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EPISTLE OF PAUL

TO

P H I L E M O N .

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK,

ON THE BASIS OF THE COMMON ENGLISH VERSION,

WITH NOTES.

HE THAT HATH MY WORD, LET HIM SPEAK MY WORD FAITHFULLY.
WHAT IS THE CHAFF TO THE WHEAT? SAITH JEHOVAH.

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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1.

GENUINENESS OF THE EPISTLE.

NOTHING is wanting to confirm the genuineness of this epistle. The external testimony is unimpeachable. It is not quoted so often by the earlier Christian fathers as some of the other letters; its brevity and the fact that its contents are not didactic or polemic account for that omission. We need not urge the expressions in Ignatius, cited often as evidence of that apostolic father's knowledge and use of the epistle; though it is difficult to regard the similarity between them and the language in v. 20 as altogether accidental. See Kirchofer's *Sammlung*, p. 205. The Canon of Muratori, which comes to us from the second century (Credner, *Geschichte des Kanons*, p. 69 sq.), enumerates this epistle as one of Paul's epistles. Tertullian mentions it and says that Marcion admitted it into his collection. Sinope in Pontus, the birth-place of Marcion, was not far from Colossæ where Philemon

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lived, and the letter would find its way to the neighboring Churches at an early period. Origen and Eusebius include it among the universally acknowledged writings (*ὁμολογούμενα*) of the early Christian times. The epistle is so well attested historically, that as De Wette says (*Einleitung*, p. 278), its genuineness on that ground is beyond doubt.

Nor does the epistle itself offer anything to conflict with this decision. It is impossible to conceive of a writing more strongly marked within the same limits by those unstudied assonances of thought, sentiment, and expression, which indicate an author's hand, than this short epistle as compared with Paul's other productions. Paley has a paragraph in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, which illustrates this feature of the letter in a very just and forcible manner. It will be found also that all the historical allusions which the apostle makes to events in his own life, or to other persons with whom he was connected, harmonize perfectly with the statements or incidental intimations contained in the Acts of the Apostles or the other epistles of Paul. It belongs to the commentary to point out the instances of such agreement.

Baur, a leader in the destructive school of criticism, would divest the epistle of its historical character, and make it the personified illustration from some later writer, of the idea that Christianity unites

and equalizes in a higher sense those whom outward circumstances have separated. See his *Paulus*, p. 475 sq. He does not impugn the external evidence. But not to leave his theory wholly unsupported, he suggests some linguistic objections to Paul's authorship of the letter, which must be pronounced unfounded and frivolous. He finds, for example, certain words in the epistle, which are alleged to be not Pauline; but to justify that assertion, he must deny the genuineness of such other letters of Paul, as happen to contain these words. He admits that the apostle could have said *σπλάγγνα* twice, but thinks it suspicious that he should use it three times. A few terms he adduces, which are not used elsewhere in the epistles; but to argue from these that they disprove the apostolic origin of the epistle, is to assume the absurd principle that a writer, after having produced two or three compositions, must for the future confine himself to an unvarying circle of words, whatever may be the subject which he discusses, or whatever the interval of time between his different writings.

The arbitrary and purely subjective character of such criticisms can have no weight against the varied testimony admitted as decisive by Christian scholars for so many ages, upon which the canonical authority of the Epistle to Philemon is founded. They are worth repeating only as illustrating Baur's own re-

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mark, that modern criticism in assailing this particular book runs a greater risk of exposing itself to the imputation of an excessive distrust, a morbid sensibility to doubt and denial, than in questioning the claims of any other epistle ascribed to Paul.

§ 2.

TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

The letter to Philemon was one of the several letters (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians) which Paul wrote during his first captivity at Rome. The arguments which show that he wrote the epistle to the Colossians in that city and at that period, involve the same conclusion in regard to this epistle; for it is evident from Col. 4 : 7, 9, as compared with the contents of this epistle, that Paul wrote the two epistles at the same time, and forwarded them to their destination by the hands of Tychicus and Onesimus who accompanied each other to Colossæ. A few modern critics, as Schulz, Schott, Böttger, Meyer, maintain that this letter and the others assigned usually to the first Roman captivity, were written during the two years that Paul was imprisoned at Cesarea (Acts 23 : 35 ; 24 : 27). But this opinion, though supported by some plausible arguments, can be demonstrated with reasonable certainty to be

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incorrect. The question belongs properly to a general introduction to the Roman group of letters, and may be passed over here without further remark.

The time when Paul wrote may be fixed with much precision. The apostle at the close of the letter expresses a hope of his speedy liberation. He speaks in like manner of his approaching deliverance in his epistle to the Philippians (2 : 23, 24), which was written during the same imprisonment. Presuming, therefore, that he had good reasons for such an expectation, and that he was not disappointed in the result, we may conclude that this letter was written by him about the year A.D. 63, or early in A.D. 64; for it was in the latter year, according to the best chronologists, that he was freed from his first Roman imprisonment.

Tychicus was the bearer also of the epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 6 : 21, 22), and hence that epistle and the two to the Colossians and Philemon were all written, no doubt, on the eve of the apostle's acquittal. Men never traversed the Appian Way, or crossed the Adriatic, bearing with them treasures of such value to the human race, as the two messengers who conveyed these writings of Paul to Ephesus and Colossæ. It is very possible that the letter to the Laodiceans (Eph. 4 : 16), which has not come down to us, was entrusted to the same hands. We do not know what circumstances may have con-

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trolled the course of the journey. The most direct way was to cross the northern part of the Greek peninsula. They would embark at Brundisium, and disembark at Dyrrhachium, on the other side. They would then traverse the Egnatian Way, along which Paul had passed and scattered the seed of the Word. They would meet with Christian hospitality at Thessalonica. Apollonia and Amphipolis were on the route. The disciples at Philippi would be eager to hear tidings of the beloved apostle. From the Pass over Symbolum they would look forth once more upon the waters which divided Europe from their native Asia.^a Neapolis, the port of Philippi, lay at the base of that range of hills, and would afford them the means to cross to Troas or to the mouth of the Cayster or the Mæander, whence they could proceed to Ephesus, Laodicea, and Colossæ in such order as their convenience, or the nature of their errand might require.

^a In a recent journey to Macedonia, the writer found that the site of Philippi, with its ruins, and the present Cavalla, the Neapolis of the Acts (16 : 11), may be seen distinctly in their opposite directions from a high overhanging the road across Symbolum, which leads from the coast to Philippi. The places are about ten miles distant from each other

§ 3.

PERSONS OF THE EPISTLE.

As to the persons to whom, and for whom the letter was written, all that we know we must gather from the epistle itself, and from the few intimations in the epistle to the Colossians. Philemon, whose name the letter bears, lived in all probability at Colossæ, a city of Phrygia, on the Lyeus, a branch of the Mæander. The present Chonas in the same neighborhood (Arundel, *Seven Churches*, p. 158) perpetuates the ancient name.

Though it does not follow certainly that Philemon dwelt in Colossæ, because Onesimus was a Colossian, yet the obvious presumption from that fact is that they belonged to the same place. Wieseler's idea (*Chronologie*, p. 452), that he was a Laodicean, not only disregards this presumption, but rests on a false inference from Col. 4 : 17, that Archippus (see v. 1) was a Laodicean, because the apostle names him in that place (which was accidental merely), after speaking of the Church in Laodicea. Paul addresses the *ἐγκατε* in that passage to the Colossians, and hence Archippus must have been one of their number, and consequently Philemon one of them also, since the two are joined in the same salutation at the beginning of

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the epistle (vv. 1, 2). Theodoret states the ancient opinion in saying that the recipient of the letter was a citizen of Colossæ, and that his house was pointed out there as late as the fifth century.

Philemon was a man of property and influence, since he is represented as the head of a numerous household, and as exercising an expensive liberality towards his friends and the poor in general. All the circumstances under which he appears in the letter, indicate the possession of ample means and a superior social rank. He was indebted to the apostle Paul as the medium of his personal participation in the gospel. All interpreters agree in assigning that significance to *σεαντόν μοι προσοφείλεις* in v. 19. It is not certain under what circumstances they became known to each other. If Paul visited Colossæ when he passed through Phrygia on his second missionary journey (Acts 15 : 36), it was undoubtedly there and at that time, that Philemon heard the gospel and attached himself to the Christian party. On the contrary, if Paul never visited that city in person, as many critics infer from Col. 2 : 1, then the supposition which agrees best with the history is that he was converted during Paul's protracted stay at Ephesus (Acts 19 : 10), about A.D. 54-57. That city was the religious and commercial capital of Western Asia Minor. The apostle labored there with such success that it

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is said "all they who dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ." Phrygia was a neighboring province, and among the strangers who repaired to Ephesus and had an opportunity to hear the preaching of Paul, may have been the Colossian Philemon. It is evident that on becoming a disciple, he gave no common proof of the sincerity and power of his faith. His character, as shadowed forth in this epistle, is one of the noblest which the sacred record makes known to us. He was full of faith and good works, was docile, confiding, grateful, was forgiving, sympathizing, charitable, and a man who on a question of simple justice needed only a hint of his duty to prompt him to go even beyond it. Any one who studies the epistle will perceive that it ascribes to him these varied qualities; it bestows on him a measure of commendation, which forms a striking contrast with the ordinary reserve of the sacred writers. It was by the example and activity of such believers that the primitive Christianity evinced its divine origin, and spread with such rapidity among the nations.^a

Onesimus was a native or certainly an inhabitant of Colossæ, since Paul in writing to the Church

^a The legendary history supplies nothing on which we can rely. It is related that Philemon became Bishop of Colossæ (*Constit. Apost.*, 7 46), and died as a martyr under Nero.

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there speaks of him (Col. 4 : 9) as *ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν*, *one of you*. This expression confirms the presumption which his Greek name affords, that he was a Gentile, not a Jew, as some have argued from *μάλιστα ἐμοὶ* in v. 16. Slaves were numerous in Phrygia, and the name itself of Phrygia was almost synonymous with that of slave. Hence it happened that in writing to the Colossians (3 : 22 sq. ; 4 : 4) Paul had occasion to instruct them concerning the duties of masters and servants to each other. Onesimus was one of this unfortunate class of persons, as is evident both from the manifest implication in *ὡς δοῦλον* in v. 16, and from the general tenor of the epistle. There appears to have been no difference of opinion on this point among the ancient commentators, and there is none of any critical weight among the modern. The man escaped from his master and fled to Rome, where in the midst of its vast population he could hope to be concealed, and to baffle the efforts which were so often made in such cases for retaking the fugitive. See Walter, *Die Geschichte des Röm. Rechts*, II., p. 63 sq. It must have been to Rome that he directed his way, and not to Cesarea, as some contend ; for the latter view stands connected with an indefensible opinion respecting the place whence the letter was written. Whether Onesimus had any other motive for the flight than the natural love of liberty, we have not

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the means of deciding. It has been very generally supposed that he had committed some offense, as theft or embezzlement, and feared the punishment of his guilt. But as the ground of that opinion we must know the meaning of *ἠδίκησε* in v. 18, which is uncertain, not to say inconsistent with any such imputation. Commentators at all events go entirely beyond the evidence when they assert that he belonged to the dregs of society, that he robbed his master, and confessed the sin to Paul. Though it may be doubted whether Onesimus heard the gospel for the first time at Rome, it is beyond question that he was led to embrace the gospel there through the apostle's instrumentality. The language in v. 10 is explicit on this point. As there were believers in Phrygia when the apostle passed through that region on his third missionary tour (Acts 18 : 23), it is not improbable that Onesimus was brought into contact with some of them at Colossæ or elsewhere, and consequently may have known something of the Christian doctrine before he went to Rome. How long a time elapsed between his escape and conversion, we can not decide; for *πρὸς ἄρα* in v. 15, to which appeal has been made, is purely a relative expression, and will not justify any inference as to the interval in question.

After his conversion, the most happy and friendly

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relations sprung up between the teacher and the disciple. The situation of the apostle as a captive and an indefatigable laborer for the promotion of the gospel (Acts 28 : 30, 31) must have made him keenly alive to the sympathies of Christian friendship and dependent upon others for various services of a personal nature, important to his efficiency as a minister of the Word. Onesimus appears to have supplied this twofold want in an eminent degree. We see from the letter that he won entirely the apostle's heart, and made himself so useful to him in various private ways, or evinced such a capacity to be so (for he may have gone back to Colossæ quite soon after his conversion), that Paul wished to have him remain constantly with him.* His attachment to him as a disciple, as a personal friend, and as a helper to him in his bonds, was such that he yielded him up only in obedience to that spirit of self-denial, and that sensitive regard for the feelings or the rights of others, of which his conduct on this occasion displayed so noble an example.

There is but little to add to this account, when we pass beyond the limits of the New Testament. The traditionary notices which have come down

* The opinion that he desired his co-operation as a Christian teacher does not agree with *ἵνα μοι διακονῆ*, in v. 13.

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to us, are too few and too late to amount to much as historical testimony. Some of the later fathers assert that Onesimus was set free, and was subsequently ordained Bishop of Berœa in Macedonia (*Constit. Apost.*, 7, 46). The person of the same name mentioned as Bishop of Ephesus in the first epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians (Hefele, *Patrum Apost. Opp.*, p. 152) was a different person. See Winer, *Realw.*, II., p. 175. It is related also that Onesimus finally made his way to Rome again, and ended his days there as a martyr during the persecution under Nero.

§ 4.

OCCASION AND OBJECT OF THE LETTER.

Under this head, too, all our knowledge must be derived from declarations or inferences furnished by the epistle. As the parties in the transaction were all Christians, and Paul sustained such intimate relations to the two who were estranged from each other, he was naturally desirous of effecting a reconciliation between them. He wished also (waiving the *ἀντίστον*, the matter of duty or right) to give Philemon an opportunity of manifesting his Christian love in the treatment of Onesimus, and his regard, at the same time, for the personal convenience and wishes, not to say official authority,

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of his spiritual teacher and guide. Paul used his influence with Onesimus (*ἀνέπεμψα*, in v. 11) to induce him to return to Colossæ, and place himself again at the disposal of his master. Whether Onesimus assented merely to the proposal of the apostle, or had a desire at the same time to revisit his former home, the epistle does not enable us to determine. On his departure, Paul put into his hand this letter as evidence that Onesimus was a true and approved disciple of Christ, and entitled as such to be received not as a servant, but above a servant, as a brother in the faith, as the representative and equal in that respect of the apostle himself, and worthy of the same consideration and love. It is remarkable to observe how entirely Paul identifies himself with Onesimus, and pleads his cause as if it were his own. He intercedes for him as his own child, promises reparation if he had done any wrong, demands for him not only a remission of all penalties, but the reception of sympathy, affection, Christian brotherhood; and while he solicits these favors for another, consents to receive them with the same gratitude and sense of obligation as if they were bestowed on himself. Such was the purpose, and such was the argument of the epistle.

It may be assumed from the known character of Philemon, that the apostle's intercession for Onesimus

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mus was not unavailing. There can be no doubt that agreeably to the express instructions of the letter, the past was forgiven; the master and the servant were reconciled to each other; and if the liberty which Onesimus had asserted in a spirit of independence was not conceded as a boon or right, it was enjoyed at all events under a form of servitude, which henceforth was such in name only. So much must be regarded as certain; or it follows that the apostle was mistaken in his opinion of Philemon's character, and his efforts for the welfare of Onesimus were frustrated. Chrysostom declares, in his impassioned style, that Philemon must have been less than a man, must have been alike destitute of sensibility and reason not to be moved by the arguments and spirit of such a letter to fulfill every wish and intimation of the apostle. Surely, no fitting response to his pleadings for Onesimus could involve less than a cessation of every thing oppressive and harsh in his civil condition as far as it depended on Philemon to mitigate or neutralize the evils of a legalized system of bondage, as well as a cessation of every thing violative of his rights as a Christian. How much further than this an impartial explanation of the epistle obliges us or authorizes us to go, has not yet been settled by any very general consent of interpreters. Many of the best critics construe certain expressions ($\tau\omicron$

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ἀγαθὸν in v. 14, and ὑπὲρ ὃ λέγω in v. 21) as conveying a distinct expectation on the part of Paul, that Philemon would liberate Onesimus. Nearly all agree that he could hardly have failed to confer on him that favor, even if it was not requested in so many words, after such an appeal to his sentiments of humanity and justice. The traditions to which I have alluded indicate an ancient opinion that such was the result of the apostle's mediation.

§ 5.

ITS ÆSTHETIC CHARACTER.

The epistle has been universally admired as a model of delicacy and skill in the department of composition to which it belongs. The writer had peculiar difficulties to overcome. He was the common friend of the parties at variance. He must conciliate a man who supposed that he had good reason to be offended. He must commend the offender, and yet neither deny nor aggravate the imputed fault. He must assert the new ideas of Christian equality in the face of a system which hardly recognized the humanity of the enslaved.*

* Ample information respecting the system of slavery among the Greeks and Romans will be found in Bœckh's *Staatshaushal-*

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He could have placed the question on the ground of his own personal rights, and yet must waive them in order to secure an act of spontaneous kindness. His success must be a triumph of love, and nothing be demanded for the sake of the justice which could have claimed every thing. He limits his request to a forgiveness of the alleged wrong, and a restoration to favor and the enjoyment of future sympathy and affection, and yet would so guard his words as to leave scope for all the generosity which benevolence might prompt towards one whose condition admitted of so much alleviation. These are contrarieties not easy to harmonize; but Paul, it is confessed, has shown a degree of self-denial and a tact in dealing with them, which in being equal to the occasion could hardly be greater.

“The epistle,” says Luther in the Preface to his Commentary upon it, “presents a charming and masterly example of Christian love. St. Paul takes the poor Onesimus to his heart, stands as representative for him with his master, intercedes for him as if it was himself who had sinned and not Onesimus, divests himself of his own rights, and so

tung der Athener, which Mr. Lamb has translated (Boston, 1857); Becker's *Gallus*, and Becker's *Charicles* (both exist in English); Schweppe, *Römische Rechtsgeschichte*, §343 sq.; and the article *Servus*, in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Rom. Antiquities*.

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compels Philemon to relinquish also his." Erasmus says of the letter: "Cicero never wrote with greater elegance." Bengel's *gnomic* description is, "mire ἀστέτος." "It is a precious relic," says Meyer, "of a great character. It pursues its object with so much Christian love and wisdom, with so much psychological tact, and without a renunciation of the apostolic authority, is so ingenious and suggestive, that this letter, viewed merely as a specimen of the Attic elegance and amiability may rank among the epistolary master-pieces of antiquity." "It is impossible to read it," says Doddridge, "without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, the masterly address that appear in every part of it. We see here in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent true politeness is, not only with the warmth and sincerity of the friend, but even with the dignity of the Christian and the apostle. If this letter were to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed to be a master-piece of its kind." Buckminster, in his admirable discourse on this epistle, describes it in the same terms.

There is an extant letter of the younger Pliny which he wrote to a friend whose servant had deserted him, in which he intercedes for the fugitive who was anxious to return to his master, but dreaded the effects of his anger. Thus the occasion

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of the correspondence was similar to that between the apostle and Philemon. It has occurred to scholars to compare this celebrated letter with that of Paul in behalf of Onesimus; and as the result they hesitate not to say, that not only in the spirit of Christian love, of which Pliny was ignorant, but in dignity of thought, argument, pathos, beauty of style, eloquence, the communication of the apostle is vastly superior to that of the polished Roman writer.^a

Some of those traits of the epistle which have led to such an estimate of its merits, admit of being illustrated in the notes; but it must be left mainly to a careful perusal of the epistle itself, combined with a distinct view of the circumstances under which it was written, to show how fully it deserves the commendation which it has received.

^a See Appendix, No. I.

ΠΑΥΛΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ

Π Ρ Ο Σ Φ Ι Λ Η Μ Ο Ν Α .

ΠΑΥΛΟΣ δέσμιος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός, Φιλήμονι τῷ ἀγαπητῷ καὶ συνεργῷ ἡμῶν, ² καὶ Ἀπφία τῇ ἀγαπητῇ, καὶ Ἀρχίππῳ τῷ συστρατιώτῃ ἡμῶν, καὶ τῇ κατ' οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ· ³ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

⁴ Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ μου, πάντοτε μνεῖαν σου ποιούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, ⁵ ἀκούων σου τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν, ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους· ⁶ ὅπως ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς σου ἐνεργῆς γένηται ἐν ἐπιγνώσει παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. ⁷ χαρὰν γὰρ ἔχομεν πολλὴν καὶ παράκλησιν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου, ὅτι τὰ σπλάγχνα τῶν ἁγίων ἀνα-

V. 2. ἀδελφῆ in good MSS.

V. 7. T. R. has χάριν

Ib. Many read ἔσχον

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL
TO PHILEMON.

PAUL, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy the brother, to Philemon the beloved and our fellow-laborer, and to Apphia the beloved, 2
and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house: Grace be to you, and 3
peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God always, making mention of 4
thee in my prayers, hearing of thy love and 5
faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus,
and unto all the saints; that the fellowship of 6
thy faith may become effectual in the knowledge
of every good thing which is in us unto Christ
Jesus. For we have much joy and consolation 7
in thy love, because the hearts of the saints

V. 2. Or, the sister Ib. Or, assembly
V. 6. Or, communion
V. 7. Or, I had

πέπαιται διὰ σοῦ, ἀδελφέ. ⁸ Διὸ πολλὴν ἐν Χριστῷ παρρησίαν ἔχων ἐπιτάσσειν σοι τὸ ἀνῆκον, ⁹ διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην μᾶλλον παρακαλῶ τοιοῦτος ὢν ὡς Παῦλος πρεσβύτης, νυνὶ δὲ καὶ δέσμιος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ¹⁰ παρακαλῶ σε περὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ τέκνου, ὃν ἐγέννησα ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, Ὀνήσιμον, ¹¹ τὸν ποτέ σοι ἄχρηστον, νυνὶ δέ σοι καὶ ἐμοὶ εὐχρηστον, ¹² ὃν ἀνέπεμψά σοι σὺ δὲ αὐτὸν, τουτέστι τὰ ἐμὰ σπλάγχνα, προσλαβοῦ. ¹³ ὃν ἐγὼ ἐβουλόμην πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν κατέχειν, ἵνα ὑπὲρ σοῦ διακονῆ μοι ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. ¹⁴ χωρὶς δὲ τῆς σῆς γνώμης οὐδὲν ἠθέλησα ποιῆσαι, ἵνα μὴ ὡς κατὰ ἀνάγκην τὸ ἀγαθόν σου ᾗ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἐκούσιον. ¹⁵ τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη πρὸς ὄραν, ἵνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχης. ¹⁶ οὐκέτι ὡς δούλον, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ δούλον, ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητὸν, μάλιστα ἐμοὶ, πόσω δὲ μᾶλλον σοὶ καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ καὶ ἐν Κυρίῳ; ¹⁷ εἰ οὖν ἐμὲ ἔχεις κοινωνόν, προσλαβοῦ αὐτὸν ὡς ἐμέ. ¹⁸ Εἰ δέ τι ἠδίκησέ σε ἢ ὀφείλει, τοῦτο ἐμοὶ ἐλλόγει. ¹⁹ Ἐγὼ Παῦλος ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ, ἐγὼ ἀποτίσω. ἵνα μὴ λέγω σοι ὅτι καὶ σεαυτὸν μοι προσοφείλεις. ²⁰ Ναὶ, ἀδελφέ, ἐγώ

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

have been refreshed by thee, brother. Where- 8
fore, though having much boldness in Christ to
enjoin upon thee that which is becoming, yet 9
for love's sake I beseech rather; being such
a one, as Paul an old man, and now also a pris-
oner of Jesus Christ, I beseech thee for my child 10
whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus:
who in time past was unprofitable to thee, but 11
is now profitable to thee and to me: whom I 12
have sent back to thee: but do thou receive
him, that is, my own flesh: whom I would 13
have retained with myself that in thy stead he
might minister unto me in the bonds of the
gospel: but without thy consent I desired to 14
do nothing; that thy benefit may not be as it
were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps 15
he departed for a season to this end, that thou
shouldest receive him as thine forever; no 16
longer as a servant, but above a servant, a
brother beloved, specially to me, but how much
more to thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?
If thou countest me therefore a partner, receive 17
him as me. But if he hath wronged thee in 18
any thing, or oweth aught, put that on my ac-
count. I Paul have written it with my own 19
hand, I will repay: not to say to thee that
unto me thou owest also thine own self be-
sides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee 20

σου ὀναίμην ἐν Κυρίῳ· ἀνάπαυσόν μου τὰ σπλάγχνα ἐν Χριστῷ. ²¹ πεποιθὼς τῇ ὑπακοῇ σου ἔγραψά σοι, εἰδὼς ὅτι καὶ ὑπὲρ ὃ λέγω ποιήσεις.

²² Ἔμα δὲ καὶ ἐτοίμαζέ μοι ξενίαν· ἐλπίζω γὰρ ὅτι διὰ τῶν προσευχῶν ὑμῶν χαρισθήσομαι ὑμῖν. ²³ Ἀσπάζεται σε Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ²⁴ Μάρκος, Ἀρίσταρχος, Δημᾶς, Λουκᾶς, οἱ συνεργοί μου. ²⁵ Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν.

V. 20. T. R. has *Κυρίῳ*

V. 23. T. R. has *ἀσπάζονται*

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in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ.
Having confidence in thy obedience I have 21
written unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also
do more than I say.

But at the same time be preparing for me 22
also a lodging: for I hope that through your
prayers I shall be given unto you.

There saluteth thee Epaphras, my fellow- 23
captive in Christ Jesus; Mark, Aristarchus, 24
Demas, Luke, my fellow-laborers. The grace 25
of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your
spirit.



NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.

ΠΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΗΜΟΝΑ.

ΠΑΥΛΟΣ δέσμιος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφὸς, Φιλήμονι τῷ ἀγαπητῷ καὶ συνεργῷ ἡμῶν, ² καὶ Ἀπφία τῇ ἀγαπητῇ, καὶ Ἀρχίππῳ τῷ συστρατιώτῃ ἡμῶν, καὶ τῇ κατ' οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ. ³ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

V. 2. ἀδελφῆ in good MSS.

VERSES 1-3.

The Salutation.

V. 1. Paul omits the apostolic title which stands usually at the head of the epistles, because he writes as a friend to solicit a favor, and not as a teacher to expound and enforce the truth. Δούλος καὶ ἀπόστολος δέσμιος in some copies is a worthless reading.

Δέσμιος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, a prisoner of Christ Jesus (Eph. 3 : 1 ; 2 Tim. 1 : 8), i. e., who belongs to Christ, whose he is, and

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whom he serves; or, more probably after the analogy of *τοῖς δεσμοῖς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου* in v. 13, *genit. subjecti*, i. e., a prisoner whom Christ has made such, whose cause has brought him to that condition. See Winer, §30, 2, β. This allusion to his captivity was suited to awaken sympathy, and dispose Philemon to listen more favorably to the sufferer's request.

Timothy was with Paul at this time (Col. 1 : 1), and, as *ὁ ἀδελφός* shows, was not unknown to those addressed in the letter. He assisted the apostle during his ministry at Ephesus (Acts 19 : 22), and could have met with Philemon and other Colossians at that period, or could have become acquainted with them at Colossæ, if Paul went thither, since Timothy was Paul's companion in that journey (Acts 16 : 1, 6). Koch regards the relation in *ὁ ἀδελφός* as the universal one which makes every Christian *the brother* of all other Christians, and not any specific relation in which Timothy stood to Paul and the Colossians.

Συνεργῶ ἡμῶν, *our fellow-laborer*. This term was applied often to preachers of the gospel (2 Cor. 8 : 23; Philip. 2 : 25; Col. 4 : 11); but there is no evidence that Philemon sustained that office, and without doubt other and more private modes of Christian co-operation are intended here. In opening his house for public worship, and in performing so many benevolent acts for the disciples of Christ, we see some of the proofs of his claim to such an appellation. Priscilla is called *συνεργός* in Rom. 16 : 3, who certainly was not a preacher. Some critics connect *ἡμῶν* with *ἀγαπητῶ*, as well as *συνεργῶ*, because the latter wants the article. But another rule also makes *συνεργῶ* anarthrous, viz., that the two nouns are appellatives of the same person. Winer, §19, 3, c; Buttm., *N. T. Spr.*, p. 86. The conclusion may be a just one, but a better proof here would be that Paul is so apt to limit this epithet; compare Rom. 16 : 5, 8, 9; 1 Cor. 10 : 14; 1 Thess. 2 : 8; Philip. 4 : 1. The construction would be less doubtful if *ἡμῶν* were attached to the first noun, instead of the

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second. On the contrary, ἀγαπητός stands often alone, meaning *beloved* and inferentially *to be loved*, wherever the person is known or may be known.

V. 2. Ἀρπία or Ἀππία (written πφ, or ππ, as in Acts 28 : 15) was the wife of Philemon as most critics suppose ; at all events must have belonged to his family or household, since otherwise she would have been named here without any obvious propriety. Unless she had been specially connected with Philemon, her name would have stood naturally after the following name.

Whether we should read ἀγαπητῆ (Γ., R.) or ἀδελφῆ (uniting the two is out of the question), is uncertain. The appeal to the external witnesses is not decisive. Tischendorf returns to ἀγαπητῆ in his second edition. Meyer urges with some reason that ἀδελφῆ may be the true word, and ἀγαπητῆ a copyist's repetition of the epithet applied to Philemon. Lachmann adopts ἀδελφῆ. On the whole, it would be premature as yet to change the common text.

We are not to reach forward to the next clause for ἡμῶν (a proper name intervenes), but must supply it mentally after ἀγαπητῆ if the pronoun (which is doubtful) really belongs there.

Archippus filled some office among the Christians at Colossæ ; most probably as the earnest terms of the charge in Col. 4 : 17 indicate, that of a pastor or preacher. From his being mentioned thus in a private letter, it is evident that he bore some more special relation to Philemon than that of a partaker of the common faith. That this relation was the relation of father and son (Olsh.), is a mere conjecture.

Τῷ συστρατιώτῃ ἡμῶν, *our fellow-soldier*, implies more than *συνεργός*. While Paul and Archippus labored for the spread of the gospel, they encountered in that service similar dangers, privations, hardships ; compare Philip. 2 : 25 ; 2 Tim. 2 : 3.

Τῇ κατ' οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ, *to the church* (assembly, congregation) *in thy house*. In Col. 1 : 2 Paul says *τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς*

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ἀγίοις, to designate the Colossian believers in general, and hence the limitation here after *ἐκκλησίᾳ* indicates that he refers not to the entire body of Christians at Colossæ, but to a certain number of them, who were accustomed to meet for worship at the house of Philemon. We have the same distinction in Col. 4 : 15 ; see also Rom. 16 : 5, and 1 Cor. 16 : 19. Further, to regard the letter as addressed to all the Colossians would be inconsistent with the private nature of its contents. This local assembly would consist naturally in part of those who belonged to Philemon's family, and of others who were led as a matter of convenience, or from personal connections, to assemble with him. The expression does not warrant the opinion that all the members of his family were converts.

Σου after *οἴκον* refers to Philemon and not to the nearer name, because he is the leading person, and is always meant when this pronoun occurs (vv. 4, 6, 7). In such assemblies messages from the apostles were announced or read (Col. 4 : 15, 16) ; hymns were sung (Col. 3 : 16) and prayers offered (1 Tim. 2 : 1) ; the Scriptures were read and explained (1 Tim. 4 : 13) ; the Lord's supper commemorated (Acts 2 : 46 ; 20 : 11) ; and in the weekly meetings, at least, probably collections were taken up when some exigency required it (1 Cor. 16 : 2, unless *παρ' ἑαυτῶν* implies that the contribution was private). Scenes like this Onesimus may have witnessed under his master's roof ; though his heart was not touched till he heard the truth again in a foreign land (v. 10).

V. 3. *Χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη*, *grace and peace*, undeserved favor, and all good, temporal and spiritual, which flows from that source. The optative *εἴη* and not *ἔστω* is the suppressed verbal form. Winer, § 64, 26. *Χάρις* *κ. τ. λ.* takes the place of the classical *χαίρειν* or *εὖ πράττειν*. It was a new form of salutation substituted perhaps for the common one, because the latter as a sort of prayer to the gods had a taint of heathenism.

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Ἀπὸ Θεοῦ, κ. τ. λ., *from God our father.* The terms differ in this, that the former marks the relation which God sustains to all men; the latter that which he sustains to his spiritual children, or such as believe on Christ. Καὶ connects the nouns with this sense in some passages; comp. Gal. 1 : 4.

Ἡμῶν may belong to κυρίου as well as to πατρός, but more probably limits itself to the latter as the personal designation of that relationship. Κυρίου may omit the article as a well-known title, but *must* omit it if ἡμῶν be repeated. Buttm., *N. T. Spr.*, p. 87.

⁴ Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ μου, πάντοτε μνεΐαν σου ποιούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, ⁵ ἀκούων σου τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν, ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους· ⁶ ὅπως ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς σου ἐνεργῆς γένηται ἐν ἐπιγνώσει παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. ⁷ χαρὰν γὰρ ἔχομεν πολλὴν καὶ παράκλησιν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου, ὅτι τὰ σπλάγχνα τῶν ἁγίων ἀναπέπνυται διὰ σου, ἀδελφέ.

V. 7. T. R. has *χάριον*

Ib. Many read *ἔσχον*

VERSES 4-7.

The Character of Philemon, and the Apostle's Joy and Gratitude on his Account.

V. 4. In εὐχαριστῶ (comp. Rom. 1 : 8; 1 Cor. 1 : 4; 1 Thess. 1 : 2; 2 Thess. 1 : 3) we see the apostle's habit of recognizing the graces of the Christian as the fruits of grace.

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Τῷ Θεῷ μου, my God, shows the apostle's tender sense of his reconciliation and his consciousness of an interest in the divine favor.

Πάντοτε, always, which some refer to the participial clause (Calv., Est., Ellic.), belongs to *εὐχαριστῶ* (Hngb., Koch, De Wet., Mey., Wiesg.); comp. 1 Cor. 1 : 4 ; Eph. 1 : 15 ; Col. 1 : 3 ; 2 Thess. 1 : 3. The Syriac joins together the verb and adverb. The thoughts are : " I remember thee in my prayers, and never fail to give thanks to God for what thou art through Him." *Πάντοτε* of itself may precede or follow the word qualified. Gersdorf's *Beiträge*, p. 498. Lachmann and Tischendorf insert no comma, because the rule is not to separate a verb and participle.

Μνείαν σου ποιούμενος means *mentioning thee* as the result or proof of the remembrance (*μνείαν*) ; since the middle strengthens the verbal idea of the noun as well as states it periphrastically, and so in both ways differs from the active, which signifies merely to cause or make that which the noun denotes. Winer, § 38, 5, 1, note ; Matthiæ, § 421, 4. The prayers of the apostle, in this instance, consisted at the same time of thanksgiving (*εὐχαριστία*), and intercession (*μνείαν σου*).

Ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, in my prayers, lit. *upon*. This preposition, with the genitive, denotes often the epoch or time when an event occurs ; see Matt. 1 : 11 ; Luke 3 : 2 ; Acts 11 : 28 ; Rom. 1 : 10.

V. 5. *Ἀκούων, hearing*, states the ground of *εὐχαριστῶ*, not of *μνείαν σου ποιούμενος*. The reason for his giving thanks would not be named at all, unless it be found in this clause ; and as we see from other passages (Rom. 1 : 8 ; Eph. 1 : 15 ; Col. 1 : 4), to leave the act unexplained would be contrary to Paul's usage. *Ἀκούων*, as a present participle, may refer to a single report, or a repeated one. It is probable, from the nature of the case, that Paul heard often that his friend was performing the acts of piety which he here commends. Epaphras, who was a

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Colossian, and was then at Rome (Col. 1 : 7 ; 4 : 12), and Onesimus may have brought such tidings, or have confirmed them.

Ἦν ἔχεις renders σου unnecessary before ἀγάπην, though the article there does not exclude the pronoun. The sentence here, as nearly all interpreters agree, involves a manifest chiasm (χιασμός). The grammatical order would be σου τὴν πίστιν ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχεις εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους, i. e., thy faith which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and the love which thou hast unto all the saints. So Theodoret, Calvin, Grotius, Estius, Bengel, Koch, Rothe, De Wette, Wiesinger, and others.

A few critics, chiefly in order to avoid this transposition, render πίστιν *fidelity*, instead of *faith*; and thus the word would denote qualities which Philemon could exercise at the same time towards Christ and towards his followers. But πίστις has this sense very rarely in the New Testament, and never when coupled thus with ἀγάπη; compare Eph. 1 : 15; 1 Thess. 3 : 6; 1 Tim. 1 : 14; 2 Tim. 1 : 13; see also Col. 1 : 4.

Meyer objects to the above passages as irrelevant, because there the order is πίστις, ἀγάπη, and different from that here. But no writer is so mechanical as to place his words always in the same order, and ἀγάπη, as the fruit of faith, may be mentioned first, as naturally as πίστις, the antecedent or source of love.

Ellicott suggests that τὴν πίστιν may belong, in its ordinary sense, to πρὸς τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους, i. e., *faith towards the Lord Jesus*, which is evinced at the same time *unto the saints*. But that view leaves τὴν ἀγάπην without any specified object to which the love is directed (since ἣν ἔχεις would strictly carry forward τὴν πίστιν only), and overlooks the manifest relation in which this passage stands to Col. 1 : 4, where the terms in question are distributed without ambiguity. That passage was written at the same time with this, and must reflect the same meaning.

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Άγιος (קדושים) designates Christians as *holy* or *consecrated*, i. e., to the service of Christ or God. As used in the New Testament, it belongs to all who profess to be disciples, and does not distinguish one class of them as superior in point of excellence to another. It refers to the normal or prescribed standard of Christian character rather than the actual one; for we find it applied sometimes to those who were censured for their want of a correct Christian life. See 1 Cor. 1 : 2, as compared with 1 Cor. 3 : 2; 11 : 21.

V. 6. Some refer *ὁπως* (as Meyer) to ἣν ἔχεις, *which thou hast* (viz., love and faith) *in order that*, etc. The reasons for this connection, says Winer (§ 53, 6), are groundless. There are positive objections to it. What immediately precedes is too subordinate to attract the thought here. Faith in Christ is an act which the believer performs essentially for its own sake and for himself, and not with a view to the cultivation of other graces, or the benefit of other persons. After saying that he prayed so constantly for his friend, Paul would naturally mention what it was that he desired for him. The telic *ὁπως* points out that object, and must depend on *μείαν ποιούμενος*.

As to the rest, the meaning of the verse turns chiefly upon *κοινωνία τῆς πίστεως*. It is not easy to decide confidently on the sense of this expression. The following are the principal interpretations :

1. The meaning may be *the fellowship* or *communion of thy faith*, i. e., *genit. subjecti*, or *auctoris*—the participation of Philemon along with others in the virtues, blessings, hopes, which accompany faith in the Redeemer. For *κοινωνία*, as denoting a coexistent participation (extended to different objects), see 2 Cor. 6 : 14; 8 : 4; Phil. 2 : 1; 3 : 10. For this genitive relation, compare *δικαιοσύνη τῆς πίστεως* (Rom. 4 : 13), *the righteousness* or *justification* which faith secures, and *χαρὰ τῆς πίστεως* (Philip. 1 : 25), *the joy* which results from faith. *Κοινωνον*, in v. 17, implies

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this idea of Christians as linked to each other by certain common ties. The proximity of that term to this may be a finger sign to the meaning here. *Κοινωνία ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*, in Philip. 1 : 5, many of the best critics understand in the same manner. Approximations to the same thought, with variations in the language, see in 1 Cor. 9 : 22 ; Eph. 3 : 6 ; 4 : 13 ; Col. 1 : 12 ; 1 Tim. 6 : 2 ; Heb. 3 : 1 ; 1 Pet. 5 : 1.

The apostle John's *κοινωνία* involves this same idea of a co-partnership between believers which unites them at the same time with God and with one another ; though in his use the subjective part, the kindredship of character, may prevail over that of the personal benefits of the common faith (1 John 1 : 6, 7).

The train of thought then would be this : " Having such evidence (*ἀκούων* *κ. τ. λ.*) that Philemon was a sharer in the grace of the gospel, the apostle prays that his friend's participation in the Christian fellowship founded on his faith and evinced as so real by his love may become more and more perfect by his full comprehension of all the duties and virtues (*παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ*) which honor the Christian name (*εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν*). Meyer's objection, that the genitive after *κοινωνία* (except that of a person) points out generally the object in which the participation consists, is not conclusive. Nothing is more common than the genitive of the cause or source, and nothing in *κοινωνία* forbids its connection with that noun.

2. Another rendering is *the community of thy faith*, i. e., the faith which thou hast in common with others (= *κατὰ κοινὴν πίστιν*, in Titus 1 : 4). This explanation limits the Christian unity to a single point, and fails to recognize the entire contents of the *κοινωνία* as unfolded in other passages. This is the view, however, more generally adopted than any other.

3. *The participation of thy faith* means the participation of others in the fruits of this faith, i. e., in his charities and other acts of piety ; and the prayer of the apostle relates not to Phile-

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mon but to those who received his favors. So Meyer, and after him Ellicott. But in the preceding verse it is the *love* which is shown to the saints, while Christ is the object of the *faith*; and hence with that meaning, we should expect *τῆς ἀγάπης σου* instead of *τῆς πίστεως*. It is still more decisive, that *μυρίαν σου ποιούμενος* becomes so unmeaning, if *ὅπως* turns the mind thus abruptly in a new direction, and leaves Philemon out of the class of persons prayed for.

4. It is understood of *the impartation* (communication in that sense) of *his faith*, i. e., by the same metonymy as before, of its effects in the form of charitable acts. But in this instance, too, *τῆς ἀγάπης* would be a more obvious word than *τῆς πίστεως*. It may be urged also that the phraseology with that sense is unlike Paul's. It is characteristic of him that he shrinks as it were instinctively from giving any apparent countenance to the idea that one person may impart faith to another.

Ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, κ. τ. λ., in a knowledge of every good thing, i. e., relating to Christian truth and duty, every thing which it becomes the believer to know (see the theoretical side in Col. 2 : 2), and which it becomes him to do (see the practical side in Philip. 4 : 8); not *every blessing* enjoyed by him, since *ἐπιγνώσει* can not mean experience. It is understood of course that the knowledge in this case is not latent, but appears in the life, nothing else being true Christian knowledge. Ecumenius: *διὰ τοῦ ἐπιγνώσθαι σε καὶ πράττειν πᾶν ἀγαθόν*. Theophylact: *ἐν τῷ ἐπιγνώσκειν σε πᾶν ἀγαθόν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ μεταχειρισθῆναι, κ. τ. λ.* This clause, therefore, defines the mode in which the apostle prays that Philemon's faith may show its increase or power, i. e., in his attainment of a still deeper insight into the truth, and his manifestation of all the fruits of such wisdom. To understand *ἐπιγνώσει* of the knowledge which others might acquire from Philemon's example is to wrest the logical subject (*πίστεώς σου*) and the predicate from each other, and is contrary to the altogether

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analogous passage in Philip. 1 : 9. That faith and knowledge, truth and obedience, may lean upon each other, may go hand in hand, is everywhere, as here, the burden of the apostle's prayer for the saints.

Ἐν ἡμῖν, *in us*, is the true reading, and not *ἐν ὑμῖν*, *in you*, as in the English Version, after the received text. The soul is the sphere in which the believer's faith operates. The fluctuating text as De Wette observes, arose from the idea that the pronoun must refer to the Colossians.

Ἐὲς Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦν, *unto Christ Jesus*, i. e., his praise, honor; not *in*, as in the Common Version. The evidence for omitting the words is unimportant. Some MSS. have *Χριστοῦ* only.

V. 7. *Χαράν γὰρ ἔσχον κ. τ. λ.*, *for I had (or we have) much joy and consolation*. *Γὰρ* assigns the reason why Paul offers this prayer with thanksgiving in Philemon's behalf. It refers not to any one word or clause, but to the entire thought in the reader's mind at this stage of the discourse. Meyer restricts the *γὰρ* to *εὐχαριστῶ* but that word is not complete without the adjuncts. *Πολλήν* belongs to both nouns. The apostle's joy (*χαράν*) alleviated the sorrow of his captivity, and *παράκλησιν* describes that effect of the happy tidings. *Χάριν* has less support, but would mean *gratitude* to God, i. e., for such piety in Philemon. Green (*Developed Criticism*, p. 164) decides for *χάριν*, chiefly because as being less obvious, it might be more easily displaced. On the contrary, *εὐχαριστῶ* may have led some copyist to substitute *χάριν* for *χαράν*. If we read *ἔχομεν* (T. R.), *we have* (E. V.), Paul and Timothy must be the subjects of the verb; but *ἔσχον* is better attested, as Griesbach, Lachmann, Wordsworth, Ellicott, and others decide. Tischendorf has both forms in different editions. The aorist would refer to the precise time when the apostle received the information which afforded him such joy. Meyer prefers *ἔχομεν*, *we had*, but without sufficient reason

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In the translation I adhere for the present to the common reading.

Ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου, in thy love, lit. upon, as the cause.

Ὅτι τὰ σπλάγχνα, z. τ. λ., because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed. This clause states a fact, but does not define the mode of the relief or consolation. It is to be understood no doubt more especially of hospitality to strangers, and of succor extended to the sick and needy, but as including also other manifestations of a sympathizing spirit towards those afflicted in mind or body. *Σπλάγχνα, = ספּלחן, as denoting the seat of the affections, the heart, is a common Hæbraism.*

The disciples whom Philemon assisted may have been not Colossians merely, but persons from other places, especially missionary friends whom he entertained in his house, or forwarded on their journeys. See Tit. 3 : 13 ; 3 John, v. 6. This conduct of Philemon is an illustration of that trait in the character of the primitive disciples, which compelled the heathen to exclaim : "*See how these Christians love one another!*"

Ἀδελφέ, brother, Paul says, and says here, because his heart overflows with love at the remembrance of such kindness.

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⁸ Διὸ πολλὴν ἐν Χριστῷ παρρησίαν ἔχων ἐπιτάσσειν σοι τὸ ἀνῆκον, ⁹ διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην μᾶλλον παρακαλῶ· τοιοῦτος ὢν ὡς Παῦλος πρεσβύτης, νυνὶ δὲ καὶ δέσμιος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ¹⁰ παρακαλῶ σε περὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ τέκνου, ὃν ἐγέννησα ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, Ὀνήσιμον, ¹¹ τὸν ποτέ σοι ἄχρηστον, νυνὶ δέ σοι καὶ ἐμοὶ εὐχρηστον, ¹² ὃν ἀπέπεμψά σοι· σὺ δὲ αὐτὸν,

V. 12. T. R. omits σοι

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τουτέστι τὰ ἐμὰ σπλάγχνα, προσλαβοῦ· ¹³ ὄν
 ἐγὼ ἐβουλόμην πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν κατέχειν, ἵνα
 ὑπὲρ σοῦ διακονῇ μοι ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς τοῦ
 εὐαγγελίου· ¹⁴ χωρὶς δὲ τῆς σῆς γνώμης οὐ-
 δὲν ἠθέλησα ποιῆσαι, ἵνα μὴ ὡς κατὰ ἀνάγκην
 τὸ ἀγαθόν σου ἦ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἐκούσιον· ¹⁵ τάχα
 γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη πρὸς ὦραν, ἵνα αἰώνι-
 ον αὐτὸν ἀπέχῃς· ¹⁶ οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον, ἀλλ'
 ὑπὲρ δοῦλον, ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητὸν, μάλιστα ἐμοὶ,
 πῶσφ δὲ μᾶλλον σοὶ καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ καὶ ἐν Κυ-
 ρίῳ; ¹⁷ εἰ οὖν ἐμὲ ἔχεις κοινωνόν, προσλαβοῦ
 αὐτὸν ὡς ἐμέ· ¹⁸ Εἰ δέ τι ἠδίκησέ σε ἢ ὀφεί-
 λει, τοῦτο ἐμοὶ ἐλλόγει· ¹⁹ Ἐγὼ Παῦλος
 ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ, ἐγὼ ἀποτίσω· ἵνα μὴ
 λέγω σοι ὅτι καὶ σεαυτὸν μοι προσοφείλεις.
²⁰ Ναὶ, ἀδελφέ, ἐγὼ σου ὀναίμην ἐν Κυρίῳ·
 ἀνάπαυσόν μου τὰ σπλάγχνα ἐν Χριστῷ.
²¹ πεπειθὼς τῇ ὑπακοῇ σου ἔγραψά σοι, εἰδὼς
 ὅτι καὶ ὑπὲρ ὃ λέγω ποιήσεις.

V. 20. T. R. has *Κυρίῳ*

VERSES 8-21.

Paul entreats Philemon to forget the Past, and receive Onesimus again as a Christian Friend and Brother.

V. 8. This paragraph (8-21) treats of the main subject of the letter.

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Διό, wherefore, on which account, i. e., since this character of Philemon was the cause of such joy (v. 7), and hence warranted the appeal to his kindness which follows. Some limit *διὸ* to *χαράν*, but *ἀγάπην*, as illustrated by *ὅτι* *κ. τ. λ.*, is the principal word, and the other an incident merely. The ideas flow into each other in the progression of the thought through *διό*.

Πολλὴν ἔχων, though having much boldness in Christ. This boldness or confidence is that which Paul possessed as an apostle, and might assert on this occasion, if he had thought it necessary to exercise his authority in that sphere.

Ἐπιτάσσειν σοι τὸ ἀνῆκον, to enjoin upon thee that which is becoming, or proper; compare Eph. 4 : 4; Col. 3 : 18. *Ἀνῆκον* retains this sense in the Romaic. The term, as Meyer remarks, is generic, and includes the forgiveness and reception of Onesimus as an instance of the category.

V. 9. *Διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην*, for love's sake; i. e., as a tribute, so to speak, to that principle, Paul asks that Philemon would exemplify his benevolence in the present case. The article defines the love not as Philemon's, but as the characteristic virtue of all Christians. This expression, therefore, and *διὸ* do not repeat each other, as some needlessly represent. The particular love shown by Philemon (v. 7.) proved that he was not deficient in this element of the Christian's nature, and hence (*διό*) that he could be moved by an appeal to it in behalf of Onesimus.

Μᾶλλον παρακαλῶ, I beseech rather, i. e., than enjoin. *Μᾶλλον* has often this alternative sense; compare Matt. 10 : 6; 1 Cor. 5 : 2; Eph. 4 : 28; Philip. 1 : 12, etc. Though the apostle might command, he waives that right, and takes the attitude of one who entreats. The act of the one verb (*ἐπιτάσσειν*) is opposed to that of the other; and *παρακαλῶ* is left purposely without any object. The insertion of the pronoun here (C. V.) encumbers the thought. If *σὲ* belonged to the verb in both

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instances, it would naturally accompany the first, and be understood after the second. A colon, not a comma, should separate this clause from the next. Tischendorf has the correct punctuation.

Τοιοῦτος ὢν, being such a one, i. e., as he who lays aside his office, and appeals to the benevolence and sympathy of his friend. *Τοιοῦτος*, as so taken, draws its antecedent from the preceding context. The numerous instances in the New Testament, in which this pronoun has such a retrospective force (see Brud. *Concord.* s. v.), suggest that reference here. So most of the later critics, as Hagenbach, De Wette, Meyer, Wiesinger, Elliott, and others, understand the passage. "The Greek," says Prof. Sophocles, "demands this explanation." Some of the older writers advance the same view. See Wetstein *ad loc.*, and Storr, *Opusc. Academ.*, II., p. 231. The more common opinion is that *ὡς* defines *τοιοῦτος*, and that the terms are correlative to each other; but the pronoun, as so used, responds to *οἷος*, *ὥστε*, and not to *ὡς*. A sort of intermediate view makes *τοιοῦτος* indefinite, being such a one as I am known to be, and *ὡς* enumerative, to wit, as Paul, etc. The participial clause belongs at all events to the second *παρακαλῶ*, and not to the first, as arranged in some editions of the text.

In *ὡς Παῦλος, κ. τ. λ.*, as Paul an old man, etc., *ὡς* points out the character (compare *ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους*, in Acts 17 : 22), in which, after having said that he would beseech and not command, he proceeds to apply himself to this work of persuasion. *Παῦλος* recalls the individual to whom the specified traits belong, and does not suggest the apostleship as one of the grounds of appeal, since *μᾶλλον παρακαλῶ* puts that argument expressly aside. His age and his captivity are the considerations which Paul urges, to give effect to his entreaty. *Πρεσβύτερης*, an old man (compare Luke 1 : 18 ; Titus 2 : 2) is not an official name, elder, which would be *πρεσβύτερος*, and being destitute of the

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article, does not point him out as *the aged one*, as if he were known in that distinctive way. If Paul was converted at the age of thirty (i. e., 36 A.D.), and wrote this letter just before the close of his first Roman captivity (64 A.D.), he was now about sixty years old. See *Commentary on the Acts*, pp. 26 and 144. According to Hippocrates a man was called *προσβύτης* from forty-nine to fifty-six, and after that *γέρον*. There was another estimate, which fixed the beginning of the later period (*γῆρας*) at sixty-nine. See Coray's note in his *Συγκείμενος*, p. 167. If Philemon was a much younger man than Paul, the latter might call himself old, in part with reference to that disparity. Ewald (*Sendschreiben des Apostels Paulus*, p. 457) finds an intimation in *προσβύτης* that Philemon was converted in early life, and had been known to the apostle for many years before this correspondence; the fact may have been so, though the ground for such a conclusion here must be held to the very object.

Δέσμιος brings the apostle to his friend's mind as bound with a chain to his keeper, and unable to take a step except under his surveillance.

V. 10. *Περί τοῦ ἐμοῦ τέκνον*, concerning my child, as the term imports, and not *son*, as in the current version, which would be much less expressive. The apostle refers to his agency in the conversion of Onesimus, as appears from the next words. Compare 1 Cor. 4 : 14; Gal. 4 : 19. Ewald (p. 459) observes this delicate distinction in translating the passage.

Ὅν . . . δεσμοῖς, whom I begot in my bonds; and whom, therefore, as the sharer of his afflictions, he loved so much the more tenderly. Hence not to heed the apostle was to turn away a father pleading for his child. The later critics drop *μον*, after *δεσμοῖς*, but the article points to the same relation. Pressense (*Histoire des trois premiers Siècles*, vol. II., p. 56) infers from the language here that Paul found Onesimus in prison, and was the means of his conversion there. He overlooks the fact

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that Onesimus must have been at large, in order to labor so effectually for the advantage of the apostle (v. 11), and at all events must have been released before the present letter was written, as the apostle otherwise would have had no control over his movements (v. 12). The bonds mentioned are those of Paul only, and the nature of his confinement was such (Acts 28 : 31) that all who desired could repair to him, and hear the Word without molestation (*ἀκωλύτως*).

Ὀνήσιμον belongs in sense to *τέκνον*, but has been drawn into the case of the relative. Winer, § 65, 2. Onesimus (Wetst. *ad loc.*) was a common name among the Greeks. Suddenly pronounced in this case, it would have grated harshly on the ear of Philemon; hence Paul must prepare the way for it by forestalling his friend's sympathy and interest, before the latter knows who the person is for whom the apostle intercedes. Nothing could be more happy than this delicate adjustment of the order of the words to the idea. It will be observed that our translators insert the name after *τέκνον*, with manifest injury to the sense. Onesimus may have been standing in person before his master, and yet Philemon never have surmised the object of the letter till he reached this name so skilfully introduced. Supported by such an advocate, and knowing the character of the man in whose hands he had consented to place himself again, the fugitive could present the letter in silence, and await the result without anxiety.

The accumulation of motives urged in this verse, and the last renders the passage one of remarkable power. Buckminster's enumeration of the ideas agrees almost verbally with that of Macknight. "He reminds Philemon of his reputation for kindness, of his friendship for the writer, of his respect for character, and especially for age, of his compassion for his bonds; and, with all this, lets fall an intimation, that perhaps some deference was due to his wishes as an apostle. On the other hand, he presents

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before Philemon the repentance of Onesimus, and his return to virtue, his Christian profession, and the consequent confidence and attachment of Paul, his spiritual father."

V. 11. *Τὸν ποτέ σοι ἄχρηστον*, *who was formerly unprofitable to thee*. So the apostle could describe him on account of his desertion and the consequent loss of service, and not necessarily because he had committed some crime, or had been so worthless before his escape. *Ὀνήσιμος* as an adjective signifies *useful*, and hence some critics have found a play on the word here: "He did not show himself an *Ὀνήσιμος* truly; but he is changed now, and become worthy, yea, twice worthy (*σοὶ καὶ ἐμοί*) of that expressive name." It is remarkable that none of the Greek commentators recognize this correspondence between the words; it may be doubted whether it is not a discovery of the later critics. With that meaning, as Rothe remarks, *Ὀνήσιμον* would naturally have called up *ἀνόνητον*, rather than *ἄχρηστον*, as the contrastive term.

Σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ εὐχρηστον, *useful to thee and me*. We are not to assign a stronger sense to this adjective, than to *χρηστός*. The service in the two relations would be similar, i. e., not religious in one and personal in the other, but personal in both. See on the next verse. Paul wrote many of his epistles by the hand of an amanuensis. Slaves were often employed in that capacity, and such were called *scribæ*. Becker's *Gallus*, I., p. 122. Possibly Onesimus may have been trained to that art, and writing for the apostle may have been one of the ways in which he was able to assist him.

Ὀν ἀπέπεμψα, *whom I have sent back to thee*. The reason for the restoration is that assigned in v. 14. The best authorities add *σοι* after the verb. The epistolary aorist here views the letter as already in the hands of the reader; compare Gal. 4 : 8; Eph. 6 : 22; Philip. 2 : 28. Winer, §41, 5, 2.

V. 12. *Σὺ δὲ ἀπόλόν*, *but do thou receive him*, i. e., to your con-

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fidence and affection. *Ἄε*, adversative, excludes the idea of any other reception than precisely this. The common text has *προσλάβοῦ*, but inserts it from v. 17. The correct reading is *σὺ δὲ αὐτόν*, without any verb. The construction is anacoluthic, but not obscure. The sequel of the sentence occurs in v. 17, and what intervenes is an instance of the turning aside to pursue other thoughts which crowd upon the mind of the writer by the way, of which Paul's fervid style affords many examples. See Winer, § 63, 1.

Τοῦτ' ἔστιν, κ. τ. λ., that is my own flesh, lit. my bowels = his heart, as in v. 17, i. e., object of his tenderest love, dear to him as his own soul, as part of himself. According to others, *σπλάγχνα* means son of my bowels, his offspring, spiritual child (Theodoret, Chrysostom, Wordsworth). "But," as Meyer replies, "this mode of describing the paternal relation would hardly be congruous with *ὃν ἐγέννησα* in v. 10. Paul constantly uses *σπλάγχνα* to denote the seat of the affections (2 Cor. 6 : 12; 7 : 15; Philip. 1 : 8; 2 : 1; Col. 3 : 12; Philem. v. 7, 15; compare also Luke 1 : 78; 1 Tim. 3 : 17); and has used it here, where the person beloved is called the heart itself, because he occupies so large a space in its affections. All languages have a similar expression."

V. 13. *Ὅν ἐγὼ ἐβούλομην*, whom I could have wished, i. e., had it been a question merely of my own feelings or convenience. The translation of the English Version is entirely defensible here. The Greeks employed the imperfect of this verb (and so *ἐβούλομην*) to express a present wish with which as a matter of politeness, or from the necessity of the case, they did not expect a compliance. See note on Acts 25 : 22; Winer, § 41, 2; Buttmann, § 139, 13, N. Some make *ἐβούλομαι* the epistolary imperfect, *was wishing*, i. e., when he wrote, and still wished, but would not allow the desire to influence his conduct. The idea remains nearly the same, though the other is a much finer idiom in this connection. Some render *was purposing*, on the supposition that this verb and *ἔθελω* differ always, as *willed* and *wished* in

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English. But the words, like our corresponding terms, have interchangeably a stronger or weaker sense, and the speaker's tone at the moment, or the emphasis of the expression must show whether the one or the other sense is meant in a given instance. See Rost and Palm, *Lex.*, I., p. 779. It is not to be supposed that Paul, with his view of the claims of the ἀγάπη, would become willing to restore Onesimus after a previous determination to retain him, but rather that he would be kept even from any such incipient purpose by his unwillingness to violate the perfect law of love. Scholars differ still respecting the relation of βούλωμαι and ἔθελω to each other; and any exegesis on that basis merely is uncertain. See, e. g., Vömel, *Synonymisches Wörterbuch*, p. 275, on one side, and Tittmann, *Synon. in N. Testamento*, p. 124, on the other.

Πρὸς ἑμαυτὸν κατέχειν, *to keep with myself*, where the verb implies not merely detention or delay, but firm or permanent possession. Ἐμαυτὸν, in this position, marks the collision of claim or interest between Paul and Philemon.

Ὑπὲρ σοῦ, *in thy stead*, as his representative, substitute; compare 2 Cor. 5 : 20. On ὑπερ, see Winer, § 47, 5, l. The assumed idea here is that the convert is indebted always to the teacher; and hence, as Paul on that principle had an undischarged claim against Philemon, he says, in effect, that he would accept the service of the slave, as an equivalent for what was due from the master.

Μοὶ διακονῆ, *might minister to me*. The tense represents the service as a present and continued one. Coneybear (Life and Epistles, II., p. 467) says, too strongly, that Paul wished to employ Onesimus in the service of the gospel. Μοὶ appears to limit the act of the verb (put before it in the best copies) to the apostle, and refers, in all probability, to the personal offices for which, as a captive, he was so dependent on the kindness of others. For this meaning of the verb, see Matt. 4 : 11; 25 : 44; Mark 1 : 13;

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Luke 8 : 3. The ministry (*διακονία*) in Acts 11 : 29 ; 1 Cor. 16 : 15 ; and 2 Cor. 11 : 8, was one of sympathy and benevolence, which the disciples performed toward each other. The fact merely of his being a slave would not show that Onesimus could not have aided Paul as a preacher ; for the ancient slaves were not excluded by law from the means of instruction, and there was a class of them among the Romans called *litterati*, on account of the use which their masters made of their literary abilities. Becker's *Gallus*, p. 121.

Ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, in the bonds of the gospel, i. e., *genit. auctoris*, into which he had been brought, as a herald of the gospel ; see on v. 1. "The bonds," says Wilke (*Rhetoric*, p. 143), "are those which the gospel suffers in the person of its advocate." But it impairs the force of the tacit appeal to the reader's sympathy to make the work here more prominent than the agent.

V. 14. *Χωρὶς δὲ τῆς σῆς γνώμης*, but without thy consent ; not, thy mind, as a *vox media*, i. e., a knowledge of his disposition whether favorable or unfavorable, since Paul could have no doubt of his friend's generosity, if he could only act freely in the case.

Οὐδὲν ἠθέλῃσα ποιῆσαι, I wished to do nothing, i. e., in the way of retaining Onesimus. The stronger sense of the verb (*willed*, as Wordsworth) would be entirely appropriate here, but is not necessary.

It is a question whether *τὸ ἀγαθὸν σου* is to be taken as specific or general. In the first case, *the benefit of thee (genit. subjecti)*, i. e., received from thee, means the favor for which Paul would be indebted to Philemon in being allowed to have the presence and the aid of so valuable an assistant. The reason, then, which he assigns for returning Onesimus is, that without taking that step Philemon would seem merely to acquiesce in the surrender of his servant (*κατὰ ἀνάγκην*) ; whereas, by having him under his control again, Philemon could place him at the disposal

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of the apostle, and so testify his friendship for him, *κατὰ ἐκούσιον*, i. e., in a voluntary manner, and by an unequivocal act. *Κατὰ ἐκούσιον* demands this view, if *τὸ ἀγαθὸν* denotes *the benefit* of his having Onesimus with him to minister to him; for unless by sending back Onesimus it was to be left to the master's option whether he would comply with Paul's known wishes or not, the alternative of a voluntary or enforced concession was out of the question. But if *τὸ ἀγαθὸν*, instead of this exclusive reference to his retaining Onesimus, means *thy good*, or *goodness* in general, any act of friendship (Calvin, Meyer, Ellicott), then the apostle states a principle or rule, viz., that he could accept no favor from Philemon in any instance, unless it was entirely free and unconstrained. Hence, as the connection between himself and Onesimus had taken place altogether without the master's agency or knowledge, he must send back the servant, since even an acquiescence on the part of Philemon *post factum* would be (*ὡς*) apparently *κατὰ ἀνάγκην*, and not *κατὰ ἐκούσιον*. The favor, according to this view, would be an extorted one in the eyes of Paul, if Philemon could approve it only after the act. The phrases *τὸ ἀγαθὸν*, *τὸ καλὸν*, *τὸ πρεπτόν*, and the like, have more commonly this abstract sense, and indicate that sense here. To understand the apostle otherwise, is to make his wish a command. He surely would not say: "I desire the service of this man, but must have your consent; and therefore I send him back to you, in order to see whether you will oblige me, or keep him to yourself." We should miss here altogether the delicacy which marks his conduct in every other part of the transaction.

V. 15. *Τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη*, for perhaps on this account he departed; which is another reason (*γάρ*) why Paul had sent back Onesimus. He was unwilling to detain him, much as he may have desired it on his own account, lest by so doing he should thwart a possible design of Providence. That this is a

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concurrent and subordinate reason, not the only one (Wiesinger, Meyer, Ellicott), is evident from the preceding verse (*ἵνα*, as related to *ἠθέλῃσα*). Paul says *τάχα*, because he had no certain knowledge of the divine purposes. Men can speak of them with confidence only as they are revealed to them, and the apostle makes no claim to such a revelation in this instance. He says *departed* (*ἐχωρίσθη*), not *fled*, because he would not censure the conduct of Onesimus, or awaken a resentful feeling in the master. The passive form has a middle sense (Acts 1 : 4 ; 18 : 1), and the rendering, *was separated*, i. e., apologetic, not so much by his own act as by a sort of providence, is incorrect. The use of this verb excludes Schrader's singular opinion that Onesimus was so worthless and incorrigible that his master drove him away, and would not have him in his service. *Διὰ τοῦτο* anticipates the clause which follows. See Winer, § 23, 5.

Ἰπὸς ὥραν, being opposed to *αἰώνιον*, is a relative expression, and does not decide how long Onesimus had been absent from Colossæ. The interval between his conversion and the return was no doubt brief.

Ἴνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχῃς, *that thou mightest have him fully*, (lit. *off*, so that nothing remains) *forever*. *Αἰώνιον* is an adjective with the force of an adverb. Winer, § 54, 2. The *forever* is the entire future both here and hereafter. The relation in this case can not be that of master and servant, which is temporary, but must be that of believers in Christ, which makes them equal sharers in the blessings of a kingdom which has no end. The purpose (*ἵνα*) is that of God, not Onesimus. The words of Joseph to his brethren (Gen. 14 : 5, sq.) illustrate the teleological relation. The intensive *ἀπέχῃς*, as applied here to the new spiritual bond, was suggested perhaps by the civil relation of the parties to each other. The verb signifies to have in full, to possess exhaustively (compare Matt. 6 : 2 ; Luke 6 : 24 ; Philip. 4 : 18), and the meaning here is, that Philemon, in gaining Onesimus as a

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Christian friend, had come into a relationship to him which made him all his own.

V. 16. *Ὅν ἔτι ὡς δοῦλον*, *no longer as a servant*, i. e., in that relation as the only one in which they would henceforth stand to each other. The meaning is not necessarily that the relation itself would cease (the expression neither demands nor excludes that limitation), but that a new element would enter into it, which would raise Onesimus above the condition of a servant under human laws, and give to him a title to the justice (Col. 4: 1), humanity, love, and entire religious equality, which the Christian brotherhood (*ἀδελφία*) confers on all believers, whether they are Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female (Gal. 3 : 28).

In *ὑπὲρ δοῦλον* the preposition may denote a superincumbent relation, as well as a superseding one. For *ὑπὲρ* = *more than*, see v. 21 ; Matt. 10 : 37 ; Acts 26 : 13 ; Heb. 4 : 12. The contrasted emphasis lies upon *ὡς* and *ὑπὲρ*, and the doctrine is that the Christian master must forget the slave in the brother.

Μάλιστα μοί, *especially to me* (beyond all others except Philemon), since Onesimus was so endeared to him as his son in the faith, and as the sharer of his bonds. *Ἐμοί* is the dative of interest or relation (Winer, § 31, 4), and not the dative of the agent after a passive verbal. Similar to this is *ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε* in 1 Thess. 2 : 8.

Καὶ ἐν σαρκί, κ. τ. λ., *both in the flesh*, i. e., his temporal or earthly relations, *and in the Lord*, i. e., his Christian or spiritual relations. *Ἐν σαρκί* answers here precisely to *κατὰ σαρκὰ* in Eph. 6 : 5, where Paul treats of the same subject. *Σὰρξ* passes readily to this meaning from its common use, as denoting that which is natural to man in distinction from the new principle, or *πνεῦμα* imparted to him in virtue of his union with Christ. The apostle employs the term often, as Koch remarks (p. 103), to designate that outward side of human existence, which is apprehended by the senses as opposed to the inner and unseen life.

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Onesimus had claims on Philemon which he could not have on the apostle or any other stranger, because he had lived with him, and labored for him so long, had been one of his household, perhaps had been reared with him from infancy, and been an object of his care and protection. The expression affords no proof of any natural relationship between Philemon and Onesimus. *Κατὰ σαρκὰ* in Eph. 6 : 5 forbids utterly that inference.

V. 17. *Εὶ οἶν με, κ. τ. λ., if therefore* (Onesimus being sent back under such circumstances) *thou hast me as a partner*, dost count me a sharer with thyself in the faith, love, blessings of the gospel. To spurn Onesimus, therefore, was to put the apostle himself out of the pale of the Christian fellowship: that is the argument. So nearly all critics, as Chrysostom, Theophylact, De Wette, Koch, Meyer, Wiesinger, Ellicott, though with some difference as to the relative prominence, which they assign to the different effects of the gospel in this experience of believers which makes them one. Not being limited by any term, *κοινωνόν* must include as much as the relation itself, which it defines, includes. As applied to Titus in 2 Cor. 8 : 23, it means not merely a *friend*, but a *friend* endeared to Paul by a conscious sympathy in all Christian things. For the nature and extent of this *κοινωνία*, see references in note on v. 6. That in *κοινωνόν* Paul would remind Philemon of an admitted right of Christians to share in each other's worldly possessions (*partner* in that sense), as a reason why he should receive what he asks for Onesimus, is far-fetched, and no longer urged as a possible meaning. This singular view appears in the Geneva Version.

Προσλαβοῦ, κ. τ. λ., receive him as me, i. e., not merely as a partner, but as my representative in that character. *Προσλαβοῦ* resumes the construction broken off in v. 12. *Ὡς* identifies the persons, and makes the reception a corollary of that identity. Onesimus, in his character as a believer, had the same rights as Paul had, and could claim their recognition as fully and justly as

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the apostle himself. So one Christian could appeal to another. Pliny, in his letter to Sabinianus, entreats his friend not to torture the wretch who was a suppliant for his mercy. The Roman laws, which were severer in this respect than the Greek laws, allowed a master to take the life of an absconding servant. See Becker's *Charikles*, p. 370. A brand-mark at least (*στίγμα*) was the penalty of an unsuccessful attempt to escape from servitude. The *δραπέτης ἐστιγμένος* (Aristoph. *Aves*, 759), or *brand-ed fugitive*, was a common sight on the estate of the wealthy Athenians.

V. 18. *Εἰ δέ τι, κ. τ. λ.*, but if he wronged thee in any thing, or oweth aught (*τι* repeated). The two verbs in the protasis may be understood of two distinct acts; the first of running away, the second of some peculation or dishonesty before the flight; or they may both refer to the same act under different aspects, viz., the running away viewed first as an injustice, which Paul asks his friend entirely to overlook for his sake; or (if that was too much, and he must be indemnified for the wrong, then) as a debt, which Paul says he was prepared to pay. *Τοῦτο* favors the view of a single act, since *ταῦτα* would be more natural, if Paul referred to the escape as one thing, and a previous theft as another. It may be urged, too, that *ἠδίκησε* is too comprehensive, if *ὀφείλει* adds another misdemeanor; for if there was stealing in addition to the escape, *ἠδίκησε* has included that offense already. Unless *ὀφείλει* refers to the same act, it falls naturally into a different ethical category from *ἠδίκησε*. The last objection, it is true, does not apply to Meyer's interpretation (also Calvin, Bengel, De Wette), viz., that *ἠδίκησε* alludes to a theft or some other fraud, which *ὀφείλει* defines euphemistically as a debt. But the greater difficulty arises then, that we have no reference whatever to the special offense of which Onesimus had been guilty, and which Paul would be expected to exert his utmost skill to induce the master to overlook. If, too, he had been alluding to an act

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which was an immorality *per se*, a bolder expression than the hesitating *εἰ* (so appropriate to the running away) would have been more natural. Schrader, Koch, Hensen, and others deny utterly that the passage affords any reason for impeaching the man's character before the flight, and Lardner says, sharply, that it is no better than calumny to charge a person with crime on such evidence. The copies read *ἐλλόγα*, *ἐλλόγει*, and *ἐνλόγα*, but favor the first. Fritzsche decides (*Epist. ad Rom.* I., p. 311) that the second is the only possible form. The word is not found out of the New Testament (here and in Rom. 5 : 13), except in some obscure fragments (Rost and Palm, *Lex.*, s. v.); but analogous words leave no doubt of the meaning. *Ἐλλόγει* = *καταλόγησαι* (Hesych.).

V. 19. The addition of *Παῦλος* strengthens the emphatic *ἐγώ*. A written pledge with such a name needed no other security.

Ἐγγραφα, κ. τ. λ., *I have written it with my own hand, I will repay*. The first verb derives its immediate object from *τοῦτο ἐμοὶ ἐλλόγα*, and *ἀποτίσω* repeats the assurance that he will discharge the obligation (*συγγραφή*) thus acknowledged by his own hand. *Ἀποτίσω* belongs to the phraseology of pecuniary compacts. Paul would not be apt to employ the hand of another to write a brief and friendly letter like this. There is no proof that he had such help in this instance. The emphasis falls evidently upon *ἐγὼ Παῦλος* (note the repeated *ἐγὼ*), and not upon *ἔγγραφα*, which *τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ* accompanies for descriptive effect merely, as in Gal. 6 : 11. The *ἐγὼ ἔγγραφα* does not except the other parts of the letter any more than *ἐγὼ εἶπον* attached to *ἐγὼ ἀποτίσω* in a speech, would prove that one person had uttered that declaration, and another the rest of the discourse. Theodoret: *ἀντὶ γραμματίου τῆνδε κατέψε τὴν ἐπιστολὴν· πᾶσαν αὐτὴν γέγραφα*.

Ἴνα μὴ λέγω (= *ne dicam*), *not to say*, is an instance of the *σῆμα παρασιωπήσεως* or *præteritio*, by which a person says in reality what he professes to pass over in silence. So *ἵνα μὴ*

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λέγωμεν in 2 Cor. 9 : 4. See Wilke, *Rhetorik*, p. 365. The *ἵνα* may depend on *ἔγγραφα* or a suppressed thought; "Accept this pledge that I may not have occasion to insist upon my rights."

Ὅτι καὶ, κ. τ. λ., that unto me thou owest also thyself besides, i. e., in addition to the favor requested for Onesimus. *Καὶ* and *πρός* in the verb strengthen each other. The indebtedness is that of Philemon for Paul's agency in his conversion. Hence as the apostle would say playfully, he was Philemon's owner in a much better sense, than Philemon could claim to stand in that relation to Onesimus.

V. 20. *Ναὶ . . . ὀνείμαρην*, yea, brother, let me have joy or profit of thee, be gratified with this evidence of thy loving spirit. The phrase was a familiar one, implying the compliment, that to obtain a favor we need appeal only to the giver's benevolence or desire to make others happy. Elsner's examples (*Observationes*, II., p. 331) are very incomplete. The usage is well illustrated in Rost and Palm, *Lex.* s. v. *Ναὶ* anticipates the affirmation of the request. It snatches the answer from the mouth of the respondent before he can utter it, like our familiar "Yes, you will." The claim on Philemon's gratitude, intimated in the last verse, is the ground of this confidence. *Ὀνείμαρην* (aorist middle, from *ὀνείμαρμι*) is an uncommon word, and hence many critics suppose it to be chosen for the sake of the alliterative resemblance to *Ὀνησιμός*. The purport of the figure would be: "It is but fair, as a matter of reciprocity, that I should receive profit from you (*ὀνείμαρην*) if you have profit from him (*Ὀνησιμός*) whom I send back to you." Yet writers by no means agree in the admission of such a witticism here. Meyer insists upon it with confidence. Winer (§ 68, 2) is undecided. De Wette rejects the idea as fanciful.

The received text has *κερίω*, instead of *Χριστώ*, but against decisive witnesses.

V. 21. *Πεποιθώς . . . σοι*, having confidence in thy obedience, as due not to Paul but Christ or God, since that which the apostle

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had requested merely, the spirit of the gospel demanded as a duty. For *ἑπακοῆ* in this absolute use, see Rom. 6 : 16 ; 16 : 19. It was natural that Paul should glance at this higher ground of obligation, but it would disagree with the tone of the letter to speak of his own wishes merely as claiming obedience. I concede that most critics put the latter sense on the expression.

Ἐγραψα σοι, *have written to thee*, i. e., at this time ; not *wrote* (Common Version), as if he had written once already. See Scholefield, *Hints*, etc., p. 128.

Ὅτι . . . ποιήσεις, *that thou wilt do also above what I say*, as well as (*καί*) according to it. *Ἵπὲρ ὃ* has the emphasis. Whether the pronoun should be *ὃ* or *ἃ* is uncertain. Lachmann adopts the latter, Tischendorf has both in different editions.

It is impossible for me to resist the impression that Paul meant here that Philemon should liberate Onesimus, and allow him to return to Rome, or use his liberty henceforth as his own master. Having asked every thing short of that already, nothing but that seems to remain for *Ἵπὲρ ὃ*. Storr, De Wette, Hagenbach, Koch, Alford, are among those who recognize a hint here that Philemon would do well to crown his generosity to the slave by making him a free man. On the contrary, some find the expression to be a delicate compliment merely to Philemon's philanthropy. Paul wrote to him so freely, he would say, because he knew that his brother would grant not only what he had asked, but more too, if he had asked it. Calvin's note on the passage deserves to be read. We may be sure that whatever Philemon understood the apostle to say or intend, he was not slow to perform. Our having the epistle in our hands at this moment is good proof that he was not remiss in acting up to every intimation of what was expected from his friendship and love of justice ; for our own feelings assure us he would never have allowed such a letter to see the light, if it was to exist only as a perpetual witness of his ingratitude and his severity.

²² Ἄμα δὲ καὶ ἐτοίμαζέ μοι ξενίαν· ἐλπίζω γὰρ ὅτι διὰ τῶν προσευχῶν ὑμῶν χαρισθήσομαι ὑμῖν. ²³ Ἀσπάζεται σε Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ²⁴ Μάρκος, Ἀρίσταρχος, Δημᾶς, Λουκᾶς, οἱ συνεργοί μου. ²⁵ Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν.

V. 23. T. R. has ἀσπάζονται

VERSES 22-25.

Paul hopes to be set free, and sends the Greetings of Friends at Rome.

V. 22. Ἄμα δὲ, κ. τ. λ., *But at the same time also* (viz., that you show this kindness to Onesimus) *be preparing for me a lodging.* De Wette prefers this mode: *At the same time I also request that,* etc. Ἄμα may be *now*, i. e., continuative; or may oppose the favor desired for himself to that desired for Onesimus, i. e., adversative. Καὶ adds the one request (ὀναίμην) to the other (ἐτοίμαζε). The imperative, as present, intimates that he expected to arrive soon, and would have the preparation made promptly. Ξενίαν denotes a *room* or *place* for his reception as a guest; compare Acts 28 : 23. He may have desired this convenience the more, because he traveled often with so many friends (Acts 19 : 22 ; 20 : 4), and because he would need a place where he could meet those who might desire religious instruction. This journey to Colossæ, as Neander suggests, may have been part of a plan to visit the churches throughout Asia Minor. Hence some argue that Paul must have written this letter from Cæsarea, or some other place, and not from Rome; because he was intending,

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before his captivity, to go from Rome into Spain (Rom. 15 : 28). But he may have had reasons to postpone the Spanish journey without relinquishing the purpose. Wiggers, *Stud. und Krit.*, 1841. Another remark may be made here. The apostle's meditated journey to Philippi, of which we read in Philip. 2 : 24, reveals a harmony between that passage and this, which I do not remember to have seen pointed out. Under most circumstances it would be a contradiction to say, in one letter, that as soon as he was released (for that is the implication) he would visit the Philippians, and in another, that he would visit the Colossians; but in this case he could say both, because there was a route (see *Introduction*, p. v) which would enable him to pass through Macedonia on his direct way to Asia Minor. Putting the two passages together, we see evidence of a plan in the apostle's mind, the parts of which come out to view in the most casual manner, but are found to be naturally dependent on each other, in consequence of a fact presupposed in the plan, but known to us altogether from another source.

Ἐλπίζω, *I hope*, implies expectation as well as desire. As the apostle must have had definite reasons for this hope, we may infer that the event agreed with the anticipation, and hence that he was freed from the captivity mentioned at the close of the Acts.

Ὅτι, . . . *ἡμῶν*, *that through your prayers* (offered for this end) *I shall be given to you*; in other words, that God in answer to their prayers and as an act of mercy or gift (*χαρισθῆσομαι*) would cause him to be set free, and restored to them. We may be sure that the praying friends at Colossæ were not the only circle in which supplication was made for Paul. The situation of the great Christian leader at Rome must have fixed upon him the eyes of the disciples in every land. When Peter was in prison, earnest prayer was made for him, and an angel came and delivered him from Herod and the Jews (Acts 12 : 5 sq.).

Ὑμῖν denotes those addressed in the letter.

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V. 23. *Ἀσπάζεταιται* agrees with the nearest name, and is repeated before the others; compare John 18 : 15; 20 : 3. Winer, § 47, 2. The best copies testify for this form, and against *ἀσπάζονται* (T. R.).

The persons whom Paul salutes here are those saluted also in the epistle to the Colossians, with the exception of Justus (Col. 4 : 11). It is conjectured that Justus may have been absent at the moment when the apostle penned this letter. It is worthy of notice that Philemon is not mentioned in the epistle to the Colossians; for it confirms our view that the letter to them was written simultaneously with that to him.

Epaphras was a native of Colossæ (Col. 4 : 12), perhaps founder of the church there (Neander, *Pflanzung*, II., p. 292), a preacher at all events (Col. 1 : 7), and, as we see here, a sharer in Paul's captivity. His being named apart from the *συνεργοί* favors the literal sense of *συναϊχμάλωτος*, i. e., that he also was in prison on account of his religious faith. The term is more specific than *δεσμῖος*—this, a prisoner in general, especially one held as such for some alleged offense against the State, while *συναϊχμάλωτος* is a captive in war. Though the Christian soldier may be thus vanquished, such defeats are the means of ultimate victory. Epaphras was a different person, no doubt, from Epaphroditus in Philip. 2 : 25; for though the names may be interchangeable (Winer, *Realw.* I., p. 331), he was sent to Rome from Colossæ, at the same time with Epaphroditus from Philippi (Philip. 2 : 25), and the former had his circuit of labor in Phrygia or Asia Minor, the latter, in Macedonia. See Hertz., *Encyk.*, IV., p. 80.

V. 24. Mark is supposed to be John Mark, the writer of the gospel and Paul's companion on his first missionary tour (Acts 13 : 5). He was expecting, ere long, to greet the Colossians in person; see Col. 4 : 10.

Aristarchus was a Macedonian (Acts 19 : 29), who accompanied Paul on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27 : 2). As he is

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classed here among the *συνεργοί*, he appears to be called *συναυμάλωτος* in Col. 4 : 10, because he made himself the apostle's voluntary companion in his exile. To remember the brethren in their bonds was accounted the same thing as being bound with them (*συνδεδεμένοι*); see Heb. 13 : 3. There was no such interval between the two epistles that he can be supposed to have been put in prison after the letter to Philemon was written.

Demas and Luke are named together also in Col. 4 : 14. We look into the prison again, after a few years, and but one of the friends is watching at the side of the apostle. In 2 Tim. 4 : 10, 11, Paul writes : " Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world ; only Luke is with me." We are reminded of Keble's words in his Hymn on St. Luke :

" Vainly before the shrine he bends
Who knows not the true pilgrim's part :
The martyr's cell no safety lends
To him who wants the martyr's heart."

V. 25. In *πρὸς τοὺς ἡμῶν* the pronoun may include the community of believers.

Μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ἡμῶν is more impassioned and earnest than *ἡμῶν* simply. We have this form of benediction in Gal. 6 : 18 ; in Philip. 4 : 23, according to the text in some copies ; and in 2 Tim. 4 : 22.

Ἡμῶν is coextensive with *ἡμῶν* in v. 22.

Ἀμήν (T. R.) is a liturgic word. It was attached to some of the other epistles also, as a response of the congregation. It appears in all the English Versions from Wiclif onward, but, being no part of the text, should be dropped.

The subscript notice, in the current editions, concerning the origin and destination of the letter, states, what was undoubtedly true, but, like other similar additions, is not from the hand of the author, though it may be traced to an early age. The notice has its value, as a confirmatory argument in proof of the genuineness

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of the letter, and the place whence it was written. Mill and Kuster mention two manuscripts, which record at the end that Onesimus had his legs broken on the rack or the cross at Rome, and so won the rewards of martyrdom. And with this thought, not historically confirmed, perhaps, but so entirely in harmony with the vicissitudes of that age of the first confessors, we may turn our eyes from this record of lowly life on earth, upward to the scene where the Lord's servants, though they may have been the slaves of men, are exalted and ennobled forever on thrones which He hath prepared for them.

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.

LETTER OF PLINY TO SABINIANUS.

It may be a convenience to some readers to have within reach this celebrated letter of the Roman courtier to his friend, which is mentioned in the Introduction, § 5, p. ix. I transcribe the Latin, as presented in DÆRING'S *C. PLINII CÆCILII Secundi Epistolæ* Vol. II., p. 242.

C. Plinnus Sabiniano suo S.

1 Libertus tuus, cui succensere te dixeras, venit ad me, ad-
volutusque pedibus meis, tamquam tuis, haesit. Flevit multum,
multumque rogavit; multum etiam tacuit: in summa, fecit
2 mihi fidem poenitentiae. Vere credo emendatum, quia deliquisse
se sentit. Irascaris, scio: et irascaris merito, id quodque scio:
3 sed tunc praecipua mansuetudinis laus, cum irae caussa justissi-
ma est. Amasti hominem, et spero amabis: interim sufficit,
ut exorari te sinas. Licebit rursus irasci, si meruerit, quod
exoratus excusatus facies. Remitte aliquid adolescentiae ip-
4 illum, ne torseris etiam te. Torqueris enim, quum tam lenis
irascaris. Vereor, ne videar non rogare, sed cogere, si precibus
ejus meas junxero. Jungam tamen tanto plenius et effusius,
quanto ipsum acrius severiusque corripui, destricte minatus
nunquam me postea rogaturum. Hoc illi, quem terreri oportet

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tebat, tibi non idem. Nam fortasse iterum rogabo, iterum imperabo : sit modo tale, ut rogare me, ut praestare te deceat. Vale.

It is not easy to transfer the peculiar elegance of such a composition to a foreign language. The following version from an anonymous hand has at least the merit of being somewhat close to the original. There may be a doubt respecting the exact force of one or two expressions.

C. Plinius to his friend Sabinianus, greeting :

A FREEDMAN of yours, whom you had said you were angry with, came to me, and, prostrating himself at my feet, as if at your own, clung to them. He wept much, and begged much ; much of the time, too, he was silent ; in fine, he gave me a confidence of his penitence. I believe him to be truly amended, because he is sensible that he has been delinquent. You are angry, I know ; and you are angry, with reason ; that, too, I know ; but the glory of clemency is greatest, when the cause of anger is most just. You have loved the man, and I hope will love him ; meanwhile it is sufficient that you suffer yourself to be entreated. You shall be at liberty to be angry again, if he should deserve it ; which, having shown yourself exorable, you will the more excusably do. Remit somewhat to his youth, remit somewhat to his tears, remit somewhat to your own indulgent disposition ; do not torture him, lest you torture also yourself ; for you are tortured, when, lenient as you are, you are angry. I fear lest I may seem, not to ask, but to compel, if to his prayers I add my own. Nevertheless, I shall add them the more fully and freely, inasmuch as I have sharply and severely reproved him, having strictly threatened never hereafter to intercede with you. This to him whom it was proper to alarm, but not the same to you. For, perhaps I shall again ask, and again obtain ; let it be only such as it may become me to ask, and you to grant.

Farewell.

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No. II.

THE RECEIVED TRANSLATION OF PHILEMON.

The following paragraph from Professor Stanley's Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians, is equally appropriate as applied to the Epistle to Philemon.

“In the Authorized Version of 1611 the Epistles were translated by the Fifth out of the Six Companies or Committees appointed for the whole work. It consisted of seven persons,»

Dr. Barlow,
Dr. Hutchinson,
Dr. Spencer,
Mr. Fenton,
Mr. Rabbett,
Mr. Sanderson,
Mr. Dakins ;

each of whom translated a part to be submitted to the revision of the whole Committee.

“To which of these, therefore, the translation of the Epistles to the Corinthians in its present form is to be ascribed can not now be ascertained. But inasmuch as the version of these Epistles in 1611, in common with that of the whole Bible, was professedly based on the ‘Bishops’ Bible’ of 1568, and inasmuch as the alterations from that earlier version are very slight, the virtual translators of the Epistles to the Corinthians, as we now have them are those who were concerned in that work in the reign of Elizabeth. Of these, the name of the translator of the First Epistle is learned from the initials affixed, ‘G.G.,’ Dr. Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster.”

The other epistles are distinguished by no such marks, and it is not ascertained who translated or revised them.

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The reader may be cautioned against being led by this statement to ascribe too much originality to the "Bishops' Bible" so called; for that translation was very much shaped in its exegeses and its phraseology by the earlier English versions, especially that of Tyndale in 1534, which has been more closely followed than any other standard. Some of the traditional interpretations and current forms of expression may be traced to Wiclif, the pioneer in these labors; though his importance in this respect has been greatly overstated by some recent writers. The very different state of the English language when he wrote, and the fact that he drew his translation from the Latin Vulgate, and not from the Hebrew and Greek, render his place in Biblical literature altogether unequal to what it is in the history of his times. Thus it appears that the Common or Authorized Version of the Bible is by no means an original translation, as many persons suppose; but was the result of a series of efforts to improve the already existing versions by rendering them more intelligible to the bulk of readers, and more conformed to the progress of sacred learning.





