

10,000 are Europeans. The first minister of that charge was the Rev. William Campbell. He was educated at the University of Aberdeen; and having obtained license as a preacher in the Church of Scotland, he went for a time to the north of Ireland in the capacity of a private tutor. Presently he was ordained by the Presbytery of Belfast to the charge of the congregation at White Abbey. Shortly after the Disruption, he was inducted by the Presbytery of Dunbarton to the charge of the congregation at Alexandria. In 1850 he was appointed by the Colonial Committee to go to Natal to minister to the numerous Scotch settlers there, and was induced to settle at the capital. He soon gathered a godly congregation around him; and he and his people were allowed from the first the free use of the Dutch Reformed Church there, until their new church was opened, on the first of October 1851. Meanwhile, Mr. Campbell not only ministered to his own people at Maritzburg, but also paid occasional visits to Durban, where he preached and administered sacraments. He also acted as chaplain to the Presbyterian troops at Fort Napier, the military headquarters, at the south-west side of the city. For this service he received at first an uncertain remuneration, which was, however, after five years' service, put on a permanent footing at the rate of £10 a year. Mr. Campbell's health was not robust, and in 1865 the Colonial Committee sent Mr. John Smith, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, to act as his assistant. In October of the same year, Mr. Smith was ordained colleague and successor to Mr. Campbell. This arrangement continued till 1869, when Mr. Smith resigned his position on account of the strained relations between himself and his senior colleague. The result was that a split in the congregation ensued, and the party which hived off elected Mr. Smith as their minister; and thus a second charge, known as St. John's, was established in Maritzburg.

In 1873 Mr. Campbell died, and was succeeded by the Rev. J. E. Carlyle, formerly of Brechin, Bombay, and Calcutta; but owing to the state of his wife's health, he was obliged to return to Scotland in 1877, when the congregation elected a minister of the Established Church of Scotland as their pastor, and thus fell out of correspondence with our committee. Meanwhile St. John's grew and prospered, receiving occasional financial aid from the Free Church. But it is now many years since any such aid was required towards the maintenance of the congregation. According to the latest account, St. John's had 4 elders, 9 deacons, 245 members, 19 Sunday-school teachers, and 152 pupils; and provided a stipend of £450 to its minister. A third charge was formed at Howick, near the famous falls on the upper Umgeni, about twelve miles from Maritzburg, to which our Colonial Committee, in 1884, sent out the Rev. John Laing, formerly of Belfort. On Mr. Laing's transfer to Addington, he was succeeded by the Rev. William Turnbull, likewise sent out by our committee.

At Durban, the port of Natal, with a population in 1891 of 27,492, the first Scottish Presbyterian minister was Rev. John Buchanan, formerly of Bothwell, who was constrained, on account of the state of his health, to resign his charge there in 1858. He went to Natal in 1862 in search of health, carrying with him the commission of our Colonial Committee. He took up his abode in Durban, and before the end of the year he had around him a congregation of worshippers numbering about 150 at the morning service and nearly as many at the evening, so that in 1863 he received a call to become their pastor. Mr. Buchanan enjoyed for a few years the assistance of Mr. James Patten, and continued in the charge till 1874, when he was obliged to resign. He is still happily among us. His successors were Messrs. James Paton (1875), P. M. Martin (1880), James Hendry (1885), Andrew Mitchell (1890), and M. Tees (1892). For many years this congregation nourished a colony at Addington, a part of the town near the harbour, which in 1884 was raised to the rank of a charge, and supplied by the Colonial Committee with a minister in the person of the Rev. W. J. Hardy, formerly of Strachan, in the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil. Under him the congregation steadily progressed; but his health not being good, he accepted a call from another new congregation at Berea, a further inland and more loftily situated suburb of the town. This was in 1886. His successor at Addington was the Rev. John Laing. In 1891 Mr. Hardy died, and was succeeded at the Berea by the Rev. A. S. Macpherson, B.A. In the neighbourhood of Durban there is another charge, Greyville, to which the Rev. E. Hewitt, whom our Colonial Committee sent out in 1892, was ordained in 1893.

Thus seven of the ten congregations have been accounted for. Two more—namely, those of Richmond and Newcastle—have been supplied by the Colonial Committee of the Established Church of Scotland. The tenth is the congregation of Harriemith in the Orange Free State, which will be more fully referred to when I have to describe the two Dutch republics in South Africa—which I propose to make the subject of my next paper.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

PAUL AND ONESIMUS.

(For Oct. 3rd.—*Epistle to Philemon.**)

BY PHILIP A. NORDELL, D.D.

The territory under nominal Christian rule where the interpretation of the *Epistle to Philemon* is still liable to be warped by social conditions is becoming relatively very small. So rapidly has slavery been extinguished throughout Christian lands that the close of the nineteenth century finds it practically non-existent where the Gospel has the slightest chance to shape public opinion. Certainly it would be hard, if not impossible, to-day to find an evangelical preacher or Biblical scholar appealing to Paul's *Epistle to Philemon* in defence of human slavery. And yet forty years have not passed since a large part of the clergy in the United States did battle for the "peculiar institution," as divinely sanctioned because of the act which this *Epistle* reports, and the language it employs.

PAUL AND THE RUNAWAY SLAVE.

Onesimus was a Phrygian slave, the property of a certain Philemon who apparently lived in Colosse. Philemon was a well-to-do man, who, like every person in easy circumstances throughout the Roman world, kept slaves for household service, and for the performance of all other kinds of labor that he required to be done. The thing that strikes us as curious at the present time is that this slave holder was also a devout Christian man, one of Paul's personal converts, greatly loved and trusted by the Apostle. He was perhaps the most influential man in the church at Colosse, a section of which was in the habit of worshipping in his house. Onesimus was one of his slaves who had run off to Rome, where he hoped to be safe from pursuit among its teeming millions. Here, however, he fell in with Paul, was attracted by the winning manner of the distinguished prisoner, listened to his personal appeals, and yielded himself to the truths of the Gospel. A remarkable confidence at once sprang up between the young man and aged Apostle. The training of Onesimus as a domestic slave enabled him to anticipate every wish of Paul, and so greatly to increase his comfort that his services after a little became almost indispensable. What was Paul to do? On the one hand to harbor a fugitive slave was contrary to the law. To conceal him was a practical theft. On the other hand, here was now a true Christian brother who had so endeared himself to Paul that he calls him "my very heart" (R.V.). Philemon owed to Paul a greater debt of gratitude for spiritual benefits received than he could ever repay. Was Paul not justified in keeping Onesimus? Ought he to send this young man back into slavery? Was not slavery a monstrous moral crime? All these considerations weighed. But right was right, and Paul was not a man to violate the law. Onesimus must return. His willingness to do so showed how completely he had yielded himself to the Apostle's guidance.

PAUL'S LETTER TO PHILEMON.

This, the shortest of Paul's *Epistles*, is the only surviving specimen of what must have been a large private correspondence. It is wondrously beautiful and pathetic. It emphasizes phases of character not so prominently brought out in any other *Epistle*. He appears here pre-eminently as a Christian gentleman, possessed of exquisite tact and courtesy, making no demands, waiving apostolic authority and personal claims, and yet presenting his intercession for the delinquent on such tender personal considerations, and such lofty Christian plane, as to make it irresistibly effective. It was simply impossible for Philemon who owed to Paul his very self, to treat harshly one whom Paul sent to him as his personal friend, his dear son begotten in his bonds, a beloved Christian brother. How would Philemon have been able to extend to Paul the hospitality anticipated and allow the Apostle to discover that Onesimus had not been received as a brother in the Lord, but as a chattel? He would rather have lost every slave in his possession than so to have grieved the heart of his spiritual benefactor.

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

It is noticeable that Paul not only returned this runaway slave to his master, but said not one word about his emancipation. Why not denounce the iniquity? Why not tell Philemon that it was his Christian duty to emancipate not only Onesimus but all his other slaves? Had Christianity then in its infancy, entered on a crusade against a social evil so extensive, so deeply rooted in the very constitution of society, it would have invited its own annihilation. To the converted slaves who constituted a large part of the early Church the Apostles counseled patience and obedience. Christianity and slavery were fundamentally antagonistic, and the former would make its power felt in due time. Reforms cannot be carried

*An Exposition of Lesson 40 in *The Bible Study Union Sunday School Lessons* on "The Three Great Apostles."