

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO

THE THESSALONIANS

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

INTRODUCTION

The AUTHENTICITY of this Epistle is attested by IRENAEUS [*Against Heresies*, 5.6.1], quoting ^{<5183>}1 Thessalonians 5:23; CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA [*The Instructor*, 1.88], quoting ^{<5187>}1 Thessalonians 2:7; TERTULLIAN [*On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, 24], quoting ^{<5184>}1 Thessalonians 5:1; CAIUS in EUSEBIUS' *Ecclesiastical History* [6.20]; ORIGEN [*Against Celsus*, 3].

The OBJECT OF THE EPISTLE. — Thessalonica was at this time capital of the Roman second district of Macedonia [LIVY, *Histories*, 45.29]. It lay on the bay of Therme, and has always been, and still is, under its modern name Saloniki, a place of considerable commerce. After his imprisonment and scourging at Philippi, Paul (^{<5182>}1 Thessalonians 2:2) passed on to Thessalonica; and in company with Silas (^{<447E>}Acts 17:1-9) and Timotheus (^{<446B>}Acts 16:3 17:14, compare with ^{<5181>}1 Thessalonians 1:1 3:1-6 ^{<5182>}2 Thessalonians 1:1) founded the Church there. The Jews, as a body, rejected the Gospel when preached for three successive sabbaths (^{<447E>}Acts 17:2); but some few “believed and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout (that is, proselytes to Judaism) Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.” The believers received the word joyfully, notwithstanding trials and persecutions (^{<5186>}1 Thessalonians 1:6 2:13) from their own countrymen and from the Jews (^{<5184>}1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). His stay at Thessalonica was doubtless not limited to the three weeks in which were the three sabbaths specified in ^{<447E>}Acts 17:2; for his laboring there with his hands for his support (^{<5181>}1 Thessalonians 2:9 ^{<5182>}2 Thessalonians 3:8), his receiving supplies there more than once from Philippi (^{<5184C>}Philippians 4:16), his making many converts from the Gentiles

(^{<5100>}1 Thessalonians 1:9; and as two oldest manuscripts read, ^{<4470>}Acts 17:4, “of the devout *and* of the Greeks a great multitude,” ^{<4470>}Acts 17:4), and his appointing ministers — all imply a longer residence. Probably as at Pisidian Antioch (^{<4436>}Acts 13:46), at Corinth (^{<4486>}Acts 18:6,7), and at Ephesus (^{<4498>}Acts 19:8,9), having preached the Gospel to the Jews, when they rejected it, he turned to the Gentiles. He probably thenceforth held the Christian meetings in the house of Jason (^{<4475>}Acts 17:5), perhaps “the kinsman” of Paul mentioned in ^{<5162>}Romans 16:21. His great subject of teaching to them seems to have been the coming and kingdom of Christ, as we may infer from ^{<5100>}1 Thessalonians 1:10 2:12,19 3:13 4:13-18 5:1-11,23,24; and that they should walk worthy of it (^{<5102>}1 Thessalonians 2:12 4:1). And it is an undesigned coincidence between the two Epistles and ^{<4475>}Acts 17:5,9, that the very charge which the assailants of Jason’s house brought against him and other brethren was, “These do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another *king*, one Jesus.” As in the case of the Lord Jesus Himself (^{<5133>}John 18:33-37 19:12; compare ^{<4164>}Matthew 26:64), they perverted the doctrine of the coming kingdom of Christ into a ground for the charge of treason against Caesar. The result was, Paul and Silas were obliged to flee under the cover of night to Berea; Timothy had probably preceded him (^{<4470>}Acts 17:10,14). But the Church had been planted, and ministers appointed; nay, more, they virtually became missionaries themselves for which they possessed facilities in the extensive commerce of their city, and both by word and example were extending the Gospel in Macedonia, Achaia, and elsewhere (^{<5100>}1 Thessalonians 1:7,8). From Berea, also, Paul, after having planted a Scripture-loving Church, was obliged to flee by the Thessalonian Jews who followed him thither. Timothy (who seems to have come to Berea separately from Paul and Silas, compare ^{<4470>}Acts 17:10, with ^{<4474>}Acts 17:14) and Silas remained there still, when Paul proceeded by sea to Athens. While there he more than once longed to visit the Thessalonians again, and see personally their spiritual state, and “perfect that which was lacking in their faith” (^{<5100>}1 Thessalonians 3:10); but (probably using the Thessalonian Jews as his instruments, ^{<5137>}John 13:27) “Satan hindered” him (^{<5100>}1 Thessalonians 2:18; compare ^{<4473>}Acts 17:13). He therefore sent Timotheus, who seems to have followed him to Athens from Berea (^{<4475>}Acts 17:15), immediately on his arrival to Thessalonica (^{<5100>}1 Thessalonians 3:1); glad as he would have been of Timothy’s help in the

midst of the cavils of Athenian opponents, he felt he must forego that help for the sake of the Thessalonian Church. Silas does not seem to have come to Paul *at Athens* at all, though Paul had desired him and Timothy to “come to him with all speed” (^{<4175>}Acts 17:15); but seems with Timothy (who from Thessalonica called for him at Berea) to have joined Paul *at Corinth* first; compare ^{<418>}Acts 18:1,5, “When Silas and Timothy were come from *Macedonia*.” The Epistle makes no mention of Silas *at Athens*, as it does of Timothy (^{<5181>}1 Thessalonians 3:1).

Timothy’s account of the Thessalonian Church was highly favorable. They abounded in faith and charity and reciprocated his desire to see them (^{<5186>}1 Thessalonians 3:6-10). Still, as nothing human on earth is perfect, there were some defects. Some had too exclusively dwelt on the doctrine of Christ’s coming kingdom, so as to neglect the sober-minded discharge of present duties (^{<5111>}1 Thessalonians 4:11,12). Some who had lost relatives by death, needed comfort and instruction in their doubts as to whether they who died before Christ’s ^{<5186>} coming would have a share with those found alive in His kingdom then to be revealed. Moreover, also, there had been committed among them sins against chastity and sobriety (^{<5186>}1 Thessalonians 5:5-7), as also against charity (^{<5186>}1 Thessalonians 4:3-10 5:13,15). There were, too, symptoms in some of want of respectful love and subordination to their ministers; others treated slightly the manifestations of the Spirit in those possessing His gifts (^{<5189>}1 Thessalonians 5:19). To give spiritual admonition on these subjects, and at the same time commend what deserved commendation, and to testify his love to them, was the object of the Epistle.

THE PLACE OF WRITING IT was doubtless Corinth, where Timothy and Silas rejoined him (^{<4185>}Acts 18:5) soon after he arrived there (compare ^{<5171>}1 Thessalonians 2:17) in the autumn of A.D. 52.

THE TIME OF WRITING was evidently immediately after having received from Timothy the tidings of their state (^{<5186>}1 Thessalonians 3:6) in the winter of A.D. 52, or early in 53. For it was written not long after the conversion of the Thessalonians (^{<5108>}1 Thessalonians 1:8,9), while Paul could speak of himself as only *taken from them for a short season* (^{<5171>}1 Thessalonians 2:17). Thus this Epistle was *first in date of all Paul’s extant Epistles*. The Epistle is written in the joint names of Paul, Silas, and

Timothy, the three founders of the Thessalonian Church. The plural first person “we,” is used everywhere, except in ^{¹ Thessalonians 2:18 3:5 5:27. “We” is the true reading, ^{¹ Thessalonians 4:13. The *English Version* “I,” in ^{¹ Thessalonians 4:9 ^{¹ Thessalonians 5:1,23, is not supported by the original [EDMUNDS].}}}}

The STYLE is calm and equable, in accordance with the subject matter, which deals only with Christian duties in general, taking for granted the great doctrinal truths which were not as yet disputed. There was no deadly error as yet to call forth his more vehement bursts of feeling and impassioned argument. The earlier Epistles, as we should expect, are moral and practical. It was not until Judaistic and legalizing errors arose at a later period that he wrote those Epistles (for example, Romans and Galatians) which unfold the cardinal doctrines of grace and justification by faith. Still, later the Epistles from his Roman prison confirm the same truths. And last of all, the Pastoral Epistles are suited to the more developed ecclesiastical constitution of the Church, and give directions as to bishops and deacons, and correct abuses and errors of later growth.

The prevalence of the Gentile element in this Church is shown by the fact that these two Epistles are among the very few of Paul’s writings in which no quotation occurs from the Old Testament.

CHAPTER 1

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10.

ADDRESS: SALUTATION: HIS PRAYERFUL THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE. THEIR FIRST RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL, AND THEIR GOOD INFLUENCE ON ALL AROUND.

1. Paul — He does not add “an apostle,” because in their case, as in that of the Philippians (see on ^{<300>}Philippians 1:1), his apostolic authority needs not any substantiation. He writes familiarly as to faithful friends, not but that his apostleship was recognized among them (^{<300>}1 Thessalonians 2:6). On the other hand, in writing to the Galatians, among whom some had called in question his apostleship, he strongly asserts it in the superscription. An undesigned propriety in the Epistles, evincing genuineness.

Silvanus — a “chief man among the brethren” (^{<4152>}Acts 15:22), and a “prophet” (^{<4153>}Acts 15:32), and one of the deputies who carried the decree of the Jerusalem council to Antioch. His age and position cause him to be placed before “Timothy,” then a youth (^{<4461>}Acts 16:1 ^{<5012>}1 Timothy 4:12). Silvanus (the Gentile expanded form of “Silas”) is called in ^{<6152>}1 Peter 5:12, “a faithful brother” (compare ^{<4019>}2 Corinthians 1:19). They both aided in planting the Thessalonian Church, and are therefore included in the address. This, the first of Paul’s Epistles, as being written before various evils crept into the churches, is without the censures found in other Epistles. So realizing was their Christian faith, that they were able hourly to look for the Lord Jesus.

unto the church — not merely as in the Epistles to Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, “to the saints,” or “the faithful at Thessalonica.” Though as yet they do not seem to have had the *final* Church organization under *permanent* “bishops” and deacons, which appears in the later Epistles (See on ^{<300>}Philippians 1:1; see First and Second Timothy). Yet he

designates them by the honorable term “Church,” implying their status as not merely isolated believers, but a corporate body with spiritual rulers (^{<S1B2>}1 Thessalonians 5:12 ^{<S10B>}2 Corinthians 1:1 ^{<S10B>}Galatians 1:2).

in — implying *vital union*.

God the Father — This marks that they were no longer *heathen*.

the Lord Jesus Christ — This marks that they were not *Jews*, but Christians.

Grace be unto you, and peace — that ye may have in God that *favor and peace* which men withhold [ANSELM]. This is the salutation in all the Epistles of Paul, except the three pastoral ones, which have “grace, mercy, and peace.” Some of the oldest manuscripts support, others omit the clause following, “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” It may have crept in from ^{<S10B>}1 Corinthians 1:3 ^{<S10B>}2 Corinthians 1:2.

2. (^{<S10B>}Romans 1:9 ^{<S10B>}2 Timothy 1:3.) The structure of the sentences in this and the following verses, each successive sentence repeating with greater fullness the preceding, characteristically marks Paul’s abounding love and thankfulness in respect to his converts, as if he were seeking by words heaped on words to convey some idea of his exuberant feelings towards them.

We — I, Silvanus, and Timotheus. ^{<S10B>}Romans 1:9 supports ALFORD in translating, “making mention of you in our prayers without ceasing” (^{<S10B>}1 Thessalonians 1:3). Thus, “without ceasing,” in the second clause, answers in parallelism to “always,” in the first.

3. **work of faith** — *the working reality of your faith*; its alacrity in *receiving* the truth, and in *evincing* itself by its fruits. Not an otiose assent; but a *realizing, working faith*; not “in word only,” but in *one* continuous chain of “work” (singular, not plural, *works*), ^{<S10B>}1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 ^{<S10B>}James 2:22. So “the work of faith” in ^{<S10B>}2 Thessalonians 1:11 implies its *perfect development* (compare ^{<S10B>}James 1:4). The other governing substantives similarly mark respectively the characteristic manifestation of the grace which follows each in the genitive. *Faith, love, and hope*, are the three great Christian graces (^{<S10B>}1 Thessalonians 5:8 ^{<S10B>}1 Corinthians 13:13).

labor of love — The *Greek* implies *toil*, or *troublesome labor*, which we are stimulated by love to bear (^{<310>}1 Thessalonians 2:9 ^{<610>}Revelation 2:2). For instances of self-denying *labors of love*, see ^{<405>}Acts 20:35 ^{<612>}Romans 16:12. Not here *ministerial* labors. Those who shun trouble for others, love little (compare ^{<310>}Hebrews 6:10).

patience — Translate, “*endurance of hope*”; the *persevering endurance* of trials which flows from “hope.” ^{<610>}Romans 15:4 shows that “patience” also nourishes “hope.”

hope in our Lord Jesus — literally, “hope of our Lord Jesus,” namely, of His coming (^{<310>}1 Thessalonians 1:10): a hope that looked forward beyond all present things for the manifestation of Christ.

in the sight of God and our Father — Your “faith, hope, and love” were not merely such as would pass for genuine *before men*, but “in the sight of God,” the Searcher of hearts [GOMARUS]. Things are really what they are before God. BENDEL takes this clause with “remembering.” Whenever we pray, we *remember before God* your faith, hope, and love. But its separation from “remembering” in the order, and its connection with “your ... faith,” etc. make me to prefer the former view.

and, etc. — The *Greek* implies, “in the sight of *Him who* is [at once] God and our Father.”

4. Knowing — Forasmuch as we know.

your election of God — The *Greek* is rather, “beloved by God”; so ^{<600>}Romans 1:7 ^{<313>}2 Thessalonians 2:13. “Your election” means that *God has elected you* as individual believers to eternal life (^{<610>}Romans 11:5,7 ^{<313>}Colossians 3:12 ^{<313>}2 Thessalonians 2:13).

5. our gospel — namely, the Gospel which we preached.

came — *Greek*, “was made,” namely, by God, its Author and Sender. God’s having made our preaching among you to be attended with such “power,” is the proof that you are “elect of God” (^{<310>}1 Thessalonians 1:4).

in power — in the efficacy of the Holy Spirit clothing us with power (see end of verse; ^{<405>}Acts 1:8 4:33 6:5,8) in preaching the Gospel, and making it in you the power of God unto salvation (^{<610>}Romans 1:16). As “power”

produces *faith*; so “the Holy Ghost,” *love*; and “much assurance” (^{<510P>}Colossians 2:2, *full persuasion*), *hope* (^{<510H>}Hebrews 6:11), resting on faith (^{<510D>}Hebrews 10:22). So *faith*, *love*, and *hope* (^{<510B>}1 Thessalonians 1:3).

as ye know — answering to the “knowing,” that is, *as WE know* (^{<510A>}1 Thessalonians 1:4) your character as *the elect of God*, so YE *know* ours as *preachers*.

for your sake — The purpose herein indicated is not so much that of the apostles, as that of God. “You know what *God enabled us to be ... how mighty in preaching the word ... for your sakes ... thereby proving that He had chosen* (^{<510A>}1 Thessalonians 1:4) you for His own” [ALFORD]. I think, from ^{<510D>}1 Thessalonians 2:10-12, that, in “what manner of men we were among you,” besides the *power in preaching*, there is included also Paul’s and his fellow missionaries’ whole *conduct* which confirmed their preaching; and in this sense, the “for your sake” will mean “in order to win you.” This, though not the sole, yet would be a strong, motive to holy circumspection, namely, so as to win those without (^{<510F>}Colossians 4:5; compare ^{<410B>}1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

6. And ye — answering to “*For our Gospel*,” ^{<510F>}1 Thessalonians 1:5.

followers — *Greek*, “imitators.” The Thessalonians in their turn became “ensamples” (^{<510D>}1 Thessalonians 1:7) for others to *imitate*.

of the Lord — who was the apostle of the Father, and taught the word, which He brought from heaven, under adversities [BENGEL]. This was the point in which they imitated Him and His apostles, *joyful witness for the word in much affliction*: the second proof of their *election of God* (^{<510A>}1 Thessalonians 1:4); ^{<510F>}1 Thessalonians 1:5 is the first (see on ^{<510B>}1 Thessalonians 1:5).

received the word in much affliction — (^{<510A>}1 Thessalonians 2:14 ^{<510B>}3:2-5 ^{<410F>}Acts 17:5-10).

joy of — that is, *wrought* by “the Holy Ghost.” “The oil of gladness” wherewith the Son of God was “anointed above His fellows” (^{<510D>}Psalm 45:7), is the same oil with which He, by the Spirit, anoints His fellows too (^{<250I>}Isaiah 61:1,3 ^{<514I>}Romans 14:17 ^{<610I>}1 John 2:20,27).

7. ensamples — So some of the oldest manuscripts read. Others, “ensample” (singular), the whole Church being regarded as *one*. The *Macedonian* Church of Philippi was the only one in Europe converted before the Thessalonians. Therefore he means their past conduct is an ensample to all believers now; of whom he specifies those “in Macedonia” because he had been there since the conversion of the Thessalonians, and had left Silvanus and Timotheus there; and those in “Achaia,” because he was now at Corinth in Achaia.

8. from you sounded ... the word of the Lord — not that they actually became missionaries: but they, by the *report* which spread abroad of their “faith” (compare ^{<500>}Romans 1:8), and by Christian merchants of Thessalonica who traveled in various directions, bearing “the word of the Lord” with them, were *virtually* missionaries, recommending the Gospel to all within reach of their influence by word and by example (^{<500>}1 Thessalonians 1:7). In “sounded,” the image is that of a trumpet filling with its clear-sounding echo all the surrounding places.

to God-ward — no longer directed to idols.

so that we need not to speak any thing — to them in praise of your faith; “for (^{<500>}1 Thessalonians 1:9) they themselves” (the people in Macedonia, Achaia, and in every place) know it already.

9. Strictly there should follow, “For they themselves show of you,” etc.; but, instead, he substitutes that which was the instrumental cause of the Thessalonians’ conversion and faith, “for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had *unto you*”; compare ^{<500>}1 Thessalonians 1:5, which corresponds to this former clause, as ^{<500>}1 Thessalonians 1:6 corresponds to the latter clause. “And how ye turned from idols to serve the living ... God,” etc. Instead of *our* having “to speak any thing” to them (in Macedonia and Achaia) in your praise (^{<500>}1 Thessalonians 1:8), “they *themselves* (have the start of us in speaking of you, and) *announce concerning* (so the *Greek* of ‘show of’ means) us, what manner of (how effectual an) entrance we had unto you” (^{<500>}1 Thessalonians 1:5 2:1).

the living and true God — as opposed to the *dead* and *false gods* from which they had “turned.” In the *English Version* reading, ^{<400>}Acts 17:4, “of the *devout Greeks* a great multitude,” no mention is made, as here, of the

conversion of *idolatrous* Gentiles at Thessalonica; but the reading of some of the oldest manuscripts and *Vulgate* singularly coincides with the statement here: “Of the devout AND of Greeks (namely, *idolaters*) a great multitude”; so in ⁵¹⁰⁰¹1 Thessalonians 1:17, “the devout persons,” that is, Gentile proselytes to Judaism, form a separate class. PALEY and LACHMANN, by distinct lines of argument, support the “AND.”

10. This verse distinguishes them from the *Jews*, as ⁵¹⁰⁰¹1 Thessalonians 1:9 from the *idolatrous* Gentiles. To wait for the Lord’s coming is a sure characteristic of a true believer, and was prominent amidst the graces of the Thessalonians (⁴⁰⁰⁷1 Corinthians 1:7,8). His *coming* is seldom called his *return* (⁶⁴⁴³John 14:3); because the two advents are regarded as different phases of the same coming; and the second coming shall have features altogether new connected with it, so that it will not be a mere repetition of the first, or a mere coming *back again*.

his Son ... raised from the dead — the grand proof of His divine *Sonship* (⁶⁰⁰⁴Romans 1:4).

delivered — rather as *Greek*, “who *delivereth us*.” Christ has once for all *redeemed* us; He is *our Deliverer* ALWAYS.

wrath to come — (⁵¹⁰⁰¹1 Thessalonians 5:9 ⁵¹⁰⁰¹Colossians 3:6).

CHAPTER 2

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-20.

HIS MANNER OF PREACHING, AND THEIRS OF RECEIVING, THE GOSPEL; HIS DESIRE TO HAVE REVISITED THEM FRUSTRATED BY SATAN.

1. For — confirming ^{<500>}1 Thessalonians 1:9. He discusses the manner of his fellow missionaries' preaching among them (^{<506>}1 Thessalonians 1:5, and former part of ^{<509>}1 Thessalonians 2:9) at ^{<501>}1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; and the Thessalonians' reception of the word (compare ^{<506>}1 Thessalonians 1:6,7, and latter part of ^{<509>}1 Thessalonians 2:9) at ^{<503>}1 Thessalonians 2:13-16.

yourselves — Not only do strangers report it, but *you* know it to be true [ALFORD] “yourselves.”

not in vain — *Greek*, “not vain,” that is, it was full of “power” (^{<506>}1 Thessalonians 1:5). The *Greek* for “was,” expresses rather “hath been and is,” implying the *permanent* and continuing character of his preaching.

2. even after that we had suffered before — at Philippi (^{<441>}Acts 16:11-40): a circumstance which would have deterred mere natural, unspiritual men from further preaching.

shamefully entreated — ignominiously scourged (^{<442>}Acts 16:22,23).

bold — (^{<403>}Acts 4:29 ^{<403>}Ephesians 6:20).

in our God — The ground of our boldness in speaking was the realization of God as “OUR God.”

with much contention — that is, literally, as of *competitors in a contest*: striving earnestness (^{<502>}Colossians 1:29 2:1). But here *outward* conflict with persecutors, rather than *inward* and mental, was what the missionaries had to endure (^{<447>}Acts 17:5,6 ^{<503>}Philippians 1:30).

3. For — The ground of his “boldness” (^{<510>}1 Thessalonians 2:2), his freedom from all “deceit, uncleanness, and guile”; *guile*, before God, *deceit* (*Greek*, “imposture”), towards men (compare ^{<610>}2 Corinthians 1:12 2:17 ^{<604>}Ephesians 4:14); *uncleanness*, in relation to one’s self (impure motives of carnal self-gratification in gain, ^{<510>}1 Thessalonians 2:5), or lust; such as actuated false teachers of the Gentiles (^{<510>}Philippians 1:16 ^{<610>}2 Peter 2:10,14 ^{<608>}Jude 1:8 ^{<614>}Revelation 2:14,15). So Simon Magus and Cerinthus taught [ESTIUS].

exhortation — The *Greek* means “consolation” as well as “exhortation.” The same Gospel which exhorts comforts. Its first lesson to each is that of peace in believing amidst outward and inward sorrows. It comforts them that mourn (compare ^{<511>}1 Thessalonians 2:11 ^{<310>}Isaiah 61:2,3 ^{<610>}2 Corinthians 1:3,4).

of — *springing from* — *having its source in* — deceit, etc.

4. as — according as; even as.

allowed — *Greek*, “We have been approved on trial,” “deemed fit.” This word corresponds to “God which *trieth* our hearts” below. This approval as to sincerity depends solely on the grace and mercy of God (^{<495>}Acts 9:15 ^{<610>}1 Corinthians 7:25 ^{<605>}2 Corinthians 3:5 ^{<511>}1 Timothy 1:11,12).

not as pleasing — not as persons who seek to please men; characteristic of false teachers (^{<810>}Galatians 1:10).

5. used we flattering words — literally, “become (that is, have we been found) in (the use of) language of flattery”; the resource of those who try to “please men.”

as ye know — “Ye know” as to whether I *flattered* you; as to “covetousness,” GOD, the Judge of the heart, alone can be “my witness.”

cloak of — that is, any specious guise under which I might cloak “covetousness.”

6. Literally, “Nor of men (have we been found, ^{<510>}1 Thessalonians 2:5) seeking glory.” The “of” here represents a different *Greek* word from “of” in the clause “*of you ... of others.*” ALFORD makes the former (*Greek*, “*ex*”) express the *abstract ground* of the glory; the latter (*apo*) the *concrete*

object from which it was to come. The former means “originating from”; the latter means “on the part of.” Many teach heretical novelties, though not for fain, yet for “glory.” Paul and his associates were free even from this motive [GROTIUS], (^{<RB4>}John 5:44).

we might have been burdensome — that is, by claiming maintenance (^{<SB1>}1 Thessalonians 2:9 ^{<TB2>}2 Corinthians 11:9 12:16 ^{<SB2>}2 Thessalonians 3:8). As, however, “glory” precedes, as well as “covetousness,” the reference cannot be *restricted* to the latter, though I think it is not *excluded*. Translate, “when we might have borne heavily upon you,” by pressing you *with the weight of self-glorifying authority*, and *with the burden of our sustenance*. Thus the antithesis is appropriate in the words following, “But we were *gentle* (the opposite of *pressing weightily*) among you” (^{<SB1>}1 Thessalonians 2:7). On *weight* being connected with authority, compare *Note*, see on ^{<TB2>}2 Corinthians 10:10, “His letters are weighty” (^{<RB1>}1 Corinthians 4:21). ALFORD’S translation, which *excludes* reference to his right of claiming *maintenance* (“when we might have stood on our *dignity*”), seems to me disproved by ^{<SB1>}1 Thessalonians 2:9, which uses *the same Greek word* unequivocally for “chargeable.” Twice he received supplies from Philippi while at Thessalonica (^{<SB4>}Philippians 4:16).

as the apostles — that is, as being apostles.

7. we were — *Greek*, “we were *made*” by God’s grace.

gentle — *Greek*, “*mild* in bearing with the faults of others” [TITTMANN]; one, too, who is gentle (though firm) in reproving the erroneous opinions of others (^{<SB2>}2 Timothy 2:24). Some of the oldest manuscripts read, “we became *little children*” (compare ^{<RB3>}Matthew 18:3,4). Others support the *English Version* reading, which forms a better antithesis to ^{<SB1>}1 Thessalonians 2:6,7, and harmonizes better with what follows; for he would hardly, in the same sentence, compare himself both to the “infants” or “little children,” and to “a nurse,” or rather, “suckling mother.” *Gentleness* is the fitting characteristic of a *nurse*.

among you — *Greek*, “in the midst of you,” that is, in our intercourse with you being *as one of yourselves*.

nurse — a suckling mother.

her — *Greek*, “her own children” (compare ^{<SIB>}1 Thessalonians 2:11). So ^{<RIB>}Galatians 4:19.

8. So — to be joined to “we were willing”; “As a nurse cherisheth ... so we were willing,” etc. [ALFORD]. But BENGEL, “So,” that is, *seeing that we have such affection for you*.

being affectionately desirous — The oldest reading in the *Greek* implies, literally, *to connect one’s self with another*; to be closely attached to another.

willing — The *Greek* is stronger, “we were *well content*”; “we would gladly have imparted,” etc.”even our own lives” (so the *Greek* for “souls” ought to be translated); as we showed in the sufferings we endured in giving you the Gospel (^{<HIB>}Acts 17:1-34). As a nursing mother is ready to impart not only her milk to them, but her life for them, so we not only imparted gladly the spiritual milk of the word to you, but risked our own lives for your spiritual nourishment, imitating Him who laid down His life for His friends, the greatest proof of love (^{<RIB>}John 15:13).

ye were — *Greek*, “ye were become,” as having become our spiritual children.

dear — *Greek*, “dearly beloved.”

9. labor and travail — The *Greek* for “labor” means *hardship in bearing*; that for “travail,” *hardship in doing*; the former, toil with the utmost solicitude; the latter, the being wearied with fatigue [GROTIUS]. ZANCHIUS refers the former to *spiritual* (see ^{<RIB>}1 Thessalonians 3:5), the latter to *manual labor*. I would translate, “weariness (so the *Greek* is translated, ^{<RIB>}2 Corinthians 11:27) and travail” (hard labor, *toil*).

for — omitted in the oldest manuscripts.

laboring — *Greek*, “working,” namely, at tent-making (^{<RIB>}Acts 18:3).

night and day — The Jews reckoned the day from sunset to sunset, so that “night” is put before “day” (compare ^{<RIB>}Acts 20:31). Their labors with their hands for a scanty livelihood had to be engaged in not only by day, but by night also, in the intervals between spiritual labors.

because we would not be chargeable — *Greek*, “with a view to not burdening any of you” (^{<4119>}2 Corinthians 11:9,10).

preached unto you — *Greek*, “unto and among you.” Though but “three Sabbaths” are mentioned, ^{<4117>}Acts 17:2, these refer merely to the time of his preaching *to the Jews in the synagogue*. When rejected by them as a body, after having converted a few Jews, he turned to the Gentiles; of these (whom he preached to in a place distinct from the synagogue) “a great multitude believed” (^{<4117>}Acts 17:4, where the oldest manuscripts read, “of the devout [proselytes] and Greeks a great multitude”); then after he had, by labors continued *among the Gentiles* for some time, gathered in many converts, the Jews, provoked by his success, assaulted Jason’s house, and drove him away. His receiving “once and again” supplies from Philippi, implies a longer stay at Thessalonica than three weeks (^{<5105>}Philippians 4:16).

10. Ye are witnesses — as to our outward conduct.

God — as to our inner motives.

holily — towards God.

justly — towards men.

unblamably — in relation to ourselves.

behaved ourselves — *Greek*, “were made to be,” namely, by God.

among you that believe — rather, “*before* (that is, in the eyes of) you that believe”; whatever we may have seemed in the eyes of the unbelieving. As ^{<5109>}1 Thessalonians 2:9 refers to their outward occupation in the world; so ^{<5109>}1 Thessalonians 2:10, to their character among believers.

11. exhorted and comforted — *Exhortation* leads one to do a thing willingly; *consolation*, to do it joyfully [BENGEL], (^{<5114>}1 Thessalonians 5:14). Even in the former term, “exhorted,” the *Greek* includes the additional idea of *comforting* and *advocating* one’s cause: “encouragingly exhorted.” Appropriate in this case, as the Thessalonians were in sorrow, both through persecutions, and also through deaths of friends (^{<5113>}1 Thessalonians 4:13).

charged — “conjured solemnly,” literally, “testifying”; *appealing solemnly* to you before God.

every one of you — in private (^{<40m>}Acts 20:20), as well as publicly. The minister, if he would be useful, must not deal merely in generalities, but must individualize and particularize.

as a father — with mild gravity. The *Greek* is, “*his own children.*”

12. worthy of God — “worthy of the Lord” (^{<50m>}Colossians 1:10); “worthily of the saints” (^{<60m>}Romans 16:2, *Greek*): “... of the Gospel” (^{<50z>}Philippians 1:27) “... of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (^{<40p>}Ephesians 4:1). Inconsistency would cause God’s name to be “blasphemed among the Gentiles” (^{<80z>}Romans 2:24). The *Greek* article is emphatical, “Worthy of THE God who is calling you.”

hath called — So one of the oldest manuscripts and *Vulgate*. Other oldest manuscripts, “Who calleth us.”

his kingdom — to be set up at the Lord’s coming.

glory — that ye may share His glory (^{<80z>}John 17:22 ^{<50m>}Colossians 3:4).

13. For this cause — Seeing ye have had such teachers (^{<50p>}1 Thessalonians 2:10-12) [BENGE], “we also (as well as ‘all that believe’ in Macedonia and Achaia) thank God without ceasing (‘always’ ... ‘in our prayers,’ ^{<50p>}1 Thessalonians 1:2), that when ye received the word of God which ye heard from us (literally, ‘God’s word of hearing from us,’ ^{<50m>}Romans 10:16,17), ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, even as it is truly, the word of God.” ALFORD omits the “as” of *English Version*. But the “as” is required by the clause, “even as it is truly.” “Ye accepted it, not (*as*) the word of men (which it might have been *supposed* to be), but (*as*) the word of God, *even as it really is.*” The *Greek* for the first “received,” implies simply the hearing of it; the *Greek* of the second is “accepted,” or “welcomed” it. The proper object of faith, it hence appears, is *the word of God*, at first oral, then for security against error, written (^{<80p>}John 20:30,31 ^{<50m>}Romans 15:4 ^{<80p>}Galatians 4:30). Also, that faith is *the work of divine grace*, is implied by Paul’s *thanksgiving*.

effectually worketh also in you that believe — “Also,” besides your accepting it with your hearts, it evidences itself in your lives. It shows its *energy* in its practical effects on you; for instance, working in you patient endurance in trial (⁵¹²⁴1 Thessalonians 2:14; compare ⁴³⁸⁵Galatians 3:5 5:6).

14. followers — *Greek*, “imitators.” Divine *working* is most of all seen and felt in affliction.

in Judea — The churches of Judea were naturally the patterns to other churches, as having been the first founded, and that on the very scene of Christ’s own ministry. Reference to them is specially appropriate here, as the Thessalonians, with Paul and Silas, had experienced from Jews in their city persecutions (⁴⁴⁷⁵Acts 17:5-9) similar to those which “the churches in Judea” experienced from Jews in that country.

in Christ Jesus — not merely “in God”; for the synagogues of the Jews (one of which the Thessalonians were familiar with, ⁴⁴⁷⁰Acts 17:1) were also *in God*. But the Christian churches alone were not only *in God*, as the Jews in contrast to the Thessalonian idolaters were, but also *in Christ*, which the Jews were not.

of your own countrymen — including primarily the Jews settled at Thessalonica, from whom the persecution originated, and also the Gentiles there, instigated by the Jews; thus, “fellow countrymen” (the *Greek* term, according to Herodian, implies, not the *enduring* relation of fellow citizenship, but sameness of country *for the time being*), including naturalized Jews and native Thessalonians, stand in contrast to the pure “Jews” in Judea (⁴¹⁰⁵Matthew 10:36). It is an undesigned coincidence, that Paul at this time was suffering persecutions of the Jews at Corinth, whence he writes (⁴⁴⁸⁵Acts 18:5,6,12); naturally his letter would the more vividly dwell on Jewish bitterness against Christians.

even as they — (³³⁰²Hebrews 10:32-34). There was a *likeness* in respect to *the nation* from which both suffered, namely, Jews, and those *their own countrymen*; in the *cause* for which, and in the *evils* which, they suffered, and also in the steadfast *manner* in which they suffered them. Such sameness of fruits, afflictions, and experimental characteristics of believers, in all places and at all times, is a subsidiary evidence of the truth of the Gospel.

15. the Lord Jesus — rather as *Greek*, “Jesus THE LORD.” This enhances the glaring enormity of their sin, that in killing Jesus they killed the LORD (Compare ^{<4814>}Acts 3:14,15).

their own — omitted in the oldest manuscripts.

prophets — (^{<4133>}Matthew 21:33-41 23:31-37 ^{<4133>}Luke 13:33).

persecuted us — rather as *Greek* (see *Margin*), “By persecution drove us out” (^{<4149>}Luke 11:49).

please not God — that is, they do not *make it their aim* to please God. He implies that with all their boast of being God’s peculiar people, they all the while are “no pleasers of God,” as certainly as, by the universal voice of the world, which even they themselves cannot contradict, they are declared to be perversely “contrary to all men.” JOSEPHUS [*Against Apion*, 2.14], represents one calling them “Atheists and Misanthropes, the dullest of barbarians”; and TACITUS [*Histories*, 5.5], “They have a hostile hatred of all other men.” However, the *contrariety to all men* here meant is, *in that they* “forbid us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved” (^{<5161>}Thessalonians 2:16).

16. Forbidding — *Greek*, “Hindering us from speaking,” etc.

to fill up their sins alway — Tending thus “to the filling up (the full measure of, ^{<4156>}Genesis 15:16 ^{<4133>}Daniel 8:23 ^{<4133>}Matthew 23:32) their sins at all times,” that is, *now as at all former times*. Their hindrance of the Gospel preaching to the Gentiles was the last measure added to their continually accumulating iniquity, which made them fully ripe for vengeance.

for — *Greek*, “but.” “But,” they shall proceed no further, for (^{<5132>}Timothy 3:8) “the” divine “wrath *has* (so the *Greek*) come upon (overtaken unexpectedly; the past tense expressing the speedy certainty of the divinely destined stroke) them to the uttermost”; not merely partial wrath, but wrath to its full extent, “even to the finishing stroke” [EDMUNDS]. The past tense implies that the fullest visitation of wrath was already begun. Already in A.D. 48, a tumult had occurred at the Passover in Jerusalem, when about thirty thousand (according to some) were slain; a

foretaste of the whole vengeance which speedily followed (^{<298>}Luke 19:43,44 21:24).

17. But we — resumed from ^{<313>}1 Thessalonians 2:13; in contrast to *the Jews*, ^{<315>}1 Thessalonians 2:15,16.

taken — rather as *Greek*, “severed (violently, ^{<411>}Acts 17:7-10) from you,” as parents bereft of their children. So “I will not leave you comfortless,” *Greek*, “orphanized” (^{<348>}John 14:18).

for a short time — literally, “for the space of an hour.” “When we had been severed from you but a very short time (perhaps alluding to the suddenness of his unexpected departure), we the more abundantly (the shorter was our separation; for the desire of meeting again is the more vivid, the more recent has been the parting) endeavored,” etc. (Compare ^{<500>}2 Timothy 1:4). He does not hereby, as many explain, anticipate a short separation from them, which would be a false anticipation; for he did not soon revisit them. The *Greek* past participle also forbids their view.

18. Wherefore — The oldest manuscripts read, “Because,” or “Inasmuch as.”

we would — *Greek*, “*we wished to come*”; we intended to come.

even I Paul — My fellow missionaries as well as myself wished to come; I can answer for *myself* that I intended it more than once. His slightly distinguishing himself here from his fellow missionaries, whom throughout this Epistle he associates with himself in the plural, accords with the fact that Silvanus and Timothy stayed at Berea when Paul went on to Athens; where subsequently Timothy joined him, and was thence sent *by Paul alone* to Thessalonica (^{<510>}1 Thessalonians 3:1).

Satan hindered us — On a different occasion “the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Jesus” (so the oldest manuscripts read), ^{<416>}Acts 16:6,7, forbade or hindered them in a missionary design; here it is *Satan*, acting perhaps by wicked men, some of whom had already driven him out of Thessalonica (^{<417>}Acts 17:13,14; compare ^{<637>}John 13:27), or else by some more direct “messenger of Satan — a thorn in the flesh” (^{<418>}2 Corinthians 12:7; compare ^{<414>}2 Corinthians 11:14). In any event, the Holy Ghost and the providence of God overruled Satan’s opposition to further His own

purpose. *We* cannot, in each case, define whence hindrances in good undertakings arise; *Paul* in this case, by inspiration, was enabled to say; the hindrance was from Satan. GROTIUS thinks Satan's mode of hindering Paul's journey to Thessalonica was by instigating the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers to cavil, which entailed on Paul the necessity of replying, and so detained him; but he seems to have left Athens leisurely (^{<4173>}Acts 17:33,34 18:1). The *Greek* for "hindered" is literally, "to cut a trench between one's self and an advancing foe, to prevent his progress"; so Satan opposing the progress of the missionaries.

19. For — giving the reason for his earnest desire to see them.

Are not even ye in the presence of ... Christ — "Christ" is omitted in the oldest manuscripts. Are not even ye (namely, among others; the "even" or "also," implies that not *they alone* will be his crown) our hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing before Jesus, when He shall come (^{<4114>}2 Corinthians 1:14 ^{<5476>}Philippians 2:16 4:1)? The "hope" here meant is his hope (in a lower sense), that these his converts might be found in Christ at His advent (^{<5183>}1 Thessalonians 3:13). Paul's *chief* "hope" was JESUS CHRIST (^{<5001>}1 Timothy 1:1).

20. Emphatical repetition with increased force. Who but ye and our other converts are our *hope*, etc., *hereafter*, at Christ's coming? For it is *ye who ARE now our glory and joy*.

CHAPTER 3

1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-13.

PROOF OF HIS DESIRE AFTER THEM IN HIS HAVING SENT TIMOTHY: HIS JOY AT THE TIDINGS BROUGHT BACK CONCERNING THEIR FAITH AND CHARITY: PRAYERS FOR THEM.

1. Wherefore — because of our earnest love to you (¹1 Thessalonians 2:17-20).

forbear — “endure” the suspense. The *Greek* is literally applied to a watertight vessel. When we could no longer contain ourselves in our yearning desire for you.

left at Athens alone — See my *Introduction*. This implies that he sent Timothy *from Athens*, whither the latter had followed him. However, the “we” favors ALFORD’S view that the determination to send Timothy was formed during the hasty consultation of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, *previous to his departure from Berea*, and that then he with them “resolved” to be “left alone” at Athens, when he should arrive there: Timothy and Silas not accompanying him, but remaining at Berea. Thus the “I,” ¹1 Thessalonians 3:5, will express that the *act* of sending Timothy, when he arrived at Athens, was *Paul’s*, while the determination that Paul should be left alone at Athens, was that of the brethren as well as himself, at Berea, whence he uses, ¹1 Thessalonians 3:1, “we.” The non-mention of Silas at Athens implies that he did not follow Paul to Athens as was at first intended; but Timothy did. Thus the history, ⁴¹⁷⁴Acts 17:14,15, accords with the Epistle. The word “left behind” (*Greek*) implies that Timothy had been with him *at Athens*. It was an act of self-denial for their sakes that Paul deprived himself of the presence of Timothy at Athens, which would have been so cheering to him in the midst of philosophic cavillers; but from love to the Thessalonians, he is well content to be left all “alone” in the great city.

2. minister of God and our fellow laborer — Some oldest manuscripts read, “fellow workman with God”; others, “minister of God.” The former is probably genuine, as copyists probably altered it to the latter to avoid the bold phrase, which, however, is sanctioned by ^{<40B>}1 Corinthians 3:9 ^{<40C>}2 Corinthians 6:1. The *English Version* reading is not well supported, and is plainly compounded out of the two other readings. Paul calls Timothy “our *brother*” here; but in ^{<40B>}1 Corinthians 4:17, “my *son*.” He speaks thus highly of one so lately ordained, both to impress the Thessalonians with a high respect for the delegate sent to them, and to encourage Timothy, who seems to have been of a timid character (^{<50D>}1 Timothy 4:12 5:23). “Gospel ministers do the work of God *with Him, for Him, and under Him*” [EDMUNDS].

establish — *Greek*, “confirm.” In ^{<50B>}2 Thessalonians 3:3, GOD is said to “stablish”: He is the true establisher: ministers are His “instruments.”

concerning — *Greek*, “in behalf of,” that is, *for the furtherance* of your faith. The *Greek* for “comfort” includes also the idea, “exhort.” The Thessalonians in their trials needed both (^{<50B>}1 Thessalonians 3:3; compare ^{<40C>}Acts 14:22).

3. moved — “shaken,” “disturbed.” The *Greek* is literally said of dogs *wagging* the tail in fawning on one. Therefore TITTMANN explains it, “That no man should, amidst his calamities, be *allured* by the *flattering* hope of a more pleasant life to abandon his duty.” So ELSNER and BENGEL, “cajoled out of his faith.” In afflictions, relatives and opponents combine with the ease-loving heart itself in flatteries, which it needs strong faith to overcome.

yourselves know — We always candidly told you so (^{<50B>}1 Thessalonians 3:4 ^{<40C>}Acts 14:22). None but a religion from God would have held out such a trying prospect to those who should embrace it, and yet succeed in winning converts.

we — Christians.

appointed thereunto — by God’s counsel (^{<50B>}1 Thessalonians 5:9).

4. that we should suffer — *Greek*, “that we are about (we are sure) to suffer” according to the *appointment* of God (^{<50B>}1 Thessalonians 3:3).

even as — “*even* (exactly) as it *both* came to pass *and* ye know”; ye know *both* that it came to pass, *and* that we foretold it (compare ^{<E39>}John 13:19). The correspondence of the event to the prediction powerfully confirms faith: “Forewarned, forearmed” [EDMUNDS]. The repetition of “ye know,” so frequently, is designed as an argument, that being forewarned of coming affliction, they should be less readily “moved” by it.

5. For this cause — Because I know of your “tribulation” having actually begun (^{<SR1>}1 Thessalonians 3:4).

when I — *Greek*, “when I *also* (as well as Timothy, who, Paul delicately implies, was equally anxious respecting them, compare “we,” ^{<SR1>}1 Thessalonians 3:1), could no longer contain myself (*endure* the suspense).”

I sent — Paul was the actual sender; hence the “I” here: Paul, Silas, and Timothy himself had agreed on the mission already, before Paul went to Athens: hence the “we,” (see on ^{<SR1>}1 Thessalonians 3:1).

to know — to learn the state of your faith, whether it stood the trial (^{<SR1>}Colossians 4:8).

lest ... have tempted ... and ... be — The indicative is used in the former sentence, the subjunctive in the latter. Translate therefore, “To know ... *whether haply* the tempter *have* tempted you (the indicative implying that he supposed such was the case), and *lest* (in that case) our labor *may prove to be* in vain” (compare ^{<SR1>}Galatians 4:11). Our labor in preaching would in that case be vain, so far as *ye* are concerned, but not as concerns *us* in so far as *we* have sincerely labored (^{<SR1>}Isaiah 49:4 ^{<SR1>}1 Corinthians 3:8).

6. Join “now” with “come”; “But Timotheus having *just now come* from you unto us” [ALFORD]. Thus it appears (compare ^{<SR1>}Acts 18:5) Paul is writing from Corinth.

your faith and charity — (^{<SR1>}1 Thessalonians 1:3; compare ^{<SR2>}2 Thessalonians 1:3, whence it seems their faith subsequently increased still more). *Faith* was the solid foundation: *charity* the cement which held together the superstructure of their practice on that foundation. In that *charity* was included their “good (kindly) remembrance” of their teachers.

desiring greatly — *Greek*, “having a yearning desire for.”

we also — The desires of loving friends for one another's presence are reciprocal.

7. over you — in respect to you.

in — in the midst of: notwithstanding “all our distress (*Greek*, ‘necessity’) and affliction,” namely, external trials at Corinth, whence Paul writes (compare ^{<5106>}1 Thessalonians 3:6, with ^{<4485>}Acts 18:5-10).

8. now — as the case is; seeing ye stand fast.

we live — we flourish. It *revives us* in our affliction to hear of your steadfastness (^{<1027>}Psalm 22:26 ^{<5106>}2 John 1:3:4).

if — implying that the vivid joy which the missionaries “now” feel, *will continue* if the Thessalonians continue steadfast. They still needed exhortation, ^{<5106>}1 Thessalonians 3:10; therefore he subjoins the conditional clause, “if ye,” etc. (^{<5106>}Philippians 4:1).

9. For what thanks — *what sufficient* thanks?

render ... again — in return for His goodness (^{<4822>}Psalm 116:12).

for you — “concerning you.”

for all the joy — on account of all the joy. It was “comfort,” ^{<5106>}1 Thessalonians 3:7, now it is more, namely, *joy*.

for your sakes — on your account.

before our God — It is a joy which will bear God's searching eye: a joy as in the presence of God, not self-seeking, but disinterested, sincere, and spiritual (compare ^{<5106>}1 Thessalonians 2:20 ^{<4851>}John 15:11).

10. Night and day — (See on ^{<5106>}1 Thessalonians 2:9). Night is the season for the saint's holiest meditations and prayers (^{<5106>}2 Timothy 1:3).

praying — connected with, “we joy”; we joy while we pray; or else as ALFORD, *What thanks can we render to God while we pray?* The *Greek* implies a *beseeking* request.

exceedingly — literally, “more than exceeding abundantly” (compare ^{<4822>}Ephesians 3:20).

that which is lacking — Even the Thessalonians had points in which they needed improvement [BENGEL], (^{<CITE>}Luke 17:5). Their doctrinal views as to the nearness of Christ’s coming, and as to the state of those who had fallen asleep, and their practice in some points, needed correction (^{<SID1>}Thessalonians 4:1-9). Paul’s method was to begin by commending what was praiseworthy, and then to correct what was amiss; a good pattern to all admonishers of others.

11. Translate, “*May God Himself, even our Father* (there being but one article in the *Greek*, requires this translation, ‘He who is at once God and our Father’), direct,” etc. The “Himself” stands in contrast with “we” (^{<SID1>}Thessalonians 2:18); *we* desired to come but could not through Satan’s hindrance; but if God *Himself* direct our way (as we pray), none can hinder Him (^{<SID2>}Thessalonians 2:16,17). It is a remarkable proof of *the unity of the Father and Son*, that in the *Greek* here, and in ^{<SID2>}Thessalonians 2:16,17, the verb is *singular*, implying that the subject, the Father and Son, are but *one in essential Being*, not in mere unity of will. Almost all the chapters in both Epistles to the Thessalonians are sealed, each with its own prayer (^{<SID1>}Thessalonians 5:23 ^{<SID2>}Thessalonians 1:11 2:16 3:5,16) [BENGEL]. Paul does not think the prosperous issue of a journey an unfit subject for prayer (^{<SID1>}Romans 1:10 15:32) [EDMUNDS]. His prayer, though the answer was deferred, in about five years afterwards was fulfilled in his return to Macedonia.

12. The “you” in the *Greek* is emphatically put *first*; “But” (so the *Greek* for “and”) what concerns “YOU,” whether we come or not, “may the Lord make you to increase and abound in love,” etc. The *Greek* for “increase” has a more *positive* force; that for “abound” a more *comparative* force, “make you *full* (supplying ‘that which is lacking,’ ^{<SID1>}Thessalonians 3:10) and even abound.” “The Lord” may here be the Holy Spirit; so the Three Persons of the Trinity will be appealed to (compare ^{<SID1>}Thessalonians 3:13), as in ^{<SID2>}Thessalonians 3:5. So the Holy Ghost is called “the Lord” (^{<SID2>}Corinthians 3:17). “Love” is the fruit of the Spirit (^{<SID2>}Galatians 5:22), and His office is “to stablish in holiness” (^{<SID1>}Thessalonians 3:13 ^{<SID1>}Peter 1:2).

13. your hearts — which are naturally the spring and seat of unholiness.

before God, even our Father — rather, “before Him who is at once God and our Father.” Before not merely men, but Him who will not be deceived by the mere show of holiness, that is, may your holiness be such as will stand His searching scrutiny.

coming — *Greek*, “presence,” or “arrival.”

with all his saints — including both the holy angels and the holy elect of men (^{<5044>}1 Thessalonians 4:14 ^{<2070>}Daniel 7:10 ^{<3840>}Zechariah 14:5 ^{<1251>}Matthew 25:31 ^{<5002>}2 Thessalonians 1:7). The saints are “His” (^{<4093>}Acts 9:13). We must have “holiness” if we are to be numbered with His holy ones or “saints.” On “unblameable,” compare ^{<6945>}Revelation 14:5. This verse (compare ^{<5182>}1 Thessalonians 3:12) shows that “love” is the spring of true “holiness” (^{<4054>}Matthew 5:44-48 ^{<5130>}Romans 13:10 ^{<5084>}Colossians 3:14). God is He who really “stablishes”; Timothy and other ministers are but instruments (^{<5182>}1 Thessalonians 3:2) in “stablishing.”

CHAPTER 4

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-18.

EXHORTATIONS TO CHASTITY; BROTHERLY LOVE; QUIET INDUSTRY; ABSTINENCE FROM UNDUE SORROW FOR DEPARTED FRIENDS, FOR AT CHRIST'S COMING ALL HIS SAINTS SHALL BE GLORIFIED.

1. Furthermore — *Greek*, “As to what remains.” Generally used towards the close of his Epistles (Ephesians 6:10 Philippians 4:8).

then — with a view to the *love* and *holiness* (1 Thessalonians 3:12,13) which we have just prayed for in your behalf, we now give you exhortation.

beseech — “ask” as if it were a personal favor.

by, etc. — rather as *Greek*, “IN the Lord Jesus”; in communion with the Lord Jesus, as Christian ministers dealing with Christian people [EDMUNDS].

as ye ... received — when we were with you (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

how — *Greek*, the “how,” that is, *the manner*.

walk and ... please God — that is, “*and so please God*,” namely, by your walk; in contrast to the Jews who “please not God” (1 Thessalonians 2:15). The oldest manuscripts add a clause here, “even as also ye do walk” (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:10 5:11). These words, which he was able to say of them with truth, conciliate a favorable hearing for the precepts which follow. Also the expression, “abound *more and more*,” implies that there had gone before a recognition of their already in some measure *walking so*.

2. by the Lord Jesus — by His authority and direction, not by our own. He uses the strong term, “commandments,” in writing to this Church not

long founded, knowing that they would take it in a right spirit, and feeling it desirable that they should understand he spake with divine authority. He seldom uses the term in writing subsequently, when his authority was established, to other churches. ^{<470>}1 Corinthians 7:10 11:17 and ^{<506>}1 Timothy 1:5 (^{<508>}1 Thessalonians 4:18, where the subject accounts for the strong expression) are the exceptions. “The Lord” marks His paramount authority, requiring implicit obedience.

3. For — enforcing the assertion that his “commandments” were “by (the authority of) the Lord Jesus” (^{<502>}1 Thessalonians 4:2). Since “this is the will of God,” let it be your will also.

fornication — not regarded as a sin at all among the heathen, and so needing the more to be denounced (^{<452>}Acts 15:20).

4. know — by moral self-control.

how to possess his vessel — rather as *Greek*, “how to *acquire* (get for himself) *his own* vessel,” that is, that each should have *his own wife* so as to avoid fornication (^{<508>}1 Thessalonians 4:3 ^{<470>}1 Corinthians 7:2). The emphatical position of “his own” in the *Greek*, and the use of “vessel” for *wife*, in ^{<407>}1 Peter 3:7, and in common Jewish phraseology, and the correct translation “acquire,” all justify this rendering.

in sanctification — (^{<468>}Romans 6:19 ^{<465>}1 Corinthians 6:15,18). Thus, “his own” stands in opposition to dishonoring his brother by lusting after *his wife* (^{<506>}1 Thessalonians 4:6).

honor — (^{<513>}Hebrews 13:4) contrasted with “*dishonor* their own bodies” (^{<402>}Romans 1:24).

5. in the lust — *Greek*, “passion”; which implies that such a one is unconsciously the *passive* slave of lust.

which know not God — and so know no better. Ignorance of true religion is the parent of unchastity (^{<408>}Ephesians 4:18,19). A people’s morals are like the objects of their worship (^{<472>}Deuteronomy 7:26 ^{<488>}Psalms 115:8 ^{<412>}Romans 1:23,24).

6. go beyond — transgress the bounds of rectitude in respect to his “brother.”

defraud — “overreach” [ALFORD]; “take advantage of” [EDMUNDS].

in any matter — rather as *Greek*, “in *the* matter”; a decorous expression for the matter now in question; the conjugal honor of his neighbor as a husband, ^{<S004>}1 Thessalonians 4:4; ^{<S007>}1 Thessalonians 4:7 also confirms this view; the word “brother” enhances the enormity of the crime. It is your *brother* whom you wrong (compare ^{<S067>}Proverbs 6:27-33).

the Lord — the coming Judge (^{<S006>}2 Thessalonians 1:7,8).

avenger — the Righter.

of all such — *Greek*, “concerning all *these things*,” in all such cases of wrongs against a neighbor’s conjugal honor.

testified — *Greek*, “constantly testified [ALFORD].

7. unto uncleanness — *Greek*, “for the purpose of.”

unto — rather as *Greek*, “in”; marking that “holiness” is the element in which our calling has place; in a sphere of holiness. *Saint* is another name for *Christian*.

8. despiseth, etc. — *Greek*, “setteth at naught” such engagements imposed on him in his calling, ^{<S007>}1 Thessalonians 4:7; in relation to his “brother,” ^{<S006>}1 Thessalonians 4:6. He who doth so, “sets at naught not man (as for instance his brother), but God” (^{<S504>}Psalm 51:4) is used of *despising* or *rejecting* God’s minister, it may mean here, “He who despiseth” or “rejecteth” these our ministerial precepts.

who hath also given unto us — So some oldest manuscripts read, but most oldest manuscripts read, “Who (without ‘also’) *giveth* (present) unto you” (not “us”).

his Spirit — *Greek*, “His own Spirit, the *Holy* (One)”; thus emphatically marking “holiness” (^{<S007>}1 Thessalonians 4:7) as the end for which the Holy (One) is being given. “Unto you,” in the *Greek*, implies that the Spirit is being given *unto*, *into* (put “into” your hearts), and *among* you (compare ^{<S009>}1 Thessalonians 2:9 ^{<S008>}Ephesians 4:30). “Giveth” implies that sanctification is not merely a work once for all accomplished in the past, but a *present progressive* work. So the Church of England Catechism,

“*sanctifieth* (present) all the elect people of God.” “His own” implies that as He gives you that which is essentially identical with Himself, He expects you should become like Himself (^{<4016>}1 Peter 1:16 ^{<6004>}2 Peter 1:4).

9. brotherly love, etc. — referring here to acts of brotherly kindness in relieving distressed brethren. Some oldest manuscripts support *English Version* reading, “YE have”; others, and those the weightiest, read, “WE have.” *We* need not write, as *ye yourselves* are taught, and that by *God*: namely, in the heart by the Holy Spirit (^{<4065>}John 6:45 ^{<5881>}Hebrews 8:11 ^{<4021>}1 John 2:20,27).

to love — *Greek*, “with a view to,” or “to the end of your loving one another.” Divine teachings have their confluence in love [BENGL].

10. And indeed — *Greek*, “For even.”

11. study to be quiet — *Greek*, “*make it your ambition* to be quiet, and to do *your own business*.” In direct contrast to the world’s *ambition*, which is, “to make a great stir,” and “to be busybodies” (^{<5881>}2 Thessalonians 3:11,12).

work with your own hands — The Thessalonian converts were, it thus seems, chiefly of the *working* classes. Their expectation of the immediate coming of Christ led some enthusiasts among them to neglect their daily work and be dependent on the bounty of others. See end of ^{<5041>}1 Thessalonians 4:12. The expectation was right in so far as that the Church should be always looking for Him; but they were wrong in making it a ground for neglecting their daily work. The evil, as it subsequently became worse, is more strongly reproved in ^{<5881>}2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.

12. honestly — in the *Old English* sense, “becomingly,” as becomes your Christian profession; not bringing discredit on it in the eyes of the outer world, as if Christianity led to sloth and poverty (^{<5133>}Romans 13:13 ^{<4022>}1 Peter 2:12).

them ... without — outside the Christian Church (^{<4041>}Mark 4:11).

have lack of nothing — not have to beg from others for the supply of your wants (compare ^{<4003>}Ephesians 4:28). So far from needing to beg from others, we ought to work and get the means of supplying the need of

others. Freedom from pecuniary embarrassment is to be desired by the Christian on account of the liberty which it bestows.

13. The leading topic of Paul's preaching at Thessalonica having been the coming *kingdom* (^{4HTT}Acts 17:7), some perverted it into a cause for fear in respect to friends lately deceased, as if these would be excluded from the glory which those found alive alone should share. This error Paul here corrects (compare ⁵¹⁵⁰¹1 Thessalonians 5:10).

I would not — All the oldest manuscripts and versions have “we would not.” My fellow laborers (Silas and Timothy) and myself desire that ye should not be ignorant.

them which are asleep — The oldest manuscripts read *present tense*, “them which are *sleeping*”; the same as “the dead in Christ” (⁵⁰⁴⁶¹1 Thessalonians 4:16), to whose bodies (⁵⁷¹¹⁰Daniel 12:2, not their *souls*; ⁵¹¹¹⁰Ecclesiastes 12:7 ⁵¹¹¹⁴2 Corinthians 5:8) death is a calm and holy sleep, from which the resurrection shall waken them to glory. The word “cemetery” means *a sleeping-place*. Observe, the glory and chief hope of the Church are not to be realized at death, but at the Lord's coming; one is not to anticipate the other, but all are to be glorified together at Christ's coming (⁵¹⁰⁰⁴Colossians 3:4 ⁵¹¹¹⁴Hebrews 11:40). Death affects the mere individual; but the coming of Jesus the whole Church; at death our souls are invisibly and individually with the Lord; at Christ's coming the whole Church, with all its members, in body and soul, shall be visibly and collectively with Him. As this is offered as a consolation to mourning relatives, *the mutual recognition of the saints* at Christ's coming is hereby implied.

that ye sorrow not, even as others — *Greek*, “the rest”; all the rest of the world besides Christians. Not all natural *mourning* for dead friends is forbidden: for the Lord Jesus and Paul sinlessly gave way to it (⁵¹¹¹³John 11:31,33,35 ⁵¹¹⁰⁷Philippians 2:27); but sorrow as though there were “no hope,” which indeed the heathen had not (⁵¹¹⁰⁷Ephesians 2:12): the Christian *hope* here meant is that of *the resurrection*. ⁵¹⁰⁶⁹Psalms 16:9,11 17:15 73:24 ⁵¹¹⁴²Proverbs 14:32, show that the Old Testament Church, though not having the hope *so bright* (⁵²³⁸⁸Isaiah 38:18,19), yet *had* this hope. Contrast CATULLUS [*Carmina* 5.4], “When once our brief day has set, we must sleep one everlasting night.” The sepulchral inscriptions of heathen

Thessalonica express the hopeless view taken as to those once dead: as AESCHYLUS writes, “Of one once dead there is no resurrection.” Whatever glimpses some heathen philosophers, had of the existence of the soul after death, they had none whatever of the body (^{<447B>}Acts 17:18,20,32).

14. For if — confirmation of his statement, ^{<504B>}1 Thessalonians 4:13, that the removal of *ignorance* as to the sleeping believers would remove undue grief respecting them. See ^{<504B>}1 Thessalonians 4:13, “hope.” Hence it appears our *hope* rests on our *faith* (“if we believe”). “As surely as we all believe that Christ died and rose again (the very doctrine specified as taught at Thessalonica, ^{<447B>}Acts 17:3), *so also* will God bring *those laid to sleep by Jesus* with Him (Jesus).” (Song of Solomon the order and balance of the members of the *Greek* sentence require us to translate). Believers are laid in sleep by Jesus, and so will be brought back from sleep with Jesus in His train when He comes. The disembodied souls are not here spoken of; the reference is to the sleeping *bodies*. The facts of Christ’s experience are repeated in the believer’s. He died and then rose: so believers shall die and then rise with Him. But in His case *death* is the term used, ^{<465B>}1 Corinthians 15:3,6, etc.; in theirs, *sleep*; because His death has taken for them the sting from death. The same Hand that shall raise them is that which *laid them to sleep*. “Laid to sleep by Jesus,” answers to “dead in Christ” (^{<504B>}1 Thessalonians 4:16).

15. by the word of the Lord — *Greek*, “in,” that is, *in virtue* of a direct revelation from the Lord to me. So ^{<117B>}1 Kings 20:35. This is the “mystery,” a truth once hidden, now revealed, which Paul shows (^{<465B>}1 Corinthians 15:51,52).

prevent — that is, “anticipate.” So far were the early Christians from regarding their departed brethren as *anticipating* them in entering glory, that they needed to be assured that those who remain to the coming of the Lord “will not anticipate them that are asleep.” The “we” means *whichever of us* are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. The Spirit designed that believers in each successive age should live in continued expectation of the Lord’s coming, not knowing but that *they* should be among those found alive at His coming (^{<117B>}Matthew 24:42). It is a sad fall from this blessed hope, that *death* is looked for by most men, rather than the coming of our Lord. Each successive generation in its time

and place represents the generation which shall actually survive till His coming (^{<425>}Matthew 25:13 ^{<631>}Romans 13:11 ^{<651>}1 Corinthians 15:51 ^{<519>}James 5:9 ^{<619>}1 Peter 4:5,6). The Spirit subsequently revealed by Paul that which is not inconsistent with the expectation here taught of the Lord's coming at any time; namely, that His coming would not be until there should be a "falling away first" (^{<512>}2 Thessalonians 2:2,3); but as symptoms of this soon appeared, none could say but that still this precursory event might be realized, and so the Lord come in his day. Each successive revelation fills in the details of the general outline first given. So Paul subsequently, while still looking mainly for the Lord's coming to clothe him with his body from heaven, looks for going to be with Christ in the meanwhile (^{<470>}2 Corinthians 5:1-10 ^{<500>}Philippians 1:6,23 3:20,21 4:5). EDMUNDS well says, The "we" is an affectionate identifying of ourselves with our fellows of all ages, as members of the same body, under the same Head, Christ Jesus. So ^{<324>}Hosea 12:4, "God spake with *us* in Beth-el," that is, with Israel. "We did rejoice," that is, Israel at the Red Sea (^{<566>}Psalms 66:6). Though neither Hosea, nor David, was alive at the times referred to, yet each identifies himself with those that were present.

16. himself — in all the Majesty of His presence in person, not by deputy.

descend — even as He ascended (^{<401>}Acts 1:11).

with — *Greek*, "in," implying one concomitant circumstance attending His appearing.

shout — *Greek*, "signal shout," "war shout." Jesus is represented as a victorious King, giving the word of command to the hosts of heaven in His train for the last onslaught, at His final triumph over sin, death, and Satan (^{<651>}Revelation 19:11-21).

the voice of ... archangel — distinct from the "signal shout." Michael is perhaps meant (^{<619>}Jude 1:9 ^{<610>}Revelation 12:7), to whom especially is committed the guardianship of the people of God (^{<213>}Daniel 10:13).

trump of God — the trumpet blast which usually accompanies God's manifestation in glory (^{<129>}Exodus 19:16 ^{<579>}Psalms 47:5); here the last of the three accompaniments of His appearing: as the trumpet was used to

convene God's people to their solemn convocations (^{401D}Numbers 10:2,10 31:6), so here to summon God's elect together, preparatory to their glorification with Christ (^{481D}Psalms 50:1-5 ^{418B}Matthew 24:31 ^{415D}1 Corinthians 15:52).

shall rise first — previously to the living being “caught up.” The “first” here has no reference to the *first* resurrection, as contrasted with that of “the rest of the dead.” That reference occurs elsewhere (^{413B}Matthew 13:41,42,50 ^{415D}John 5:29 ^{415D}1 Corinthians 15:23,24 ^{415D}Revelation 20:5,6); it simply stands in opposition to “then,” ⁴⁰¹⁷1 Thessalonians 4:17. FIRST, “the *dead* in Christ” shall rise, THEN the *living* shall be caught up. The Lord's people alone are spoken of here.

17. we which are alive ... shall be caught up — after having been “changed in a moment” (^{415D}1 Corinthians 15:51,52). Again he says, “we,” recommending thus the expression to Christians of all ages, each generation bequeathing to the succeeding one a continually increasing obligation to look for the coming of the Lord. [EDMUNDS].

together with them — all together: the raised dead, and changed living, forming one joint body.

in the clouds — *Greek*, “in clouds.” The same honor is conferred on them as on their Lord. As He was taken in a cloud at His ascension (^{410D}Acts 1:9), so at His return with clouds (^{410D}Revelation 1:7), they shall be caught up in clouds. The clouds are His and their triumphal chariot (^{410D}Psalms 104:3 ^{401B}Daniel 7:13). ELLICOTT explains the *Greek*, “robed round by upbearing clouds” [*Aids to Faith*].

in the air — rather, “*into* the air”; caught up *into* the region just above the earth, where the *meeting* (compare ^{415D}Matthew 25:1,6) shall take place between them ascending, and their Lord descending towards the earth. Not that the air is to be the place of their *lasting abode* with Him.

and so shall we ever be with the Lord — no more parting, and no more going out (^{410D}Revelation 3:12). His point being established, that the dead in Christ shall be on terms of equal advantage with those found alive at Christ's coming, he leaves undefined here the other events foretold elsewhere (as not being necessary to his discussion), Christ's reign on

earth with His saints (⁴⁰⁶1 Corinthians 6:2,3), the final judgment and glorification of His saints in the new heaven and earth.

18. comfort one another — in your mourning for the dead (⁵⁰⁴1 Thessalonians 4:13).

CHAPTER 5

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-28.

THE SUDDENNESS OF CHRIST'S COMING A MOTIVE FOR WATCHFULNESS; VARIOUS PRECEPTS: PRAYER FOR THEIR BEING FOUND BLAMELESS, BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT, AT CHRIST'S COMING: CONCLUSION.

1. times — the general and indefinite term for chronological periods.

seasons — the *opportune times* (^{<270>}Daniel 7:12 ^{<400>}Acts 1:7). *Time* denotes quantity; *season*, quality. *Seasons* are parts of *times*.

ye have no need — those who watch do not need to be told *when* the hour will come, for they are always ready [BENGEL].

cometh — present: expressing its *speedy* and awful *certainty*.

2. as a thief in the night — The apostles in this image follow the parable of their Lord, expressing how the Lord's coming shall take men by surprise (^{<1245>}Matthew 24:43 ^{<6100>}2 Peter 3:10). “The *night* is wherever there is quiet unconcern” [BENGEL]. “At midnight” (perhaps figurative: to some parts of the earth it will be *literal* night), ^{<1210>}Matthew 25:6. The thief not only gives no notice of his approach but takes all precaution to prevent the household knowing of it. So the Lord (^{<6165>}Revelation 16:15). *Signs* will precede the coming, to confirm the patient hope of the watchful believer; but the coming itself shall be sudden at last (^{<1200>}Matthew 24:32-36 ^{<1215>}Luke 21:25-32,35).

3. they — the men of the world. ^{<1185>}1 Thessalonians 5:5,6 4:13, “others,” all the rest of the world save Christians.

Peace — (^{<1207>}Judges 18:7,9,27,28 ^{<1164>}Jeremiah 6:14 ^{<1210>}Ezekiel 13:10).

then — *at the very moment* when they least expect it. Compare the case of Belshazzar, ^{<1100>}Daniel 5:1-5,6,9,26-28; Herod, ^{<1121>}Acts 12:21-23.

sudden — “unawares” (^{<423>}Luke 21:34).

as travail — “As *the* labor pang” comes in an instant on the woman when otherwise engaged (^{<481>}Psalm 48:6 ^{<231>}Isaiah 13:8).

shall not escape — *Greek*, “shall not at all escape.” Another awful feature of their ruin: there shall be then no possibility of shunning it however they desire it (^{<100>}Amos 9:2,3 ^{<665>}Revelation 6:15,16).

4. not in darkness — not in darkness of understanding (that is, spiritual ignorance) or of the moral nature (that is, a state of sin), ^{<408>}Ephesians 4:18.

that — *Greek*, “in order that”; with God results are all purposed.

that day — *Greek*, “THE day”; the *day* of the Lord (^{<502>}Hebrews 10:25, “*the* day”), in contrast to “darkness.”

overtake — unexpectedly (compare ^{<625>}John 12:35).

as a thief — The two oldest manuscripts read, “as (the daylight overtakes) *thieves*” (^{<307>}Job 24:17). Old manuscripts and *Vulgate* read as *English Version*.

5. The oldest manuscripts read, “FOR ye are all,” etc. Ye have no reason for fear, or for being taken by surprise, by the coming of the day of the Lord: “*For* ye are all sons (so the *Greek*) of light and sons of day”; a *Hebrew* idiom, implying that as *sons* resemble their fathers, so you are *in character* light (intellectually and morally illuminated in a spiritual point of view), ^{<218>}Luke 16:8 ^{<626>}John 12:36.

are not of — that is, *belong not to* night nor darkness. The change of person from “ye” to “we” implies this: *Ye* are sons of light because ye are Christians; and *we*, Christians, are not of night nor darkness.

6. others — *Greek*, “the rest” of the world: the unconverted (^{<503>}1 Thessalonians 4:13). “Sleep” here is worldly apathy to spiritual things (^{<531>}Romans 13:11 ^{<454>}Ephesians 5:14); in ^{<510>}1 Thessalonians 5:7, ordinary *sleep*; in ^{<510>}1 Thessalonians 5:10, death.

watch — for Christ’s coming; literally, “be wakeful.” The same *Greek* occurs in ^{<454>}1 Corinthians 15:34 ^{<512>}2 Timothy 2:26.

be sober — refraining from carnal indulgence, mental or sensual (^{<4188>}1 Peter 5:8).

7. This verse is to be taken in the literal sense. Night is the time when sleepers sleep, and drinking men are drunk. To sleep by day would imply great indolence; to be drunken by day, great shamelessness. Now, in a spiritual sense, “we Christians profess to be day people, not night people; therefore our work ought to be day work, not night work; our conduct such as will bear the eye of day, and such has no need of the veil of night” [EDMUNDS], (^{<5188>}1 Thessalonians 5:8).

8. *Faith, hope, and love*, are the three pre-eminent graces (^{<5103>}1 Thessalonians 1:3 ^{<4133>}1 Corinthians 13:13). We must not only be awake and sober, but also *armed*; not only watchful, but also guarded. The armor here is only *defensive*; in ^{<4133>}Ephesians 6:13-17, also *offensive*. Here, therefore, the reference is to the Christian means of being *guarded* against being surprised by the day of the Lord as a thief in the night. The *helmet* and *breastplate* defend the two vital parts, the head and the heart respectively. “With head and heart right, the whole man is right” [EDMUNDS]. The head needs to be kept from error, the heart from sin. For “the breastplate of righteousness,” ^{<4133>}Ephesians 6:14, we have here “the breastplate of faith and love”; for the righteousness which is imputed to man for justification, is “faith working by love” (^{<4103>}Romans 4:3,22-24 ^{<4133>}Galatians 5:6). “Faith,” as the motive *within*, and “love,” exhibited in *outward* acts, constitute the perfection of *righteousness*. In ^{<4133>}Ephesians 6:17 the helmet is “salvation”; here, “the *hope* of salvation.” In one aspect “salvation” is a present possession (^{<4133>}John 3:36 5:24 ^{<4133>}1 John 5:13); in another, it is a matter of “hope” (^{<4133>}Romans 8:24,25). Our Head primarily wore the “breastplate of righteousness” and “helmet of salvation,” that we might, by union with Him, receive both.

9. **For** — assigning the ground of our “hopes” (^{<5188>}1 Thessalonians 5:8).

appointed us — Translate, “set” (^{<4133>}Acts 13:47), in His everlasting purpose of love (^{<5188>}1 Thessalonians 3:3 ^{<5109>}2 Timothy 1:9). Contrast ^{<4133>}Romans 9:22 ^{<4104>}Jude 1:4.

to — that is, *unto* wrath.

to obtain — *Greek*, “to the acquisition of salvation”; said, according to BENGEL, Of One saved out of a general wreck, when all things else have been lost: so of the elect saved out of the multitude of the lost (^{<S1B3>}2 Thessalonians 2:13,14). The fact of God’s “appointment” of His grace “through Jesus Christ” (^{<S1B3>}Ephesians 1:5), takes away the notion of our being able to “acquire” salvation *of ourselves*. Christ “acquired (so the *Greek* for ‘purchased’) the Church (and its salvation) with His own blood” (^{<S1B3>}Acts 20:28); each member is said to be appointed by God to the “acquiring of salvation.” In the primary sense, God does the work; in the secondary sense, man does it.

10. died for us — *Greek*, “in our behalf.”

whether we wake or sleep — whether we be found at Christ’s coming awake, that is, alive, or asleep, that is, in our graves.

together — *all of us together*; the living not preceding the dead in their glorification “with Him” at His coming (^{<S1B3>}1 Thessalonians 4:13).

11. comfort yourselves — *Greek*, “one another.” Here he reverts to the same consolatory strain as in ^{<S1B3>}1 Thessalonians 4:18.

edify one another — rather as *Greek*, “edify (ye) the one the other”; “edify,” literally, “build up,” namely, in faith, hope, and love, by discoursing together on such edifying topics as the Lord’s coming, and the glory of the saints (^{<S1B3>}Malachi 3:16).

12. beseech — “Exhort” is the expression in ^{<S1B4>}1 Thessalonians 5:14; here, “we beseech you,” as if it were a personal favor (Paul making the cause of the Thessalonian presbyters, as it were, his own).

know — to have a regard and respect for. Recognize their office, and treat them accordingly (compare ^{<S1B3>}1 Corinthians 16:18) with reverence and with liberality in supplying their needs (^{<S1B7>}1 Timothy 5:17). The Thessalonian Church having been newly planted, the ministers were necessarily novices (^{<S1B3>}1 Timothy 3:6), which may have been in part the cause of the people’s treating them with less respect. Paul’s practice seems to have been to ordain elders in every Church soon after its establishment (^{<S1B3>}Acts 14:23).

them which labor ... are over ... admonish you — not three classes of ministers, but one, as there is but one article common to the three in the *Greek*. “Labor” expresses their laborious life; “are over you,” their pre-eminence as presidents or superintendents (“bishops,” that is, *overseers*, ^{<S100>}Philippians 1:1, “them that have rule over you,” literally, *leaders*, ^{<S137>}Hebrews 13:17; “pastors,” literally, *shepherds*, ^{<S101>}Ephesians 4:11); “admonish you,” one of their leading functions; the *Greek* is “put in mind,” implying not arbitrary authority, but gentle, though faithful, admonition (^{<S124>}2 Timothy 2:14,24,25 ^{<S103>}1 Peter 5:3).

in the Lord — Their presidency over you is *in divine things*; not in worldly affairs, but in things appertaining to the Lord.

13. very highly — *Greek*, “exceeding abundantly.”

for their work’s sake — The high nature of their work alone, the furtherance of your salvation and of the kingdom of Christ, should be a sufficient motive to claim your reverential love. At the same time, the word “work,” teaches ministers that, while claiming the reverence due to their office, it is not a sinecure, but a “work”; compare “*labor*” (even to *weariness*: so the *Greek*), ^{<S152>}1 Thessalonians 5:12.

be at peace among yourselves — The “and” is not in the original. Let there not only be peace between ministers and their flocks, but also no party rivalries among yourselves, one contending in behalf of some one favorite minister, another in behalf of another (^{<S153>}Mark 9:50 ^{<S112>}1 Corinthians 1:12 4:6).

14. brethren — This exhortation to “warm (*Greek*, ‘admonish,’ as in ^{<S152>}1 Thessalonians 5:12) the unruly (those ‘disorderly’ persons, ^{<S130>}2 Thessalonians 3:6,11, who would not work, and yet expected to be maintained, literally, said of soldiers who will *not remain in their ranks*, compare ^{<S111>}1 Thessalonians 4:11; also those insubordinate as to Church discipline, in relation to those ‘over’ the Church, ^{<S152>}1 Thessalonians 5:12), comfort the feeble-minded (the *faint-hearted*, who are ready to sink ‘without hope’ in afflictions, ^{<S113>}1 Thessalonians 4:13, and temptations),” applies to all clergy and laity alike, though primarily the duty of the clergy (who are meant in ^{<S152>}1 Thessalonians 5:12).”

support — literally, “lay fast hold on so as to support.”

the weak — spiritually. Paul practiced what he preached (^{<402>}1 Corinthians 9:22).

be patient toward all men — There is no believer who needs not the exercise of patience “toward” him; there is none to whom a believer ought not to show it; many show it more to strangers than to their own families, more to the great than to the humble; but we ought to show it “toward *all men*” [BENJEL]. Compare “the long-suffering of our Lord” (^{<402>}2 Corinthians 10:1 ^{<405>}2 Peter 3:15).

15. (^{<527>}Romans 12:17 ^{<409>}1 Peter 3:9.)

unto any *man* — whether unto a Christian, or a heathen, however great the provocation.

follow — as a matter of earnest pursuit.

16, 17. In order to “rejoice evermore,” we must “pray without ceasing” (^{<507>}1 Thessalonians 5:17). He who is wont to thank God for all things as happening for the best, will have continuous joy [THEOPHYLACT].

^{<408>}Ephesians 6:18 ^{<504>}Philippians 4:4,6, “Rejoice *in the Lord* ... by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving”; ^{<547>}Romans 14:17, “*in the Holy Ghost*”; ^{<512>}Romans 12:12, “*in hope*”; ^{<454>}Acts 5:41, “*in being counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ’s name*”; ^{<501>}James 1:2, *in falling “into divers temptations.”*

17. The *Greek* is, “Pray *without intermission*”; without allowing prayerless gaps to intervene between the times of prayer.

18. **In every thing** — even what *seems* adverse: for nothing is *really* so (compare ^{<533>}Romans 8:28 ^{<451>}Ephesians 5:20). See Christ’s example (^{<456>}Matthew 15:36 26:27 ^{<421>}Luke 10:21 ^{<514>}John 11:41).

this — That ye should “rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, (and) in every thing give thanks,” “is the will of God in Christ Jesus (as the Mediator and Revealer of that will, observed by those who are *in Christ* by faith, compare ^{<518>}Philippians 3:14) concerning you.” *God’s will* is the believer’s law. LACHMANN rightly reads commas at the end of the three precepts (^{<516>}1 Thessalonians 5:16-18), making “this” refer to all three.

19. Quench not — the Spirit being a holy *fire*: “where the Spirit is, He burns” [BENGE] (^{<401>}Matthew 3:11 ^{<401>}Acts 2:3;7:51). Do not throw cold water on those who, under extraordinary inspiration of the Spirit, stand up to speak with tongues, or reveal mysteries, or pray in the congregation. The enthusiastic exhibitions of some (perhaps as to the nearness of Christ’s coming, exaggerating Paul’s statement, ^{<512>}2 Thessalonians 2:2, By *spirit*), led others (probably the presiding ministers, who had not always been treated with due respect by enthusiastic novices, ^{<512>}1 Thessalonians 5:12), from dread of enthusiasm, to discourage the free utterances of those really inspired, in the Church assembly. On the other hand, the caution (^{<512>}1 Thessalonians 5:21) was needed, not to receive “all” pretended revelations as divine, without “proving” them.

20. prophesyings — whether exercised in inspired teaching, or in predicting the future. “Despised” by some as beneath “tongues,” which seemed most miraculous; therefore declared by Paul to be a greater gift than tongues, though the latter were more showy (^{<415>}1 Corinthians 14:5).

21, 22. Some of the oldest manuscripts insert “But.” You ought indeed not to “quench” the manifestations of “the Spirit,” nor “despise prophesyings”; “but,” at the same time, do not take “all” as genuine which professes to be so; “prove (test) all” such manifestations. The means of testing them existed in the Church, in those who had the “discerning of spirits” (^{<420>}1 Corinthians 12:10 14:29 ^{<411>}1 John 4:1). Another sure test, which we also have, is, to try the professed revelation whether it accords with Scripture, as the noble Bereans did (^{<282>}Isaiah 8:20 ^{<471>}Acts 17:11 ^{<408>}Galatians 1:8,9). This precept negatives the Romish priest’s assumption of infallibly laying down the law, without the laity having the right, in the exercise of private judgment, to test it by Scripture. LOCKE says, Those who are for laying aside reason in matters of revelation, resemble one who would *put out his eyes* in order to use a *telescope*.

hold fast that which is good — Join this clause with the next clause (^{<512>}1 Thessalonians 5:22), not merely with the sentence preceding. As the result of your “proving all things,” and especially all *prophesyings*, “*hold fast*” (^{<485>}Luke 8:15 ^{<412>}1 Corinthians 11:2 ^{<511>}Hebrews 2:1) the good, and *hold yourselves aloof from every appearance of evil* (“*every evil species*” [BENGE and WAHL]). Do not accept even a professedly spirit-inspired

communication, if it be at variance with the truth taught you (^{<311B>}2 Thessalonians 2:2).

22. TITTMANN supports *English Version*, “from every evil *appearance*” or “semblance.” The context, however, does not refer to *evil appearances* IN OURSELVES which we ought to abstain from, but to *holding ourselves aloof from every evil appearance* IN OTHERS; as for instance, in the pretenders to spirit-inspired prophesyings. In many cases the Christian should *not* abstain from what has the *semblance* (“appearance”) of evil, though really good. Jesus healed on the sabbath, and ate with publicans and sinners, acts which wore the *appearance* of evil, but which were not to be abstained from on that account, being really good. I agree with TITTMANN rather than with BENGEL, whom ALFORD follows. The context favors this sense: However *specious* be the *form* or *outward appearance* of such would-be prophets and their prophesyings, hold yourselves aloof from every such form when it is evil, literally, “Hold yourselves aloof from every evil appearance” or “form.”

23. the very God — rather as the *Greek*, “the God of peace *Himself*”; who can do for you by His own power what *I* cannot do by all my monitions, nor *you* by all your efforts (^{<51C1>}Romans 16:20 ^{<51C2>}Hebrews 13:20), namely, keep you from all evil, and give you all that is good.

sanctify you — for *holiness* is the necessary condition of “peace” (^{<310F>}Philippians 4:6-9).

wholly — *Greek*, “(so that you should be) perfect in every respect” [TITTMANN].

and — that is, “*and so* (omit ‘I pray God’; not in the *Greek*) may your ... spirit and soul and body be preserved,” etc.

whole — A different *Greek* word from “wholly.” Translate, “entire”; with none of the integral parts wanting [TITTMANN]. It refers to man in his normal integrity, as originally designed; an ideal which shall be attained by the glorified believer. All three, spirit, soul, and body, each in its due place, constitute man “entire.” The “spirit” links man with the higher intelligences of heaven, and is that highest part of man which is receptive of the quickening Holy Spirit (^{<4157>}1 Corinthians 15:47). In the unspiritual,

the spirit is so sunk under the lower animal *soul* (which it ought to keep under) that such are termed “animal” (*English Version*. “sensual,” having merely the *body* of organized matter, and the *soul* the immaterial animating essence), having *not the Spirit* (compare ^{<4124>}1 Corinthians 2:14; see on ^{<4344>}1 Corinthians 15:44; 1Cor 15:46-48; ^{<4386>}John 3:6). The unbeliever shall rise with an *animal* (soul-animated) *body*, but not like the believer with a *spiritual* (spirit-endued) *body* like Christ’s (^{<4381>}Romans 8:11).

blameless unto — rather as *Greek*, “blamelessly (so as to be in a blameless state) at the coming of Christ.” In *Hebrew*, “peace” and “wholly” (perfect in every respect) are kindred terms; so that the prayer shows what the title “God of peace” implies. BENGEL takes “wholly” as *collectively*, all the Thessalonians without exception, so that no one should fail. And “whole (entire),” *individually*, each one of them entire, with “spirit, soul, and body.” The mention of the preservation of the *body* accords with the subject (^{<3106>}1 Thessalonians 4:16). TRENCH better regards “wholly” as meaning, “having perfectly attained the moral *end*,” namely, to be a full-grown man in Christ. “Whole,” *complete*, with no grace which ought to be wanting in a Christian.

24. Faithful — to His covenant promises (^{<4307>}John 10:27-29 ^{<4009>}1 Corinthians 1:9 10:23 ^{<3100>}Philippians 1:6).

he that calleth you — God, the caller of His people, will cause His calling not to fall short of its designed end.

do it — preserve and present you blameless at the coming of Christ (^{<3123>}1 Thessalonians 5:23 ^{<4383>}Romans 8:30 ^{<4050>}1 Peter 5:10). You must not look at the foes before and behind, on the right hand and on the left, but to God’s faithfulness to His promises, God’s zeal for His honor, and God’s love for those whom He calls.

25. Some oldest manuscripts read, “Pray ye *also* for (literally, ‘concerning’) us”; make us and our work the subject of your prayers, even as *we* have been just praying for you (^{<3123>}1 Thessalonians 5:23). Others omit the “also.” The clergy need much the prayers of their flocks. Paul makes the same request in the Epistles to Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and in Second Corinthians; not so in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, whose intercessions, as his spiritual sons, he was

already sure of; nor in the Epistles, I Corinthians, and Galatians, as these Epistles abound in rebuke.

26. Hence it appears this Epistle was first handed to the elders, who communicated it to “the brethren.”

holy kiss — pure and chaste. “A kiss of charity” (⁶¹⁵⁴1 Peter 5:14). A token of Christian fellowship in those days (compare ⁶¹⁷⁵Luke 7:45 ⁶¹⁸⁷Acts 20:37), as it is a common mode of salutation in many countries. The custom hence arose in the early Church of passing the kiss through the congregation at the. holy communion [JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apology*, 1.65; *Apostolic Constitutions*, 2.57], the men kissing the men, and the women the women, in the Lord. So in the Syrian Church each takes his neighbor’s right hand and gives the salutation, “Peace.”

27. I charge — *Greek*, “I adjure you.”

read unto all — namely, publicly in the congregation at a particular time. The *Greek* aorist tense implies a single act done at a particular time. The earnestness of his adjuration implies how solemnly important he felt this divinely inspired message to be. Also, as this was the FIRST of the Epistles of the New Testament, he makes this the occasion of a solemn charge, that so its being publicly read should be a sample of what should be done in the case of the others, just as the Pentateuch and the Prophets were publicly read under the Old Testament, and are still read in the synagogue. Compare the same injunction as to the public reading of the Apocalypse, the LAST of the New Testament canon (⁶¹⁸⁸Revelation 1:3). The “all” includes women and children, and especially those who could not read it themselves (⁶³¹²Deuteronomy 31:12 ⁶¹⁸³Joshua 8:33-35). What Paul commands with an adjuration, Rome forbids under a curse [BENJEL]. Though these Epistles had difficulties, the laity were all to hear them read (⁶⁰⁴¹1 Peter 4:11 ⁶¹⁸⁰2 Peter 3:10; even the very young, ⁵¹⁰⁰2 Timothy 1:5 3:15). “Holy” is omitted before “brethren” in most of the oldest manuscripts, though some of them support it.

28. (See on ⁶¹³⁴2 Corinthians 13:14.) Paul ends as he began (⁵¹⁰⁰1 Thessalonians 1:1), with “grace.” The oldest manuscripts omit “Amen,” which probably was the response of the Church after the public reading of the Epistle.

The subscription is a comparatively modern addition. The Epistle was not, as it states, written from Athens, but from Corinth; for it is written in the names of Silas and Timothy (besides Paul), who did not join the apostle before he reached the latter city (~~418~~ Acts 18:5).