Philemon - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Christian Treasury: Volume 7, Lodgings of Paul

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“Prepare me also a lodging." Philem. 1:22. The lodgings of Paul in the book of the Acts furnish illustrations of various households that are in moral accord with Paul's doctrine, and which provide instruction for the preservation and blessing of our households. We may look at Paul, not only as a devoted servant of God, but as typical of his ministry which embraces the whole counsel of God.

Paul arrived in Corinth and lodged with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-3). Corinth was a city full of corruption and vice. The saints there had absorbed many of the Corinthians' ways as we notice in Paul's first epistle to that assembly. There were, however, bright spots such as the household of Stephanas. They had devoted themselves to the service of the Lord and His people (1 Cor. 16:15). It is encouraging to see not only individuals, but households continuing on for the Lord amid evil in the world and confusion in the local assembly. Aquila and Priscilla had moved from Rome to Corinth. Later, they moved to Ephesus. Their moves illustrate the proper order for a soul to progress.

1. The epistle to the Romans sets forth the foundational truths of the gospel and the believer's position in this world.

2. The first epistle to the Corinthians gives us instruction as to the assembly, the obvious next step for a soul once he has received the gospel.

3. Then he should gain an understanding and enjoyment of the higher truths set forth in Ephesians. We do not advance in our souls apart from exercise of heart and carefulness in our walk.

We observe the pilgrim character with Aquila and Priscilla in that they were tent-makers. It is difficult to live simply when we are surrounded by luxury, but it is in keeping with Paul's ministry. We have all been in situations and places where we have felt uncomfortable. Perhaps we have even been in a luxurious house where we have felt tension and strife. Despite the display of wealth, there were unhappy hearts. It is our privilege and responsibility to turn from pleasing self, and to give ourselves over with our households to the Lord's service. In this way we will provide a lodging for Paul, a place in moral harmony with his teaching.

Scripture is plain in telling us that riches do not produce happiness. Solomon is a powerful example of one who had every earthly advantage, but much vexation of soul. (Compare also Prov. 15:16, 17; 16:8, 19; 17:1.) May we choose the part that God calls "better". Are we living moderately with our bills paid, or are we living beyond our means on payment plans and credit? "The borrower is servant to the lender." Prov. 22:7. Our first obligations are to our creditors. It is not for us to be "giving" money to the Lord if, in actuality, it belongs to someone else.

If we are walking as pilgrims and strangers we will be free to help others with that with which the Lord has prospered us. May our hearts be enlarged to the needs of others and be exercised that our giving is a sacrifice to us, not to those to whom we have obligations. It may be we are not able to assist financially in cases of definite need because we have unnecessarily purchased things we really could not afford.

May God grant us not only to have our households in moral agreement with Paul's ministry, but to walk in the truth of the assembly with our affections fixed and eyes set on the Lord Jesus Christ.

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