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The Negro Question.

THE Southern Church is confronted with a phase of the Negro Question, which is likely to prove troublesome in the near future. It is the admission of colored students with a view to the ministry. The facts in a case now being discussed with considerable feeling reveal a deplorable situation. It seems that one Reuben James, a colored boy, applied to the Presbytery of Charleston to be received as a candidate for the ministry. The Presbytery refused to receive him. The Synod reversed the Presbytery's decision and the Assembly sustained the Synod in a finding thus expressed:

"In refusing to sustain this complaint the General Assembly, without expressing any opinion as to the extent of the general discretionary power of a Presbytery in receiving candidates, confirms the action of the Synod solely on the ground that the reason given by the Presbytery for not receiving the applicant as a candidate, namely that he was colored, is contrary to the law and constitution of the Church."

The Presbytery now refuses to bow to the decision of Synod and Assembly upon the ground that Reuben James was rejected for another reason than that he was a "colored" youth viz: as a protest against the churches delay in setting up the Independent African Church.

The document drawn up by the Charleston Presbytery contains some sad facts. It states:

"The Presbytery is thoroughly convinced that the setting up of a separate church for colored people would largely increase the contribution to the Tuscaloosa Institute, and to evangelistic labor among the negroes."

Again

"The Presbytery, in stating the fact in reference to its action, does not wish to be considered as receding from its time honored opposition to the amalgamation of whites and negroes in social and ecclesiastical relations. Such amalgamation the Presbytery believes to be unnatural and unscriptural, and will continue in every proper way to oppose and resist."

The Synod held that it was against the law and constitution of the Church to exclude negroes, whereupon the Presbytery replies:

"If our 'law and constitution' refuses us the right to reject negroes who may wish to become rulers over our people because they are negroes, then, of course it follows that sessions are forbidden to reject negro applicants for communion and church fellowship because they are negroes. All negroes, therefore, who may apply for church membership, and who give evidence of having true faith, must be received. Having then equal rights with us in the Church, they, with their wives and children, can enter our houses of worship, mingle with our wives and children in all public exercises and vote in the election of church officers. Moreover, if they can increase their numbers so as to have a majority in a church they can fill the

offices of elder, deacon and pastor with men of their own color, and can take possession of the church property, while our own people are without redress."

All of which shows the deep-seated antipathy that exists against the Southern Negro. As to the historic position of the Church the Presbytery thus states it:

"It is well-known that prior to 1865 the colored people were received into our churches without the right to vote or hold office, and that they had separate seats in the sanctuary and communed at separate tables. The Assembly of 1865 declared, 'That the abolition of slavery by the civil and military powers has not altered the relations as above defined in which our Church stands to the colored people,' which means that the past policy of the Church should continue to be the Church's policy."

As has been said the question is one of perplexing interest to the Southern Church, but happily the Presbytery of Charleston, although representing a large body of opinion is not unopposed in its course by some of the more enlightened leaders in the Church. The *Southern Presbyterian* thus voices the views of the latter:

"We are just as responsible to God for our relation as a Church to the negro in the Southern States, as for our relation toward the American Indians, the Chinese, the Japanese, or the savages in Africa.

"And our duty toward these different peoples is precisely the same as that of all those who profess and call themselves Christians. We can not believe that the Lord Jesus has laid down one law for England and another for America in their church work; or one law for the North and another for the South in our own country. We may be guilty of blunders and failures to understand and to obey the law, but the commission given to the primitive Church is the law of Christ's Kingdom to-day; 'Go make disciples of all the nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.'

"We hold it as a principle settled beyond question, that it is the duty of the Christian world to preach the Gospel to all men who are sinners and in need of salvation. This is not a matter of choice or inclination, but a positive command of the great Head of the Church. Again it is clear that the object of preaching the Gospel is not simply to make the announcement of salvation, but so far as possible to make disciples of all the nations, to imbue them with the principles of Christianity, to train them in religious doctrines and religious duties, and so to leaven each people with the truth as to build up a true Christian Church."

Here the true position of the Church is indicated. There ought to be no respect of persons in the Church, and the solution of the vexed problem will not be furthered by the extreme attitude assumed at Charleston.

Another Armenian Appeal.

Canada has shown a practical interest in the Armenian case. When the atrocities and persecutions perpetuated there by the Turk aroused the indignation of the Christian world, not only were hard words sent to Turkey, but what was better and more to the point, money was sent to Armenia and so liberal have our Canadian citizens proved that Dr. Geikie, the honorary Treasurer has transmitted sums which will reach the neighborhood of \$14,000. This is most creditable to us as a people and in the future will be a bright spot in our history.

But much remains yet to be done if the evil wrought by the Turks is to be met, even in a small way. An appeal has just been issued on behalf of the orphans of the massacres—some of whom lost their parents in the general slaughter or by starvation, and others whose fathers gave up their lives for the sake of the Christian religion, in refusing to deny Christ. A heart-rending picture is furnished by one of the Relief Committee on the spot, which harrow the feelings.