

F.B. Meyer:

My very heart - Philemon 1:12

This fragment of ancient letter-writing gives us a model of the way in which our commonest or most prosaic dealings, and our letters, even on business matters, may breathe Christ's spirit. It also illustrates the relation in which we stand to Jesus Christ. What Onesimus was to Paul and Philemon combined, that we are to our Lord.

What was Onesimus to Paul? - His child, whom he had begotten in his bonds. He had probably been discovered by some of his companions in the purlieus of Rome, where criminals concealed themselves from justice, and abandoned characters gave vent to the wildest passions. Or, having heard that the apostle, whom he had so often met in his master's house, was residing in his own hired house in Rome, the runaway slave had found him out, when in the extremity of hunger. In either case he had now become dear as the apostle's heart; had learned to minister to him in his bonds; had proved more than a servant - a brother beloved. O Thou who hast redeemed us from our sins, may we be all this to Thee!

What was Onesimus to Philemon? - He had been unprofitable; and we have been. He was sent back; and we have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. He had been a servant, henceforth he should be a beloved brother; and we are no longer servants but friends. He had grievously wronged his master; but his sin had been forgiven, and so covered by over-abounding grace, that it would bring him into a position of greater privilege and blessing than ever before. In this man's sin and restoration we see ourselves. Where our sin abounded, grace has much more abounded, through the tender pity of Him who had put our defalcations to His own account.