

PHILEMON

INTRODUCTORY SECTIONS
ON
PHILEMON

- A. Facts about the Epistle to Philemon.
- B. It was somewhat like this . . .
- C. Appeals Used by Paul in the Epistle to Philemon.
- D. Facts about Philemon the man, and about Onesimus.
- E. Slavery and the Scriptures.
- F. Social justice and the Scriptures.
- G. Translation and Paraphrase of Philemon.
- H. Questions on the Introductory sections.

INTRODUCTION

A. FACTS ABOUT THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

(Pronounced Fy-LEE mun)

1. It was written by the apostle Paul. Timothy is named as co-sender.
2. It was written from Rome during Paul's first imprisonment, about A.D. 62.
3. It is the only strictly private letter in the New Testament. The epistles to Timothy and Titus, though addressed to one person, dealt with matters involving the whole church.
4. The letter is primarily a request to a man named Philemon to receive back a runaway slave named Onesimus (Oh-NESS-uh-muss). Onesimus had run away from Philemon his master, and had gone to Rome, where Paul met him and won him to Christ. Then Paul sent him back to Philemon with this letter.
5. The letter is a gem of literary beauty. This fact is almost universally admitted. The epistle has sometimes been compared with a letter from Pliny the younger (a Roman governor about 90 A.D.), who wrote to a friend urging him not to condemn back into slavery an ex-slave who had offended. Pliny's letter is full of grace and beauty also, but it does not have the spiritual foundations nor the brotherly earnestness of the letter to Philemon. (Pliny's letter may be read in Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, pp. 318-319).
6. Onesimus himself delivered the letter to Philemon. He travelled with Tychichus (TICKY-kuss), who delivered the letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. Observe that the same men sent both Colossians and Philemon (Col. 1:1; Phm. 1). Note that Paul calls himself a prisoner in both epistles (Col. 4:10; Phm. 1). Note that the same men send greetings; in both epistles (Col. 4:12-14; Phm. 23-24). Note that in Col. 4:7-9 Onesimus is called "one of you," and that Tychicus is to give them personal news.
7. Although Philemon is a private letter, it has been regarded as inspired scripture by the church from the very beginning. Even Marcion, the heretic in the late second century, included it in his abridged list of authentic epistles. Origen early in the third century quotes vs. 9 and 14 as scripture.

PHILEMON

8. Many Christian leaders of the fourth century deprecated the epistle, and thought that it dealt with a matter too trifling to be a part of Scripture. They were interested only in credal controversies and ecclesiastical authority. Jerome and Chrysostom defended the letter ably.
9. The Geneva Bible (1557) has this note before the epistle: "Paul, handling a base and small matter, yet, according to his manner, mounteth aloft unto God." This is a quaint but accurate description.
10. It is hard for us to feel that the matter under discussion in Philemon is a small matter. It involved the whole future life on earth of one of God's saints. This case would become a precedent for all subsequent similar situations. The letter shows that the principles of the gospel bring good to us in every situation of life, small as well as great.
11. The letter presents the concept of DUTY very vividly. Onesimus was to do his duty in spite of his changed spiritual condition in Christ.
12. Outline of Philemon (memorize):
 - I. Paul's greeting; Phm. 1-3.
 - II. Paul's thanks for Philemon; Phm. 4-7.
 - III. Paul's intercession for Onesimus; Phm. 8-22.
 - IV. Salutations and benediction; Phm. 23-25.

B. IT WAS SOMEWHAT LIKE THIS¹

Two men stood on the rim of a mountain valley in the Cadmus range of Central Asia Minor. A narrow road led from their feet down into the Lycus river valley before them. Spread out below them lay the town of Colossae, the river dividing the city.

The men, wearing Roman togas of very ordinary style, looked at one another and smiled a bit. This was the end of the journey. The one, named Tychicus, held in his hand a rolled-up letter to be delivered to the church of God in Colossae. The other man felt of his robe to make sure a letter was still tucked in his breast.

As the city appeared before him, a swirl of memories foamed up before his mind: his last look at this scene—in the moonlight—going the other way—stolen coins bumping against his thigh as he walked—the weary week of walking at nights, to Ephesus,

INTRODUCTION

a hundred miles away—the lonely ship ride, a thousand miles to Rome, suspicious people asking leading questions as he tried to keep to himself—those dazzling buildings of Rome—street gossip about a queer prisoner there named Paul—“Paul?” He’d heard his master speak of Paul back in Colossae!—The crooked gamblers who took his last coin—His meeting with Paul—His burning heart and tear-filled eyes as he heard of God’s love for slaves and for masters—That clean feeling as Paul’s friends had baptized him—Then Paul’s words, “You must go back to Philemon!”

Now he had come back—he, Onesimus, un-helpful Onesimus! He, a slave, who had left his good master Philemon! Slaves simply did not go back voluntarily. But there he was, and there was his master’s house, the corner house, across the river, right over there!

Down the steep path their feet fell heavily; the road levelled, into the city, over the bridge, around the turn, to the house. Tychicus knocked. Footfalls inside. The door opens, and Philemon’s mouth falls open. “ONESIMUS!”

With downturned eyes the slave holds out the sweat-soiled, rolled-up letter. Philemon slowly takes it; its seal snaps open . . .

“From Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ . . . unto Philemon . . .”

1. Credit is given to Dr. Dean E. Walker of Milligan College, Tenn., who furnished the inspiration for this article by a sermon at the North American Christian Convention, 1952.

C. APPEALS USED BY PAUL IN THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

1. I am a prisoner; vs. 1, 9.
2. There is a love between us; vs. 1.
3. I am thankful for you; vs. 4,7.
4. I pray for you; vs. 4.
5. You have refreshed the hearts of saints; vs. 7.
6. I don’t command you; I rather appeal; vs. 8-9.
7. I am an old man; vs. 9.
8. I have won Onesimus to Christ; vs. 10.
9. He is now profitable to us both; vs. 11.
10. Sending him back is like sending my own heart; vs. 12.
11. You may now have him forever; vs. 15.
12. He is now your brother; vs. 16.
13. Receive him as you would receive me; vs. 17.

PHILEMON

14. I will pay whatever he owes you; vs. 18-19a.
15. Don't forget that you owe yourself to me; vs. 19b.
16. I have great confidence in you; vs. 21.
17. I'm coming to visit you; vs. 22.

This group of appeals used by Paul to move Philemon to receive Onesimus back could well be studied as a course in psychology for Christians.

Paul's appeals are the very essence of tact. The Scripture contains many examples of tactfulness. Christ himself was most tactful, except when dealing with reprobates, often telling stories to bring out points to people who probably deserved a bitter scolding. A harsh and legalistic approach to people—a "Do or be damned" attitude—is neither helpful nor Scriptural.

D. FACTS ABOUT PHILEMON THE MAN

1. He lived in the city of Colossae (Ko-LOSS-ee). Paul had never visited the town of Colossae personally. (Col. 2:1).
2. Philemon was a Christian. Phm. 19 plainly indicates that he had been won to Christ by Paul. Where that took place we cannot say. Perhaps it was during the time Paul preached in Ephesus, and many that were in Asia heard the word of the Lord. Acts 19:10.
3. Philemon's wife was named Apphia (AP-fia). She also was a Christian.
4. It seems probably that Archippus (Ar-KIPP-us) was the son of Philemon, and that Archippus served as the minister of the church in Colossae after the departure of Epaphras to visit Paul. See Phm. 2; Col. 1:7; 4:17.
5. The church at Colossae met in Philemon's house.
6. Philemon owned a slave named Onesimus, who had run away from him.
7. The fact that Philemon had slave(s) and a house suitable for the meeting place of the church suggests that he was a man of some wealth and social standing.
8. Paul may have heard from Epaphras concerning Philemon's love and faith. Phm. 5; Compare Col. 1:7-8.

FACTS ABOUT ONESIMUS

1. Onesimus was the slave of Philemon who ran away.
2. His name means "helpful." This was a common name given

INTRODUCTION

to slaves, as were similar names indicating utility, worth, and such.

3. Unsubstantiated legends say that many years after his conversion Onesimus became bishop of Ephesus, early in the second century. To us this seems rather unlikely.
4. Martin Luther wrote a famous statement concerning Onesimus: "We are all the Lord's Onesimi."

E. SLAVERY AND THE SCRIPTURES

1. Slavery was a widespread institution in the world of New Testament times. There were far more slaves in the Roman empire than free citizens. Slaves were obtained from many nations by the ceaseless wars fought by the Romans. Wealthy Romans sometimes owned ten to twenty thousand slaves, who did all the menial and sometimes much of the mental work in the families. While Greece is sometimes called the cradle of democracy, there were more slaves in Athens during the days of their great philosophers than freemen. This social condition tended to undermine society by making the citizens lazy, and giving them time for philosophizing, politicking, immorality, and gambling.
2. The philosophers, such as Aristotle, did not regard slaves as human beings, but as property, as extensions of the master's body.
3. Extreme cruelty to slaves was nothing uncommon, and several slave uprisings occurred (e.g. Spartacus). One Roman, Vedius Pollio, a friend of the emperor Augustus, kept a tank of conger-eels in his garden. Slaves who incurred his displeasure were thrown to these eels to be killed and eaten.

About 60 A.D. in Rome four hundred slaves belonging to one master were killed because one of them had slain the master, after terrible provocation. That is if the tales are true. In defense of this act the historian Tacitus said that killing an entire slave household after such offenses was an "old custom" to deter further disobedience.

Crucifixion was the common punishment for even petty thievery by slaves.

4. In the Old Testament slavery was accepted as an existing social institution, and regulated. Foreigners might be purchased and kept as bondmen. Lev. 25:44-46. Israelites were not to be

PHILEMON

sold as bondmen. Lev. 25:39-43. Hebrews sometimes got into slavery to their own brethren as a result of debt, but Hebrew slaves had to be liberated after seven years. Lev. 25:39-43; Deut. 15:12-15; Ex. 21:2-4. Hebrew slaves could bind themselves to their masters permanently. Ex. 21:5-6; Deut. 15:16-18. Cruelty to slaves was forbidden and punishable. Ex. 21:26-27; Deut. 23:15. Slaves (even foreign ones) could take part in the Hebrew feasts with their masters. Ex. 12:47-49. Stealing and selling people as slaves was a capital offense. Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7.

5. All in all the O.T. regulations for the Hebrews concerning slavery were much milder than those in other nations at the same time. A comparison of the O.T. laws about slavery with those in the Code of Hammurabi will verify this.
6. Even so the O.T. stipulations about slavery are not as perfect as those in the N.T. In the O.T. age God overlooked ("winked at") many acts—polygamy, slavery, etc.—that the N.T. principles condemn. See Acts 17:30. We are glad to live under the new covenant.
7. The N.T. sets forth no revolutionary edicts abolishing slavery as an institution. But it does set forth principles of conduct that inevitably lead to the abolition of slavery.
8. Some N.T. Scriptures regarding slavery:
 - a. Gal. 3:28—There is neither bond nor free in Christ.
 - b. Col. 3:22—4:1—Slaves, be heartily obedient. Masters, be fair.
 - c. Titus 2:9-10—Slaves, be in subjection.
 - d. I Timothy 6:1-2—Slaves, count your masters worthy of honor.
 - e. Eph. 6:5-9—Slaves, be obedient. Masters, be gracious.
 - f. I Cor. 7:20-24—Do not try to make radical changes in your social position, e.g. into or out of slavery.
 - g. Book of Philemon—Receive the slave as your brother.
9. These New Testament teachings on slavery have done their job. They have created good will. They have prevented needless civil disturbances and lawlessness. They have brought freedom.

If the New Testament preachers had advocated an immediate and total end to slavery throughout the Roman empire, they would have produced unmanageable social disorders. Vast numbers of people would have been dislocated and left without employment, when they were neither economically, socially, educationally, nor emotionally prepared to survive as free

INTRODUCTION

citizens. The principles set forth by Christ and the apostles made the slaves to be brothers and equals with their masters. This inevitably led to blessings for the slave, and total liberty in countless cases.

F. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE SCRIPTURES

The epistle to Philemon raises the question of social justice in the earth. This is a hot question in this age with its controversies about integration of races, civil rights, welfare state programs, etc. Church councils pass many resolutions on social issues. What do the Scriptures say on this subject?

1. God desires social justice in the world. The dishonesty and sinfulness of men will bring damnation upon them. Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 12:20-21; Romans 1:18.
2. Christians are to do good works unto all men. Gal. 6:10; Matt. 5:13; Romans 12:17-21; Ephesians 2:10; 4:28; Titus 2:14. In the steps of God's people the fir tree and the myrtle tree should come up instead of thorns and briars. Isaiah 55:13. Thus social blessings have risen and will arise wherever there are Christians.
3. As Christians and as citizens of the USA we have liberty to pressure our legislators and executive officers to enforce just and equal treatment of all citizens and to suppress wickedness. Civil officers are appointed by God as avengers of wrath upon evil doers. Romans 13:1-4. If we as Christians do not stand up for right, then selfish, grasping, heartless, impenitent evil doers (even religious evildoers!) will wipe their feet in our faces and make our lives unbearable.
4. However, this question arises: Are such civil and social efforts the main work of the church? Do we bring in the kingdom of God by social legislation? To this we answer a resounding NO!

Many modern churchmen have gone off on this tangent. They think that pressure for social change is the primary (if not the only) work of the church in this generation. Such people have closed their eyes to the sinfulness in men's hearts, and to the examples of Christ and his apostles.

5. Neither Christ nor his apostles nor the early Christians entered upon great political crusades to rectify existing social evils. They knew that the gospel was the power of God unto

PHILEMON

salvation, not man's efforts to pull himself up by his own bootstraps. Christ refused to be a judge or a divider of men's earthly possessions. He warned us to beware of coveting earthly goods. Luke 12:13-15. Paul never led any protest parades against slavery before the Roman senate. He did not organize a mob of gladiators to go through the Roman market-place, burning, looting, and killing in the name of justice. The early Christians sent no resolutions to Caesar. We regard their restraint in these matters as the right example for us to follow.

6. Economic and social advancement will not take away the sinfulness of men, and the sinfulness itself causes the misery in society. Romans 1:28-32. A man who is a liar, drunkard, thief, adulterer, or loafer in a slum will almost certainly still be a liar, drunkard, thief, adulterer, or loafer in a new apartment. There are circumstances wherein a government might well help some people with housing or relief (but shame on the church for not doing it!), but these acts will not change the sinfulness in people.
7. The Scriptures plainly predict that there will be war, sin, and trouble until the end of the world. Matt. 13:30, 40; Luke 18:8; Rev. 20:8; Matt. 24:37. Even those who do not believe the predictions of the scripture should be able to see that all human history points to more war and trouble. It is a foolish and hopeless goal to assume that we can make a paradise out of the present world and society. We hope to save some out of the world, and to do as much good as we can in the world. But we expect to find tares along with the good grain until Christ returns.
8. Christians are taught to set their prime hope upon the world to come, upon the blessings to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven. I Peter 1:13; Titus 2:13; Rom. 8:18; John 14:1-3; Col. 1:5.
9. Some so-called liberals, desiring to find justification for their political and social meddling in the name of religion, and not finding it in the New Testament, turn for endorsement to the Old Testament prophets. These men are set forth as great examples and pioneers of social reform, while at the same time emphatic denials are made that they received objective revelations from God or made predictions of distant events by divine inspiration. Such use of the prophets is to be condemned. Why?

INTRODUCTION

- (1) The prophets plainly made predictive statements, even predictions of far distant events. Only by tearing passages out of their books can such statements be dodged.
- (2) The prophets spoke to Israel, not to all the world. Israel was the people of God, and if it is to be equated with anything in this present dispensation, it must be equated with the church, not the whole world. Among the people of God (both Israel of old and the church now) social righteousness was obligatory. Heathen nations were sometimes condemned for gross wickedness (e.g. Amos chs. 1, 2, and Jonah), but no consistent attempt was made to force them into the righteous mold of Israel. Similarly the evangelists of New Testament times made almost no attempts to force non-Christians by political pressure into the righteous mold of the gospel.

G. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO PHILEMON (translation and paraphrase)¹

1. (This is a short note from) Paul, a captive of Christ Jesus (—I'm in bonds!), and (from) Timothy, the brother (you know well),—to Philemon, (our) beloved (friend) and our co-worker,
2. and to Apphia, the sister (we love greatly)², and to Archippus, our fellow-soldier (in Christ's army), and to the church (that meets) in your (sing.) house.
3. (May) all divine favor (be) upon you, and peace (also), from God our father and (from our) Lord Jesus Christ.
4. In my prayers I give thanks to my God always, making mention of you (sing.),
5. hearing (as I do) about the (sincere benevolent) love and the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and to all the saints (the holy brethren in the churches)—
6. (I pray) that the share which you have in the faith (of Christ) may become active (and working) in (ways that will rise up from) a full knowledge of every good thing that is (known) among us, for (the sake of) Christ.
7. I have had much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you (and your good deeds), (my) brother. (Indeed the aftereffects of your refreshing deeds still continue.)

PHILEMON

8. So though I have plenty of boldness to command you to (do) the thing that is proper,
9. (yet) for love's sake I rather (just) urge (you)—being such a one as (I am), Paul, an old man, and now also a captive of Christ Jesus—
10. I urge you regarding my child, (one) whom I have begotten (while I have been) in these bonds, (none other than) Onesimus,
11. the (very) one who was formerly of no value to you, but (who) now is of good value to you and to me—
12. I have sent him to you, (Onesimus) himself—that is (I have sent) my (own very) heart (in sending him);
13. whom I wanted to keep back with me so that he could serve me in your place in (the service due from you in) the bonds of the gospel.
14. But without your knowledge (and consent) I was not willing to do anything, so that your good (work) might not be (done) because of compulsion, but because of (your) free will.
15. For perhaps he was separated (from you) for (a short time,) an "hour," that you might (in the fullest manner) have him (with you) forever,
16. no longer as a slave but (over and) beyond a slave, a brother beloved, (beloved) most of all by me, (and yet) how much more (beloved) by you, both in the flesh and in the Lord!
17. If therefore you accept me (as) a partner, receive him as (you would receive) me.
18. If he has done some dishonest thing to you, or owes (you something), lay this to my charge.
19. I Paul, with my own hand, put it in writing: I will repay (anything that is due.) (However I do not feel you will want to do this) so that I may not (have to) say to you that you owe to me even your own self.
20. Yes, (my) brother, let me receive help from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.
21. Because I am convinced of your obedience I have written to you (in this way), knowing that you will do even beyond the things I say.
22. Also (now) at this same time (please) prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I may be granted to you all (my presence being somewhat of a gift from God to you).

INTRODUCTION

23. Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus greets you.
24. (Also) Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke—my fellow workers.
25. May the favor of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the spirit of you (all). (Amen)

1. This is first of all a precise translation from the Greek New Testament. To the translation we have added some additional words to make the meaning of the Greek as complete as possible and to improve the English. The words in parentheses are the paraphrased additions.

2. Several Greek manuscripts, also some Latin and Syriac, describe Apphia as beloved, or most beloved.

H. QUESTIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION TO PHILEMON

1. Who wrote the epistle to Philemon?
2. Who was the co-sender?
3. What was the place of writing the epistle?
4. What is its date?
5. What is the epistle to Philemon primarily about?
6. What Roman governor wrote a letter on a related subject?
7. Who travelled with Onesimus when he delivered the letter?
8. What two letters did his travelling companion deliver?
9. What evidence is there that the epistle to Philemon was early accepted as Scripture?
10. Does the epistle to Philemon deal with a small topic? Give your own opinion.
11. Give the outline of Philemon.
12. On what river did the city of Colossae lay?
13. How far from Colossae to Ephesus?
14. How far from Colossae to Rome?
15. List five of the arguments Paul used to present his appeal to Philemon.
16. In what town did Philemon live?
17. Who was Philemon's wife?
18. Who was Philemon's son? What was his son's work?
19. Where did the church meet in Philemon's town?
20. From whom may Paul have heard about Philemon's love and faith?
21. What does the name *Onesimus* mean?
22. How extensive was slavery in the Roman empire?
23. Tell three things the Old Testament said about slavery.

PHILEMON

24. True or false: The New Testament abolishes slavery. Explain your answer.
25. Should Christians work for social justice?
26. Did Christ lead political crusades for social justice?
27. Did the apostles lead political crusades for social justice?
28. Does social legislation take away human sinfulness?
29. What are Christians to set their hopes mainly upon?
30. Is our world ever to become a social paradise?
31. Why can we, or why can we not, use the O.T. prophets as examples of religio-political social crusading?

COMMENTARY

I. *Paul's greeting*; Phm. 1-3.

1. Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker,

- a. Paul opens this lovely letter with a description of himself as "a prisoner of Christ Jesus." The word *prisoner* means one bound with a chain. Paul was constantly bound to a guarding soldier by a chain from his wrist to the guard's arm. Phil. 1:7; Eph. 6:20. Paul's situation as a prisoner would make it harder for Philemon to refuse his request.
- b. Paul was the prisoner of *Christ*, not the prisoner of Rome. Paul had not committed any civil offenses that could have convicted him, but his devotion to Christ kept him in trouble with those who hated Christ. However, Paul was a free man in reality, for captivity to Christ is the truest freedom.

When bound to Christ, my soul is free;
But sin doth make a slave of me. (John 8:31-34)
- c. Paul lists Timothy as the co-sender of the epistle. Timothy is called "our (Gr. *the*) brother." He was so well known for his associations with Paul from the second missionary journey onward that he can well be called *the* brother. For a summary of his career see notes on Phil. 1:1.
- d. Philemon's name comes from a word meaning to love. The Greek word for a *kiss* is very similar to the name Philemon. No significance is to be attached to these facts; however the character of Philemon as it is suggested by this letter makes the root meaning of his name seem very fitting for him. He was loving, and Paul calls him "the beloved."

- e. Philemon lived in the city of Colossae, on the river Lycus, in the ancient land of Phrygia, now a part of Turkey (Asia Minor.)
- f. We do not know in what ways that Philemon had been a fellow-worker with Paul. The observations that the church met in his house, and that he had refreshed the hearts of the saints (Phm. 7) suggest many ways in which he may have been a fellow-worker.

2. and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house:

- a. Apphia was probably Philemon's wife. She was a Christian. Paul addresses her as "our (Gr. *the*) sister."
- b. It is possible that Archippus was the son of Philemon and Apphia, and was serving the Colossian church as minister and evangelist. Col. 4:17 mentions Archippus, and urges him to take heed to his ministry and fulfill it. Remember, of course, that Colossians and Philemon were letters dispatched at the same time to people in the same city.
- c. Archippus is called "our fellow-soldier." The figure of soldiers and warfare is often applied to Christians and Christian service. We are in a battle. II Tim. 2:3; Phil. 2:25.
- d. The reference to the church meeting in Philemon's house reminds us that the churches in other cities also often met in people's homes. The Roman church met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila. Rom. 16:5. This same couple previously had a church meeting in their house in Ephesus. I Co. 16:19. The church at Laodicea had meetings in the house of a lady named Nympha. Buildings made specially for church meetings did not exist in the first century, and probably not during most of the second century.

3. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- a. Like all the epistles of Paul, the epistle to Philemon begins and ends with a request that grace be given to the readers.
- b. Grace means *favor*, particularly undeserved favor, with all the good things that God's favor brings to us. As a result of God's grace we receive inward peace and happiness, our daily needs, the ability to work for the Lord, and other such benefits.
- c. We always, without any dispute, receive grace and peace from God when we receive Christ. But Paul could request that

grace would be with them, because grace is a quality that we can always receive more of with greater and greater profit.

- d. Grace and peace come not only from God the father, but from Jesus Christ the Lord. It is just as necessary to give Christ the honor as it is to give God honor. He that honors not the son honors not the father that sent him. John 5:23.

II. *Paul's thanks for Philemon; Phm. 4-7.*

4. I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers,

- a. As in many of his epistles Paul starts the section right after his greeting with an expression of his thankfulness. Compare Rom. 1:8; I Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3; and other epistles by Paul.
- b. Paul's thankfulness was sincere. He was not hypocritically "polishing the apples" to make Philemon more receptive to his request. It is almost impossible to express thanks convincingly unless you really feel thankful.

5. hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints;

- a. Paul may have heard of Philemon's faith and love from Epaphras, whom he describes as "one of you," and who was visiting with Paul at the time he wrote the epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon. Col. 4:12.
- b. We naturally would think that the faith of Philemon would be directed toward the Lord Jesus, and his love toward all the saints (though we love Christ also). However, the order in which faith and love are named is opposite to that in which the most obvious recipients of the faith and love are listed. We do not know the reason for this order of listing (called a chiasmic construction), if any reason actually exists.
- c. Can your Christian friends say of you that they have heard of your love and faith? Or do they hear of your spitefulness and skepticism?

6. that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ.

- a. This verse gives Paul's objective in his prayers for Philemon. He desires that the fellowship (A.V. *communication*) of his faith may become effectual.
- b. The word *effectual* means active or at work. The word *fellowship*, or communication, means participation, sharing, or

the share which one has in anything. Thus Paul was praying that the share or portion which Philemon had of faith might be put to work and become active. Faith which is not active is not worth much. Compare Gal. 5:6.

Numerous commentators understand the word *fellowship* here to refer to the act of sharing the faith, rather than to the share which one has in the faith. Both meanings come out at about the same point.

- c. Paul furthermore plays that the activity of Philemon's faith may be done in the *knowledge* (A.V. *acknowledging*) of every good thing which is in you unto Christ.

The Greek word for *knowledge* in this verse means precise, accurate, and full knowledge. Thus faith is not simply to be active in just any business, but in that which is based on the full knowledge of the truth. Compare Phil. 1:9.

- d. The last words of this verse indicate that all of this desired activity is *unto Christ* (K.J.V., *in Christ Jesus*), that is, for Christ's sake. The service of Christ must be the ultimate motivation and goal of our activities.

7. For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother.

- a. This verse continues and enlarges upon the theme of thankfulness started in Phm. 4. In this verse Paul says that his joy and comfort came because he had heard how Philemon had refreshed the hearts of the saints.

- b. The word *heart* refers to center of emotion and feeling. In Biblical times people regarded the bowels as the center of emotion, and thus the King James Bible renders the word literally as *bowels*. Actually it makes just as much sense to speak of the bowels (the nobler bowels, the liver, lungs, etc. rather than the entrails) as the seat of feeling as to speak of the heart as the center of feeling.

- c. The word *comfort* in this verse is *paraklesis*, which means both comfort and exhortation. Thus Philemon's graciousness was both a comfort to Paul and an exhortation to him to finer Christian living.

III. Paul's intercession for Onesimus; Phm. 8-22.

8. Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, 9. yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus.

- a. Paul as a chosen apostle of Christ Jesus had authority to command Christ's followers to do what they should. See Gal. 1:1; Rom. 1:1; II Cor. 10:2, 8; II Thess. 3:6. But even as Christ usually sought to move men's hearts by love and teaching rather than by compulsion, so Paul usually appealed to people by love and devotion to Christ.

Actually we cannot say that Paul utterly excluded his authority as Christ's ambassador in this section, but it was not the motivation that he desired Philemon to act upon.

- b. The *wherefore* at the beginning of vs. 8 refers ahead to vs. 9: "Wherefore (because of your love and faith) . . . I beseech you."
- c. There are certain attitudes that are befitting (A.V. *convenient*) to Christians, i.e. proper, appropriate, due, and becoming. We should pray that in all circumstances we may be able to discern what is the befitting course of action, and then be motivated to do it.
- d. Paul leads up to his main appeal very skilfully. He expressed his prayer for Philemon, and his thanks for his deeds. Now he makes a frank appeal on the basis of his old age and imprisonment, and the love between them. It would have been hard for Philemon to refuse the request thus presented.
- e. Some old N.T. manuscripts have *ambassador* (Gr. *presbentes*) instead of *aged* (Gr. *presbutes*) in vs. 9. R.S.V. gives *ambassador*. It seems to us that the reading *aged* is much to be preferred. More of the old manuscripts give it. Also an ambassador is one invested with authority from another person or country, and Paul does not make his request to Philemon on the basis of authority. He makes it as an appeal based on love, respect, propriety, and personal relationships. Thus he speaks of himself as Paul the old man.
- f. Regarding Paul as the prisoner of Christ Jesus, see notes on Phm. 1.
- g. If Paul was a young man (maybe about 30) when Stephen was stoned (Acts 7:58), which took place about A.D. 40, he would now (about A.D. 62) have indeed been an old man of approximately 60 years. In Paul's time with its limited medical services, and in consideration of all that Paul had suffered (II Cor. 11:23—12:9), sixty years would indeed have made him an old man.

10. I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus.

- a. In this verse the great central burden of the letter is revealed: Paul is begging concerning Onesimus, the runaway slave.

In all probability Philemon sensed that the letter concerned Onesimus from the instant he saw it, even before he unrolled it. Onesimus himself had probably handed it to Philemon, or was standing nearby as Tychicus handed it over. See Col. 4:7-9. The very circumstances under which a runaway slave might return were so rare that the return of the slave would in itself arouse the expectation of an explanation.

But even if Philemon had sensed that the letter concerned Onesimus, he could hardly have anticipated an appeal so tender, so spiritual, so moving.

- b. The name *Onesimus* is given last in the sentence, both in the Greek and in our version. Placing the name last produces an effective climax to the request.
- c. The fact that Onesimus was now Paul's child shows that Paul had won him to Christ during their contact at Rome. Onesimus had heard the story of Jesus, and was convinced. He had been begotten by the word of truth. James 1:18; I Pet. 1:23. He had been told that he must repent. He had been baptized, born of the water and the spirit. John 3:5. Probably one of Paul's helpers, Timothy or Tychicus or some other, had gone to a pool, or bath, or river to baptize him; Paul himself was confined to his house. See Acts 28:30. After his conversion Paul himself had told Onesimus that he was obligated to return to his master.
- d. The name Onesimus means "Helpful." Up to this time Onesimus had hardly lived up to his name. However, if Onesimus afterwards obeyed Paul's instructions to slaves in Col. 3:22-25, he certainly would have been helpful.
- e. A verb (*oninemi*) from the same root as the name Onesimus is used in Phm. 20. It means to be useful, to profit, or help. Thus Paul makes a play on words, based on the name *Onesimus*.
- f. The fact that Onesimus was begotten (converted) while Paul was in bonds shows that we can win souls under any circumstances. I Cor. 4:15.

11. who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me:

- a. Paul makes no attempt to cover up or deny the wrongs that Onesimus had done. He did not assume, as may do today, that a person must not be criticized for responding violently in a bad environment. If Philemon were living in the twentieth century, some people would blame him for anything that Onesimus did that was wrong. Paul admits that Onesimus had been unprofitable, and that is probably a euphemism of major proportions!
- b. Paul, however, emphasizes the transformation in Onesimus. Too many people are unwilling to forget a man's past, and to recognize that in Christ we become new creatures. "Once a thief, always a thief" is not necessarily true. Once a thief takes Christ by belief, he's not a thief. Thus unprofitable Onesimus was now profitable both to Paul and to Philemon. The only problem now was this: Would Philemon give him the chance to prove it? Runaway slaves were frequently tortured or slain upon recapture.

12. whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart:

- a. This sentence is choppy and ragged in wording. It evidently was written under strong emotion. The words blurted forth without regard to smooth poetic flow. A literal Greek rendering is: "Whom I sent to you, him, that is my own heart." Even though it is in the King James version, the command to "Receive him" is not in the best Greek manuscripts of this verse. It is, however, found in vs. 17. And the idea is plainly implied.
- b. It was obviously Paul's own idea that Onesimus should go back from Rome to Philemon. Paul declares, "I send him." It may have taken some persuading to get Onesimus to do this. Think of all the arguments that could have been advanced against Onesimus' going back.
- c. If the case of Onesimus had occurred in the twentieth century, some churchmen would probably have put Onesimus at the head of a picket parade or protest march in front of the Rome Senate.

But never once did Christ or any of his apostles organize political and civil protests and disturbances in the name of

the church. There were plenty of causes that needed rectifying in those times. Slaves outnumbered free citizens in Roman society. Gladiatorial games took hundreds of lives in cruel exhibitions. Children were occasionally exposed, that is, thrown out to perish as infants if their fathers so decreed.

The spread of the gospel guaranteed that the wicked social conditions would end. But the changes were brought about by the leavening influence of godliness in the lives of individual believers, not by the political lobbying of organized churchmen.

13. whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel; 14. but without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will.

- a. The information in vs. 13 would certainly go far to convince Philemon that a marvelous change had come over Onesimus. Once he was an unprofitable slave; now Paul desired to keep him with him, so that he could be of assistance to him.
- b. The *I* in vs. 13 is emphatic: I, Paul, personally have been wanting to keep Onesimus with me. The verb is in a continuous past tense (imperfect). Paul's desire to keep Onesimus with him had been continuous. It had not been interrupted by lapses into loafing or wrongdoing by Onesimus.
- c. These verses do not suggest that Paul expected Philemon to send Onesimus back to Rome to help him. On the contrary Paul expected to be visiting Philemon at Colossae soon. Phm. 22. Paul mentions the service of Onesimus to him merely to prove to Philemon the sincerity of Onesimus' conversion.
- d. Phil. 2:20 suggests that Paul had a distinct shortage of helpers with him during part of his imprisonment in Rome. Therefore the assistance of Onesimus would be the more appreciated. Cf. I Tim. 4:11.
- e. Paul declares that Onesimus had been helping him "in thy behalf," or "in your place." He thus indicates that Philemon was indebted to him, since Paul had won Philemon to Christ. Philemon owed Paul a debt of service, even though Paul did not demand payment (like the merchant his pound of flesh). Thus when Philemon's slave turned to Christ and assisted Paul it was somewhat as if Philemon were paying off his debt to Paul by granting time off to Onesimus to serve Paul.
- f. The service rendered by Onesimus was "in the bonds of the gospel." This can mean that Paul himself was in the bonds

of the gospel, as in Phm. 1. Or it can mean that Philemon (and every one of us) in his bonds (i.e. obligation) to help other people by the very facts and truths of the gospel. The latter meaning is broader, and is probably to be preferred.

- g. The fact that Paul would not keep Onesimus without Philemon's consent shows the high value which Paul set on individual property rights. He recognized Philemon's right (his right in the sight of *God*) to dictate what should be done with his bond servant Onesimus. As Christians we have come so far in our revulsion to slavery that Paul's rather pedantic attention to Philemon's legal rights as master seems to us more a violation of Onesimus' greater right to be free than a necessary preservation of Philemon's rights. Perhaps we have all been brainwashed a bit in this line of thinking. Too long have the property rights of people been disregarded in futile socialistic attempts to force everyone into equality.

Thus Paul would not keep Onesimus without Philemon's mind (his consent, resolve, and judgment). Furthermore Paul's teaching in I Cor. 7:20-22, I Tim. 6:1-2, Titus 2:9-10, and Col. 3:22-25 indicate that he expected Onesimus to be obedient and subject to Philemon's wishes.

- h. Nonetheless we must not fail to notice that Paul fully desired and expected Philemon to do the good thing, to forgive, accept, and (almost inevitably it would seem to us) emancipate Onesimus, and then doubtless help him in every way possible to enter into the mainstream of free human society.

The whole issue was this: On what basis should this be done? By compulsion (as by state or ecclesiastical law), or by free will? The apostle Paul chose to effect social changes in people's lives by appealing to the sanctified free will of saints rather than by force.

- i. The idea that our good works should be done by free will and not legalistic compulsion applies not only to our treatment of one another (as in the case of Philemon and Onesimus), but to such matters as our giving (II Cor. 9:7) and our Christian labors (I Peter 5:2).

15. For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever;

- a. Paul here presents a possibility ("perhaps"—"peradventure"): Maybe Onesimus was separated from Philemon so that he

might be reunited with Philemon throughout eternity. He was parted from a slave temporarily to be reunited with a brother forever.

- b. Note the tactful "was parted." Paul might just as accurately have said, "He ran off from you." But the passive verb forms suggests that Onesimus' departure was perhaps not just gross disobedience on his part, but that he was influenced by other factors (for example, by divine providence!). And thus he "was parted," or separated, from you.

We are not insinuating that Paul was insincere in saying that Onesimus "was parted" from Philemon. Maybe God did indeed have a hand in Onesimus' departure. We cannot often tell which acts of men are the results of God's intervention. Certainly his running away indirectly produced benefits for the entire Christian world ever since. We would be much poorer, for example, if we did not have the letter to Philemon.

- c. The verb *have* (Gr. *apecho*) in "that thou shouldest *have*" means "to have wholly or in full." Thus Philemon would have Onesimus in the fullest way possible throughout eternity.

So often we really do not know our associates and have so little in common with them. In eternity we shall have one another fully, and know as we are known. And this will be altogether good, for there will be no secret sins to fear or hide.

16. no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

- a. Philemon was to consider that in having Onesimus forever, he would have him no longer as a slave, but as one much superior to a slave, a beloved brother.

It is almost unthinkable that a person could enslave his own brother. In the song "O Holy Night" there are these lovely words concerning Christ :

"Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother;
And in his name all oppression shall cease."

- b. Paul declares that Onesimus is beloved "specially" to me. This is a superlative form, meaning "most of all." However Philemon's love for Onesimus was to be even more than Paul's (more than most!).

The idealism of Paul and his high expectations concerning Philemon, show the power of the Holy Spirit to transform attitudes, feelings, and actions.

- c. Philemon's love for Onesimus was to be both in the flesh and in the Lord. He was not to feel as one party who said, "Oh, I love foreigners; I just don't want to be around them." It is often pretense to claim to love people abstractly, but not in the flesh. I John 4:20.

17. If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself.

- a. This verse is the grand climax of all that Paul has written up to this point. Receive Onesimus as you would receive me.
- b. Paul assumes that Philemon will have (accept, welcome) him as a *partner*, one with a common share in the blessings of Christ, an associate. But Philemon was to do more than that. He was to receive Onesimus as one equal to Paul himself.
- c. Paul's conditional statement is a simple form which assumes that the conditional statement is truth. "Since you accept me as a partner, then receive him to yourself as you would receive me."

18. But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account;

- a. This verse answers a possible objection that might be raised by Philemon: How can I receive Onesimus back when he has done so dishonestly (or unjustly), and owes me for what he has taken?
- b. We have no definite information as to what Onesimus had done or not done that could be called "unjust." It is altogether likely that he stole some money from Philemon's house before he ran away. He could hardly have gotten to far-off Rome from Colossae without considerable funds. But we can only guess about all this. (Titus 2:9-10 commands Christian slaves to avoid stealing and pilfering!)
- c. In three short Greek words Paul disposes of the possible objection of Onesimus' debts to Philemon: *touto emoi elloga!* "Put this to my account!"
- d. Paul almost certainly never expected to have to pay any damages caused by Onesimus. In the first place Paul probably did not have enough money to do so. Phil. 2:25 speaks of Paul being in need while he was a prisoner in Rome. Secondly Paul wrote these words—"Put this to my account"—more to impress Philemon with his eagerness about forgiving Onesimus, than to pledge himself as financial security for debts.

19. I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides.

- a. In vs. 19 Paul continues and clinches his promise to personally square up all debts of Onesimus, should it be that Philemon insisted on this. Paul declares that he has put it in writing with his own hand: he will repay all that Onesimus may owe.
- b. It is rather obvious that Paul really did not expect to receive from Philemon an itemized bill from Philemon of Onesimus' debts. He goesads the conscience of Philemon by saying, "I am confident that you will not demand payment of Onesimus' debts, so that I may not say unto you that you owe to me your own self. (Though Paul said he did not want to say this, he did say it!)"
- c. Philemon owed his own self to Paul because Paul had preached to and won Philemon. Philemon had eternal life because Paul had gone to the trouble and effort of teaching, exhorting, and persuading him.
- d. The Bible does not say a great deal about the debts of converts to their teachers. But this is a very real obligation, and is one that cannot be paid off with money. It is best paid by doing the same things to others that those who won us to Christ did unto us. It is best paid by holding and radiating a sincere feeling of gratitude. The heartfelt recognition of the debt is in itself a payment of the debt.

20. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ.

- a. Paul's appeal closes on a positive note: "Yes, my brother, I wish to receive help from you in the Lord." Philemon's act of receiving Onesimus back would be a help to Paul. It would encourage him. It would show to multitudes of people the reality of the power of the gospel in human lives. It would strengthen the faith and love of Onesimus, who was in reality only a babe in Christ. It would show how the gospel relates to and solves the problems of this life.
- b. The wording of this verse ("Let me have *joy* in thee") literally reads, "Let me have *help* of (from) thee." The Gr. word for *help* is *oninemi*, which is from the same root as the name Onesimus. See notes on Phm. 10. Paul rather asked Philemon to onesimize (i.e. help) him by receiving Onesimus.

- c. The verb *help* is in the optative mood, a mood expressing wishes and possibility. Paul doubtless used this mood form to make his request gentle and suggestive, rather than imperious and demanding.
- d. Back in Phm. 7 Paul declared that Philemon had refreshed the hearts of the saints. Paul closes by asking that Philemon refresh his heart *in Christ* by receiving Onesimus back as a brother. While this would not be a refreshing for Paul *in the flesh*, it would be a refreshing to him *in Christ*. That expression implies a lot of areas wherein Paul might find refreshment.

21. Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say.

- a. Paul was persuaded by his personal knowledge of Philemon that he would be obedient to the request to receive Onesimus. He could even assert more than that: he *knew* that Philemon would do more than he requested in the letter.
- b. We can well imagine that Philemon emancipated Onesimus, and then helped him by training, and counsel, and perhaps financial assistance and intercession on his behalf with others to become a self-supporting citizen in the society of free Christians.
- c. If such actually happened it is unthinkable that Onesimus ever became overbearing and contemptuous and demanding toward his former master. It sometimes happens that those who have been helped out of slavery or poverty become overbearing and intolerably demanding toward the very people to whom they owe all they are and have.
- d. Some commentators start a new division of the outline of Philemon at vs. 21, assuming that the conclusion and salutations start there, and go on to the end of the epistle. But inasmuch as the proposed visit by Paul to Philemon served as a powerful incentive to Philemon to receive Onesimus, we have included vss. 21-22 as part of division III, Paul's intercession for Onesimus.

22. But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you.

- a. Paul clinches his written appeal by the announcement that he expected to be visiting Philemon sometime soon. If by

some chance Philemon had not complied with Paul's written request, he could expect to face kindly old Paul with this disobedience standing as a barrier between them. Such an meeting could not avoid being an emotional experience even if Philemon had been obedient. Should Philemon have been disobedient it would be nearly an unbearable experience.

- b. Paul asked Philemon to prepare a guest room for him at the same time (Gr. *ama*) he was giving Onesimus his brotherly reception.
- c. Paul was, of course, still in detention in Rome when he wrote that he hoped to visit Philemon. To hasten his release Paul wrote that he expected Philemon to be praying for him.

This request for prayer sharpens Paul's appeal. How could Philemon be praying for Paul's release, so that Paul could the more quickly visit him, when he was at the same time not doing that which Paul had so fervently requested him to do?

- d. Paul hoped to *be granted* (A.V. *given*) to Philemon and to the other brethren in Colossae (the *you* is plural). The word *grant* used here means to give graciously, give as a gift, give as a favor. And notice the passive voice. Paul speaks of himself as being acted upon. God was working things out so that Paul would be granted to visit Philemon, and this is regarded as a favor bestowed upon Philemon.

This manner of speaking might make us feel that Paul was a bit conceited in looking upon his presence as a gift to those who entertained him. But there was no conceit or vanity there. The Colossians were genuinely in Paul's debt. (Phm. 19). Paul's visit to them would be God's doing, not his own.

IV. *Salutations and benediction; Phm. 23-25.*

- 23. Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee;
- 24. and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers.

- a. As he does in several epistles Paul closes by naming several brethren with him who also send greetings.
- b. All of the men named here in the epistle to Philemon are called Paul's fellow-workers.
- c. All of them are also named in Colossians chapter four. This is a strong confirmation that the epistles to Colossians and to Philemon were dispatched simultaneously. Names here given include:

- (1) Epaphras, their former minister, who was at that time with Paul, and who had reported to Paul concerning their love. Col. 1:7-8; 4:12. Epaphras is called Paul's fellow-prisoner. This word is also found in Rom. 16:7 and Col. 4:10. It is not the same word as *desmios* that is used in Phm, 1. Its root meaning is "one taken away captive by the spear." We do not know the cause of Epaphras' imprisonment, nor its severity.
- (2) Mark; See notes on Col. 4:10.
- (3) Aristarchus; See notes on Col. 4:10.
- (4) Demas; See notes on Col. 4:14 and II Tim. 4:10.
- (5) Luke; See notes on Col. 4:14.

25. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

- a. This closing wish for grace is found in every epistle of Paul.
- b. This benediction is nearly word for word like Gal. 6:18, and is identical with Phil. 4:23.
- c. Grace comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is a comprehensive term for His favor and all the good effects that His favor brings to us.
- d. It is noteworthy that the grace is to be with your (plural) spirit. The invisible needs of our invisible spirits are just as real as the more obvious visible needs of our visible bodies. Furthermore if the needs of our spirits are not supplied, we shall soon be suffering in both body and spirit. See Eph. 4:12.

The question comes inevitably to our minds: Did Philemon obey Paul's request. We think the answer is YES.

There is no written postscript or definite historical information to settle the question. Traditions that Onesimus ultimately became a bishop are just traditions. But to us it is more than unthinkable that Philemon did not fulfill Paul's confidence and hopes to the utmost. Surely the letter would never have been preserved if it had not accomplished its goal.

QUESTIONS OVER THE COMMENTARY ON PHILEMON

1. How does Paul describe himself in his greeting?
2. How does Paul describe Philemon?
3. How does Paul describe Archippus?

EXAMINATION

4. When were church buildings first built?
5. What is grace?
6. From whom does grace come?
7. When did Paul thank God for Philemon?
8. What two things had Paul heard about Philemon?
9. What was Paul asking for in praying that "the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual"?
10. What is the significance of the word *knowledge* in Phm. 6?
11. To what does the *bowels* of the saints refer?
12. What did Paul not command (or enjoin) Philemon to do what he should?
13. Why should Paul refer to himself as "Paul the aged"?
14. What other word is sometimes used rather than *aged*?
15. Explain the word *befitting* in vs. 8
16. If Paul did not present his wish as a command, in what form did he present it?
17. At what point in the sentence in Phm. 10 is the name Onesimus placed? Why?
18. Explain the clause, "I have begotten (him) in my bonds."
19. How may Onesimus have once been unprofitable to Philemon?
20. To whom had Onesimus become profitable?
21. What did Paul mean by saying that he was send back his very heart in sending Onesimus?
22. Why did Paul desire to keep Onesimus with him?
23. Why did he send him back if he desired to keep him?
24. Why did Paul assume that Philemon ought to minister unto him?
25. What was to be the motivating cause of Philemon's good act? (Phm. 14)
26. What significance may there be in the passive verb form "was parted" in Phm. 15?
27. Why, perhaps, was Onesimus parted from Philemon? (Phm. 15)
28. What is the significance of the verb *have* in Phm. 15?
29. In what capacity would Philemon have Onesimus for ever?
30. According to Phm. 16 how much love did Paul have for Onesimus? How much was Philemon to have for him?
31. In what two respects was Philemon to love Onesimus?
32. Philemon was to receive Onesimus as he would receive whom?
33. What settlement was to be made for the wrongs Onesimus had done and the debts he owed?
34. How did Paul make emphatic his pledge to repay?

PHILEMON

35. What did Paul say he hoped not to say, and yet did say?
36. Why did Philemon owe Paul even his very self?
37. How does the sentence, "Let me have joy of thee" relate to the name Onesimus?
38. What deed would refresh Paul?
39. Of what did Paul have confidence?
40. What did Paul know that Philemon would do?
41. What did Paul request that Philemon prepare for him?
42. What did Paul hope would hasten his coming to visit Philemon?
43. How would Paul's promised visit to Philemon strengthen the force of his appeal for Onesimus?
44. Paul hoped that "I shall be granted unto you." Explain the implication of the passive verb form.
45. Name the five men who sent greetings along with Paul.
46. Which of these is called Paul's fellow-prisoner?
47. What descriptive title is applied to all five of the men?
48. What closing benediction is found in all of Paul's epistles?
49. What is the grace of Christ to be with? (Phm. 25)