intropuction.] THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON. [eu. xiv.   
   
   
 the merest disregard to common sense and probability. Such expres-   
 sions, occurring ina familiar letter, such as we do not elsewhere possess,   
 are no more than are perfectly natural, and only serve to enlarge for us   
 the Apostle’s vocabulary, instead of inducing doubt, where all else is so   
 thoroughly characteristic of him.   
 6. The contents also of the Epistle seem to him objectionable. The   
 incident on which it is founded, he says, of itself raises suspicion. He   
 then takes to pieces the whole history of Onesimus’s flight and con-   
 yersion, and the feeling shewn to him by the Apostle, in a way which,   
 as I observed before (ch. vi. § i. 2) respecting his argument against   
 the Epistle to the Philippians, only finds a parallel in the pages of   
 burlesque: so that, I am persuaded, if the section on the Epistle to   
 Philemon had been first published separately and without the author’s   
 name, the world might well have supposed it written by some defender   
 of the authenticity of the Epistle, as a caricature on Baur’s general line   
 of argument.   
 7. On both his grounds of objection—the close connexion of this   
 with the other Epistles of the imprisonment, and its own internal   
 evidence,—fortified as these are by the consensus of the ancient Chureh,   
 we may venture to assume it as certain that this Epistle was written by   
 St. Paul.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 SECTION IL   
 THE PLACE, TIME, OCCASION, AND OBJECT OF WRITING.   
   
   
   
 1, The Epistle is connected by the closest links with that to the Colos-   
 sians. It is borne by Onesimus, one of the persons mentioned as sent   
 with that Epistle (Col. iv. 9). The persons sending salutation are the   
 same, with the one exception of Jesus Justus. In Col. iv. 17, a message   
 is sent to Archippus, who is one of those addressed in this Epistle.   
 Both Epistles are sent from Paul and Timotheus; and in both the   
 Aposile is a prisoner (Col. iv. 18; Philem. vv. 1, 9).   
 2. This being so, we are justified in assuming that it was written at   
 the same place and time as the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians,   
 viz. at Rome, and in the year 61 or 62.   
 8. Its occasion and object are plainly indicated in the Epistle itself.   
 Onesimus, a native of Colossx, the slave of Philemon, had absconded,   
 after having, as it appears, defrauded his master (ver. 18). He fled to   
 Rome, and there was converted to Christianity by St. Paul. Being per-   
 suaded by him to return to his master, he was furnished with this letter   
 to recommend him, now no longer merely a servant, but a brother also,   
 to a favourable reception by Philemon. This alone, and no didactic or   
 general object, is discernible in the Epistle.   
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