

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO

PHILEMON.

[VER. 21

VER. 1]

WRITER. The Apostle Paul (1. 1).

Date. Probably A.D. 64. It is one of the Prison Epistles. See Introductions to Ephesians and Colossians.

Theme. Onesimus ("profitable"), a slave of Philemon, a Christian of Colosse, had robbed his master and fled to Rome. There he became a convert through Paul, who sent him back to Philemon with this letter. It is of priceless value as a teaching (1) in practical righteousness; (2) in Christian brotherhood; (3) in Christian courtesy; (4) in the law of love.

The divisions are four: I. Greeting, 1-3. II. The character of Philemon, 4-7. III. Intercession for Onesimus, 8-21. IV. Salutations and conclusion, 22-25.

Part I. The apostolic greeting.

PAUL, a "prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,
 2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and *b*Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the "church in thy house:
 3 *d*Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A.D. 64.
a Eph.3.1.
b Col.4.17.
c Churches (local). Jas.5.14. (Acts 2.41; Phil.1.1.)
d Eph.1.2.
e Eph.1.16.
f Jas.2.14,17.
g Phil.4.8; 2 Pet.1.5.8.
h v.19.
i fitting.
j Col.4.9.
k 1 Cor.4.15.
l 1 Pet.2.10.
m Gospel. Heb.4.2. (Gen.12.1-3; Rev.14.6.)
n bondman.
o 2 Cor.8.23.
p Lk.14.14.
q in Christ.
r 2 Cor.7.16.

11 ^lWhich in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the "gospel:

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

16 Not now as a "servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

17 If thou count me therefore a "partner, receive him as myself.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine ¹account;

19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it*: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels ²in the Lord.

21 Having 'confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

Part II. The character of Philemon.

4 ^eI thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

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

6 That the communication of thy faith may become ^feffectual by the acknowledging of ^gevery good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Part III. Intercession for Onesimus.

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that ^hwhich is ⁱconvenient,

9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech *thee*, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

10 I beseech thee for my son ^jOnesimus, whom I have ^kbegotten in my bonds:

¹ Verses 17, 18 perfectly illustrate imputation: "Receive him as myself"—reckon to him my merit; "If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account"—reckon to me his demerit. See "Imputation," Lev. 25, 30; Jas. 2. 23, note.

Part IV. Salutations and conclusion.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I ^atrust that ^bthrough your prayers I shall be given unto you.

A.D. 64.

^a *hope.*
^b Acts 12.5,11,12.
^c Col.1.7.
^d Acts 12.12,25.
^e Acts 19.29.
^f 2 Tim.4.10.
^g 2 Tim.4.22.

23 There salute thee ^cEpaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

24 ^dMarcus, ^eAristarchus, ^fDemas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

25 The ^ggrace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.