

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE EPISTLE AS A WHOLE.

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NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

1. All that we know of Philemon is to be gathered from the Epistle bearing his name. He seems to have been a believer at Colosse, from the references to certain in the church there (see Notes below), and must have been possessed of means (v. 22). Paul's words indicate that he held his friend in high esteem.

2. Onesimus is the Latinized form of the Greek *Onesimos*, which means "useful", or "profitable". He was a slave (v. 16), and, fleeing from his master, found his way to Rome, where he was, under Paul, led to become the Lord's freeman, and "called being a servant (slave)", he cared not for it, but was willing to return to his master's service, whether to continue as a slave or as "brother beloved" (v. 16). Paul sends the letter by Onesimus.

3. From Col. 4:9. we learn that Paul had sent unto the church at Colosse Tychicus "with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you". For other references, see Notes.

4. The Epistle was written during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, probably in A.D. 62. In no one of his Epistles is more clearly shown the great heart of the apostle in his care for every member of the church. See 2 Cor. 11:28, 29.

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- 1** PAUL, a °prisoner of *Christ Jesus*, and Timothy *the* brother, *to* Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,
- 2** And *to the sister* °Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:
- 3** °Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4** I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,
- 5** Hearing of *the love* and *the faith*, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all *the saints*;
- 6** *Praying that the fellowship of the faith* may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which *is in us* in Christ
- 7** ... For *I had* great joy and *comfort* in thy love, because the *inward affection* of the saints are refreshed by thee, °brother.
- 8** Wherefore, *I having much boldness and freedom of speech* in Christ to *command* thee that which is *befitting*,
- 9** For love's sake I rather °*appeal to thee*, being such an one as Paul the *old man*, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.
- 10** I *appeal to* thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have *begat* in my bonds:
- 11** Which in time past was to thee *not useful*, but now profitable to thee and to me:
- 12** Whom I ... *Sent back: sent again to thee* him, that is, *as mine own self*:
- 13** Whom I *was minded to retain* with me, *in order that* in thy stead he *may minister* unto me in the bonds of the gospel:
- 14** But *apart from* thy mind °would I do nothing; *in order that* °thy benefit should not be as ... of necessity, but *according to freewill*.
- 15** For perhaps he *because of this* departed for a season, *in order that* thou shouldest receive him for ever;
- 16** *No longer* as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?
- 17** If thou *have* me therefore a *partaker*, *You have received me; receive him in addition, as myself*.
- 18** If he ... wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account;
- 19** I Paul *wrote it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it: that* I do not say to thee *that* thou owest unto me even thine own *self* besides.
- 20** Yea, brother, °*may I profit* of thee in the Lord: refresh my *inward affection* in *Christ*.
- 21** Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt *do more also above that which* I say.
- 22** But withal prepare *also for me* a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be *granted as a favor* unto you.
- 23** There *greet* thee °Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;
- 24** °Marcus, °Aristarchus, °Demas, °Lucas, my fellowlabourers.
- 25** °The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

1 prisoner. Cp. Eph. 3:1; 4:1. 2 Tim. 1:8.
2 Apphia. Tradition says she was the wife of Philemon.
3 Grace. Gr.charis. [free, undeserved favour]. Ap.184.I.1.

9 appeal to. Ap.134.I.6.
14 would. Lit. was willing to.
 thy benefit. Lit. the good thing of thee.

20 may I profit. Gr.oninemi, the root-word from which comes onesimos. "Let me have profit from thee, seeing I am sending back Onesimus (profitable) to thee."

23 Epaphras. See Col. 1:7
24 Marcus. See Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39, &c.
 Aristarchus. See Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2. Col. 4:10.
 Demas. See Col. 4:14. 2 Tim. 4:10.
 Lucas. See Col. 4:14. 2 Tim. 4:11; also Int. Notes to Luke's Gospel, especially the foot-note.
25 The grace, &c. Paul's constant benediction.