

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 27 September 2021

Greetings.

Today marks the anniversary of the birth (in Kroppenstedt, Germany) of George Müller of Bristol on 27 September 1805.

Last week, I happened to come across a sermon on 'Paul's letter to Philemon', preached by Mr Müller almost 150 years ago.

(The notes of this sermon can be accessed at ...

<https://www.mullers.org/downloads/Muller%20Sermons%20pdf/Pauls%20letter%20to%20Philemon.pdf>.)

In his sermon, Mr Müller summarises well some of the background to Paul's letter:

'Onesimus might have come to Rome and never seen Paul. He might have spent fifty years in Rome, and never seen Paul; *but God* has purposes of grace and mercy towards him, and in His good providence orders it that he may fall in with Paul ... this slave runs away, and yet God follows him, and lays hold on him at the very time when you and I would least have thought he would have been brought to the Lord'.

Mr Müller's exposition reminded me of a message which I gave locally on Paul's letter to Philemon earlier this year.

I am [attaching the notes of that address](#).

Here are three 'tasters':

(i) 'There was a man in first-century Rome who had occasion to write a short letter to a friend, in which he requested his friend to forgive one of his domestic servants who had wronged him.

That man's name began with the letter 'P', but, contrary to what some of you are thinking, the name of the man I have in mind was *not* Paul.

His name was ...'.

(ii) Paul's 'repeated description of himself as a "prisoner" (which he explicitly asks Philemon, along with all others in the Colossian church, to "remember") is a subtle reminder to Philemon of the enormously high price which he is willing to pay personally for the sake of Christ and the gospel.

Paul has every reason to expect, therefore, that, when he later makes his request to Philemon concerning Onesimus, Philemon will look on granting his request as *a very small sacrifice in comparison*'.

(iii) 'It has been said of Onesimus that, "*socially*, he was a slave ... *morally*, he was a thief ... and *legally*, he was an outlaw"'.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

PS

A. T. Pierson's excellent biography of Mr Müller can be accessed freely at ...

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/26522/26522-h/26522-h.htm#1>.

Scripture.

Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.
Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Colossians 3. 22 – 4. 1 (*The New King James Version*)