

G. Light From Historical Background

The historical background shows why Paul felt it so necessary to extend himself in placing all things in order on the account of Onesimus. The slavery conditions which prevailed impressed on him the sense of urgency to appeal in the most touching way to the heart of Philemon, even though he knew this one very well.

At the same time it may be understood how Paul could have this freedom. It was by his agency that Philemon himself had come to the possession of life and he owed that to Paul. There was a warm tie of love between the two.

This explains the rich aesthetic quality of the Epistle which hardly occurs in any other portion of New Testament writing and excels that in the secular world. It explains the depth of emotion which occurs and the appeal of Paul in behalf of Onesimus as his own "bowels."

Without the historical background much of the beauty of the thought and concern of the Apostle would be lost and much of the meaningful quality would be sacrificed as well.