, ought to abandon the missionary field in which he has been hitherto employed, for the equally wide and important field which is now white for the harvest. The position of things in the East is such as not to require absolutely his presence. The mission is comparatively strong, and the Churches which have been planted seem to be permanent nurseries of the Gospel. The door, moreover, is open to the world—from any part of Europe or America the servants of God may go and labor there; but here we are restricted in our choice of men to a limited region, and a region in which the supply is small: and your Committee feel that Presbytery will not be justified in sparing a man to do what others can do as well when he might be commissioned to do what is not likely to be undertaken without him. We cannot but think that the disease which was God's immediate agent in bringing our brother back to us, is to be regarded as an index of God's will, that he should now labor where his earliest impulses prompted him to put in his sickle.

Should Brother Adger be induced to enter upon this field, your Committee are clear that he should endeavor to collect a separate congregation of the blacks; but, they are not prepared to recommend any plan, in reference to the organization of a Church and the administration of discipline. Three schemes are conceivable, though all do not seem to be equally compatible with our distinctive principles as Presbyterians. One is to place the Church entirely under the jurisdiction of Brother Adger, as an Evangelist, until it should have attained sufficient maturity to elect its own officers and discharge the functions of a particular Church of Christ. From the state of society among us, it would probably require a length of time to reach the maturity supposed: and your Committee cannot see but that it is perfectly consistent with our principles that an Evangelist should sustain to an infant and feeble Missionary Church the relations, and discharge the duties, of a parochial Presbytery. He would be at liberty to consult discreet and judicious men, but the responsibility of all measures of Government and discipline must fall finally upon himself. Another plan is to appoint a session consisting of white elders, who should have the oversight of this flock; but, then, the difficulty occurs—Who is to choose these Elders? According to our system, every Church has a right to elect its own officers; and these colored Presbyterians, if organized into a separate Church, could not constitutionally be deprived of this right.

A third plan might be to regard it as a branch of some existing Church, and to have all its discipline administered by the session of that Church. This and the first proposed seem to be the only schemes fully compatible with our circumstances in the Southern States. In conclusion, your Committee would recommend to Presbytery the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. That the Presbytery heartily approve of the efforts which the Rev. J. B. Adger, of Charleston, proposes to make for the purpose of impart-

ing more effectual religious instruction to the colored population of that city.

2. That while the Presbytery recommends the formation of separate colored congregations, it is not prepared to advise that they be organized into separate Churches, but rather that they be placed under the discipline and spiritual jurisdiction of existing sessions, or treated as missionary Churches under the care of an Evangelist.

3. That this Presbytery is persuaded, under all the circumstances of the case, there is a call of Providence to Brother Adger, to abandon his mission in the East and enter upon the field which is whitening to the harvest at his very doors.

4. That in giving this opinion, the Presbytery would not be understood to disparage the Foreign Missionary work, but simply to inculcate the imperative obligation of the Southern Church, to give the Gospel to the negro and the slave."

III.—*Extract from the Richmond Times and Compiler, of June 2d, 1847, with reference to the late meeting, in that city, of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.*

"This ecclesiastical assembly is one of great dignity and ability. It was gathered from every section, almost, of the United States. From Northern New-York to Texas—from the Atlantic to the farthest civilized bounds of the West, it was represented; and, in view of this fact, the harmony, courtesy and concession which characterized its deliberations—especially on the most exciting topic which can agitate the councils of our country—excite alike admiration and praise. Its session here will be remembered by the Church in this city with gratification, and its first convocation in this city, we hope, will not be without national benefits."

On the last day of their meeting, Monday, May 31, the Rev. Mr. Pryor of Virginia, submitted the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That this Assembly has heard, with satisfaction, the sermon preached by the Rev. C. C. Jones, D. D., of Georgia, according to their appointment, on the subject of the religious instruction of the colored population.

2. *Resolved*, That the Assembly regard the subject as one of very great interest and importance, and recognize the good hand of God in opening this field to our ministers and missionaries, to so large an extent, and with such cordial approbation of the community.

3. *Resolved*, That the Board of Missions be directed, if it appears to them advisable, to appoint a Secretary or General Agent from and for the South and South-west, who shall superintend the collection of funds and the location of missionaries, and attend to the other duties of this department, in co-operation with the Presbyteries and Churches in that section of the country.

Mr. Pryor said this was the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church which was ever held in Virginia. During its session the exciting subject of slavery had engaged their attention; and he would here say, that, as a Southern man, devoted to Southern feelings, Southern rights, and Southern principles, he recognized, with high satisfaction, the spirit of liberality and Christian courtesy, which had been manifested by the body during the consideration of that subject. No General Assembly, he

believed, had passed through a discussion of it with so much harmony and Christian feeling—so strong an exhibition of the spirit of concession and respect for the feelings of one another.

Mr. Pryor felt assured the South would enter into the spirit and object of these resolutions and endeavor to give them efficient operation. The spiritual condition of nearly two millions and a half of people was to be affected by them. He hoped their importance would be deeply appreciated. We regard them, said he, as but the incipient stage of the scheme. We yet deem that we need something more efficient—we need more zeal, more humility, more self-denial, more of the spirit of our Lord and Master, in this matter. All, he was sure, would, with one accord, concur in the first resolution; the only resolution on which he thought there might be a difference of opinion, was the 3d resolution, which pointed out the kind of agent to take charge of the matter. Some man must be elected for that important duty; and he felt persuaded that the brethren from other sections would feel the importance of selecting him from the South or Southwest. He hoped all the resolutions would pass unanimously. It would be a most felicitous conclusion to their deliberations. Looking to the everlasting salvation of those people whom God in His Providence had cast amongst us, he hoped the Assembly would see their way clear to pass these resolutions unanimously.

Rev. Mr. Robinson, of Ohio, moved to strike out the 1st resolution. He and others could not vote for every thing in Dr. Jones discourse, and he hoped the question of approving that discourse would not be mooted.

Mr. Pryor said that in adopting that resolution, which expressed a mere general satisfaction with the discourse, the members would not, of course, be bound for every word or idea it uttered.

The question on each resolution offered by Dr. Pryor was then put, and they were all adopted—the first with two or three dissenting voices, the others without dissent.



