

SAINT JEROME

COMMENTARY ON PHILEMON

Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Philemonem

SABBATISMUS

Saint Jerome (347–420)
Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Philemonem · Commentary on Philemon

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PROLOGUS.

Qui nolunt inter Epistolas Pauli eam recipere quae ad Philemonem scribitur, aiunt, non semper Apostolum, nec omnia, Christo in se loquente, dixisse: quia nec humana imbecillitas unum tenorem sancti Spiritus ferre potuisset: nec hujus corpusculi necessitates sub praesentia Domini semper complerentur: velut disponere prandium, cibum capere, esurire, saturari, ingesta digerere, exhausta complere; taceo de caeteris, quae exquisite et coacte replicant: ut affirmant fuisse aliquod tempus in quo Paulus dicere non auderet: Vivo, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus (Galat. II, 20); et illud: An experimentum quaeritis ejus qui in me loquitur Christus (II Cor. XIII, 3)? Quale, inquit, experimentum Christi est, audire: Penulam quam reliqui Troade apud Carpum, veniens tecum affer (II Tim. IV, 13). Et illud ad Galatas: Utinam et excidantur qui vos conturbant (Gal. V, 12). Et in hac ipsa Epistola: Simul autem et praepara mihi hospitium. Hoc autem non solum apostolis, sed prophetis quoque similiter accidis: unde saepius scriptum feratur: Factum est verbum Domini ad Ezechiel (Ezech. XXII), sive ad quemlibet alium prophetarum: quia post expletum vaticinium, rursus in semet revertens, homo communis fieret e propheta; et excepto Domino nostro Jesu Christo in nullo sanctum Spiritum permansisse. Quod signum et Joannes Baptista acceperat, ut super quem vidisset Spiritum sanctum descendentem et manentem in eo, ipsum esse cognosceret (Joan. I). Ex quo ostendit super multos quidem descendere Spiritum sanctum; sed proprium hoc esse Salvatoris insigne, quia permaneat in eo. His et caeteris istiusmodi, volunt aut Epistolam non esse Pauli, quae ad Philemonem scribitur: aut etiam si Pauli sit, nihil habere quod aedificare nos possit; et a plerisque veteribus repudiatam, dum commendandi tantum scribatur officio, non docendi.

THE COMMENTARIES OF SAINT EUSEBIUS
 JEROME OF STRIDON, THE PRESBYTER, ON THE
 EPISTLE TO PHILEMON: BOOK ONE. (C)
PROLOGUE.

Those who are unwilling to accept the epistle written to Philemon among the Epistles of Paul say that the Apostle did not always, nor in all things, speak with Christ speaking in him: because neither could human weakness have borne the single tenor of the Holy Spirit, nor could the necessities of this little body always be fulfilled in the presence of the Lord—such as arranging a meal, taking food, being hungry, being full, digesting what has been eaten, replenishing what is exhausted; I say nothing of the other things which they meticulously and constrainedly repeat—so that they affirm there was some time in which Paul would not dare to say: "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20); and that other passage: "Do you seek proof of Christ who speaks in me?" (2 Cor. 13:3). What sort of proof of Christ is it, they say, to hear: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring with you when you come" (2 Tim. 4:13). And that passage to the Galatians: "I wish that those who are unsettling you would even cut themselves off" (Gal. 5:12). And in this very Epistle: "At the same time, also prepare a guest room for me." Moreover, they say this happened not only to the apostles, but similarly to the prophets as well; whence it is often found written: "The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel" (Ezek. 22), or to any other of the prophets, because after the prophecy was completed, returning again to himself, the prophet would become an ordinary man; and that except for our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit has remained permanently in no one. John the Baptist had also received this sign, so that he would recognize the one upon whom he saw the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on him (John 1). From this it is shown that the Holy Spirit does indeed descend upon many, but that it is the proper mark of the Savior that the Spirit remains in Him. For these and other reasons of this kind, they wish either that the Epistle written to Philemon is not by Paul, or, even if it is by Paul, that it has nothing in it that can edify us; and that it was rejected by many of the ancients, since it was written only for the purpose of commendation, not of teaching.

At e contrario qui germanae auctoritatis eam esse defendunt, dicunt numquam in toto orbe a cunctis Ecclesiis fuisse susceptam, nisi Pauli apostoli crederetur: et hac lege ne secundam quidem ad Timotheum, et ad Galatas eos debere suscipere, de quibus et ipse humanae imbecillitatis exempla protulerit: Penulam quam reliqui Troade apud Carpum, veniens tecum affer; et: Utinam excidantur qui vos conturbant. Inveniri plurima et ad Romanos, et ad caeteras Ecclesias maximeque ad Corinthios remissius et quotidiano pene sermone dictata, in quibus Apostolus loquatur: Caeteris autem ego dico, non Dominus. Quas et ipsas quia aliquid tale habent, aut Pauli epistolas non putandas: aut si istae recipiuntur, recipiendam esse et ad Philemonem, ex praeiudicio similium receptarum. Valde autem eos et simpliciter errare, si putent cibum emere, hospitium praeparare, vestimenta conquirere, esse peccatum, et asserere fugari Spiritum sanctum, si corpusculi paulisper necessitatibus serviamus. Nolite, inquit Apostolus, contristare Spiritum sanctum, in quo signati estis in die redemptionis (Ephes. IV, 30). Quibus operibus Spiritus sanctus contristetur propheta commemorat, multis in ordine vitiis peccatisque digestis, ad extremum inferens: In omnibus istis contristabas me. Alioqui calicem aquae frigidae porrigere, pedes lavare, immolare vitulum, prandium praeparare, peccatum sit: cum sciamus ex his rebus in Dei quosdam filios adoptari? Non est huius temporis ad omnia respondere: quia nec omnia, quae illi proponere solent, intulimus. Quod si non putant eorum esse parva quorum et magna sunt, alterum mihi Conditorem, juxta Valentinum, Marcionem et Apellen, formicae, vermium, culicum, locustarum: alterum coeli, terrae, maris, et angelorum debent introducere. An potius ejusdem potentiae est, ingenium quod in majoribus exercueris, etiam in minoribus non negare? Et quoniam Marcionis fecimus mentionem, Pauli esse Epistolam ad Philemonem saltem Marcione auctore doceantur. Qui cum caeteras Epistolas ejusdem vel non susceperit, vel quaedam in his mutaverit atque corroserit, in hanc solam manus non est ausus mittere: quia sua illam brevitates defendebat. Sed mihi videntur, dum epistolam simplicitatis arguunt, suam imperitiam prodere, non intelligentes quid in singulis sermonibus virtutis ac sapientiae lateat. Quae, orantibus vobis, et ipso nobis sancto Spiritu suggerente, quo scripta sunt, suis locis explanare conabimur.

But on the contrary, those who defend it as being of genuine authority say that it would never have been received by all the Churches in the whole world unless it were believed to be by the apostle Paul; and that by this rule, they ought not to accept even the second to Timothy and the one to the Galatians, from which they themselves have brought forward examples of human weakness: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring with you when you come," and, "I wish that those who are unsettling you would cut themselves off." Many things are found, both in the letter to the Romans and to the other Churches, and especially to the Corinthians, dictated in a more relaxed and almost everyday style, in which the Apostle says: "To the rest I say, not the Lord." And because these letters also contain something of this sort, they must either not be considered Paul's epistles, or, if these are received, the one to Philemon must also be received, based on the precedent of similar ones that have been accepted. Moreover, they err greatly and naively if they think that to buy food, prepare lodging, or procure clothing is a sin, and to assert that the Holy Spirit is driven away if we attend for a little while to the necessities of our small body. "Do not," says the Apostle, "grieve the Holy Spirit, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). The prophet recounts by what works the Holy Spirit is grieved, having listed many vices and sins in order, concluding at the end: "In all these things you grieved me." Otherwise, would it be a sin to offer a cup of cold water, to wash feet, to sacrifice a calf, to prepare a meal, when we know that through these things some are adopted as sons of God? This is not the time to respond to everything, because we have not even introduced all the points that they are accustomed to propose. But if they do not think that small things belong to the same one to whom great things also belong, then, following Valentinus, Marcion, and Apelles, they must introduce one Creator for me of ants, worms, gnats, and locusts, and another of heaven, earth, sea, and angels. Or is it not rather a mark of the same power, not to deny in smaller things the skill which you have exercised in greater things? And since we have made mention of Marcion, let them be taught that the Epistle to Philemon is Paul's, at least on the authority of Marcion. For although he either did not accept the other Epistles of the same author, or changed and corrupted certain things in them, he did not dare to lay hands on this one alone, because its brevity defended it. But it seems to me that, while they accuse the epistle of simplicity, they betray their own ignorance, not understanding what power and wisdom lies hidden in each word. These things, with your prayers and with the Holy Spirit Himself suggesting to us the Spirit with which they were written, we will endeavor to explain in their proper places.

Si autem brevitatis habetur contemptui, contemnatur Abdias, Naum, Sophonias, et alii duodecim prophetarum, in quibus tam mira et tam grandia sunt quae feruntur, ut nescias utrum brevitatem sermonum in illis admirari debeas, an magnitudinem sensuum. Quod si intelligerent hi, qui Epistolam ad Philemonem repudiant, numquam brevitatem despicerent: quae pro laciniosis Legis oneribus, evangelico decore conscripta est, dum brevium consummatumque sermonem facit Dominus super terram. Sed jam ipsa Apostoli verba ponenda sunt, quae ita incipiunt.

INCIPIT LIBER.

(Vers. 1 seqq.) Paulus victus Christi Jesu, et Timotheus frater, Philemoni dilecto et cooperatori nostro, et Apphia sorori, et Archippo commilitoni nostro, et Ecclesiae quae in domo tua est, gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre nostro, et Domino nostro Jesu Christo.

Praepostero ordine atque perverso, in Epistolas Pauli dictari a me vobis placuit. Nam cum id crebro, o Paula et Eustochium, peteretis ut facerem; et ego obnix ne facerem recusarem, saltem parvam, et quae vobis ut numero versuum, ita sensu quoque et ordine videbatur extrema, ut dissererem coegistis. Rem itaque principii in fine tentabo, et quod alius in exordio statim Apostoli quaereret, quare, aut quo tempore, vel quo cognominante, e Saulo Pauli nomen acceperit, hoc ego nunc facere compellor: ne mu quidem, ut dicitur, ante hanc diem in eum facere ausus. Neque vero putandum est, ut a simplicioribus Latinis legitur, Saulum ante dictum esse, et non Saul: quia et de tribu Benjamin erat, in qua hoc nomen familiariter habebatur. Siquidem et ille Saul, rex Iudaeae, persecutor David, de tribu Benjamin fuit. Quod autem Saulus a nobis dicitur, non mirum est Hebraea nomina ad similitudinem Graecorum et Romanorum casuum declinari, ut sicut pro Joseph, Iosephus: pro Iacob, Iacobus: ita pro Saul quoque, Saulus in nostra lingua ac sermone dicatur.

Quaeritur igitur, cur, aut quo iubente, vel antiquum nomen amiserit, vel novum sumpserit. Ut ex Abram, Abraham diceretur, Dei iussione perfectum est (Gen. XVII, etc.): ut ex Sarai, Sarae vocabulum fieret, aequae Dei imperium fuit. Et ut ad novum Instrumentum veniam, ut Simon, Petri nomen acciperet (Marc. III): et filii Zebedaei, BANE REEM (), hoc est, filii tonitruum vocarentur, Domini nostri Iesu Christi voce praeceptum est (Ibidem). Quare autem e Saulo Paulus dictus sit, nulla Scriptura memorat. Audacter itaque faciam, sed forte vere de Actibus Apostolorum suspiciones meas affirmans.

But if brevity is held in contempt, then let Obadiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and the other twelve prophets be condemned, in whom are found things so wonderful and so great that you do not know whether you should admire the brevity of their words or the magnitude of their thoughts. If those who reject the Epistle to Philemon understood this, they would never despise brevity, which is written with evangelical grace in place of the verbose burdens of the Law, as the Lord makes a shortened and complete word upon the earth. But now the very words of the Apostle must be set forth, which begin thus.

HERE BEGINS THE BOOK.

(Vers. 1 ff.) Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the Church that is in your house: grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

In a backward and perverse order, it has pleased you that I should dictate a commentary on the Epistles of Paul. For although you, O Paula and Eustochium, frequently asked that I do this, and I stubbornly refused to do it, you have compelled me to discuss at least a small one, which seemed to you the last both in number of verses and also in meaning and order. And so I will attempt at the end a matter for the beginning, and what another would inquire about at the very start of the Apostle—why, or at what time, or by whose naming he received the name of Paul from Saul—this I am now compelled to do, not having dared, as they say, to utter even a "mu" against him before this day. Nor indeed should it be thought, as is read by the more simple-minded Latins, that he was previously called *Saulus* and not *Saul*, because he was of the tribe of Benjamin, in which this name was more common. Indeed, that Saul, king of Judea, the persecutor of David, was also of the tribe of Benjamin. But that he is called *Saulus* by us is not surprising, for Hebrew names are declined in the likeness of Greek and Roman cases, so that just as for Joseph we have Josephus, for Jacob, Jacobus, so also for Saul, *Saulus* is said in our language and speech.

It is asked, therefore, why, or by whose command, he either lost his old name or took a new one. That from Abram he should be called Abraham was accomplished by the command of God (Gen. 17, etc.); that from Sarai the name Sarah should be made was likewise the command of God. And to come to the New Testament, that Simon should receive the name of Peter (Mark 3), and that the sons of Zebedee should be called BANE REEM, that is, sons of thunder, was commanded by the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ibid.). But why he was called Paul from Saul, no Scripture mentions. Therefore, I will do so boldly, but perhaps truly, affirming my suspicions from the Acts of the Apostles.

Legimus in eis, quod sanctus Spiritus Antiochiae dixerit: Separate mihi Barnabam et Saulum, in opus ad quod assumpsi eos. Tunc jejunantes et orantes, imponentesque eis manus, dimiserunt illos (Actor. XIII, 3 seqq.). Qui cum Seleuciam Syriae descendissent, et navigantes Salaminam Cypri, quae nunc Constantia dicitur, pervenissent, haberentque secum in ministerio Joannem (propter quem postea aedificatorium Ecclesiae jurgium concitatum est) et omni insula peragrata, Paphum usque venissent, invenerunt quemdam magum [Al. magnum] pseudoprophetam nomine Bar Jesu, cum proconsule Sergio Paulo viro prudente. Qui accitis Barnaba et Saulo [Al. Paulo], desiderabat Dei sermonem ab eis audire. Resistente itaque mago [Al. magno], et a fide recta Sergium depravante, Saulus (ait Scriptura) qui et Paulus, repletus Spiritu sancto, intuens in eum dixit: O plene omni dolo, et omni fallacia, fili diaboli, inimice omnis iustitiae, non desinis subvertere vias Domini rectas? Et nunc ecce manus Domini super te, et eris caecus, non videns solem usque ad tempus. Confestimque cecidit in eum caligo et tenebrae, et circuiens quaerebat qui ei manus daret. Tunc proconsul, cum vidisset factum, credit, admirans super doctrina Domini. Et cum a Papho navigassent Paulus, et qui cum eo erant, venerunt Pergen Pamphyliæ.

Diligenter attende, quod hic primum nomen Pauli acceperit. Ut enim Scipio, subjecta 747 Africa, Africani sibi nomen assumpsit: et Metellus, Creta insula subjugata, insigne Cretici suae familiae reportavit: et Imperatores nunc usque Romani ex subjectis gentibus, Adiabenici, Parthici, Sarmatici nuncupantur: ita et Saulus ad praedicationem gentium missus, a primo Ecclesiae spolio proconsule Sergio Paulo, victoriae suae trophaea retulit, erexitque vexillum, ut Paulus diceretur e Saulo. Si autem et interpretatio nominis quaeritur, Paulus in Hebraeo, mirabilem sonat. Revera mirum, ut post Saul, qui interpretatur, expetitus, eo quod ad vexandum Ecclesiam, fuisset a diabolo postulatus, de persecutore vas fieret electionis. Plus forte quam oportuit, sed necessarie disputatum est.

Quod autem sequitur, vinctus Jesu Christi, in nulla Epistola hoc cognomine usus est, licet in corpore Epistolarum, ad Ephesios videlicet et Philippenses, et Colossenses, esse se in vinculis pro confessione testetur. Majoris autem mihi videtur supercilii, vinctum se Jesu Christi dicere, quam Apostolum. Gloriabantur quippe apostoli, quod digni fuerant pro nomine Jesu Christi contumeliam pati (Act. V, 41); sed necessaria auctoritas vinculorum. Rogaturus pro Onesimo, talis rogare debuit, qui posset impetrare quod posceret.

We read in them that the Holy Spirit said at Antioch: "Separate for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, fasting and praying, and laying their hands on them, they sent them away (Acts 13:3 ff.). When they had gone down to Seleucia in Syria, and sailing to Salamis in Cyprus, which is now called Constantia, had arrived, and had with them John in their ministry (on account of whom a quarrel later arose that built up the Church), and having traveled through the whole island, had come to Paphos, they found a certain magician [alternatively: great man], a false prophet named Bar-Jesus, with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, a prudent man. He, having summoned Barnabas and Saul [alternatively: Paul], desired to hear the word of God from them. When the magician [alternatively: great man] therefore resisted and tried to turn Sergius from the true faith, "Saul," says the Scripture, "(who is also Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, looking intently at him, said: 'O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?'" "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him, and going about he sought someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, when he saw what had been done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. And when Paul and those who were with him had sailed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia.

Pay close attention, for it was here that he first received the name of Paul. For just as Scipio, after subduing Africa, took for himself the name Africanus; and Metellus, after subjugating the island of Crete, brought back the distinction of "Creticus" for his family; and Roman Emperors to this day are named from the peoples they have subjected—Adiabenicus, Parthicus, Sarmaticus—so also Saul, sent to preach to the gentiles, from the first spoil of the Church, the proconsul Sergius Paulus, brought back the trophies of his victory, and raised a standard, so that he was called Paul from Saul. Moreover, if the interpretation of the name is sought, *Paulus* in Hebrew sounds like "wonderful." It is truly wonderful that after being Saul, which is interpreted as "sought after"—because he had been demanded by the devil to vex the Church—from a persecutor he should become a chosen vessel. This has been discussed perhaps more than was necessary, but it was necessary.

As for what follows, "a prisoner of Jesus Christ," he has used this title in no other Epistle, although in the body of his Epistles, namely to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, he testifies that he is in chains for his confession. But it seems to me a matter of greater pride to call himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ than an Apostle. Indeed, the apostles gloried that they had been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 5:41); but the authority of chains was necessary. About to ask a favor for Onesimus, he had to ask as one who could obtain what he requested.

Felix nimirum qui non in sapientia, non in divitiis, non in eloquentia et potentia saeculari, sed in Christi passionibus gloriatur. Tali et ad Galatas Epistolam sermone concludens: De caetero, ait, nemo mihi molestus sit: ego enim stigmata Domini nostri Jesu Christi in corpore meo porto (Galat. VI). Non omnis autem qui vinctus est vinctus est Christi; sed quicumque pro Christi nomine et pro ejus confessione vincitur, ille vere vinctus dicitur Jesu Christi, et sanguis effusus is tantum martyrem facit, qui pro Christi nomine funditur.

Scribit igitur ad Philemonem Romae vinctus in carcere, quo tempore mihi videntur ad Philippenses, Colossenses, et Ephesios Epistolae esse dictatae. Ad Philippenses illa ex causa: primum quod cum solo Timotheo scribit, quod et in hac Epistola facit. Dehinc quod vincula sua manifesta dicit facta pro Christo 748 in omni praetorio. Quid sit autem praetorium, in ipsius Epistolae fine significat, Salutant vos omnes sancti, maxime autem qui de Caesaris domo sunt. A Caesare missus in carcerem, notior familiae ejus factus, persecutoris domum, Christi fecit Ecclesiam. Deinde ait: Quidam autem ex contentione Christum annuntiant, non sincere existimantes pressuram se suscitare vinculis meis (Philip. I, 17).

Porro et ad Colossenses principium simile. Paulus Apostolus Jesu Christi per voluntatem Dei, et Timotheus frater. Et in consequentibus: Cujus factus sum ego Paulus minister, qui nunc gaudeo in passionibus pro vobis: et adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea pro corpore ejus, quod est Ecclesia (Col. I, 2, 23, 24). Et in fine: Salutatio mea manu Pauli, memores estote vinculorum meorum (Col. IV, 18). Hoc ideo, ut sciamus has quoque Epistolas de carcere et inter vincula fuisse dictatas.

Illud autem proprie habet ad Colossenses, quod idem Onesimus, qui nunc Philemoni commendatur, etiam perlator ejusdem sermonis fuit. Denique ait: Quae circa me sunt, omnia vobis nota faciet Tychicus charissimus frater, et minister fidelis, et conservus in Domino quem misi ad vos, ad hoc ut cognoscat quae circa vos sunt, et consoletur corda vestra, cum Onesimo charissimo, et fideli fratre, qui est ex vobis (Ibid., 7, 8). Si autem Philemon, ad quem haec epistola scribitur, Onesimi dominus est, immo frater esse coepit in Domino, et ad Colossenses refertur quod Onesimus ex eis sit: ratio nos ipsa et ordo deducit, quod et Philemon Colossensis sit, et eo tempore communem ad omnem Ecclesiam Onesimus epistolam tulerit, quo privatas et sui commendatrices ad Dominum litteras sumpserat. Est et aliud indicium, quod in hac eadem epistola et Archippus nominatur: cui hic cum Philemone scribitur: Dicite, inquit, Archippo, vide ministerium quod accepisti a [Al. in] Domino, ut illud impleas.

Happy indeed is he who glories not in wisdom, not in riches, not in eloquence and worldly power, but in the sufferings of Christ. Concluding his Epistle to the Galatians with such a statement, he says: "From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6). However, not everyone who is a prisoner is a prisoner of Christ; but whoever is bound for the name of Christ and for his confession, he is truly called a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and only that shed blood makes a martyr which is poured out for the name of Christ.

He writes, therefore, to Philemon as a prisoner in chains in Rome, at which time it seems to me the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians were also dictated. To the Philippians, for this reason: first, because he writes with Timothy alone, which he also does in this Epistle. Then, because he says his chains have become known throughout the whole praetorium for Christ. And what the praetorium is, he indicates at the end of that same Epistle: "All the saints greet you, especially those who are of Caesar's household." Sent to prison by Caesar, he became better known to his household and made the house of his persecutor into a Church of Christ. Then he says: "But some proclaim Christ out of contention, not sincerely, thinking to stir up affliction for my chains" (Phil. 1:17).

Furthermore, the beginning of the Epistle to the Colossians is similar: "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother." And in the following verses: "Of which I, Paul, was made a minister, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of his body, which is the Church" (Col. 1:2, 23, 24). And at the end: "The salutation by my own hand, Paul's. Remember my chains" (Col. 4:18). This is so that we may know that these Epistles were also dictated from prison and in chains.

But what is proper to the Colossians is that the same Onesimus, who is now commended to Philemon, was also the bearer of that same letter. Finally, he says: "Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord, will make known to you all the things that are about me, whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that he might know your state, and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, a beloved and faithful brother, who is one of you" (Ibid., 7, 8). If, however, Philemon, to whom this epistle is written, is the master of Onesimus—or rather, began to be his brother in the Lord—and it is mentioned to the Colossians that Onesimus is one of them, then reason and order themselves lead us to the conclusion that Philemon is also a Colossian, and that at the same time Onesimus carried the general epistle to the whole Church, he also took with him the private letters of commendation for himself to his master. There is also another indication, that in this same epistle Archippus is also named, to whom it is written here with Philemon: "Say," he says, "to Archippus, 'See to the ministry which you have received from [alternatively: in] the Lord, that you fulfill it.'"

Quod est ministerium quod Archippus accepit a Domino? Ad Philemonem legimus: Et Archippo commilitoni nostro, et Ecclesiae quae in domo tua est. Ex quo puto aut episcopum eum fuisse Colossensis Ecclesiae, cui admonetur, studiose et diligenter praeesse, 749 ut Evangelii praedictorem. Aut si ita non est, illud mihi impraesentiarum sufficit, quod et Philemon et Archippus, et Onesimus ipse qui litteras perferebat, fuerint Colossenses, et eodem tempore quatuor (ut ante diximus) Epistolae scriptae sunt.

Ad Ephesios vero illam ob causam, quod pro Christo et hic vinctum se esse dicat, et eadem quae ad Colossenses iusserat, in hujus quoque Epistolae fine praecipiat, ut uxores subjiciantur viris, et viri uxores diligant, ut filii obediant parentibus, ut patres non provocent ad iracundiam filios suos, ut servi obediant dominis carnalibus, ut domini, relictis minis, ea servis quae justa sunt, praebeant: et ad extremum Epistolam suam hoc fine concludat: Quid agam, notum vobis faciet Tychicus charissimus frater, et fidelis minister in Domino: quem misi ad vos in hoc ipsum, ut cognoscatis quae circa me sunt, et consoletur corda vestra. Tychicus autem is est, qui et ad Colossenses cum Onesimo mittitur, et eo tempore Onesimum habuit comitem, quo Onesimus ad Philemonem litteras perferebat.

Et Timotheus frater. In aliis epistolis Sosthenes et Silvanus, interdum et Timotheus frater [Al. tacet frater] assumitur. In quatuor tantum Timotheus, quia vel eodem tempore, vel praesente Timotheo caeterisque, dictatae sint. Quod ego duplici ex causa factum puto; ut et Epistola majorem haberet auctoritatem, quae non ab uno scribebatur: et quia nulla aemulatio erat inter apostolos, si quid forte Paulo dictante, alii spiritus suggessisset, absque ulla tristitia addebat Paulus in litteris quas dictabat. Secundum id quod ipse Corinthiis praecepit, ut si alio prophetante, alii fuerit revelatum, taceat ille qui prius prophetabat (I Cor. XIV). Ita ipse quoque praeceptum suum opere complebat, et propter pauca quae alio addiderat suggerente ut suam, ita alterius quoque epistolam praescribebat.

Philemoni, inquit, dilecto. Non habetur in Graeco ἡγαπημένω, quod dilectus dicitur, sed ἀγαπητῷ, id est, diligibili. Inter dilectum autem et diligibilem, hoc interest, quod dilectus appellari potest et ille qui dilectionem non meretur. Diligibilis vero is tantum qui merito diligitur. Denique et inimicos nostros diligere praecipimur, qui sunt 750 dilecti, sed non diligibiles. Amamus quippe illos, non quia amari merentur, sed quia praecipitur eos odio non habendos.

What is the ministry that Archippus received from the Lord? To Philemon we read: "And to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the Church that is in your house." From this I think that he was either the bishop of the Church of Colossae, who is admonished to preside studiously and diligently, as a preacher of the Gospel. Or if it is not so, it is sufficient for me at present that Philemon and Archippus, and Onesimus himself who carried the letters, were Colossians, and that at the same time four Epistles (as we said before) were written.

And to the Ephesians, for this reason: because here too he says he is a prisoner for Christ, and at the end of this Epistle also he commands the same things he had ordered for the Colossians: that wives be subject to their husbands, and husbands love their wives; that children obey their parents, that fathers not provoke their children to anger; that slaves obey their earthly masters, that masters, leaving aside threats, provide to their slaves what is just; and at the very end he concludes his Epistle with this: "What I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make known to you, whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know my affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts." Now this Tychicus is the one who was sent to the Colossians with Onesimus, and at that time he had Onesimus as a companion when Onesimus was carrying the letter to Philemon.

And Timothy our brother. In other epistles Sosthenes and Silvanus, and sometimes also Timothy the brother, are included. Timothy is included in only four, because they were dictated either at the same time, or with Timothy and the others present. I believe this was done for a twofold reason: so that the Epistle might have greater authority, as it was not written by one person alone; and because there was no rivalry among the apostles, if by chance, while Paul was dictating, the spirit had suggested something to another, Paul would add it without any displeasure to the letters he was dictating. This is according to what he himself commanded the Corinthians, that if, while one is prophesying, a revelation is made to another, the one who was prophesying first should be silent (1 Cor. 14). Thus he also fulfilled his own precept in practice, and on account of the few things which another had added at his suggestion, he would sign the epistle as being the other's as well as his own.

To Philemon, he says, the beloved. In Greek it does not have ἡγαπημένω (ēgapēmēnō), which is said for 'beloved' (dilectus), but ἀγαπητῷ (agapētō), that is, 'lovable' (diligibilis). Now, between 'beloved' and 'lovable' there is this difference: that even he who does not deserve love can be called beloved. But 'lovable' is only he who is loved by merit. Indeed, we are commanded to love our enemies, who are beloved, but not lovable. For we love them not because they deserve to be loved, but because it is commanded that they not be held in hatred.

Illud vero quod in quadragesimi quarti Psalmi titulo praenotatur, pro dilecto, melius habet in Graeco, pro diligibili: qui locus manifestissime de Christo intelligitur. Licet enim Judaei IDIDIA (), hoc est, amatum Dei, Salomonem dici putent, quod ei a Deo sit ob sapientiam nomen impositum (II Reg. XII): tamen amatus Dei quis magis dici potest, nisi is de quo in Evangelio Pater loquitur: Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui, hunc audite (Luc. IX, 36) Denique et in Isaia ita scriptum habet: Cantabo dilecto canticum diligibilis vineae meae. Vineae facta est dilecto (Isai. V, 1). Et hoc circumcisio de populo Judaico accipiendum putans, impegit in lapidem offensionis, et petram scandali: non recogitans vineam quae de Aegypto translata est, esse domum Israel, et Christum hic dici vel diligibilem, vel dilectum: dum et ipse diligere meretur a sanctis, et sancti eum diligunt, offerentes ei magis charitatem, quam ulla [Al. alia] charitatis praemia postulantes.

Scribunt igitur Paulus et Thimotheus, Philemoni charissimo et cooperatori: qui ideo charissimus dictus est, quod in eodem Christi opere versetur. Apphia [Al. Appiae] quoque sorori, non habenti in se falsae aliquid, et fictae germanitatis: et Archippo commilitoni, quem arbitror cum Paulo et Thimotheo contra adversarios pro Christi nomine dimicantem exstitisse victorem, et propterea nunc commilitonem dici, quod in eodem certamine belloque superaverit.

Scribitur etiam Ecclesiae quae in domo ejus est. Verum hoc ambiguum, utrum Ecclesiae quae in domo Archippi sit: an ei quae in domo Philemonis. Sed mihi videtur non ad Archippi, sed ad Philemonis referendum esse personam, cui ipsa quoque epistola deputatur. Nam licet Paulus et Thimotheus pariter scribant ad Philemonem, Appiam, Archippum, et Ecclesiam: tamen in sequentibus approbatur Paulum tantummodo ad Philemonem scribere, et unum cum uno sermocinari.

Gratias ago Deo meo semper, et memoriam tui faciens.

Hunc autem morem scribendi in nonnullis epistolis ejus invenire poteritis: quod cum plures, et ad plures 751 in praefatione ponantur, postea per totum corpus Epistolae, unus disputans inducatur.

Illud quod ad Galatas scribens Apostolus ait: in Christi fide nihil referre, gentilis sit aliquis, an Judaeus: vir, an mulier: servus, an liber (Galat. III, 28): etiam in hoc loco perspicuum fit. Inter duos quippe viros et apostolicos, inter cooperatorem Pauli, et commilitonem ejus, medium Apphia nomen inseritur: ut tali [Al. talis] ex utroque latere fulsa comitatu, non videatur ordinem sexus habere, sed meriti.

Indeed, that which is noted in the title of the forty-fourth Psalm, 'for the beloved,' is better in the Greek, 'for the lovable one'; this passage is most clearly understood of Christ. For although the Jews think that Solomon is called IDIDIA (Jedidiah), that is, 'beloved of God,' because this name was given to him by God on account of his wisdom (2 Kings 12), yet who can more rightly be called 'beloved of God' than He of whom the Father speaks in the Gospel: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him' (Luke 9:35)? Finally, in Isaiah it is thus written: 'I will sing to my beloved a song of my lovable one for my vineyard.' 'A vineyard was made for the beloved' (Isa. 5:1). And the circumcision, thinking this should be understood of the Jewish people, stumbled on the stone of offense and the rock of scandal, not recognizing that the vineyard which was brought out of Egypt is the house of Israel, and that Christ is here called either 'lovable' or 'beloved': since He both deserves to be loved by the saints, and the saints love Him, offering Him charity rather than asking for any rewards of charity.

Therefore, Paul and Timothy write to Philemon, dearest and co-worker, who is called 'dearest' for the reason that he is engaged in the same work of Christ. Also to Apphia the sister, who has in herself nothing of false or feigned sisterhood; and to Archippus the fellow soldier, whom I judge to have emerged as a victor fighting with Paul and Timothy against adversaries for the name of Christ, and for that reason is now called a fellow soldier, because he has conquered in the same contest and war.

It is also written to the Church that is in his house. But this is ambiguous, whether it is the Church in the house of Archippus, or that in the house of Philemon. But it seems to me that it should be referred not to the person of Archippus, but to that of Philemon, to whom the epistle itself is also addressed. For although Paul and Timothy write jointly to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the Church, yet in what follows it is shown that Paul alone is writing to Philemon, and one is conversing with one.

'I thank my God always, making mention of you.'

You will be able to find this manner of writing in some of his epistles: that although several persons are named in the preface, both as senders and as recipients, afterwards throughout the body of the Epistle, one person is introduced as speaking.

That which the Apostle says when writing to the Galatians—that in the faith of Christ it makes no difference whether someone is Gentile or Jew, male or female, slave or free (Gal. 3:28)—is also made clear in this place. For between two apostolic men, between the co-worker of Paul and his fellow soldier, the name of Apphia is inserted in the middle, so that, supported on either side by such company, she might not seem to have the rank of her sex, but of her merit.

Quod autem ait, Gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre nostro, et Domino Jesu Christo, adhuc a duobus ad plures scribitur, et in omnibus pene Epistolis aequale principium est, ut gratiam eis et pacem a Deo Patre et Christo Domino imprecetur. Ex quo ostenditur unam Filii Patrisque esse naturam, cum id potest Filius praestare quod Pater, et dicitur id Pater praestare quod Filius. Gratia autem est, qua nullo merito nec opere salvamur. Pax, qua reconciliati Deo per Christum sumus ut ibi: Obsecramus pro Christo, reconciliamini Deo (II Cor. V, 20).

(Vers. 4 seqq.) Gratias ago Deo meo semper, memoriam tui faciens in orationibus meis, audiens charitatem tuam, et fidem quam habes in Domino Jesu, et omnes sanctos ejus: ut communicatio fidei tuae evidens fiat in agnitione omnis boni, quod in vobis est in Christo. Haec jam non ut Paulus et Timotheus, Philemoni et caeteris; sed ut solus Paulus, ad solum Philemonem loquitur: Gratias, inquit, ago Deo meo semper [Al. addit et] memoriam tui faciens in orationibus meis. Ambigue vero dictum, utrum gratias agat Deo suo semper, an memoriam ejus faciat in orationibus suis semper. Et utrumque intelligi potest. Qui enim praecipit aliis, ut in omnibus gratias agant Deo, nullis angustiis poterit coarctari, ut gratias semper Deo ipse non referat. Si autem pro sanctis, et melioribus quibusque Paulus semper orabat (sanctus autem et Philemon est, tantam habens in se fidem et charitatem, ut non solum auditu ei, sed etiam opere nosceretur) et pro Philemone semper orasse Paulum, credibile est: quo scilicet fides et charitas quam habebat in Christo, et in omnes sanctos ejus, per communicationem fidei, et operationem agnitionis in omni bono, Christi misericordia servaretur; et de charitate quidem quam habebat in Christo Jesu, et in omnes sanctos ejus, non difficilis interpretatio est: qua post Deum diligere jubemus et proximos. Nunc hoc quaeritur, quomodo eandem fidem in Christo Jesu habere quis possit, et in sanctos ejus; ἀπὸ κοινοῦ enim resonat charitatem quam habes in Domino Jesu, et in omnes sanctos ejus: et fidem, quam habes in Domino Jesu, et in omnes sanctos ejus. Ad expositionem hujus loci de Exodo sumamus exemplum: Credidit populus Deo et Moysi servo ejus (Exod. XIX). Una atque eadem credulitas in Moysen refertur, et in Deum: ut populus qui credebat in Dominum, aequè credidisse dicatur [Al. scribatur] in servum. Hoc autem non solum in Moysen, sed in omnibus sanctis ejus est; ut quicumque credidit Deo, aliter ejus fidem recipere non queat, nisi credat et in sanctos ejus. Non est enim in Deum perfecta dilectio et fides, quae in ministros ejus odio et infidelitate tenuatur.

As for what he says, 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,' this is still written by two to many, and it is a similar beginning in almost all the Epistles, that he should implore for them grace and peace from God the Father and Christ the Lord. From this it is shown that the nature of the Son and the Father is one, since the Son can bestow what the Father can, and the Father is said to bestow what the Son does. Now, grace is that by which we are saved with no merit or work of our own. Peace is that by which we are reconciled to God through Christ, as it is said: 'We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God' (2 Cor. 5:20).

(Verses 4ff.) I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, hearing of your charity and the faith which you have in the Lord Jesus and in all his saints: that the communication of your faith may become evident in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you in Christ. These things he now says not as Paul and Timothy to Philemon and the others, but as Paul alone to Philemon alone, saying: "I thank my God always [another manuscript adds 'and'] making mention of you in my prayers." It is said ambiguously, however, whether he always gives thanks to his God, or always makes mention of him in his prayers. And both can be understood. For he who commands others to give thanks to God in all things cannot be constrained by any hardships from always giving thanks to God himself. But if Paul always prayed for the saints and for all the better ones (and Philemon is also a saint, having in himself such faith and charity that he was known not only by hearing but also by deed), it is credible that Paul also always prayed for Philemon: so that, of course, the faith and charity which he had in Christ and in all his saints might be preserved by the mercy of Christ, through the communication of faith and the operation of the knowledge of all good; and indeed, concerning the charity which he had in Christ Jesus and in all his saints, the interpretation is not difficult: by which we are commanded to love our neighbors also, after God. Now this is the question, how someone can have the same faith in Christ Jesus and in his saints; for by a common construction (*ἀπὸ κοινού*) it applies to "the charity which you have in the Lord Jesus and in all his saints" and "the faith which you have in the Lord Jesus and in all his saints." For the exposition of this passage, let us take an example from Exodus: "The people believed God and Moses his servant" (Exodus 19). One and the same belief is referred to Moses and to God, so that the people who believed in the Lord are said [another manuscript reads: 'is written'] to have believed equally in the servant. This, however, is true not only of Moses, but of all His saints; so that whoever has believed in God cannot otherwise receive His faith unless he also believes in His saints. For there is no perfect love and faith in God which is diminished by hatred and faithlessness towards His ministers.

Quod autem dico, tale est: credidit [Al. credit] quispiam in conditorem Deum: non potest credere, nisi prius crediderit, de sanctis ejus vera esse quae scripta sunt: Adam a Deo plasmatum, Evam ex costa illius, et latere fabricatam, Enoch translatum, Noe naufrago solum orbe servatum: quod primus Abraham de terra sua, et cognatione jussus exire, circumcisionem quam in signum futurae prolis acceperat, posteris dereliquit: quod Isaac oblatus victima sit, et pro illo aries immolatus, coronatusque sentibus, passionem Domini deformarit: quod Moyses et Aaron decem plagis Aegyptum affligerint: quod ad vocem Jesu filii Nave precesque steterit sol in Gabaon, et luna in valle Ailon. Longum est universa Judicum gesta percurrere: et totam Samson fabulam, ad veri solis (hoc quippe nomen ejus sonat) trahere sacramentum. Ad Regum [Al. Regnorum] libros veniam quando in tempore messis, obsecrante Samuele, pluviae de coelo, et flumina repente manarunt: et David unctus in regem est: et Nathan et Gad prophetaverunt mysteria; cum Elias igneo raptus est curru, et Elisaeus spiritu duplici mortuus mortuum suscitavit. Haec et caetera quae de sanctis scripta sunt, nisi quis universa crediderit, in Deum sanctorum credere non valebit: nec adduci ad fidem veteris Testamenti, nisi quaecumque de patriarchis et prophetis, et aliis insignibus viris narrat historia, comprobarit: ut ex fide Legis, ad fidem veniat Evangelii, et justitia Dei in eo reveletur ex fide in fidem, sicut scriptum est: Justus autem ex fide vivit (Abac. II). Praecipitur et in alio loco: Sancti estote, quoniam ego sanctus sum, dicit Dominus Deus vester (Levit. XIX, 2). Eadem sanctitas servis debetur et Domino: et sanctificans quippe et sanctificati ex uno omnes. Non putemus levem Philemonis praedicationem, si eandem fidem habeat in sanctos quam et in Deum. Qui credit Deum sanctum esse, utique non errat. Quod si quis hominem qui sanctus non est, sanctum esse crediderit, et Dei eum junxerit societati, Christum violat, cujus corporis omnes membra sumus. Qui dicit, inquit, justum injustum, et injustum justum, abominabilis uterque apud Deum est (Prov. VII, 15): similiter qui sanctum dicit esse non sanctum, et rursus non sanctum, asserit sanctum, abominabilis apud Deum est. Omnes credentes, secundum Apostolum, Christi corpus efficiuntur [Al. efficimur] (I Cor. VI). Qui in Christi corpore errat et labitur, asserens membrum ejus vel sanctum esse, cum non sit: vel non sanctum esse, cum sanctum sit, vide quali crimine obnoxius fiat: Vae, ait Isaias, qui dicunt dulce amarum, et amarum dulce: ponentes tenebras lucem, et lucem tenebras (Isai. V, 20).

What I am saying is this: someone has believed [another manuscript reads: 'believes'] in God the creator: he cannot believe unless he has first believed that what is written about His saints is true: that Adam was formed by God, Eve fashioned from his rib and side, Enoch was taken up, Noah was saved alone in a shipwrecked world; that Abraham was the first to be commanded to leave his land and his kindred, and left to his descendants the circumcision which he had received as a sign of future offspring; that Isaac was offered as a victim, and in his place a ram was sacrificed, crowned with thorns, prefiguring the passion of the Lord; that Moses and Aaron afflicted Egypt with ten plagues; that at the voice and prayers of Joshua son of Nun the sun stood still in Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Aijalon. It would be long to run through all the deeds of the Judges, and to draw out the whole story of Samson as a sacrament of the true sun (for this is what his name means). I come to the books of Kings [another manuscript reads: 'Kingdoms'], when in the time of harvest, at the prayer of Samuel, rains from heaven and rivers suddenly flowed; and David was anointed king; and Nathan and Gad prophesied mysteries; when Elijah was taken up in a fiery chariot, and Elisha, with a double portion of his spirit, being dead, raised a dead man. These and the other things which are written about the saints, unless one believes them all, he will not be able to believe in the God of the saints: nor can he be brought to the faith of the Old Testament, unless he has approved whatever history narrates about the patriarchs and prophets, and other distinguished men: so that from the faith of the Law, he may come to the faith of the Gospel, and the righteousness of God may be revealed in him from faith to faith, as it is written: "But the just man lives by faith" (Habakkuk 2). It is also commanded in another place: "Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). The same holiness is due to the servants and to the Lord: for both the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one. Let us not think it a light praise of Philemon, if he has the same faith in the saints as in God. He who believes God to be holy, certainly does not err. But if anyone believes a man who is not holy to be holy, and joins him to the company of God, he violates Christ, of whose body we are all members. "He who says," it says, "that the just is unjust, and the unjust is just, both are an abomination before God" (Proverbs 7:15): similarly, he who says that a holy person is not holy, and again asserts that an unholy person is holy, is an abomination before God. All believers, according to the Apostle, are made [another manuscript reads: 'we are made'] the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 6). He who errs and slips in the body of Christ, asserting that a member of it is holy when it is not, or is not holy when it is, see to what a crime he becomes liable: "Woe," says Isaiah, "to those who call sweet bitter, and bitter sweet: who put darkness for light, and light for darkness" (Isaiah 5:20).

Dulce, puto esse sanctimoniam: amarum, quod sanctimoniae contrarium est; aequae lux sanctimonia intelligi potest, tenebrae contrariae sanctitati. Quis putas e nobis probandis numismatibus callidus trapezita, non errabit in discretione sanctorum? Qui cum in Deum vel in sanctos ejus aequalem charitatem habuerit, et fidem, ipsius fidei communicationem debet habere non disparem: ut sicut credit et diligit, ita dilectionem suam et fidem opere consumat. Unde ait: Evidens fiat in agnitione omnis boni; sive ut in Graeco melius habetur, efficax; ἐνέργης enim proprie transferri potest, efficax, sive operatrix: ut non solum fidem nobis, et charitatem in Deum, et in sanctos ejus sufficere posse credamus; sed id quod credimus [Al. creditur], opere compleatur. Potest autem accidere, ut quis habeat fidem, et eam opere consummet: verum simpliciter et nude, non habens agnitionem nec scientiam ejus, juxta illud Apostoli: Confiteor zelum Dei habent, sed non secundum scientiam (Rom. X, 2). Sunt hodie plerique simplicium, qui faciunt opera justitiae, et non habent eorum quae ipsi operantur scientiam. Unde addidit: Ut communicatio fidei tuae operatrix fiat in agnitione omnis boni. Quantis gradibus quantisque saltibus, apostolicus in altiora sermo se tendit? Habet quispiam charitatem et fidem in Deum et in sanctos ejus: sed forsitan non aequali eam in omnes lance communicet. Communicet forsitan in cunctos, sed opere non expleat: voluntate impleat aliquis et opere, sed gestorum suorum perfectam habere non potest notionem. Sit talis quoque qui et opus habeat et scientiam, sed non omnis agnitionem habet boni; multa enim juste, mansuete, studio-seque perpetrans, impar est suis in aliqua parte virtutibus. An non talis Philemon? Habet quippe communicationem operatricis fidei, et charitatis in agnitione omnis boni. Quae cum in apostolis sit, non eam putemus ob id tantum esse perfectam, si in illis sit: sed in eo totam esse, quia Christi est, ut quidquid boni, et in Philemone laudatur, et de apostolorum exemplo sumitur: inde bonum sit, quia de fonte Christi ducatur.

Gaudium enim magnum habuimus, et consolationem in charitate tua, quia viscera sanctorum requieverunt per te, frater. Plenius inculcat et edocet, quare dixerit: Gratias ago Deo meo, semper memoriam tui faciens in orationibus meis. Dignum siquidem erat agere gratias Deo super charitate Philemonis, qui internum cordis affectum, et profundos animi sanctorum recessus suscipiendo refecerat. Et hoc idioma apostolicum est; ut semper viscera vocet, volens plenam mentis ostendere charitatem.

Sweet, I think, is holiness; bitter, that which is contrary to holiness; likewise, light can be understood as holiness, and darkness as what is contrary to holiness. Who among us, do you think, being a skilled money-changer in testing coins, will not err in the discernment of the saints? He who has equal charity and faith in God and in His saints, ought to have a communication of that faith that is not unequal: so that just as he believes and loves, so he may consummate his love and faith in deed. Whence he says: "May it become evident in the knowledge of all good"; or as it is better in the Greek, "effective"; for **ἐνργητός** can properly be translated as "effective" or "operative": so that we may not believe that faith and charity towards God and His saints is sufficient for us; but that what we believe [another manuscript reads: 'is believed'] may be completed by work. But it can happen that someone has faith and consummates it by work, yet simply and nakedly, not having knowledge or science of it, according to that of the Apostle: "I confess they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2). There are today many simple people who do works of justice, and do not have knowledge of what they themselves are doing. Whence he added: "That the communication of your faith may become operative in the knowledge of all good." By how many steps and by what leaps does the apostolic discourse strive for higher things? Someone has charity and faith in God and in His saints: but perhaps he does not communicate it with an equal balance to all. Perhaps he communicates it to all, but does not fulfill it in deed: someone may fulfill it in will and in deed, but cannot have a perfect notion of his own actions. There may also be such a one who has both the work and the knowledge, but does not have the knowledge of all good; for, performing many things justly, meekly, and studiously, he is unequal to his own virtues in some part. Is not Philemon such a one? For he has the communication of an operative faith and charity in the knowledge of all good. Since this is in the apostles, let us not think it is perfect for that reason alone, that it is in them: but that it is whole in him, because it is of Christ, so that whatever good is praised both in Philemon and is taken from the example of the apostles, is good from this source, because it is drawn from the fount of Christ.

For we have had great joy and consolation in your charity, because the bowels of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother. He more fully impresses and teaches why he had said: "I thank my God, always making mention of you in my prayers." For it was indeed fitting to give thanks to God for the charity of Philemon, who by his welcome had refreshed the internal affection of the heart and the deep recesses of the souls of the saints. And this is an apostolic idiom: that he always uses the word "bowels" (**viscera**), wishing to show the full charity of the mind.

Unde gaudens cum gaudentibus, et cum his qui requieverant, se refectum esse credens: habet laetitiam non transitoriam et levem, et quae fortuito possit accidere; sed magnam, et prout erat in Philemone charitas, eminentem: quam augebat consolatio super Philemonis charitate descendens, plena a Patre misericordiarum, et Deo totius consolationis.

Propter quod multam fiduciam habens in Christo Jesu, imperandi tibi quod prodest propter charitatem: magis obsecro, cum sis talis, ut Paulus senex: nunc autem et victus Jesu Christi. Multis in Philemonem laudibus ante praemissis, cum res talis sit, pro qua rogatus est, quae et praestanti sit utilis et roganti, poterat Paulus magis imperare, quam petere. Et hoc ex fiducia illa veniebat, quod qui tanta ob Christum opera perpetrarat, utique impar sui in caeteris esse non poterat. Sed vult magis petere quam jubere, grandi petentis auctoritate proposita; per quam et Apostolus obsecrat, et senex et victus Jesu Christi. Totum autem pro quo rogat, illud est: Onesimus servus Philemonis, fugam furto cumulans quaedam rei domesticae compilarat: hinc pergens ad Italiam, ne in proximo facilius posset apprehendi, pecuniam domini per luxuriam prodegerat. Hoc ne quis putet temere, et ut libet a nobis fictum, in sequentibus discat. Numquam enim Paulus diceret: Si quid nocuit tibi aut debet, hoc mihi imputa: Ego Paulus scripsi manu mea, ego reddam. Nec sponsor rei fieret ablatae, nisi esset id quod ablatum fuerat dissipatum. Hic igitur cum ob confessionem Christi, Paulus Romae esset in carcere, credidit in Christum: et ab eo baptizatus, digna poenitentia maculas vitae prioris abstersit: intantum ut is apostolus conversionis ejus testis fieret, qui quondam Petrum increpaverat, non recto pede in Evangelii veritate gradientem (Galat. II). Quantum igitur ad peccatum et ad facinus pertinet, quo dominum laeserat, veniam non meretur; quantum vero ad Apostoli testimonium, qui scit eum plene conversum, grandi pondere premitur, qui rogatur, ut qui e servo fugitivo atque raptore, minister Apostoli factus erat. (Quod autem aliud habeat Apostolus ministerium nisi Evangelii Christi Jesu?) jam non quasi a domino, sed quasi a conseruo, et coevangelista, ignosceretur ei, qui servus esset Christi similiter et minister.

(Vers. 10, seqq.) Obsecro te de meo filio, quem genui in 756 vinculis, Onesimo, qui tibi aliquando inutilis fuit; nunc autem et tibi, et mihi utilis est: quem remisi tibi. Tu autem illum, id est mea viscera, suscipe, quem ego volueram mecum detinere, ut pro te mihi ministraret in vinculis Evangelii.

Hence, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and believing himself to be refreshed with those who had found rest, he has a joy that is not transitory and light, nor one that could happen by chance, but one that is great and eminent, just as the charity in Philemon was eminent; a joy which was increased by the consolation descending upon Philemon's charity, full from the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation.

Wherefore, though I have much confidence in Christ Jesus to command you what is fitting, for charity's sake I rather beseech you, seeing you are such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Having first offered many praises to Philemon, since the matter for which he is asked is such that it is useful both to the one granting it and to the one asking, Paul could have commanded rather than requested. And this came from that confidence that he who had accomplished such great works for Christ's sake could certainly not be unequal to himself in other matters. But he wishes to ask rather than to command, setting forth the great authority of the one asking, by which he beseeches as an Apostle, an old man, and a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Now, the whole matter for which he asks is this: Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, compounding his flight with theft, had stolen certain household goods; from there, proceeding to Italy so that he could not be so easily apprehended nearby, he had squandered his master's money in debauchery. Lest anyone think this is rashly and arbitrarily invented by us, let him learn from what follows. For Paul would never have said: "If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, have written this with my own hand; I will repay it." Nor would he have become a guarantor for the stolen property, unless what had been stolen had been dissipated. This man, therefore, while Paul was in prison at Rome for the confession of Christ, came to believe in Christ; and having been baptized by him, he washed away the stains of his former life with worthy penance, so much so that the apostle who had once rebuked Peter for not walking uprightly in the truth of the Gospel (Galatians 2) became a witness to his conversion. Therefore, as far as pertains to the sin and the crime by which he had wronged his master, he does not deserve pardon; but as for the Apostle's testimony, who knows him to be fully converted, the one who is being asked is pressed with great weight, seeing that he who was a fugitive and thieving slave had become a minister of the Apostle. (And what other ministry does the Apostle have but that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?) Now, he should be forgiven not as by a master, but as by a fellow servant and fellow evangelist—he who was likewise a servant and minister of Christ.

(Verses 10, ff.) I appeal to you for my son, whom I have begotten in my 756 chains, Onesimus, who was once useless to you; but now is useful both to you and to me: whom I have sent back to you. But you, receive him, that is, my own heart, whom I would have liked to keep with me, that he might minister to me on your behalf in the chains of the Gospel.

Volens impetrare quod postulat, jam non pro servo Philemonis, sed pro filio suo se asserit deprecari; et de illo filio quem genuerit in vinculis Evangelii, hoc est, quae pro Christi Evangelio sustinebat: qui cum ante inutilis domino suo tantum fuerit (nec enim servus fur atque fugitivus alteri nocuit, nisi domino suo) nunc econtrario utilitatis compensatione, qua ipsi domino et Paulo utilis est, caeterisque per Paulum, plus charitatis meretur, quam odii ante meruerat. Unde ait: Qui tibi aliquando inutilis fuit. Tibi, inquit, soli; non caeteris: nunc autem et mihi, et tibi utilis. Utilis domino in eo, quia posset et Paulo servire pro domino suo; Paulo vero in eo utilis: quia illo in carcere, vinculisque detento, posset ei in Evangelio ministrare. Simul autem admirandum de magnanimitate Apostoli, et in Christum mente ferventis. Tenetur in carcere, vinculis stringitur, squalore corporis, charorum separatione, poenalibus tenebris coarctatur, et non sentit injuriam, non dolore cruciatur, nihil novit aliud, nisi de Christi Evangelio cogitare. Sciebat servum, sciebat fugitivum, sciebat aliquando raptorem ad Christi fidem esse conversum. Grandis laboris est talem hominem in eo perseverare quod coepit. Idcirco filium suum, et filium vinculorum, et ministrum Evangelii in vinculis constituti, inculcat, ac replicat, ut Philemon ille prudenter et dispensatorie tantum in praefatione laudatus, non auderet negare, ne suis laudibus videretur indignus. Quod autem ait: Tu autem illum, id est, mea viscera suscipe, hoc est, quod paulo ante dixi: viscera significare internum cordis affectum, et plenam ex animo voluntatem, cum totum quidquid in nobis est, suscipitur a rogato. Alias autem omnes liberi viscera sunt parentum.

(Vers. 14.) Sine consilio autem tuo nihil volui facere: ut non quasi ex necessitate bonum tuum esset, sed voluntarium. Hoc quod a plerisque quaeritur, et saepissime retractatur: quare Deus hominem faciens, non eum bonum rectumque condiderit, de 757 praesenti loco solvi potest. Si enim Deus voluntarie, et non ex necessitate bonus est, debuit hominem faciens, ad suam imaginem et similitudinem facere, hoc est, ut et ipse voluntarie, et non ex necessitate bonus esset. Qui autem asserunt ita cum debuisset fieri, ut malum recipere non posset, hoc dicunt: talis debuit fieri qui necessitate bonus esset, et non voluntate. Quod si talis fuisset effectus, qui bonum non voluntate, sed necessitate perficeret, non esset Deo similis: qui ideo bonus est, quia vult, non quia cogitur. Ex quo manifestum est, rem eos inter se postulare contrariam. Nam ex eo quod dicunt, Debuit homo Deo similis fieri, illud petunt, ut liberi fieret arbitrii, sicut Deus ipse est.

Wishing to obtain what he asks, he now asserts that he is pleading not for Philemon's slave, but for his own son; and for that son whom he had begotten in the chains of the Gospel, that is, which he was enduring for the Gospel of Christ: who, although he was formerly useless only to his master (for a thieving and fugitive slave harmed no one else but his master), now, on the contrary, by the compensation of usefulness, by which he is useful to his master and to Paul, and to others through Paul, deserves more charity than the hatred he had previously deserved. Hence he says: "Who was once useless to you." "To you," he says, "alone; not to others: but now useful both to me and to you." Useful to his master in that he could also serve Paul on behalf of his master; but useful to Paul in this: that with him detained in prison and in chains, he could minister to him in the Gospel. At the same time, one must admire the magnanimity of the Apostle, and his mind fervent in Christ. He is held in prison, bound by chains, constrained by the squalor of his body, by separation from his dear ones, by penal darkness, and yet he does not feel the injury, is not tormented by pain, knows nothing else but to think of the Gospel of Christ. He knew that a slave, a fugitive, once a thief, had been converted to the faith of Christ. It is a matter of great labor for such a man to persevere in what he has begun. Therefore, he insists and repeats that he is his son, and a son of his chains, and a minister of the Gospel established in chains, so that Philemon, who was praised so prudently and stewardly in the preface, would not dare to refuse, lest he seem unworthy of his own praises. As for what he says: "But you, receive him, that is, my own heart," this is what I said a little before: that "heart" (*viscera*) signifies the internal affection of the heart, and the full will from the soul, when the whole of whatever is in us is received by the one being asked. Besides, all children are the heart of their parents.

(Verse 14.) But without your consent, I wanted to do nothing: so that your good deed might not be, as it were, by necessity, but voluntary. The question which is asked by many, and very often reconsidered—why God, in making man, did not create him good and upright—can be resolved from this present passage. For if God is good voluntarily and not by necessity, He ought, in making man, to have made him in His own image and likeness; that is, so that he himself might also be good voluntarily, and not by necessity. But those who assert that he ought to have been made in such a way that he could not receive evil, are saying this: he ought to have been made such that he would be good by necessity, and not by will. But if he had been made such that he accomplished good not by will, but by necessity, he would not be like God, who is good for the reason that He wills it, not because He is compelled. From this it is manifest that they are demanding a thing contradictory in itself. For from their statement, "Man ought to have been made like God," they demand that he be made of free choice (*liberi arbitrii*), just as God Himself is.

Ex eo autem quod inferunt [Al. infertur], talis debuit fieri, qui malum recipere non posset; dum necessitatem ei boni important, illud volunt, ut homo Deo similis non fieret. Potuit itaque et apostolus Paulus absque voluntate Philemonis, Onesimum sibi in ministerium retinere. Sed si hoc sine voluntate Philemonis fecisset: bonum quidem erat, sed non voluntarium. Quod autem non erat voluntarium, alio genere arguebatur non esse bonum. Nihil quippe bonum dici potest, nisi quod ultroneum est. Ex quo Apostoli considerata prudentia est: qui idcirco fugitivum servum remittit ad dominum, ut prosit domino suo: qui prodesse non poterat, si domino teneretur absente. Superior ergo quaestio ita solvitur: Potuit Deus hominem sine voluntate ejus facere bonum. Porro si hoc fecisset, non erat bonum voluntarium, sed necessitatis. Quod autem necessitate bonum est, non est bonum, et alio genere malum arguitur. Igitur proprio arbitrio nos relinquens, magis ad suam imaginem et similitudinem fecit. Similem autem Deo esse absolute bonum est.

(Vers. 15, 16.) Forsitan enim ideo discessit ad horam a te, ut aeternum illum reciperes. Jam non sicut servum, sed plus servo, fratrem charissimum, maxime mihi: quanto magis autem tibi, et in carne, et in Domino. Nonnumquam malum occasio fit bonorum, et hominum prava consilia Deus vertit ad rectum. Quod dico manifestius exemplo fiet. Joseph fratres, sui zeli stimulis incitati, Ismaelitis viginti aureis vendiderunt (Gen. XXXVII). Hoc initium et patri, et fratribus, et omni Aegypto bonorum omnium fuit. Denique ipse postea ad fratres: Vos, inquit, cogitastis de me mala: et Deus cogitavit de me bona (Gen. XLV, 8). Simile quid et in Onesimo possumus intelligere, quod mala principia occasiones fuerint rei bonae. Si enim dominum non fugisset, numquam venisset Romam ubi erat Paulus vinctus in carcere. Si Paulum in vinculis non vidisset, non recepisset fidem in Christum. Si Christi non habuisset fidem, numquam Pauli effectus filius, in opus Evangelii mitteretur. Ex quo paulatim, et per gradus suos, reciprocante sententia, ideo minister Evangelii est factus Onesimus, quia fugit a domino. Pulchre autem addens, forsitan, sententiam temperavit. Occulta sunt quippe judicia Dei, et temerarium est quasi de certo pronuntiare quod dubium est. Forsitan, inquit, ideo discessit: caute, timide, trepidanter, et non toto [Al. totum] fixo gradu: ut si non posuisset forsitan, omnibus servis fugiendum esset, ut apostolici fierent. Quod autem, ad horam, junxit, horam pro tempore debemus accipere. Ad comparationem enim aeternitatis, omne tempus breve est. Ut aeternum illum reciperes. Nullus aeternus dominus servi sui: potestas quippe ejus, et utriusque conditio, morte finitur.

But from what they infer, "he ought to have been made such that he could not receive evil," while they impose on him the necessity of good, they desire that man should not be made like God. Thus, the apostle Paul could also have retained Onesimus for his own ministry without Philemon's consent. But if he had done this without Philemon's consent, it would have been a good deed, indeed, but not a voluntary one. But that which was not voluntary, was in another sense argued not to be good. For nothing can be called good, unless it is freely offered. From this, the prudence of the Apostle is to be considered, who for this reason sends the fugitive slave back to his master, so that he might be useful to his master—for he could not be useful if he were kept while his master was absent. Therefore, the preceding question is resolved thus: God could have made man good without his will. Furthermore, if He had done this, it would not have been a voluntary good, but one of necessity. But that which is good by necessity is not good, and in another sense is argued to be evil. Therefore, by leaving us to our own choice, He made us more in His image and likeness. But to be like God is absolutely good.

(Verses 15, 16) For perhaps he was parted from you for a while for this reason, that you might receive him back for eternity. No longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a most beloved brother, especially to me: but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. Sometimes evil becomes an occasion for good, and God turns the wicked plans of men to what is right. What I am saying will be made clearer by an example. The brothers of Joseph, spurred on by the goads of their own jealousy, sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver (Gen. XXXVII). This was the beginning of all good things for his father, for his brothers, and for all of Egypt. Finally, he himself later said to his brothers: "You," he said, "thought evil of me: but God thought good of me" (Gen. XLV, 8). We can understand something similar in the case of Onesimus, that evil beginnings were the occasions for a good outcome. For if he had not fled from his master, he would never have come to Rome where Paul was bound in prison. If he had not seen Paul in chains, he would not have received faith in Christ. If he had not had faith in Christ, he would never have been made a son of Paul and been sent to the work of the Gospel. From which, little by little, and by its own steps, with the thought turning back on itself, Onesimus was therefore made a minister of the Gospel because he fled from his master. But by beautifully adding "perhaps," he tempered the statement. For the judgments of God are hidden, and it is rash to pronounce as certain what is doubtful. "Perhaps," he says, "he was parted for this reason": cautiously, timidly, hesitantly, and not with a completely firm step; so that if he had not put "perhaps," all slaves would have to flee in order to become apostolic. As for his adding "for a while," we should take "while" (hour) to mean "time." For in comparison with eternity, all time is short. "That you might receive him back for eternity." No master is the eternal master of his slave: for his power, and the condition of both, is ended by death.

Onesimus vero qui ex fide Christi factus aeternus est, aeterno Philemoni, quia in Christum et ipse crediderat, spiritu libertatis accepto, jam non servus, sed frater coepit esse de servo, frater charissimus, frater aeternus: aeterno et ipsi Apostolo dominoque suo, cui Onesimum ut carnis ante conditio: ita postea spiritus copulat. Et tunc quidem quando erat ei subjectus in carne, non erat ei junctus in Domino; nunc autem ei et in carne junctus est, et in Domino. Ex quo intelligimus servum qui crediderit Christo, duplici domino suo lege constringi, ut ei et carnis necessitate jungatur ad tempus, et in aeternum spiritu copuletur.

(Vers. 17.) Si ergo habes me socium, suscipe illum sicut me. Philemon Paulum socium habere cupiebat, et in Christum credens, tales utique volebat habere profectus, ut Paulo similis fieret, et ei communicaret in vinculis. Consideremus ergo quantum hic laudetur Onesimus, quantum profecisse dicatur: cum ita recipiendus sit ut Apostolus et sic ejus dominus ut Pauli debeat desiderare consortium. Breviter quod dicit tale est: Si me vis habere consortem, habeto et Onesimum, quem ego consortem, et filium meum, et viscera mea habeo: quem si non susceperis, nec habere volueris, et ipse intelligis quod me habere non possis.

(Vers. 18.) Si autem aliquid nocuit tibi, aut debet, hoc mihi imputa. Imitator Domini sui, et Christum in se loquentem habens, ea juxta vires suas debet facere quae Christus. Si enim ille infirmitates nostras portavit, et plagas nostras doluit, juste Apostolus pro Onesimo se opponit, et spondet quae ille debebat. Ut autem supra diximus, totum illud est, quod ablatum furto, et per luxuriam perditum, non poterat absolvi: quod Philemon grandi pretio pensabat [Al. compensabat] dum pro servo fugitivo, et pecunia perdit, et fratrem charissimum, et fratrem reciperet aeternum, et per eum sibi Apostolum faceret debitorem.

(Vers. 19.) Ego Paulus scripsi manu mea. Ego reddam, ut non dicam tibi, quia et ipsum te mihi debes. Quod dicit tale est: Quod Onesimus furto rapuit, ego me spondeo redditurum: cujus sponsonis, Epistola haec et manus testis est propria: quam non solito more dictavi, sed mea manu ipse conscripsi. Crede igitur mihi pro Onesimo pollicenti. Hoc autem dico quasi ad extraneum loquens. Caeterum si ad jus meum redeam, propter sermonem Christi, quem tibi evangelizavi, et Christianus effectus es, teipsum mihi debes. Quod si tu meus es, et tua omnia mea sunt: Onesimus quoque, qui tuus est, meus est. Poteram igitur eo uti ut meo; sed voluntati tuae relinquo, ut mercedem habeas ignoscendo.

But Onesimus, who was made eternal by faith in Christ, to the eternal Philemon, because he too had believed in Christ, having received the spirit of liberty, began to be no longer a slave but a brother from a slave, a most beloved brother, an eternal brother: to the eternal Apostle himself and to his own master, to whom the prior condition of the flesh joins Onesimus, just as the spirit later unites him. And at that time, indeed, when he was subject to him in the flesh, he was not joined to him in the Lord; but now he is joined to him both in the flesh and in the Lord. From this we understand that a slave who has believed in Christ is bound to his master by a double law, so that he is joined to him for a time by the necessity of the flesh, and is united to him in the spirit for eternity.

(Verse 17) If therefore you consider me a partner, receive him as you would receive me. Philemon desired to have Paul as a partner, and believing in Christ, he certainly wished to make such progress as to become like Paul and to share in his chains. Let us consider, therefore, how much Onesimus is praised here, how much he is said to have progressed: since he is to be received as the Apostle, and his master should thus desire his fellowship as he would Paul's. In short, what he says is this: If you wish to have me as a companion, have Onesimus also, whom I have as a companion, and my son, and my very heart: whom if you do not receive, nor wish to have, you yourself understand that you cannot have me.

(Verse 18) But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. An imitator of his Lord, and having Christ speaking in him, he ought to do, according to his strength, those things which Christ did. For if He bore our infirmities and grieved for our wounds, justly does the Apostle stand in for Onesimus and guarantee what he owed. But as we said above, the whole matter is this, that what was taken by theft and lost through extravagance could not be absolved: which Philemon was compensating at a great price, since in exchange for a fugitive slave and lost money, he would receive both a most beloved brother and an eternal brother, and through him would make the Apostle his debtor.

(Verse 19.) I, Paul, have written with my own hand. I will repay it—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self. What he says is this: What Onesimus took by theft, I pledge that I will repay; of which pledge, this Epistle and my own hand are the witness, which I have not dictated in the usual manner, but have written myself with my own hand. Believe me, therefore, as I make this promise on behalf of Onesimus. However, I say this as if speaking to a stranger. For the rest, if I were to return to my right, on account of the word of Christ which I preached to you, by which you became a Christian, you owe your very self to me. But if you are mine, and all that is yours is mine, then Onesimus also, who is yours, is mine. I could, therefore, have used him as my own; but I leave it to your will, so that you may have a reward in forgiving.

(Vers. 20.) Ita, frater, ego te fruar in Domino. Proprietatem Graecam Latinus sermo non explicat. Quod enim ait, *καὶ ἀδελφέ: καὶ* quoddam quasi adverbium blandientis est. Nos autem interpretantes, ita, frater, aequatius et dilutius nescio quid magis aliud quam id quod est scriptum, sonamus. Sicut enim ANNA () illud Hebraicum, pro quo frequenter 760 Septuaginta interpretes ὃ δὴ transtulerunt, in lingua sua significat deprecantis affectum: unde nonnumquam Symmachus pro ANNA, *δέομαι*, hoc est, obsecro, transtulit: ita et nos eandem in Graeca lingua vim patimur, quam Graeci sustinent in Hebraea. Quod autem ait: Ego te fruar in Domino, aliud multo intelligitur quam putatur. Apostolus non fruitur nisi eo qui multas in se habet continentesque virtutes, et totum quod Christus dicitur pro varietate causarum: sapientiam videlicet, justitiam, continentiam, mansuetudinem, temperantiam, castitatem: has imprecatur Philemoni: ut cum his abundaverit, ipse eo perfruens impleatur. Et ne putes illam fruitionem dici, qua nos saepe nostri inter nos praesentia delectamur, addidit, in Domino: ut ex eo quod Domini nomen adjunctum est, intelligeretur, et alia esse fruitio, qua quis absque Domino perfruatur.

Refice viscera mea in Christo. Sicut ipse frui vult Philemone in Domino: ita viscera sua Onesimum, quem et superius eodem nomine appellavit, refici vult per Philemonem, et ambigue dictum: utrum viscera Pauli in Christo Onesimus sit: an viscera Pauli Onesimus per Philemonem in Christo reficienda sint. Si superius accipere volueris, recte Pauli in Christo viscera dicentur Onesimus, quem in vinculis Christo genuit. Si posterius: in Christo reficiendus est Onesimus a Philemone, dum ejus in Christo sermonibus eruditur.

(Vers. 21.) Confidens de obedientia tua scripsi tibi: sciens quoniam super id quod dico facies. Qui praesumit de eo quem rogaturus est, ipsa quodammodo praesumptione praejudicat, ne ei negare liceat quod rogatur. Porro si scit ille qui postulat plusquam rogavit, rogatum esse futurum: ideo minora petit, ut habeat rogatus voluntariam, et majorem praestatione mercedem. Si autem Philemon haec ad hominis praeceptum facit: quanto magis faciet ob dilectionem Dei?

(Verse 20.) Yea, brother, let me have joy of you in the Lord. The Latin language does not explain the Greek propriety. For what he says, "ναὶ, ἀδελφέ" (yea, brother): "ναὶ" is a kind of adverb of endearment. But we, in translating it as "ita, frater" (so, brother), sound out something more watery and diluted, I know not what, rather than what is written. For just as that Hebrew word ANNA, for which the Seventy interpreters frequently translated *אֲנִי*, signifies in its own language the feeling of one who entreats—whence Symmachus sometimes translated *δέομαι*, that is, "I beseech," for ANNA—so also we suffer the same difficulty with the Greek language as the Greeks sustain with the Hebrew. But as for what he says, "Let me have joy of you in the Lord," it is understood as something much different from what is commonly thought. The Apostle does not have joy except in one who has in himself many harmonious virtues, and all that which Christ is called according to the variety of causes: namely, wisdom, justice, continence, meekness, temperance, chastity; these he prays for Philemon to have, so that when he abounds in them, the Apostle himself, enjoying him, may be fulfilled. And lest you think that enjoyment is meant by which we are often delighted by each other's presence among ourselves, he added, "in the Lord," so that from the fact that the Lord's name is joined to it, it might be understood that there is also another enjoyment, by which one might have joy without the Lord.

Refresh my bowels in Christ. Just as he himself wishes to have joy of Philemon in the Lord, so he wishes his bowels—Onesimus, whom he also called by the same name above—to be refreshed through Philemon; and it is said ambiguously: whether Onesimus is Paul's bowels in Christ, or whether Paul's bowels, Onesimus, are to be refreshed by Philemon in Christ. If you wish to take the former meaning, Onesimus will rightly be called Paul's bowels in Christ, whom he begot for Christ in his chains. If the latter, Onesimus is to be refreshed in Christ by Philemon, while he is instructed by his words in Christ.

(Verse 21.) Confident of your obedience I have written to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. He who presumes upon the one he is about to ask, in a way prejudices by that very presumption, so that it is not permissible for him to deny what is asked. Furthermore, if he who asks knows that more than he has asked will be done by the one asked, he therefore asks for less, so that the one asked may have a voluntary reward, and a greater one for his compliance. But if Philemon does these things at the command of a man, how much more will he do them for the love of God?

Unde merito Apostoli voce laudatur: quod mandata ejus opere praevertat, et possit dicere: Voluntaria oris mei complaceant tibi, Domine (Ps. CXVIII, 108): plusque faciens quam praeceptum est, vincat eos qui tantummodo imperata fecerunt, et jubentur dicere: Servi inutiles sumus, quod debuimus facere, 761 fecimus (Luc. XVII, 10). Virginitas quoque propterea majori praemio coronatur: quia praeceptum Domini non habet, et ultra imperata se tendit.

Non puto tam divitem fuisse Apostolum, et tantis sarcinis occupatum, ut praeparato egeret hospitio, et non una contentus cellula, breves corporis sui spatio aedes, amplissimas existimaret: sed ut dum eum exspectat [Al. spectat] Philemon ad se esse venturum, magis faciat quod rogatus est. Si autem hoc non dispensatorie, sed vere quis existimat imperatum, ut sibi hospitium praeparet, apostolo magis quam Paulo hospitium praeparandum est. Venturus ad novam civitatem, praedicaturus Crucifixum, et inaudita dogmata delaturus, sciebat ad se plurimos concursuros; et necesse erat primum, ut domus in celebri esset urbis loco, ad quam facile conveniretur. Deinde, ut ab omni importunitate vacua: ut ampla, quae plurimos caperet audientium: ne proxima spectaculorum locis: ne turpi vicinia detestabilis: postremo ut in plano potius esset sita quam in coenaculo. Quam ob causam eum existimo etiam Romae in conducto mansisse biennium [Al. biennio]. Nec parva, ut reor, erat mansio, ad quam Judaeorum turbae quotidie confluebant.

Filium Patri, Deus rogatus indulget, et frater saepe fratris oratione servatur. Apostolus autem totius Ecclesiae precibus conceditur, ob eorum qui eum audituri sunt utilitatem. Et hoc donum, non tam in eum dicitur esse qui defertur [Al. differtur] a martyrio ad martyrium praeparatus, quam in eos ad quos Apostolus mittitur. Quod autem crebro Paulus in carcere fuerit, et de vinculis liberatus sit, ipse in alio loco dicit: In carceribus frequenter (II Cor. XI), de quibus nonnumquam Domini auxilio, crebro ipsis persecutoribus nihil dignum in eo morte invenientibus dimittebatur. Necdum enim super nomine Christiano senatusconsulta praecesserant: necdum Christianum sanguinem Neronis gladius dedicarat. Sed pro novitate praedicationis, sive a Judaeis invidentibus, sive ab his qui sua videbant idola destrui, ad furorem populis concitatis, missi in carcerem, rursum impetu et furore deposito, 762 laxabantur. Et hoc ita esse ut dicimus, Apostolorum Acta testantur, in quibus et Felix loquitur ad Agrippam: potuisse dimitti Paulum, si non appellasset Caesarem (Act. XXV).

Whence he is deservedly praised by the Apostle's voice, because he anticipates his commands by his action, and can say: "Let the free-will offerings of my mouth be pleasing to you, O Lord" (Ps. 118:108); and by doing more than is commanded, he surpasses those who have only done what was ordered, and are bidden to say: "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do" (Luke 17:10). Virginity also is for this reason crowned with a greater reward: because it has no command from the Lord, and it extends itself beyond what is commanded.

I do not think the Apostle was so rich, or so encumbered with baggage, that he needed lodging prepared for him, and that, not content with a single small room, he would have considered a dwelling, brief in the space it offered his body, to be most ample; but rather, so that while Philemon was expecting him to come, he would be more inclined to do what he was asked. If, however, someone thinks this was commanded not strategically (*dispensatorie*), but genuinely, that he should prepare lodging for him, then the lodging was to be prepared for the apostle rather than for Paul. About to come to a new city, to preach the Crucified One, and to bring unheard-of doctrines, he knew that very many would flock to him; and it was necessary, first, that the house be in a prominent place in the city, to which people could easily gather. Second, that it be free from all disturbance; that it be large, to accommodate a great many listeners; not near places of public spectacle; not rendered odious by a disreputable neighborhood; finally, that it be situated on the ground floor rather than in an upper room. For this reason, I think he also stayed in a rented lodging in Rome for two years. Nor was the dwelling small, I believe, to which crowds of Jews flocked daily.

God, when asked, grants a son to a father, and a brother is often saved by a brother's prayer. The Apostle, however, is granted through the prayers of the whole Church, for the benefit of those who are to hear him. And this gift is said to be not so much for him who is delivered—prepared as he is for martyrdom—as for those to whom the Apostle is sent. Moreover, that Paul was frequently in prison and was freed from his chains, he himself says in another place: "In prisons frequently" (II Cor. XI), from which he was sometimes released by the Lord's help, and often because the persecutors themselves, finding nothing in him worthy of death, let him go. For decrees of the senate concerning the Christian name had not yet been passed, nor had Nero's sword yet consecrated Christian blood. But because of the newness of the preaching, with the populace stirred to fury either by envious Jews or by those who saw their own idols being destroyed, they were sent to prison, and then, when the impulse and fury subsided, they were released. And that this is as we say, the Acts of the Apostles testifies, in which Felix also says to Agrippa that Paul could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar (Acts XXV).

Et quia nullam invenerit causam praeter quaestiones quasdam de religione propria, et de quodam Jesu, quem Paulus vivero praedicabat. Ex quo animadvertimus, et a caeteris iudicibus similiter eos potuisse dimitti, id agente Domino, ut toto orbe nova praedicatio disseminaretur.

(Vers. 23, 24.) Salutat te Epaphras concaptivus meus in Christo Jesu: Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas cooperatores mei. Id quod in principio dicebamus, quoniam ad Colossenses Epistola eodem in tempore, et per eundem esset scripta bajulum litterarum, quo ad Philemonem quoque scriptum est, etiam eorum qui salutantes inducuntur nomina docent. Nam et in ipsa ita scribitur: Salutat vos Aristarchus concaptivus meus, et Marcus, consobrinus Barnabae, et Epaphras, qui ex vobis servus Christi (Coloss. IV, 10, 12); et paulo inferius: Salutat vos Lucas medicus charissimus, et Demas; et dicite Archippo: Vide ministerium quod accepisti in Domino, ut illud impleas (Ibid., 14, 17); et: Memores estote vinculorum meorum (Ibid., 18). Si autem ex eo aliquis non putat pariter scriptas, quod ad Colossenses pauca sint nomina quae hic non ferantur ascripta: sciat non omnes omnibus aut amicos esse, aut notos, et aliud esse privatam ad unum hominem, aliud publicam ad universam Ecclesiam epistolam fieri.

Salutat te, inquit, Epaphras concaptivus meus in Christo Jesu. Quis sit Epaphras concaptivus Pauli, talem fabulam accepimus: Aiunt parentes apostoli Pauli de Gyscalis regione fuisse Judaeae; et eos, cum tota provincia, Romana vastaretur manu, et dispergerentur in orbem [Al. orbe] Judaei, in Tharsum urbem Ciliciae fuisse translatos: parentum conditionem adolescentulum Paulum secutum. Et sic posse stare illud quod de se ipse testatur: Hebraei sunt, et ego: Israelitae sunt, et ego: semen Abrahae sunt, et ego (II Cor. XI, 22). Et rursum alibi: Hebraeus ex Hebraeis (Philip. III, 5): et caetera quae illum Judaeum magis indicant quam Tharsensem. Quod si ita est, possumus et Epaphram illo tempore captum suspicari, quo captus est Paulus: et cum parentibus suis in Colossis urbe Asiae collocatum, Christi postea recipere sermonem.

Unde ad Colossenses, ut supra diximus, scribitur: Salutat vos Epaphras qui est ex vobis, servus Christi, semper sollicitus pro vobis in orationibus (Coloss. IV, 12). Hoc si se ita habeat, et Aristarchus qui concaptivus ejus in eadem Epistola dicitur, ad eandem intelligentiam deducetur: nisi forte reconditum aliquid, et sacratum, ut quidam putant, in verbo captivitatis ostenditur [Al. ostendit], quod capti pariter et vincti, in vallem hanc adducti [Al. deducti] sint lacrymarum. Quod si neutrum recipitur, ex eo quod hic additum est in Christo Jesu, possumus suspicari eadem cum Romae pro Christo vincula sustinuisse quae Paulum: et ut vinctum Christi, ita captivum quoque ejus potuisse dici.

And because he had found no charge against him except certain questions about their own religion, and about a certain Jesus, whom Paul proclaimed to be alive. From this we observe that they could have been similarly released by other judges, with the Lord bringing it about that the new preaching might be disseminated throughout the whole world.

(Verses 23, 24) Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you: Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers. That which we were saying at the beginning, namely that the Epistle to the Colossians was written at the same time and by the same letter-carrier as the one to Philemon, is also taught by the names of those who are introduced as sending greetings. For in that epistle itself it is thus written: 'Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, and Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ' (Col. 4:10, 12); and a little below: 'Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you; and say to Archippus: "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord"' (Ibid., 14, 17); and: 'Remember my chains' (Ibid., 18). But if anyone, from the fact that in the letter to the Colossians there are a few names that are not written here, does not think they were written at the same time, let him know that not all are friends or acquaintances to all, and that it is one thing for a private letter to be made to one man, and another for a public one to the entire Church.

'Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus,' he says, 'greet you.' As to who this Epaphras, Paul's fellow prisoner, might be, we have received such a story: They say that the parents of the apostle Paul were from the region of Giscala in Judea; and that when the whole province was being devastated by the Roman hand, and the Jews were being scattered throughout the world, they were transported to Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, and that the adolescent Paul followed the condition of his parents. And thus can stand that which he himself testifies about himself: 'Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I' (2 Cor. 11:22). And again elsewhere: 'a Hebrew of Hebrews' (Phil. 3:5), and other things which indicate he was more a Jew than a Tarsian. If this is so, we can suspect that Epaphras was also captured at that time when Paul was captured, and having been settled with his parents in the city of Colossae in Asia, he later received the word of Christ.

Hence, to the Colossians, as we said above, it is written: 'Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, greets you, always anxious for you in his prayers' (Col. 4:12). If this is the case, then Aristarchus, who is called his fellow prisoner in the same Epistle, will be brought to the same understanding; unless perhaps something recondite and sacred, as some think, is shown in the word 'captivity,' that being captured and bound together, they were brought into this valley of tears. But if neither of these is accepted, from the fact that 'in Christ Jesus' is added here, we can suspect that he endured the same chains for Christ in Rome as Paul did; and that just as he could be called a prisoner of Christ, so also could he be called His captive.

Aut certe ita, quod nobilis et ipse sit in apostolis, ut Andronicus et Julia, de quibus ad Romanos scribitur: Salutate Andronicum, et Juliam cognatos, et concaptivos meos, qui sunt nobiles in apostolis, qui et ante me fuerunt in Christo Jesu (Rom. XVI, 7).

Haec de Epaphra.

Caeterum cooperatores Evangelii et vinculorum suorum, cum ad Philemonem epistolam scriberet, Marcum ponit, quem puto Evangelii conditorem, et Aristarchum cujus supra fecimus mentionem, et Demam, de quo in alio loco queritur: Demas me dereliquit, diligens praesens saeculum, et abiit Thessalonicam. Et Lucam medicum, qui Evangelium et Actus Apostolorum Ecclesiis derelinquens, quomodo Apostoli de piscatoribus piscium, piscatores hominum facti sunt (Matth. IV): ita de medico corporum, in medicum est versus animarum, de quo et in alio loco: Misi, inquit, cum illo fratrem, cujus laus est in Evangelio per omnes Ecclesias (II Cor. VIII, 18): cujus liber quotiescumque legitur in Ecclesiis, toties ejus medicina non cessat.

(Vers. 25.) Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi cum spiritu vestro. Sicut a meliore parte hominis capite, numeratur populus Israel, dicente Scriptura, secundum capita eorum (Num. I, 2): ita in toto quidem homine, et in omni parte sanctorum, gratia est Domini Jesu Christi. Sed a majori et meliori parte, id est, spiritu, per synecdochen de toto homine dicitur: Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi cum spiritu vestro. Cum autem in spiritu gratia fuerit, totum facit hominem spiritualem: ut et caro spiritui serviat, et anima non vincatur a carne et redacta simul in substantiam spiritualem, adhaereat Domino; quia qui adhaeret Domino, unus spiritus est (II Cor. VI) Interpretatur autem secundum Judaeos [Al. Hebraeos] Paulus, admirabilis. Timotheus, beneficus. Philemon, mire donatus, sive os panis, ab ore, non ab osse. Apphia, continens, aut libertas. Archippus, longitudo operis. Onesimus, respondens. Epaphras, frugifer, et videns, sive succrescens. Marcus, sublimis mandato. Aristarchus, mons operis amplioris. Demas, silens. Lucas, ipse consurgens. Quae si nomina juxta interpretationem suam volueritis intelligere, non est difficile admirabilem atque beneficum praecipue ad eum scribere, cui universa concessa sint vitia et os ejus pateat ad coelestem panem. Deinde ad continentem, et liberam, et ad longitudinem operis: quod numquam a sancto labore desistat. Scribere autem pro eo qui respondeat testimonio suo, nec non ei [Al. eum], cui specialiter Epistola dedicatur, salutari ab ubertate crescente.

Or certainly thus, that he himself is also notable among the apostles, like Andronicus and Julia, about whom it is written to the Romans: 'Greet Andronicus and Julia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are notable among the apostles, and who were in Christ Jesus before me' (Rom. 16:7).

This much about Epaphras.

Furthermore, when writing the epistle to Philemon, he lists as fellow workers of the Gospel and of his chains: Mark, whom I believe to be the author of the Gospel; and Aristarchus, whom we mentioned above; and Demas, about whom he complains in another place: 'Demas has deserted me, loving this present age, and has gone to Thessalonica.' And Luke the physician, who, leaving the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles to the Churches, just as the Apostles were made from fishers of fish into fishers of men (Matt. 4), so he was turned from a physician of bodies into a physician of souls, about whom it is also said in another place: 'I have sent,' he says, 'with him the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches' (2 Cor. 8:18); whose book, as often as it is read in the Churches, so often does his medicine not cease.

(Verse 25.) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Just as the people of Israel are numbered by the better part of man, the head, with Scripture saying, "according to their heads" (Numbers 1:2): so indeed the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is in the whole man, and in every part of the saints. But it is said of the whole man by synecdoche (*per synecdochen*), from the greater and better part, that is, the spirit: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." For when grace is in the spirit, it makes the whole man spiritual: so that the flesh may serve the spirit, and the soul may not be overcome by the flesh but, being reduced together into a spiritual substance, may adhere to the Lord; for "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (II Corinthians 6). Now, according to the Jews [or Hebrews], Paul is interpreted as "admirable." Timothy, "beneficent." Philemon, "wonderfully gifted," or "mouth of bread," from *os* (mouth), not from *os* (bone). Apphia, "continent," or "liberty." Archippus, "length of work." Onesimus, "responding." Epaphras, "fruit-bearing," and "seeing," or "growing up." Mark, "sublime by mandate." Aristarchus, "mountain of a greater work." Demas, "silent." Luke, "he himself rising up." If you wish to understand these names according to their interpretation, it is not difficult to see the "admirable" and "beneficent" one writing especially to him to whom all faults have been forgiven and whose mouth may be open to the celestial bread. Then to the "continent" and "free" one, and to the "length of work," because he never desists from holy labor. Moreover, to write for him who "responds" with his testimony, and also for him to whom the Epistle is specially dedicated to be greeted by the "growing abundance."

Et eum [Al. eo] qui factus sit per mandata sublimior, illoque qui per majora opera in montem usque succeverit, ab eo quoque qui posuit custodiam ori suo, et ostium munitum labiis suis: qui idcirco forsitan siluit, quia ad modicum Apostolum dereliquerat. Et ad extremum ab eo qui per se ipse consurgens quotidie augeatur, processusque habeat: dum ejus Evangelio orbis impletur, et toties crescit, quoties auditus et lectus aedificat.

And by him who was made "more sublime by mandates," and by him who through "greater works" has grown up into a "mountain"; also by him who placed a guard on his mouth and a fortified door on his lips, who perhaps was silent for this reason, because for a short time he had forsaken the Apostle. And finally, by him who, "rising up by himself," is daily increased and makes progress, while the world is filled with his Gospel, and it grows as often as, being heard and read, it edifies.