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COMMENTARY

**COMMENTARY
ON THE FIRST EPISTLE
TO THE THESSALONIANS**

by John Calvin

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THE AUTHOR'S DEDICATORY EPISTLE.

TO

MATURINUS CORDERIUS,

A MAN OF EMINENT PIETY AND LEARNING, PRINCIPAL OF
THE COLLEGE OF LAUSANNE.

It is befitting that you should come in for a share in my labors, inasmuch as, under your auspices, having entered on a course of study, I made proficiency at least so far as to be prepared to profit in some degree the Church of God. When my father sent me, while yet a boy, to Paris, after I had simply tasted the first elements of the Latin tongue; Providence so ordered it that I had, for a short time, the privilege of having you as my instructor,^{f1} that I might be taught by you the true method of learning, in such a way that I might be prepared afterwards to make somewhat better proficiency. For, after presiding over the first class with the highest renown, on observing that pupils who had been ambitiously trained up by the other masters, produced nothing but mere show, nothing of solidity, so that they required to be formed by you anew, tired of this annoyance, you that year descended to the fourth class. This, indeed, was what you had in view, but to me it was a singular kindness on the part of God that I happened to have an auspicious commencement of such a course of training. And although I was permitted to have the use of it only for a short time, from the circumstance that we were soon afterwards advanced higher by an injudicious man, who regulated our studies according to his own pleasure, or rather his caprice, yet I derived so much assistance afterwards from your training, that it is with good reason that I acknowledge myself indebted to you for such progress as has since been made. And this I was desirous to testify to posterity, that, if any advantage shall accrue to them from my writings, they shall know that it has in some degree originated with you.

GENEVA, 17th February 1550.

ARGUMENT

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE greater part of this Epistle consists of exhortations. PAUL had instructed the THESSALONIANS in the right faith. On hearing, however, that persecutions were raging there,^{f2} he had sent Timothy with the view of animating them for the conflict, that they might not give way through fear, as human infirmity is apt to do. Having been afterwards informed by TIMOTHY respecting their entire condition, he employs various arguments to confirm them in steadfastness of faith, as well as in patience, should they be called to endure anything for the testimony of the gospel. These things he treats of in the *first three* Chapters.

In the beginning of the *Fourth* Chapter, he exhorts them, in general terms, to holiness of life, afterwards he recommends mutual benevolence, and all offices that flow from it. Towards the end, however, he touches upon the question of the resurrection, and explains in what way we shall all be raised up from death. From this it is manifest, that there were some wicked or light—minded persons, who endeavored to unsettle their faith by unseasonably bringing forward many frivolous things.^{f3} Hence with the view of cutting off all pretext for foolish and needless disputations, he instructs them in few words as to the views which they should entertain.

In the *Fifth* Chapter he prohibits them, even more strictly, from inquiring as to *times*; but admonishes them to be ever on the watch, lest they should be taken unawares by Christ's sudden and unexpected approach. From this he proceeds to employ various exhortations, and then concludes the Epistle.

COMMENTARY ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER 1

<520101>1 THESSALONIANS 1:1

1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Paulus et Silvanus et Timotheus Ecclesiae Thessalonicensium, in Deo Patre, et Domino Iesu Christo, gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre nostro, et Domino Iesu Christo.

THE brevity of the inscription clearly shews that PAUL's doctrine had been received with reverence among the THESSALONIANS, and that without controversy they all rendered to him the honor that he deserved. For when in other Epistles he designates himself an Apostle, he does this for the purpose of claiming for himself authority. Hence the circumstance, that he simply makes use of his own name without any title of honor, is an evidence that those to whom he writes voluntarily acknowledged him to be such as he was. The ministers of Satan, it is true, had endeavored to trouble this Church also, but it is evident that their machinations were fruitless. He associates, however, two others along with himself, as being, in common with himself, the authors of the Epistle. Nothing farther is stated here that has not been explained elsewhere, excepting that he says, "the Church *in God the Father, and in Christ*;" by which terms (if I mistake not) he intimates, that there is truly among the Thessalonians a Church of God. This mark, therefore, is as it were an approval of a true and lawful Church. We may, however, at the same time infer from it, that a Church is to be sought for only where God presides, and where Christ reigns, and that, in short, there is no Church but what is founded upon God, is gathered under the auspices of Christ, and is united in his name.

<520102> 1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-5

2. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;	2. Gratias agimus Deo semper de omnibus vobis, memoriam vestri facientes in precibus nostris,
3. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;	3. Indesinenter ^{f4} memores vestri, propter opus fidei, et laborem caritatis, ^{f5} et patientiam spei Domini nostri Iesu Christi coram Deo et Patre nostro,
4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.	4. Scientes, fratres dilecti, ^{f6} a Deo esse electionem vestram.
5. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.	5. Quia Evangelium nostrum non fuit erga vos in sermone solum, sed in potentia, et in Spiritu sancto, et in certitudine multa: quemadmodum nostis quales fuerimus in vobis propter vos.

2. *We give thanks to God.* He praises, as he is wont, their faith and other virtues, not so much, however, for the purpose of praising them, as to exhort them to perseverance. For it is no small excitement to eagerness of pursuit, when we reflect that God has adorned us with signal endowments, that he may finish what he has begun, and that we have, under his guidance and direction, advanced in the right course, in order that we may reach the goal. For as a vain confidence in those virtues, which mankind foolishly arrogate to themselves, puffs them up with pride, and makes them careless and indolent for the time to come, so a recognition of the gifts of God humbles pious minds, and stirs them up to anxious concern. Hence, instead of congratulations, he makes use of *thanksgivings*, that he may put them in mind, that everything in them that he declares to be worthy of praise, is a kindness from God. ^{f7} He also turns immediately to the future, in making mention of his *prayers*. We thus see for what purpose he commends their previous life.

3. *Unceasingly remembering you.* While the adverb *unceasingly* might be taken in connection with what goes before, it suits better to connect it in this manner. What follows might also be rendered in this way:

Remembering your work of faith and labor of love, etc. Nor is it any objection to this that there is an article interposed between the pronoun ὑμῶν and the noun ἔργου,^{f8} for this manner of expression is frequently made use of by Paul. I state this, lest any one should charge the old translator with ignorance, from his rendering it in this manner.^{f9} As, however, it matters little as to the main point^{f10} which you may choose, I have retained the rendering of Erasmus.^{f11}

He assigns a reason, however, why he cherishes so strong an affection towards them, and prays diligently in their behalf—because he perceived in them those gifts of God which should stir him up to cherish towards them love and respect. And, unquestionably, the more that any one excels in piety and other excellences, so much the more ought we to hold him in regard and esteem. For what is more worthy of love than God? Hence there is nothing that should tend more to excite our love to individuals, than when the Lord manifests himself in them by the gifts of his Spirit. This is the highest commendation of all among the pious—this the most sacred bond of connection, by which they are more especially bound to each other. I have said, accordingly, that it is of little importance, whether you render it *mindful of your faith*, or *mindful of you on account of your faith*.

Work of faith I understand as meaning the *effect* of it. This effect, however, may be explained in two ways—*passively* or *actively*, either as meaning that faith was in itself a signal token of the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as he has wrought powerfully in the exciting of it, or as meaning that it afterwards produced outwardly its fruits. I reckon the effect to be in the root of faith rather than in its fruits—”A rare energy of faith has strewn itself powerfully in you.”

He adds *labor of love*, by which he means that in the cultivation of love they had grudged no trouble or labor. And, assuredly, it is known by experience, how laborious love is. That age, however, more especially afforded to believers a manifold sphere of labor, if they were desirous to discharge the offices of love. The Church was marvelously pressed down by a great multitude of afflictions:^{f12} many were striped of their wealth, many were fugitives from their country, many were thrown destitute of counsel, many were tender and weak.^{f13} The condition of almost all was involved. So many cases of distress did not allow *love* to be inactive.

To *hope* he assigns *patience*, as it is always conjoined with it, for *what we hope for, we in patience wait for*, (<450824> Romans 8:24) and the statement should be explained to mean, that Paul remembers their patience in hoping for the coming of Christ. From this we may gather a brief definition of true Christianity—that it is a faith that is lively and full of vigor, so that it spares no labor, when assistance is to be given to one's neighbors, but, on the contrary, all the pious employ themselves diligently in offices of love, and lay out their efforts in them, so that, intent upon the hope of the manifestation of Christ, they despise everything else, and, armed with patience, they rise superior to the wearisomeness of length of time, as well as to all the temptations of the world.

The clause, *before our God and Father*, may be viewed as referring to Paul's remembrance, or to the three things spoken immediately before. I explain it in this way. As he had spoken of his *prayers*, he declares that as often as he raises his thoughts to the kingdom of God, he, at the same time, recalls to his remembrance the *faith, hope*, and *patience*, of the Thessalonians, but as all mere presence must vanish when persons come into the presence of God, this is added, ^{f14} in order that the affirmation may have more weight. Farther, by this declaration of his good—will towards them he designed to make them more teachable and prepared to listen. ^{f15}

4. *Knowing, brethren beloved*. The participle *knowing* may apply to Paul as well as to the Thessalonians. Erasmus refers it to the Thessalonians. I prefer to follow Chrysostom, who understands it of Paul and his colleagues, for it is (as it appears to me) a more ample confirmation of the foregoing statement. For it tended in no small degree to recommend them—that God himself had testified by many tokens, that they were acceptable and dear to him.

Election of God. I am not altogether dissatisfied with the interpretation given by Chrysostom—that God had made the Thessalonians illustrious, and had established their excellence. Paul, however, had it in view to express something farther; for he touches upon their calling, and as there had appeared in it no common marks of God's power, he infers from this that they had been specially called with evidences of a sure *election*. For the reason is immediately added—that it was not a bare preaching that had

been brought to them, but such as was conjoined with the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, that it might obtain entire credit among them.

When he says, *in power, and in the Holy Spirit*, it is, in my opinion, as if he had said—in the power *of* the Holy Spirit, so that the latter term is added as explanatory of the former. *Assurance*, to which he assigned the third place, was either in the thing itself, or in the disposition of the Thessalonians. I am rather inclined to think that the meaning is, that Paul's gospel had been confirmed by solid proofs,^{f16} as though God had strewn from heaven that he had ratified their calling.^{f17} When, however, Paul brings forward the proofs by which he had felt assured that the calling of the Thessalonians was altogether from God, he takes occasion at the same time to recommend his ministry, that they may themselves, also, recognize him and his colleagues as having been raised up by God.

By the term *power* some understand miracles. I extend it farther, as referring to spiritual energy of doctrine. For, as we had occasion to see in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul places it in contrast with *speech*^{f18}—the voice of God, as it were, living and conjoined with effect, as opposed to an empty and dead eloquence of men. It is to be observed, however, that the election of God, which is in itself hid, is manifested by its marks—when he gathers to himself the lost sheep and joins them to his flock, and holds out his hand to those that were wandering and estranged from him. Hence a knowledge of our election must be sought from this source. As, however, the secret counsel of God is a labyrinth to those who disregard his calling, so those act perversely who, under pretext of *faith* and *calling*, darken this first grace, from which faith itself flows. “By faith,” say they, “we obtain salvation: there is, therefore, no eternal predestination of God that distinguishes between us and reprobates.” It is as though they said—“Salvation is of faith: there is, therefore, no grace of God that illuminates us in faith.” Nay rather, as gratuitous election must be conjoined with calling, as with its effect, so it must necessarily, in the mean time, hold the first place. It matters little as to the sense, whether you connect *ὑπὸ* with the participle *beloved* or with the term *election*.^{f19}

5. As ye know. Paul, as I have said before, has it as his aim, that the Thessalonians, influenced by the same considerations, may entertain no doubt that they were elected by God. For it had been the design of God, in honoring Paul's ministry, that he might manifest to them their adoption.

Accordingly, having said that they *know what manner of persons they had been*,^{f20} he immediately adds that he was such *for their sake*, by which he means that all this had been given them, in order that they might be fully persuaded that they were loved by God, and that their election was beyond all controversy.

<520106> 1 THESSALONIANS 1:6-8	
6. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:	6. Et vos imitatores nostri facti estis et Domini, dum sermonem amplexi estis in tribulatione multa, cum gaudio Spiritus sancti:
7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.	7. Ita ut fueritis exemplaria omnibus credentibus in Macedonia et in Achaia.
8. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God—ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.	8. A vobis enim personuit sermo Domini: nec in Macedonia tantum et in Achaia, sed etiam in omni loco, fides vestra quae in Deum est manavit: ita ut non opus habeamus quicquam loqui.

6. *And ye became imitators.* With the view of increasing their alacrity, he declares that there is a mutual agreement, and harmony, as it were, between his preaching and their faith. For unless men, on their part, answer to God, no proficiency will follow from the grace that is offered to them—not as though they could do this of themselves, but inasmuch as God, as he begins our salvation by calling us, perfects it also by fashioning our hearts to obedience. The sum, therefore, is this—that an evidence of Divine election shewed itself not only in Paul’s ministry, in so far as it was furnished with the power of the Holy Spirit, but also in the faith of the Thessalonians, so that this conformity is a powerful attestation of it. He says, however, “Ye were imitators *of God and of us*,” in the same sense in which it is said, that *the people believed God and his servant Moses*, (<021413> Exodus 14:13) not as though Paul and Moses had anything different from God, but because he wrought powerfully by them, as his ministers and instruments.^{f21} *While ye embraced.* Their readiness in receiving the gospel is called an *imitation* of God, for this reason, that as

God had presented himself to the Thessalonians in a liberal spirit, so they had, on their part, voluntarily come forward to meet him.

He says, *with the joy of the Holy Spirit*, that we may know that it is not by the instigation of the flesh, or by the promptings of their own nature, that men will be ready and eager to obey God, but that this is the work of God's Spirit. The circumstance, that *amidst much tribulation* they had embraced the gospel, serves by way of amplification. For we see very many, not otherwise disinclined to the gospel, who, nevertheless, avoid it, from being intimidated through fear of the cross. Those, accordingly, who do not hesitate with intrepidity to embrace along with the gospel the afflictions that threaten them, furnish in this an admirable example of magnanimity. And from this it is so much the more clearly apparent, how necessary it is that the Spirit should aid us in this. For the gospel cannot be properly, or sincerely received, unless it be with a joyful heart. Nothing, however, is more at variance with our natural disposition, than to rejoice in afflictions.

7. *So that ye were*. Here we have another amplification—that they had stirred up even believers by their example; for it is a great thing to get so decidedly the start of those who had entered upon the course before us, as to furnish assistance to them for prosecuting their course. *Typus* (the word made use of by Paul) is employed by the Greeks in the same sense as *Exemplar* is among the Latins, and *Patron* among the French. He says, then, that the courage of the Thessalonians had been so illustrious, that other believers had borrowed from them a rule of constancy. I preferred, however, to render it *patterns*, that I might not needlessly make any change upon the Greek phrase made use of by Paul; and farther, because the plural number expresses, in my opinion, something more than if he had said that that Church as a body had been set forward for imitation, for the meaning is, that there were as many *patterns* as there were individuals.

8. *For from you sounded forth*. Here we have an elegant metaphor, by which he intimates that their faith was so lively, ^{f22} that it did, as it were, by its *sound*, arouse other nations. For he says that the word of God *sounded forth* from them, inasmuch as their faith was *sonorous* ^{f23} for procuring credit for the gospel. He says that this had not only occurred in neighboring places, but this *sound* had also extended far and wide, and had

been distinctly heard, so that the matter did not require to be published by him.^{f24}

<520109>1 THESSALONIANS 1:9-10	
9. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God,	9. Ipsi enim de vobis annuntiant, qualem habuerimus ingressum ad vos: et quomodo conversi fueritis ad Deum ab idolis, ut serviretis Deo viventi et vero:
10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.	10. Et expectaretis e cõlis Filium eius, quem excitavit a mortuis, Iesum qui nos liberat ab ira ventura.

He says that the report of their conversion had obtained great renown everywhere. What he mentions as to his *entering in among them*, refers to that power of the Spirit, by which God had signalized his gospel.^{f25} He says, however, that both things are freely reported among other nations, as things worthy of being made mention of. In the detail which follows, he shews, first, what the condition of mankind is, before the Lord enlightens them by the doctrine of his gospel; and farther, for what end he would have us instructed, and what is the fruit of the gospel. For although all do not worship idols, all are nevertheless addicted to idolatry, and are immersed in blindness and madness. Hence, it is owing to the kindness of God, that we are exempted from the impostures of the devil, and every kind of superstition. Some, indeed, he converts earlier, others later, but as alienation is common to all, it is necessary that we be converted to God, before we can serve God. From this, also, we gather the essence and nature of true faith, inasmuch as no one gives due credit to God but the man, who renouncing the vanity of his own understanding, embraces and receives the pure worship of God.

9. *To the living God*. This is the end of genuine conversion. We see, indeed, that many leave off superstitions, who, nevertheless, after taking this step, are so far from making progress in piety, that they fall into what is worse. For having thrown off all regard to God, they give themselves up to a profane and brutal contempt.^{f26} Thus, in ancient times, the superstitions

of the vulgar were derided by Epicurus, Diogenes the Cynic, and the like, but in such a way that they mixed up the worship of God so as to make no difference between it and absurd trifles. Hence we must take care, lest the pulling down of errors be followed by the overthrow of the building of faith. Farther, the Apostle, in ascribing to God the epithets *true and living*, indirectly censures idols as being dead and worthless inventions, and as being falsely called gods. He makes the end of conversion to be what I have noticed—that they might *serve God*. Hence the doctrine of the gospel tends to this, that it may induce us to serve and obey God. For so long as we are the *servants of sin*, we are *free from righteousness*, (<450620> Romans 6:20) inasmuch as we sport ourselves, and wander up and down, exempt from any yoke. No one, therefore, is properly converted to God, but the man who has learned to place himself wholly under subjection to him.

As, however, it is a thing that is more than simply difficult, in so great a corruption of our nature, he shews at the same time, what it is that retains and confirms us in the fear of God and obedience to him—*waiting for Christ*. For unless we are stirred up to the hope of eternal life, the world will quickly draw us to itself. For as it is only confidence in the Divine goodness that induces us to serve God, so it is only the expectation of final redemption that keeps us from giving way.^{f27} Let every one, therefore, that would persevere in a course of holy life, apply his whole mind to a expectation of Christ's coming. It is also worthy of notice, that he uses the expression *waiting for Christ*, instead of the hope of everlasting salvation. For, unquestionably, without Christ we are ruined and thrown into despair, but when Christ shews himself, life and prosperity do at the same time shine forth upon us.^{f28} Let us bear in mind, however, that this is said to believers exclusively, for as for the wicked, as he will come to be their Judge, so they can do nothing but tremble in looking for him.

This is what he afterwards subjoins—that Christ *delivereth us from the wrath to come*. For this is felt by none but those who, being reconciled to God by faith, have conscience already pacified; otherwise,^{f29} his name is dreadful. Christ, it is true, delivered us by his death from the anger of God, but the import of that deliverance will become apparent on the last day.^{f30} This statement, however, consists of two departments. The *first* is, that the wrath of God and everlasting destruction are impending over the human race, inasmuch as *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*. (<450323> Romans 3:23) The *second* is, that there is no way of escape

but through the grace of Christ; for it is not without good grounds that Paul assigns to him this office. It is, however, an inestimable gift, that the pious, whenever mention is made of judgment, know that Christ will come as a Redeemer to them.

In addition to this, he says emphatically, *the wrath to come*, that he may rouse up pious minds, lest they should fail from looking at the present life. For as faith is a *looking at things that do not appear*, (<581101> Hebrews 11:1) nothing is less befitting than that we should estimate the wrath of God, according as any one is afflicted in the world; as nothing is more absurd than to take hold of the transient blessings which we enjoy, that we may from them form an estimate of God's favor. While, therefore, on the one hand, the wicked sport themselves at their ease, and we, on the other hand, languish in misery, let us learn to fear the vengeance of God, which is hid from the eyes of flesh, and take our satisfaction in the secret delights of the spiritual life. ^{f31}

10. *Whom he raised up.* He makes mention here of Christ's resurrection, on which the hope of our resurrection is founded, for death everywhere besets us. Hence, unless we learn to look to Christ, our minds will give way at every turn. By the same consideration, he admonishes them that Christ is to be *waited for from heaven*, because we will find nothing in the world to bear us up, ^{f32} while there are innumerable trials to overwhelm us. Another circumstance must be noticed, ^{f33} for as Christ rose for this end—that he might make us all at length, as being his members, partakers of the same glory with himself, Paul intimates that his resurrection would be vain, unless he again appeared as their Redeemer, and extended to the whole body of the Church the fruit and effect of that power which he manifested in himself. ^{f34}

CHAPTER 2

<520201> 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-4

1. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:	1. Ipsi enim nostis, fratres, quod ingressus noster ad vos non inanis fuerit:
2. But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.	2. Imo quod persecutionem passi, et probro affecti Philippis (ut scitis) fiduciam sumpsimus in Deo nostro proferendi apud vos evangelium Dei, cum multo certamine.
3. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:	3. Nam exhortatio nostra, non ex impostura, neque ex immunditia, neque in dolo:
4. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.	4. Sed quemadmodum probati fuimus a Deo, ut crederetur nobis evangelium, sic loquimur, non quasi hominibus placentes, sed Deo qui probat corda nostra.

He now, leaving out of view the testimony of other Churches, reminds the Thessalonians of what they had themselves experienced,^{f35} and explains at large in what way he, and in like manner the two others, his associates, had conducted themselves among them, inasmuch as this was of the greatest importance for confirming their faith. For it is with this view that he declares his integrity—that the Thessalonians may perceive that they had been called to the faith, not so much by a mortal man, as by God himself. He says, therefore, that his *entering in unto them had not been vain*, as ambitious persons manifest much show, while they have nothing of solidity; for he employs the word *vain* here as contrasted with *efficacious*.

He proves this by *two* arguments. The *first* is, that he had suffered persecution and ignominy at Philippi; the *second* is, that there was a great conflict prepared at Thessalonica. We know that the minds of men are

weakened, nay, are altogether broken down by means of ignominy and persecutions. It was therefore an evidence of a Divine work that Paul, after having been subjected to evils of various kinds and to ignominy, did, as if in a perfectly sound state, shew no hesitation in making an attempt upon a large and opulent city, with the view of subjecting the inhabitants of it to Christ. In this *entering in*, nothing is seen that savors of vain ostentation. In the *second* department the same Divine power is beheld, for he does not discharge his duty with applause and favor, but required to maintain a keen conflict. In the mean time he stood firm and undaunted, from which it appears that he was held up ^{f36} by the hand of God; for this is what he means when he says that he was *emboldened*. And, unquestionably, if all these circumstances are carefully considered, it cannot be denied that God there magnificently displayed his power. As to the history, it is to be found in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of the Acts.

3. *For our exhortation.* He confirms, by another argument, the Thessalonians in the faith which they had embraced—inasmuch as they had been faithfully and purely instructed in the word of the Lord, for he maintains that his doctrine was free from all deception and uncleanness. And with the view of placing this matter beyond all doubt, he calls their conscience to witness. The three terms which he makes use of may, it would seem, be distinguished in this manner: *imposture* may refer to the substance of doctrine, *uncleanness* to the affections of the heart, *guile* to the manner of acting. In the *first* place, therefore, he says that they had not been deluded or imposed upon by fallacies, when they embraced the kind of doctrine that had been delivered to them by him. *Secondly*, he declares his integrity, inasmuch as he had not come to them under the influence of any impure desire, but actuated solely by upright disposition. *Thirdly*, he says that he had done nothing fraudulently or maliciously, but had, on the contrary, manifested a simplicity befitting a minister of Christ. As these things were well known to the Thessalonians, they had a sufficiently firm foundation for their faith.

4. *As we have been approved.* He goes even a step higher, for he appeals to God as the Author of his apostleship, and he reasons in this manner: “God, when he assigned me this office, bore witness to me as a faithful servant; there is no reason, therefore, why men should have doubts as to my fidelity, which they know to have been *approved of by God*. Paul, however, does not glory in having been *approved of*, as though he were

such of himself; for he does not dispute here as to what he had by nature, nor does he place his own power in collision with the grace of God, but simply says that the Gospel had been committed to him as a faithful and *approved* servant. Now, God approves of those whom he has formed for himself according to his own pleasure.

Not as pleasing men. What is meant by *pleasing men* has been explained in the Epistle to the Galatians, (<480110> Galatians 1:10) and this passage, also, shews it admirably. For Paul contrasts *pleasing MEN*, and *pleasing GOD*, as things that are opposed to each other. Farther, when he says—*God, who trieth our hearts*, he intimates, that those who endeavor to obtain the favor of men, are not influenced by an upright conscience, and do nothing from the heart. Let us know, therefore, that true ministers of the gospel ought to make it their aim to devote to God their endeavors, and to do it from the heart, not from any outward regard to the world, but because conscience tells them that it is right and proper. Thus it will be secured that they will not make it their aim to *please men*, that is, that they will not act under the influence of ambition, with a view to the favor of men.

<520205>1 THESSALONIANS 2:5-8	
5. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness:	5. Neque enim unquam in sermone adulationis fuimus, quemadmodum nostis, neque in occasione avaritiæ: Deus testis.
6. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.	6. Nec quaesivimus ab hominibus gloriam, neque a vobis, neque ab aliis.
7. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:	7. Quum possemus in pondere esse tanquam Christi Apostoli, facti tamen sumus mites in medio vestri, perinde acsi nutrix aleret filios suos.
8. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.	8. Ita erga vos affecti, libenter voluissemus distribuere vobis non solum Evangelium Dei, sed nostras ipsorum animas, propterea quod cari nobis facti estis.

5. *For neither have we ever.* It is not without good reason that he repeats it so frequently, that the Thessalonians knew that what he states is true. For there is not a surer attestation, than the experience of those with whom we speak. And this was of the greatest importance to them, because Paul relates with what integrity he had conducted himself, with no other intention, than that his doctrine may have the greater respect, for the building up of their faith. It is, however, a confirmation of the foregoing statement, for he that is desirous to *please men*, must of necessity stoop shamefully to flattery, while he that is intent upon duty with an earnest and upright disposition, will keep at a distance from all appearance of flattery.

When he adds, *nor for an occasion of covetousness*, he means that he had not, in teaching among them, been in quest of anything in the way of personal gain. *Πρόφασις* is employed by the Greeks to mean both *occasion* and *pretext*, but the former signification suits better with the passage, so as to be, as it were, a trap.^{f37} “I have not abused the gospel so as to make it an occasion of catching at gain.” As, however, the malice of men has so many winding retreats, that avarice and ambition frequently lie concealed, he on this account calls God to witness. Now, he makes mention here of two vices, from which he declares himself to be exempt, and, in doing so, teaches that the servants of Christ should stand aloof from them. Thus, if we would distinguish the genuine servants of Christ from those that are pretended and spurious, they must be tried according to this rule, and every one that would serve Christ aright must also conform his aims and his actions to the same rule. For where avarice and ambition reign, innumerable corruptions follow, and the whole man passes away into vanity, for these are the two sources from which the corruption of the whole ministry takes its rise.

7. *When we might have exercised authority.* Some interpret it—*when we might have been burdensome*, that is, might have loaded you with expense, but the connection requires that *τὸ βαρὺ* should be taken to mean *authority*. For Paul says that he was so far removed from vain pomp, from boasting, from arrogance, that he even waived his just claim, so far as the maintenance of authority was concerned. For inasmuch as he was an Apostle of Christ, he deserved to be received with a higher degree of respect, but he had refrained from all show of dignity,^{f38} as though he had

been some minister of the common rank. From this it appears how far removed he was from haughtiness. ^{f39}

What we have rendered *mild*, the old translator. renders *Fuimus parvuli*, (*we have been little*,) ^{f40} but the reading which I have followed is more generally received among the Greeks; but whichever you may take, there can be no doubt that he makes mention of his voluntary abasement. ^{f41}

As if a nurse. In this comparison he takes in two points that he had touched upon—that he had sought neither glory nor gain among the Thessalonians. For a mother in nursing her infant shews nothing of power or dignity. Paul says that he was such, inasmuch as he voluntarily refrained from claiming the honor that was due to him, and with calmness and modesty stooped to every kind of office. *Secondly*, a mother in nursing her children manifests a certain rare and wonderful affection, inasmuch as she spares no labor and trouble, shuns no anxiety, is wearied out by no assiduity, and even with cheerfulness of spirit gives her own blood to be sucked. In the same way, Paul declares that he was so disposed towards the Thessalonians, that he was prepared to lay out his life for their benefit. This, assuredly, was not the conduct of a man that was sordid or avaricious, but of one that exercised a disinterested affection, and he expresses this in the close—*because ye were dear unto us*. In the mean time, we must bear in mind, that all that would be ranked among true pastors must exercise this disposition of Paul—to have more regard to the welfare of the Church than to their own life, and not be impelled to duty by a regard to their own advantage, but by a sincere love to those to whom they know that they are conjoined, and laid under obligation. ^{f42}

<520209> 1 THESSALONIANS 2:9-12

<p>9. For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.</p>	<p>9. Memoria enim tenetis, fratres, laborem nostrum et sudorem: nam die ac nocte opus facientes, ne gravaremus quenquam vestrum, praedicavimus apud vos Evangelium Dei.</p>
<p>10. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe:</p>	<p>10. Vos testes estis et Deus, ut sancte, et iuste, et sine querela vobis, qui creditis, fuerimus.</p>
<p>11. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father doth his children,)</p>	<p>11. Quemadmodum nostis, ut unumquemque vestrum, quasi pater suos liberos,</p>
<p>12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.</p>	<p>12. Exhortati simus, et monuerimus et obtestati simus, ut ambularetis digne Deo, qui vocavit vos in suum regnum et gloriam.</p>

9. *For ye remember.* These things tend to confirm what he had stated previously—that to spare them he did not spare himself. He must assuredly have burned with a wonderful and more than human zeal, inasmuch as, along with the labor of teaching, he labors with his hand as an operative, with the view of earning a livelihood, and in this respect, also, refrained from exercising his right. For it is the law of Christ, as he also teaches elsewhere, (^{<460914>} 1 Corinthians 9:14) that every church furnish its ministers with food and other necessities. Paul, therefore, in laying no burden upon the Thessalonians, does something more than could, from the requirements of his office, have been required from him. In addition to this, he does not merely refrain from incurring public expense, but avoids burdening any one individually. Farther, there can be no doubt, that he was influenced by some good and special consideration in thus refraining from exercising his right, ^{f43} for in other churches he exercised, equally with others, the liberty allowed him. ^{f44} He received nothing from the Corinthians, lest he should give the false apostles a handle for glorying as to this matter. In the mean time, he did not hesitate to ask ^{f45} from other

churches, what was needed by him, for he writes that, while he bestowed labor upon the Corinthians, free of charge, he *robbed* the Churches that he did not serve. (<471108> 2 Corinthians 11:8)^{f46} Hence, although the reason is not expressed here, we may, nevertheless, conjecture that the ground on which Paul was unwilling that his necessities should be ministered to, was—lest such a thing should put any hindrance in the way of the gospel. For this, also, ought to be matter of concern to good pastors—that they may not merely run with alacrity in their ministry, but may, so far as is in their power, remove all hindrances in the way of their course.

10. *Ye are witnesses.* He again calls God and them to witness, with the view of affirming his integrity, and cites, on the one hand, God as a witness of his conscience, and them,^{f47} on the other hand, as witnesses of what they had known by experience. *How holily*, says he, *and justly*, that is, with how sincere a fear of God, and with what fidelity and blamelessness towards men; and thirdly, *unreproachably*, by which he means that he had given no occasion of complaint or obloquy. For the servants of Christ cannot avoid calumnies, and unfavorable reports; for being hated by the world, they must of necessity be evil—spoken of among the wicked. Hence he restricts this to *believers*, who judge uprightly and sincerely, and do not revile malignantly and groundlessly.

11. *Every one as a father.* He insists more especially on those things which belong to his office. He has compared himself to a *nurse* : he now compares himself to a *father*. What he means is this—that he was concerned in regard to them, just as a *father* is wont to be as to his sons, and that he had exercised a truly paternal care in instructing and admonishing them. And, unquestionably, no one will ever be a good pastor, unless he shews himself to be a *father* to the Church that is committed to him. Nor does he merely declare himself to be such to the entire body,^{f48} but even to the individual members. For it is not enough that a pastor in the pulpit teach all in common, if he does not add also particular instruction, according as necessity requires, or occasion offers. Hence Paul himself, in <442026> Acts 20:26, declares himself to be *free from the blood of all men*, because he did not cease to admonish all publicly, and also individually in private in their own houses. For instruction given in common is sometimes of little service, and some cannot be corrected or cured without particular medicine.

12. *Exhorted.* He shews with what earnestness he devoted himself to their welfare, for he relates that in preaching to them respecting piety towards God and the duties of the Christian life, it had not been merely in a perfunctory way, ^{f49} but he says that he had made use of exhortations and *adjurations*. It is a lively preaching of the gospel, when persons are not merely told what is right, but are *pricked* (<440237> Acts 2:37) by exhortations, and are called to the judgment—seat of God, that they may not fall asleep in their vices, for this is what is properly meant by *adjuring*. But if pious men, whose promptitude Paul so highly commends, stood in absolute need of being stimulated by stirring exhortations, nay, *adjurations*, what must be done with us, in whom sluggishness ^{f50} of the flesh does more reign? In the mean time, as to the wicked, whose obstinacy is incurable, it is necessary to denounce upon them the horrible vengeance of God, not so much from hope of success, as in order that they may be rendered inexcusable.

Some render the participle *παρὰμυθοῦμένοι*, *comforted*. If we adopt this rendering, he means that he made use of consolations in dealing with the afflicted, who need to be sustained by the grace of God, and refreshed by tasting of heavenly blessings, ^{f51} that they may not lose heart or become impatient. The other meaning, however, is more suitable to the context, that he *admonished*; for the three verbs, it is manifest, refer to the same thing.

That ye might walk. He presents in a few words the sum and substance of his exhortations, that, in magnifying the mercy of God, he admonished them not to fail as to their calling. His commendation of the grace of God is contained in the expression, *who hath called us into his kingdom*. For as our salvation is founded upon God's gracious adoption, every blessing that Christ has brought us is comprehended in this one term. It now remains that we answer God's call, that is, that we shew ourselves to be such children to him as he is a Father to us. For he who lives otherwise than as becomes a child of God, deserves to be cut off from God's household.

<520213> 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13-16

<p>13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.</p>	<p>13 Quapropter nos quoque indesinenter gratias agimus Deo, quod, quum sermonem Dei praedicatum a nobis percepistis, amplexi estis, non ut sermonem hominum, sed quemadmodum revera est, sermonem Dei: qui etiam efficaciter agit in vobis credentibus.</p>
<p>14. For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews;</p>	<p>14. Vos enim imitatores facti estis, fratres, Ecclesiarum Dei, quae sunt in Iudaea in Christo Iesu: quia eadem passi estis et vos a propriis tribulibus, quemadmodum et ipsi a Iudaeis.</p>
<p>15. Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men;</p>	<p>15. Qui Dominum Iesum occiderunt, et proprios Prophetas, et nos persequuti sunt, et Deo non placent, et cunctis hominibus adversi sunt:</p>
<p>16. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.</p>	<p>16. Qui obsistunt ne Gentibus loquamur, ut salvae fiant, ut compleantur eorum peccata semper: pervenit enim in eos ira usque in finem.</p>

13. *Wherefore we give thanks.* Having spoken of his ministry, he returns again to address the Thessalonians, that he may always commend that mutual harmony of which he has previously made mention.^{f52} He says, therefore, that he gives thanks to God, because they had *embraced the word of God which they heard from his mouth, as the word of God, as it truly was.* Now, by these expressions he means, that it has been received by them reverently, and with the obedience with which it ought. For so soon as this persuasion has gained a footing, it is impossible but that a feeling of obligation to obey takes possession of our minds.^{f53} For who

would not shudder at the thought of resisting God? who would not regard contempt of God with detestation? The circumstance, therefore, that the word of God is regarded by many with such contempt, that it is scarcely held in any estimation—that many are not at all actuated by fear, arises from this, that they do not consider that they have to do with God.

Hence we learn from this passage what credit ought to be given to the gospel—such as does not depend on the authority of men, but, resting on the sure and ascertained truth of God, raises itself above the world; and, in fine, is as far above mere opinion, as heaven is above earth: ^{f54} and, *secondly*, such as produces of itself reverence, fear, and obedience, inasmuch as men, touched with a feeling of Divine majesty, will never allow themselves to sport with it. Teachers ^{f55} are, in their turn, admonished to beware of bringing forward anything but the pure word of God, for if this was not allowable for Paul, it will not be so for any one in the present day. He proves, however, from the effect produced, that it was the word of God that he had delivered, inasmuch as it had produced that fruit of heavenly doctrine which the Prophets celebrate, (<²³⁵⁵¹¹ Isaiah 55:11,13; <²⁴²³²⁹ Jeremiah 23:29) in renewing their life, ^{f56} for the doctrine of men could accomplish no such thing. The relative pronoun may be taken as referring either to *God* or to his *word*, but whichever way you choose, the meaning will come all to one, for as the Thessalonians felt in themselves a Divine energy, which proceeded from faith, they might rest assured that what they had heard was not a mere sound of the human voice vanishing into air, but the living and efficacious doctrine of God.

As to the expression, *the word of the preaching of God*, it means simply, as I have rendered it, *the word of God preached by man*. For Paul meant to state expressly that they had not looked upon the doctrine as contemptible, although it had proceeded from the mouth of a mortal man, inasmuch as they recognized God as the author of it. He accordingly praises the Thessalonians, because they did not rest in mere regard for the minister. but lifted up their eyes to God, that they might receive his word. Accordingly, I have not hesitated to insert the particle *ut*, (*that*,) which served to make the meaning more clear. There is a mistake on the part of Erasmus in rendering it, “the word of the hearing of God,” as if Paul meant that God had been manifested. He afterwards changed it thus, “the word by which you learned God,” for he did not advert to the Hebrew idiom. ^{f57}

14. *For ye became imitators.* If you are inclined to restrict this to the clause in immediate connection with it, the meaning will be, that the power of God, or of his word, shews itself in their patient endurance, while they sustain persecutions with magnanimity and undaunted courage. I prefer, however, to view it as extending to the whole of the foregoing statement, for he confirms what he has stated, that the Thessalonians had in good earnest embraced the gospel, as being presented to them by God, inasmuch as they courageously endured the assaults which Satan made upon them, and did not refuse to suffer anything rather than leave off obedience to it. And, unquestionably, this is no slight test of faith when Satan, by all his machinations, has no success in moving us away from the fear of God.

In the mean time, he prudently provides against a dangerous temptation which might prostrate or harass them; for they endured grievous troubles from that nation which was the only one in the world that gloried in the name of God.

This, I say, might occur to their minds: “If this is the true religion, why do the Jews, who are the sacred people of God, oppose it with such inveterate hostility?” With the view of removing this occasion of offense, ^{f58} he, in the *first* place, shews them that they have this in common with the first *Churches that were in Judea* : afterwards, he says that the Jews are determined enemies of God and of all sound doctrine. For although, when he says that they suffered from *their own countrymen*, this may be explained as referring to others rather than to the Jews, or at least ought not to be restricted to the Jews exclusively, yet as he insists farther in describing their obstinacy and impiety, it is manifest that these same persons are adverted to by him from the beginning. It is probable, that at Thessalonica some from that nation were converted to Christ. It appears, however, from the narrative furnished in the Acts, that *there*, no less than in Judea, the Jews were persecutors of the gospel. I accordingly take this as being said indiscriminately of Jews as well as of Gentiles, inasmuch as both endured great conflicts and fierce attacks from *their own countrymen*.

15. *Who killed the Lord Jesus.* As that people had been distinguished by so many benefits from God, in consequence of the glory of the ancient fathers, the very name ^{f59} was of great authority among many. Lest this disguise should dazzle the eyes of any one, he strips the Jews of all honor, so as to leave them nothing but odium and the utmost infamy.

“Behold,” says he, “the virtues for which they deserve praise among the good and pious!—they killed their own prophets and at last the Son of God, they have persecuted me his servant, they wage war with God, they are detested by the whole world, they are hostile to the salvation of the Gentiles; in fine, they are destined to everlasting destruction.”

It is asked, why he says that Christ and the prophets were killed by the same persons? I answer, that this refers to the entire body, ^{f60} for Paul means that there is nothing new or unusual in their resisting God, but that, on the contrary, they are, in this manner, *filling up the measure of their fathers*, as Christ speaks. (<402332> Matthew 23:32)

16. *Who hinder us from speaking to the Gentiles.* It is not without good reason that, as has been observed, he enters so much into detail in exposing the malice of the Jews. ^{f61} For as they furiously opposed the Gospel everywhere, there arose from this a great stumblingblock, more especially as they exclaimed that the gospel was profaned by Paul, when he published it among the Gentiles. By this calumny they made divisions in the Churches, they took away from the Gentiles the hope of salvation, and they obstructed the progress of the gospel. Paul, accordingly, charges them with this crime—that they regard the salvation of the Gentiles with envy, but adds, that matters are so, in order that their *sins may be filled up*, that he may take away from them all reputation for piety; just as in saying previously, that they *pleased not God*, (<520215> 1 Thessalonians 2:15) he meant, that they were unworthy to be reckoned among the worshippers of God. The manner of expression, however, must be observed, implying that those who persevere in an evil course fill up by this means the measure of their judgment, ^{f62} until they come to make it a heap. This is the reason why the punishment of the wicked is often delayed—because their impieties, so to speak, are not yet ripe. By this we are warned that we must carefully take heed lest, in the event of our adding from time to time ^{f63} sin to sin, as is wont to happen generally, the heap at last reaches as high as heaven.

For wrath has come. He means that they are in an utterly hopeless state, inasmuch as they are vessels of the Lord’s wrath. “The just vengeance of God presses upon them and pursues them, and will not leave them until they perish—as is the case with all the reprobate, who rush on headlong to

death, to which they are destined.” The Apostle, however, makes this declaration as to the entire body of the people, in such a manner as not to deprive the elect of hope. For as the greater proportion resisted Christ, he speaks, it is true, of the whole nation generally, but we must keep in view the exception which he himself makes in ^{<451105>}Romans 11:5,—that the Lord will always have some seed remaining. We must always keep in view Paul’s design—that believers must carefully avoid the society of those whom the just vengeance of God pursues, until they perish in their blind obstinacy. *Wrath*, without any additional term, means the judgment of God, as in ^{<450415>}Romans 4:15,—*the law worketh WRATH*; also in ^{<451219>}Romans 12:19,—*neither give place unto WRATH*.

^{<520217>} 1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-20	
17. But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.	17. Nos vero, fratres, orbatī vobis ad tempus horae ^{f64} aspectu, non corde, abundantius studuimus faciem vestram videre in multo desiderio.
18. Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again; but Satan hindered us.	18. Itaque voluimus venire ad vos, ego quidem Paulus, et semel et bis, et obstitit nobis Satan.
19. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?	19. Quae enim nostra spes, vel gaudium, vel corona gloriationis? annon etiam vos coram Domino nostro Iesu Christo in eius adventu?
20. For ye are our glory and joy.	20. Vos enim estis gloria nostra et gaudium.

17. *But we, brethren, bereaved of you.* This excuse has been appropriately added, lest the Thessalonians should think that Paul had deserted them while so great an emergency demanded his presence. He has spoken of the persecutions which they endured from their own people: he, in the mean time, whose duty it was above all others to assist them, was absent. He has formerly called himself a *father*; now, it is not the part of a *father* to desert his children in the midst of such distresses. He, accordingly, obviates all suspicion of contempt and negligence, by saying, that it was

from no want of inclination, but because he had not opportunity. Nor does he say simply, “I was desirous to come to you, but my way was obstructed;” but by the peculiar terms that he employs he expresses the intensity of his affection: “When,” says he, “I was *bereaved* of you.” ^{f65} By the word *bereaved*, he declares how sad and distressing a thing it was to him to be absent from them. ^{f66} This is followed by a fuller expression of his feeling of desire—that it was with difficulty that he could endure their absence for a short time. It is not to be wondered, if length of time should occasion weariness or sadness; but we must have a strong feeling of attachment when we find it difficult to wait even a single hour. Now, by the *space of an hour*, he means—a small space of time.

This is followed by a correction—that he had been separated from them in *appearance*, *not in heart*, that they may know that distance of place does not by any means lessen his attachment. At the same time, this might not less appropriately be applied to the Thessalonians, as meaning that they, on their part, had felt united in *mind* while absent in *body*; for it was of no small importance for the point in hand that he should state how fully assured he was of their affection towards him in return. He shews, however, more fully his affection, when he says that he *endeavored the more abundantly*; for he means that his affection was so far from being diminished by his leaving them, that it had been the more inflamed. When he says, *we would once and again*, he declares that it was not a sudden heat, that quickly cooled, (as we see sometimes happen,) but that he had been steadfast in this purpose, ^{f67} inasmuch as he sought various opportunities.

18. *Satan hindered us.* Luke relates that Paul was in one instance hindered, (<442003> Acts 20:3) inasmuch as the Jews laid an ambush for him in the way. The same thing, or something similar, may have occurred frequently. It is not without good reason, however, that Paul ascribes the whole of this to Satan, for, as he teaches elsewhere, (<490612> Ephesians 6:12) we have to

wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities of the air,
and spiritual wickednesses, etc.

For, whenever the wicked molest us, they fight under Satan’s banner, and are his instruments for harassing us. More especially, when our endeavors are directed to the work of the Lord, it is certain that everything that hinders proceeds from Satan; and would to God that this sentiment were

deeply impressed upon the minds of all pious persons—that Satan is continually contriving, by every means, in what way he may hinder or obstruct the edification of the Church! We would assuredly be more careful to resist him; we would take more care to maintain sound doctrine, of which that enemy strives so keenly to deprive us. We would also, whenever the course of the gospel is retarded, know whence the hindrance proceeds. He says elsewhere, (<450113> Romans 1:13) that God had not permitted him, but both are true: for although Satan does his part, yet God retains supreme authority, so as to open up a way for us, as often as he sees good, against Satan’s will, and in spite of his opposition. Paul accordingly says truly that God does not permit, although the hindrance comes from Satan.

19. *For what is our hope.* He confirms that ardor of desire, of which he had made mention, inasmuch as he has his happiness in a manner treasured up in them. “Unless I forget myself, I must necessarily desire your presence, for *ye are our glory and joy*.” Farther, when he calls them his *hope and the crown of his glory*, we must not understand this as meaning that he gloried in any one but God alone, but because we are allowed to glory in all God’s favors, in their own place, in such a manner that he is always our object of aim, as I have explained more at large in the *first* Epistle to the Corinthians. ^{f68} We must, however, infer from this, that Christ’s ministers will, on the last day, according as they have individually promoted his kingdom, be partakers of glory and triumph. Let them therefore now learn to rejoice and glory in nothing but the prosperous issue of their labors, when they see that the glory of Christ is promoted by their instrumentality. The consequence will be, that they will be actuated by that spirit of affection to the Church with which they ought. The particle *also* denotes that the Thessalonians were not the only persons in whom Paul triumphed, but that they held a place among many. The causal particle *γάρ*, (*for*), which occurs almost immediately afterwards, is employed here not in its strict sense, by way of affirmation—“*assuredly* you are.”

CHAPTER 3

<520301> 1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-5

1. Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone,	1. Quare non amplius sufferentes censuimus, ut Athenis relinqueremur soli:
2. And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow—laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;	2. Et misimus Timotheum fratrem nostrum, et ministrum Dei, et cooperarium nostrum in evangelio Christi, ut confirmaret vos, et vobis animum adderet ex fide nostra,
3. That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.	3. Ut nemo turbaretur in his afflictionibus: ipsi enim nostis quod in hoc sumus constituti.
4. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.	4. Etenim quum essemus apud vos, praediximus vobis quod essemus afflictiones passuri; quemadmodum etiam accidit, et nostis.
5. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain.	5. Quamobrem et ego non amplius sustinens, misi ut cognoscerem fidem vestram: ne forte tentasset vos, is qui tentat, et exinanitus esset labor noster.

1. *Wherefore, when we could no longer endure.* By the detail which follows, he assures them of the desire of which he had spoken. For if, on being detained elsewhere, he had sent no other to Thessalonica in his place, it might have seemed as though he were not so much concerned in regard to them; but when he substitutes Timothy in his place, he removes that suspicion, more especially when he prefers them before himself. Now that he esteemed them above himself, he shews from this, that he chose rather to be left alone than that they should be deserted: for these words, *we judged it good to be left alone*, are emphatic. Timothy was a most faithful

companion to him: he had at that time no others with him; hence it was inconvenient and distressing for him to be without him. It is therefore a token of rare affection and anxious desire that he does not refuse to deprive himself of all comfort, with the view of relieving the Thessalonians. To the same effect is the word *εὐδοκῆσαμεν*, which expresses a prompt inclination of the mind. ^{f69}

2. *Our brother*. He assigns to him these marks of commendation, that he may shew the more clearly how much inclined he was to consult their welfare: for if he had sent them some common person, it could not have afforded them much assistance; and inasmuch as Paul would have done this without inconvenience to himself, he would have given no remarkable proof of his fatherly concern in regard to them. It is, on the other hand, a great thing that he deprives himself of a *brother* and *fellow—laborer*, and one to whom, as he declares in ^{<505920>}Philippians 2:20, he found no equal, inasmuch as all aimed at the promotion of their own interests. In the mean time, ^{f70} he procures authority for the doctrine which they had received from Timothy, that it may remain the more deeply impressed upon their memory.

It is, however, with good reason that he says that he had *sent Timothy* with this view—that they might receive a *confirmation of their faith* from his example. They might be intimidated by unpleasant reports as to persecutions; but Paul’s undaunted constancy was fitted so much the more to animate them, so as to keep them from giving way. And, assuredly, the fellowship which ought to subsist between the saints and members of Christ extends even thus far—that the faith of one is the consolation of others. Thus, when the Thessalonians heard that Paul was going on with indefatigable zeal, and was by strength of faith surmounting all dangers and all difficulties, and that his faith continued everywhere victorious against Satan and the world, this brought them no small consolation. More especially we are, or at least ought to be, stimulated by the examples of those by whom we were instructed in the faith, as is stated in the end of the Epistle to the Hebrews. (^{<581307>}Hebrews 13:7) Paul, accordingly, means that they ought to be fortified by his example, so as not to give way under their afflictions. As, however, they might have been offended if Paul had entertained a fear lest they should all give way under persecutions, (inasmuch as this would have been an evidence of excessive distrust,) he mitigates this harshness by saying—*lest any one, or, that no one*. There

was, however, good reason to fear this, as there are always some weak persons in every society.

3. *For ye yourselves know*. As all would gladly exempt themselves from the necessity of bearing the cross, Paul teaches that there is no reason why believers should feel dismayed on occasion of persecutions, as though it were a thing that was new and unusual, inasmuch as this is our condition, which the Lord has assigned to us. For this manner of expression—*we are appointed to it*—is as though he had said, that we are Christians on this condition. He says, however, that they *know* it, because it became them to fight the more bravely,^{f71} inasmuch as they had been forewarned in time. In addition to this, incessant afflictions made Paul contemptible among rude and ignorant persons. On this account he states that nothing had befallen him but what he had long before, in the manner of a prophet, foretold.

5. *Lest perhaps the tempter has tempted you*. By this term he teaches us that temptations are always to be dreaded, because it is the proper office of Satan to *tempt*. As, however, he never ceases to place ambushes for us on all sides, and to lay snares for us all around, so we must be on our watch, eagerly taking heed. And now he says openly what in the outset he had avoided saying, as being too harsh—that he had felt concerned lest his *labors* should be *vain*, if, peradventure, Satan should prevail. And this he does that they may be carefully upon their watch, and may stir themselves up the more vigorously to resistance.

<520306>1 THESSALONIANS 3:6-10

6. But now, when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you;	6. Nuper autem quum venisset Timotheus ad nos a vobis, et annuntiasset nobis fidem et dilectionem vestram, et quod bonam nostri memoriam habetis semper, desiderantes nos videre, quemadmodum et nos ipsi vos:
7. Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:	7. Inde consolationem percepimus fratres de vobis, in omni tribulatione et necessitate nostra per vestram fidem:
8. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.	8. Quia nunc vivimus, si vos stasis in Domino.
9. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;	9. Quam enim gratiarum actionem possumus Deo reddere de vobis, in omni gaudio quod gaudemus propter vos coram Deo nostro;
10. Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?	10. Nocte ac die supra modum precantes, ut videamus faciem vestram, et suppleamus quae fidei vestrae desunt?

He shews here, by another argument, by what an extraordinary affection he was actuated towards them, inasmuch as he was transported almost out of his senses by the joyful intelligence of their being in a prosperous condition. For we must take notice of the circumstances which he relates. He was in *affliction* and *necessity* : there might have seemed, therefore, no room for cheerfulness. But when he hears what was much desired by him respecting the Thessalonians, as though all feeling of his distresses had been extinguished, he is carried forward to joy and congratulation. At the same time he proceeds, by degrees, in expressing the greatness of his joy, for he says, in the *first* place, we *received consolation* : afterwards he speaks of a joy that was plentifully poured forth. ^{f72} This congratulation, ^{f73} however, has the force of an exhortation; and Paul's intention was to stir up the Thessalonians to perseverance. And, assuredly, this must have

been a most powerful excitement, when they learned that the holy Apostle felt so great consolation and joy from the advancement of their piety.

6. *Faith and love.* This form of expression should be the more carefully observed by us in proportion to the frequency with which it is made use of by Paul, for in these two words he comprehends briefly the entire sum of true piety. Hence all that aim at this twofold mark during their whole life are beyond all risk of erring: all others, however much they may torture themselves, wander miserably. The third thing that he adds as to their *good remembrance* of him, refers to respect entertained for the Gospel. For it was on no other account that they held Paul in such affection and esteem.

8. *For now we live.* Here it appears still more clearly that Paul almost forgot himself for the sake of the Thessalonians, or, at least, making regard for himself a mere secondary consideration, devoted his first and chief thoughts to them. At the same time he did not do that so much from affection to men as from a desire for the Lord's glory. For zeal for God and Christ glowed in his holy breast to such a degree that it in a manner swallowed up all other anxieties. "*We live,*" says he, that is, "we are in good health, if you *persevere in the Lord.*" And under the adverb *now*, he repeats what he had formerly stated, that he had been greatly pressed down by *affliction* and *necessity*; yet he declares that whatever evil he endures in his own person does not hinder his joy. "Though in myself I am dead, yet in your welfare I *live.*" By this all pastors are admonished what sort of connection ought to subsist between them and the Church—that they reckon themselves happy when it goes well with the Church, although they should be in other respects encompassed with many miseries, and, on the other hand, that they pine away with grief and sorrow if they see the building which they have constructed in a state of decay, although matters otherwise should be joyful and prosperous.

9. *For what thanksgiving.* Not satisfied with a simple affirmation, he intimates how extraordinary is the greatness of his joy, by asking himself *what thanks he can render to God*; for by speaking thus he declares that he cannot find an expression of gratitude that can come up to the measure of his joy. He says that he rejoices *before God*, that is, truly and without any presence.

10. *Praying beyond measure.* He returns to an expression of his *desire*. For it is never allowable for us to congratulate men, while they live in this world, in such unqualified terms as not always to desire something better for them. For they are as yet in the way: they may fall back, or go astray, or even go back. Hence Paul is desirous to have opportunity given him of *supplying what is wanting in the faith* of the Thessalonians, or, which is the same thing, completing in all its parts their faith, which was as yet imperfect. Yet this is the faith which he had previously extolled marvelously. But from this we infer, that those who far surpass others are still far distant from the goal. Hence, whatever progress we may have made, let us always keep in view our *deficiencies*, (ὕστερήματα,) ^{f74} that we may not be reluctant to aim at something farther.

From this also it appears how necessary it is for us to give careful attention to doctrine, for teachers ^{f75} were not appointed merely with the view of leading men, in the course of a single day or month, to the faith of Christ, but for the purpose of perfecting the faith which has been begun. But as to Paul's claiming for himself what he elsewhere declares belongs peculiarly to the Holy Spirit, (<461414> 1 Corinthians 14:14) this must be restricted to the ministry. Now, as the ministry of a man is inferior to the efficacy of the Spirit, and to use the common expression, is subordinate to it, nothing is detracted from it. When he says that he prayed *night and day beyond all ordinary measure*, ^{f76} we may gather from these words how assiduous he was in praying to God, and with what ardor and earnestness he discharged that duty.

<520311> 1 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13

11. Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.	11. Ipse autem Deus et Pater noster, et Dominus noster Iesus Christus viam nostram ad vos dirigat.
12. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:	12. Vos autem Dominus impleat et abundare faciat caritate mutua inter vos et erga omnes: quemadmodum et nos ipsi affecti sumus erga vos:
13. To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.	13. Ut confirmet corda vestra irreprehensibilia, in sanctitate coram Deo et Patre nostro, in adventu Domini nostri Iesu Christi, cum omnibus sanctis eius.

11. *Now God himself.* He now prays that the Lord, having removed Satan's obstructions, may open a door for himself, and be, as it were, the leader and director of his way to the Thessalonians. By this he intimates, that we cannot move a step with success,^{f77} otherwise than under God's guidance, but that when he holds out his hand, it is to no purpose that Satan employs every effort to change the direction of our course. We must take notice that he assigns the same office to God and to Christ, as, unquestionably, the Father confers no blessing upon us except through Christ's hand. When, however, he thus speaks of both in the same terms, he teaches that Christ has divinity and power in common with the Father.

12. *And the Lord fill you.* Here we have another prayer—that in the mean time, while his way is obstructed, the Lord, during his absence, may confirm the Thessalonians in holiness, and fill them with love. And from this again we learn in what the perfection of the Christian life consists—in love and pure holiness of heart, flowing from faith. He recommends love mutually cherished *towards each other*, and afterwards *towards all*, for as it is befitting that a commencement should be made with those that are of the *household of faith*, (<480610> Galatians 6:10) so our love ought to go forth to the whole human race. Farther, as the nearer connection must be

cherished,^{f78} so we must not overlook those who are farther removed from us, so as to prevent them from holding their proper place.

He would have the Thessalonians abound in love and be filled with it, because in so far as we make progress in acquaintance with God, the love of the brethren must at the same time increase in us, until it take possession of our whole heart, the corrupt love of self being extirpated. He prays that the love of the Thessalonians may be perfected by God, intimating that its increase, no less than its commencement, was from God alone. Hence it is evident how preposterous a part those act who measure our strength by the precepts of the Divine law. *The end of the law is love*, says Paul, (<540105> 1 Timothy 1:5) yet he himself declares that it is a work of God. When, therefore, God marks out our life,^{f79} he does not look to what we can do, but requires from us what is above our strength, that we may learn to ask from him power to accomplish it. When he says—as *we also towards you*, he stimulates them by his own example.

13. *That he may confirm your hearts.* He employs the term *hearts* here to mean *conscience*, or the innermost part of the soul; for he means that a man is acceptable to God only when he brings holiness of heart; that is, not merely external, but also internal. But it is asked, whether by means of holiness we stand at God's judgment—seat, for if so, to what purpose is remission of sins? Yet Paul's words seem to imply this—that their consciences might be *irreproveable in holiness*. I answer, that Paul does not exclude remission of sins, through which it comes that our holiness, which is otherwise mixed up with many pollutions, bears God's eye, for faith, by which God is pacified towards us, so as to pardon our faults,^{f80} precedes everything else, as the foundation comes before the building. Paul, however, does not teach us what or how great the holiness of believers may be, but desires that it may be increased, until it attain its perfection. On this account he says—at *the coming of our Lord*, meaning that the completion of those things, which the Lord now begins in us, is delayed till that time.

With all his saints. This clause may be explained in two ways, either as meaning that the Thessalonians, *with all saints*, may have pure hearts at Christ's coming, or that Christ will come with *all his saints*. While I adopt this second meaning, in so far as concerns the construction of the words, I have at the same time no doubt that Paul employed the term *saints* for the

purpose of admonishing us that we are called by Christ for this end—that we may be gathered *with all his saints*. For this consideration ought to whet our desire for holiness.

CHAPTER 4

<520401> 1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-5

1. Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.	1. Ergo quod reliquum est, fratres, rogamus vos et obsecramus in Domino Iesu, quemadmodum accepistis a nobis, quomodo oporteat vos ambulare et placere Deo, ut abundetis magis:
2. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.	2. Nostis enim quae praecepta dederimus vobis per Dominum Iesum.
3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:	3. Haec enim est voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra: ut vos abstineatis ab omni scortatione.
4. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor;	4. Et sciat unusquisque vestrum suum vas possidere in sanctificatione et honore:
5. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.	5. Non in affectu concupiscentiae, quemadmodum et Gentes, quae non noverunt Deum.

1. *Furthermore*. This chapter contains various injunctions, by which he trains up the Thessalonians to a holy life, or confirms them in the exercise of it. They had previously learned what was the rule and method of a pious life: he calls this to their remembrance. *As*, says he, *ye have been taught*. Lest, however, he should seem to take away from them what he had previously assigned them, he does not simply exhort them to *walk* in such a manner, but to *abound more and more*. When, therefore, he urges them to make progress, he intimates that they are already in the way. The sum is this, that they should be more especially careful to make progress in the doctrine which they had received, and this Paul places in contrast with frivolous and vain pursuits, in which we see that a good part of the world very generally busy themselves, so that profitable and holy meditation as to the due regulation of life scarcely obtains a place, even the

most inferior. Paul, accordingly, reminds them in what manner they had been instructed, and bids them aim at this with their whole might. Now, there is a law that is here enjoined upon us—that, *forgetting the things that are behind*, we always aim at farther progress, (^{<500313>}Philippians 3:13) and pastors ought also to make this their endeavor. Now, as to his *beseeking*, when he might rightfully enjoin—it is a token of humanity and modesty which pastors ought to imitate, that they may, if possible, allure people to kindness, rather than violently compel them.^{f81}

3. *For this is the will of God.* This is doctrine of a general nature, from which, as from a fountain, he immediately deduces special admonitions. When he says that *this is the will of God*, he means that we have been called by God with this design. “For this end ye are Christians—this the gospel aims at—that ye may *sanctify* yourselves to *God*.” The meaning of the term *sanctification* we have already explained elsewhere in repeated instances—that renouncing the world, and clearing ourselves from the pollutions of the flesh, we offer ourselves to God as if in sacrifice, for nothing can with propriety be offered to Him, but what is pure and holy.

That ye abstain. This is one injunction, which he derives from the fountain of which he had immediately before made mention; for nothing is more opposed to holiness than the defilement of *fornication*, which pollutes the whole man. On this account he assigns the *lust of concupiscence* to the *Gentiles, who know not God*. “Where the knowledge of God reigns, lusts must be subdued.”

By the *lust of concupiscence*, he means all base lusts of the flesh, but, at the same time, by this manner of expression, he brands with dishonor all desires that allure us to pleasure and carnal delights, as in ^{<451314>}Romans 13:14, he bids us *have no care for the flesh in respect of the lust thereof*. For when men give indulgence to their appetites, there are no bounds to lasciviousness.^{f82} Hence the only means of maintaining temperance is to bridle all lusts.

As for the expression, *that every one of you may know to possess his vessel*, some explain it as referring to a wife,^{f83} as though it had been said, “Let husbands dwell with their wives in all chastity.” As, however, he addresses husbands and wives indiscriminately, there can be no doubt that he employs the term *vessel* to mean *body*. For every one has his body as a

house, as it were, in which he dwells. He would, therefore, have us keep our body pure from all uncleanness.

And honor, that is, honorably, for the man that prostitutes his body to fornication, covers it with infamy and disgrace.

<520406> 1 THESSALONIANS 4:6-8	
6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified.	6. Ne quis opprimat vel circumveniat in negotio fratrem suum: quia vindex erit Dominus omnium istorum, quemadmodum et praediximus vobis, et obtestati sumus.
7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.	7. Non enim vocavit vos Deus ad immunditiam, sed ad sanctificationem.
8. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.	8. Itaque qui hoc repudiat, non hominem repudiat, sed Deum, qui etiam dedit Spiritum suum sanctum in nos.

6. *Let no man oppress*. Here we have another exhortation, which flows, like a stream, from the doctrine of sanctification. “God,” says he, “has it in view to sanctify us, *that no man may do injury to his brother*.” For as to Chrysostom’s connecting this statement with the preceding one, and explaining *ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν* to mean—neighing after the wives of others, (<240508> Jeremiah 5:8) and eagerly desiring them, is too forced an exposition. Paul, accordingly, having adduced one instance of unchastity in respect of lasciviousness and lust, teaches that this also is a department of holiness—that we conduct ourselves righteously and harmlessly towards our neighbors. The *former* verb refers to violent oppressions—where the man that has more power emboldens himself to inflict injury. The *latter* includes in it all immoderate and unrighteous desires. As, however, mankind, for the most part, indulge themselves in lust and avarice, he reminds them of what he had formerly taught—that *God would be the avenger of all such things*. We must observe, however, what he says—we have *solemnly testified* ;^{f84} for such is the sluggishness

of mankind, that, unless they are wounded to the quick, they are touched with no apprehension of God's judgment.

7. *For God hath not called us.* This appears to be the same sentiment with the preceding one—that *the will of God is our sanctification*. There is, however, a little difference between them. For after having discoursed as to the correcting of the vices of the flesh, he proves, from the end of our calling, that God desires this. For he sets us apart to himself as his peculiar possession.¹⁸⁵ Again, that God calls us to holiness, he proves by contraries, because he rescues us, and calls us back, from unchastity. From this he concludes, that all that reject this doctrine *reject not men, but God*, the Author of this calling, which altogether falls to the ground so soon as this principle as to newness of life is overthrown. Now, the reason why he rouses himself so vehemently is, because there are always wanton persons who, while they fearlessly despise God, treat with ridicule all threatenings of his judgment, and at the same time hold in derision all injunctions as to a holy and pious life. Such persons must not be taught, but must be beaten with severe reproofs as with the stroke of a hammer.

8. *Who hath also given.* That he may the more effectually turn away the Thessalonians from such contempt and obstinacy, he reminds them that they had been endowed with the Spirit of God, *first*, in order that they may distinguish what proceeds from God; *secondly*, that they make such a difference as is befitting between holiness and impurity; and *thirdly*, that, with heavenly authority, they may pronounce judgment against all manner of unchastity—such as will fall upon their own heads, unless they keep aloof from contagion. Hence, however wicked men may treat with ridicule all instructions that are given as to a holy life and the fear of God, those that are endowed with the Spirit of God have a very different testimony sealed upon their hearts. We must therefore take heed, lest we should extinguish or obliterate it. At the same time, this may refer to Paul and the other teachers, as though he had said, that it is not from human perception that they condemn unchastity, but they pronounce from the authority of God what has been suggested to them by his Spirit. I am inclined, however, to include both. Some manuscripts have the second person—*you*, which restricts the gift of the Spirit to the Thessalonians.

<520409> 1 THESSALONIANS 4:9-12

9. But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.	9. De fraterno amore non opus habetis, ut scribam vobis: ipsi enim vos a Deo estis edocti, ut diligatis invicem.
10. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;	10. Etenim hoc facitis erga omnes fratres, qui sunt in tota Macedonia. Hortamur autem vos, fratres, ut abundetis magis,
11. And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;	11. Et altius contendatis, ut colatis quietem, et agatis res vestras, et laboretis manibus vestris, quemadmodum vobis denuntiavimus,
12. That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.	12. Ut ambuletis decenter erga extraneos, et nulla re opus habeatis.

9. As to brotherly love. Having previously, in lofty terms, commended their love, he now speaks by way of *anticipation*, saying, *ye need not that I write to you*. He assigns a reason—*because they had been divinely taught*—by which he means that love was engraven upon their hearts, so that there was no need of letters written on paper. For he does not mean simply what John says in his first Canonical^{f86} Epistle, *the anointing will teach you*, (<620227> 1 John 2:27) but that their hearts were framed for love; so that it appears that the Holy Spirit inwardly dictates efficaciously what is to be done, so that there is no need to give injunctions in writing. He subjoins an argument from the greater to the less; for as their love diffuses itself through the whole of Macedonia, he infers that it is not to be doubted that they *love one another*. Hence the particle *for* means *likewise*, or *nay more*, for, as I have already stated, he adds it for the sake of greater intensity.

10. And we exhort you. Though he declares that they were sufficiently prepared of themselves for all offices of love, he nevertheless does not cease to exhort them to make progress, there being no perfection in men. And, unquestionably, whatever appears in us in a high state of excellence, we must still desire that it may become better. Some connect the verb

φιλοτιμεῖσθαι with what follows, as if he exhorted them to strive at the maintaining of peace; but it corresponds better with the expression that goes before. For after having admonished them to increase in love, he recommends to them a sacred emulation, that they may strive among themselves in mutual affection, or at least he enjoins that each one strive to conquer himself;^{f87} and I rather adopt this latter interpretation. That, therefore, their love may be perfect, he requires that there be a striving among them, such as is wont to be on the part of those who eagerly^{f88} aspire at victory. This is the best emulation, when each one strives to overcome himself in doing good. As to my not subscribing to the opinion of those who render the words, *strive to maintain peace*, this single reason appears to me to be sufficiently valid—that Paul would not in a thing of less difficulty have enjoined so arduous a conflict—which suits admirably well with advancement in love, where so many hindrances present themselves. Nor would I have any objection to the other meaning of the verb—that they should exercise liberality generally towards others.

11. *Maintain Peace.* I have already stated that this clause must be separated from what goes before, for this is a now sentence. Now, to *be at peace*, means in this passage—to act peacefully and without disturbance, as we also say in French—*sans bruit*, (*without noise*.) In short, he exhorts them to be peaceable and tranquil. This is the purport of what he adds immediately afterwards—to *do your own business*: for we commonly see, that those who intrude themselves with forwardness into the affairs of others, make great disturbance, and give trouble to themselves and others. This, therefore, is the best means of a tranquil life, when every one, intent upon the duties of his own calling, discharges those duties which are enjoined upon him by the Lord, and devotes himself to these things: while the husbandman employs himself in rural labors, the workman carries on his occupation, and in this way every one keeps within his own limits. So soon as men turn aside from this, everything is thrown into confusion and disorder. He does not mean, however, that every one shall *mind his own business* in such a way as that each one should live apart, having no care for others, but has merely in view to correct an idle levity, which makes men noisy bustlers in public, who ought to lead a quiet life in their own houses.

Labor with your hands. He recommends manual labor on two accounts—that they may have a sufficiency for maintaining life, and that they may

conduct themselves honorably even before unbelievers. For nothing is more unseemly than a man that is idle and good for nothing, who profits neither himself nor others, and seems born only to eat and drink. Farther, this labor or system of working extends far, for what he says as to *hands* is by way of *synecdoche* ; but there can be no doubt that he includes every useful employment of human life.

<520413> 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-14	
13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.	13. Nolo autem vos ignorare, fratres, de iis qui obdormierunt, ut ne contristemini, sicut et caeteri qui spem non habent.
14. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.	14. Nam si credimus, quod Iesus mortuus est, et resurrexit, ita et Deus eos, qui dormierunt per Christum, adducet cum eo.

13. *But I would not have you ignorant.* It is not likely that the hope of a resurrection had been torn up among the Thessalonians by profane men, as had taken place at Corinth. For we see how he chastises the Corinthians with severity, but here he speaks of it as a thing that was not doubtful. It is possible, however, that this persuasion was not sufficiently fixed in their minds, and that they accordingly, in bewailing the dead, retained something of the old superstition. For the sum of the whole is this—that we must not bewail the dead beyond due bounds, inasmuch as we are all to be raised up again. For whence comes it, that the mourning of unbelievers has no end or measure, but because they have no hope of a resurrection? It becomes not us, therefore, who have been instructed as to a resurrection, to mourn otherwise than in moderation. He is to discourse afterwards as to the manner of the resurrection; and he is also on this account to say something as to *times* ; but in this passage he meant simply to restrain excessive grief, which would never have had such an influence among them, if they had seriously considered the resurrection, and kept it in remembrance.

He does not, however, forbid us altogether to mourn, but requires moderation in our mourning, for he says, *that ye may not sorrow, as others who have no hope*. He forbids them to grieve in the manner of unbelievers, who give loose reins to their grief, because they look upon death as final destruction, and imagine that everything that is taken out of the world perishes. As, on the other hand, believers know that they quit the world, that they may be at last gathered into the kingdom of God, they have not the like occasion of grief. Hence the knowledge of a resurrection is the means of moderating grief. He speaks of the dead as *asleep*, agreeably to the common practice of Scripture—a term by which the bitterness of death is mitigated, for there is a great difference between *sleep* and *destruction*.^{f89} It refers, however, not to the soul, but to the body, for the dead body lies in the tomb, as in a couch, until God raise up the man. Those, therefore, act a foolish part, who infer from this that souls sleep.^{f90}

We are now in possession of Paul's meaning—that he lifts up the minds of believers to a consideration of the resurrection, lest they should indulge excessive grief on occasion of the death of their relatives, for it were unseemly that there should be no difference between them and unbelievers, who put no end or measure to their grief for this reason, that in death they recognize nothing but destruction.^{f91} Those that abuse this testimony, so as to establish among Christians Stoical indifference, that is, an iron hardness,^{f92} will find nothing of this nature in Paul's words. As to their objecting that we must not indulge grief on occasion of the death of our relatives, lest we should resist God, this would apply in all adversities; but it is one thing to bridle our grief, that it may be made subject to God, and quite another thing to harden one's self so as to be like stones, by casting away human feelings. Let, therefore, the grief of the pious be mixed with consolation, which may train them to patience. The hope of a blessed resurrection, which is the mother of patience, will effect this.

14. *For if we believe.* He assumes this axiom of our faith, that Christ was raised up from the dead, that we might be partakers of the same resurrection: from this he infers, that we shall live with him eternally. This doctrine, however, as has been stated in ^{<461513>} 1 Corinthians 15:13, depends on another principle—that it was not for himself, but for us that Christ died and rose again. Hence those who have doubts as to the resurrection, do great injury to Christ: nay more, they do in a manner draw him down from heaven, as is said in ^{<451006>} Romans 10:6

To *sleep in Christ*, is to retain in death the connection that we have with Christ, for those that are by faith ingrafted into Christ, have death in common with him, that they may be partakers with him of life. It is asked, however, whether unbelievers will not also rise again, for Paul does not affirm that there will be a resurrection, except in the case of Christ's members. I answer, that Paul does not here touch upon anything but what suited his present design. For he did not design to terrify the wicked, but to correct ^{f93} the immoderate grief of the pious, and to cure it, as he does, by the medicine of consolation.

<520415> 1 THESSALONIANS 4:15-18	
15. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.	15. Hoc enim vobis dicimus in sermone Domini, quod nos, qui vivemus et superstites erimus in adventum Domini, non praeveniemus eos, qui dormierunt.
16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:	16. Quoniam ipse Dominus cum clamore, cum voce Archangeli et tuba Dei descendet e c̃llo: ac mortui, qui in Christo sunt, resurgent primum.
17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.	17. Deinde nos qui vivemus, ac residui erimus, simul cum ipsis rapiemur in nubibus, in occursum Domini in aera: et sic semper cum Domino erimus.
18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.	18. Itaque consolamini vos mutuo in sermonibus istis.

15. *For this we say unto you.* He now briefly explains the manner in which believers will be raised up from death. Now, as he speaks of a thing that is very great, and is incredible to the human mind, and also promises what is above the power and choice of men, he premises that he does not bring forward anything that is his own, or that proceeds from men, but that the Lord is the Author of it. It is probable, however, that the *word of the Lord* means what was taken from his discourses. ^{f94} For though Paul had learned by revelation all the secrets of the heavenly kingdom, it was, nevertheless,

more fitted to establish in the minds of believers the belief of a resurrection, when he related those things that had been uttered by Christ's own mouth. "We are not the first witnesses of the resurrection, but instead of this the Master himself declared it." ^{f95}

We who live. This has been said by him with this view—that they might not think that those only would be partakers of the resurrection who would be alive at the time of Christ's coming, and that those would have no part in it who had been previously taken away by death. "The order of the resurrection," says he, "will begin with them: ^{f96} we shall accordingly not rise without them." From this it appears that the belief of a final resurrection had been, in the minds of some, slight and obscure, and involved in various errors, inasmuch as they imagined that the dead would be deprived of it; for they imagined that eternal life belonged to those alone whom Christ, at his last coming, would find still alive upon the earth. Paul, with the view of remedying these errors, assigns the first place to the dead, and afterwards teaches that those will follow who will be at that time remaining in this life.

As to the circumstance, however, that by speaking in the first person he makes himself, as it were, one of the number of those who will live until the last day, he means by this to arouse the Thessalonians to wait for it, nay more, to hold all believers in suspense, that they may not promise themselves some particular time: for, granting that it was by a special revelation that he knew that Christ would come at a somewhat later time, ^{f97} it was nevertheless necessary that this doctrine should be delivered to the Church in common, that believers might be prepared at all times. In the mean time, it was necessary thus to cut off all pretext for the curiosity of many—as we shall find him doing afterwards at greater length. When, however, he says, *we that are alive*, he makes use of the present tense instead of the future, in accordance with the Hebrew idiom.

16. For the Lord himself. He employs the term *κελεύσματος*, (*shout*), and afterwards adds, *the voice of the archangel*, by way of exposition, intimating what is to be the nature of that arousing shout—that the archangel will discharge the office of a herald to summon the living and the dead to the tribunal of Christ. For though this will be common to all the angels, yet, as is customary among different ranks, he appoints one in the foremost place to take the lead of the others. As to the *trumpet*, however, I

leave to others to dispute with greater subtlety, for I have nothing to say in addition to what I briefly noticed in the First Epistle to the Corinthians.^{f98} The Apostle unquestionably had nothing farther in view here than to give some taste of the magnificence and venerable appearance of the Judge, until we shall behold it fully. With this taste it becomes us in the mean time to rest satisfied.

The dead who are in Christ. He again says that the *dead who are in Christ*, that is, who are included in Christ's body, will *rise first*, that we may know that the hope of life is laid up in heaven for them no less than for the living. He says nothing as to the reprobate, because this did not tend to the consolation of the pious, of which he is now treating.

He says that those that survive will be *carried up together with them*. As to these, he makes no mention of death: hence it appears as if he meant to say that they would be exempted from death. Here Augustine gives himself much distress, both in the twentieth book on the City of God and in his Answer to Dulcitius, because Paul seems to contradict himself, inasmuch as he says elsewhere, that *seed cannot spring up again unless it die*. (<461536> 1 Corinthians 15:36) The solution, however, is easy, inasmuch as a sudden change will be like death. Ordinary death, it is true, is the separation of the soul from the body; but this does not hinder that the Lord may in a moment destroy this corruptible nature, so as to create it anew by his power, for thus is accomplished what Paul himself teaches must take place—that *mortality shall be swallowed up of life*. (<470504> 2 Corinthians 5:4) What is stated in our Confession,^{f99} that “Christ will be the Judge of the dead and of the living,”^{f100} Augustine acknowledges to be true without a figure.^{f101} He is only at a loss as to this—how those that have not died will rise again. But, as I have said, that is a kind of death, when this flesh is reduced to nothing, as it is now liable to corruption. The only difference is this—that those who *sleep*^{f102} put off the *substance* of the body for some space of time, but those that will be suddenly changed will put off nothing but the *quality*.

17. And so we shall be ever. To those who have been once gathered to Christ he promises eternal life with him, by which statements the reveries of Origen and of the Chiliasts^{f103} are abundantly refuted. For the life of believers, when they have once been gathered into one kingdom, will have no end any more than Christ's. Now, to assign to Christ a thousand years,

so that he would afterwards cease to reign, were too horrible to be made mention of. Those, however, fall into this absurdity who limit the life of believers to a thousand years, for they must live with Christ as long as Christ himself will exist. We must observe also what he says—*we shall be*, for he means that we profitably entertain a hope of eternal life, only when we hope that it has been expressly appointed for us.

18. *Comfort.* He now shews more openly what I have previously stated—that in the faith of the resurrection we have good ground of consolation, provided we are members of Christ, and are truly united to him as our Head. At the same time, the Apostle would not have each one to seek for himself assuagement of grief, but also to administer it to others.

CHAPTER 5

<520501> 1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-5

1. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.	1. Porro de temporibus et articulis temporum non opus habetis, ut vobis scribatur.
2. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.	2. Ipsi enim optime scitis, quod dies Domini tanquam fur in nocte sic veniet.
3. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.	3. Quando enim dixerint, Pax et securitas, tunc repentinus ipsis superveniet interitus, quasi dolor partus mulieri praegnanti, nec effugient.
4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.	4. Vos autem, fratres, non estis in tenebris, ut dies ille vos quasi fur opprimat.
5. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.	5. Omnes vos filii lucis estis, et filii diei: non sumus noctis, neque tenebrarum.

1. *But as to times.* He now, in the third place, calls them back from a curious and unprofitable inquiry as to *times*, but in the mean time admonishes them to be constantly in a state of preparation for receiving Christ. ^{f104} He speaks, however, by way of *anticipation*, saying, that they have no need that he should write as to those things which the curious desire to know. For it is an evidence of excessive incredulity not to believe what the Lord foretells, unless he marks out the day by certain circumstances, and as it were points it out with the finger. As, therefore, those waver between doubtful opinions who require that moments of time should be marked out for them, as if they would draw a conjecture ^{f105} from some plausible demonstration, he accordingly says that discussions of this nature are not necessary for the pious. There is also another reason—that believers do not desire to know more than they are permitted to learn in God’s school. Now Christ designed that the day of his coming

should be hid from us, that, being in suspense, we might be as it were upon watch.

2. *Ye know perfectly.* He places exact knowledge in contrast with an anxious desire of investigation. But what is it that he says the Thessalonians know accurately? ^{f106} It is, that the day of Christ will come suddenly and unexpectedly, so as to take unbelievers by surprise, as a thief does those that are asleep. This, however, is opposed to evident tokens, which might portend afar off his coming to the world. Hence it were foolish to wish to determine the time precisely from presages or prodigies.

3. *For when they shall say.* Here we have an explanation of the similitude, *the day of the Lord will be like a thief in the night.* Why so? because it will come suddenly to unbelievers, when not looked for, so that it will take them by surprise, as though they were asleep. But whence comes that sleep? Assuredly from deep contempt of God. The prophets frequently reprove the wicked on account of this supine negligence, and assuredly they await in a spirit of carelessness not merely that last judgment, but also such as are of daily occurrence. Though the Lord threatens destruction, ^{f107} they do not hesitate to promise themselves peace and every kind of prosperity. And the reason why they fall into this destructive indolence ^{f108} is, because they do not see those things immediately accomplished, which the Lord declares will take place, for they reckon that to be fabulous that does not immediately present itself before their eyes. For this reason the Lord, in order that he may avenge this carelessness, which is full of obstinacy, comes all on a sudden, and contrary to the expectation of all, precipitates the wicked from the summit of felicity. He sometimes furnishes tokens of this nature of a sudden advent, but that will be the principal one, when Christ will come down to judge the world, as he himself testifies, (<402437> Matthew 24:37) comparing that time to the age of Noe, inasmuch as all will give way to excess, as if in the profoundest repose.

As the pains of child-bearing. Here we have a most apt similitude, inasmuch as there is no evil that seizes more suddenly, and that presses more keenly and more violently on the very first attack; besides this, a woman that is with child carries in her womb occasion of grief without

feeling it, until she is seized amidst feasting and laughter, or in the midst of sleep.

4. *But ye, brethren.* He now admonishes them as to what is the duty of believers, that they look forward in hope to that day, though it be remote. And this is what is intended in the metaphor of *day* and *light*. The coming of Christ will take by surprise those that are carelessly giving way to indulgence, because, being enveloped in darkness, they see nothing, for no darkness is more dense than ignorance of God. We, on the other hand, on whom Christ has shone by the faith of his gospel, differ much from them, for that saying of Isaiah is truly accomplished in us, that

while darkness covers the earth, the Lord arises upon us, and his
glory is seen in us. (<²³⁶⁰⁰²> Isaiah 60:2)

He admonishes us, therefore, that it were an unseemly thing that we should be caught by Christ asleep, as it were, or seeing nothing, while the full blaze of light is shining forth upon us. He calls them *children of light*, in accordance with the Hebrew idiom, as meaning—furnished with light; as also *children of the day*, meaning—those who enjoy the light of day.^{f109} And this he again confirms, when he says that we are *not of the night nor of darkness*, because the Lord has rescued us from it. For it is as though he had said, that we have not been enlightened by the Lord with a view to our walking in darkness.

<520506>1 THESSALONIANS 5:6-10

6. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.	6. Ergo ne dormiamus ut reliqui, sed vigilemus, et sobrii simus.
7. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.	7. Qui enim dormiunt, nocte dormiunt: et qui ebrii sunt, nocte ebrii sunt.
8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation.	8. Nos autem qui sumus diei, sobrii simus, induti thorace fidei et caritatis, et galea, spe salutis:
9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.	9. Quia non constituit nos Deus in iram, sed in acquisitionem salutis, per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum:
10. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.	10. Qui mortuus est pro nobis. ut sive vigilemus, sive dormiamus, simul cum ipso vivamus.

6. *Therefore let us not sleep.* He adds other metaphors closely allied to the preceding one. For as he lately shewed that it were by no means seemly that they should be blind in the midst of light, so he now admonishes that it were dishonorable and disgraceful to sleep or be drunk in the middle of the day. Now, as he gives the name of *day* to the doctrine of the gospel, by which the Christ, the *Sun of righteousness* (<390402> Malachi 4:2) is manifested to us, so when he speaks of sleep and drunkenness, he does not mean natural sleep, or drunkenness from wine, but stupor of mind, when, forgetting God and ourselves, we regardlessly indulge our vices. ***Let us not sleep,*** says he; that is, let us not, sunk in indolence, become senseless in the world. *As others*, that is, unbelievers,^{f110} from whom ignorance of God, like a dark night, takes away understanding and reason. ***But let us watch,*** that is, let us look to the Lord with an attentive mind. ***And be sober,*** that is, casting away the cares of the world, which weigh us down by their pressure, and throwing off base lusts, mount to heaven with freedom and alacrity. For this is spiritual sobriety, when we use this world so sparingly and temperately that we are not entangled with its allurements.

8. *Having put on the breastplate.* He adds this, that he may the more effectually shake us out of our stupidity, for he calls us as it were to arms, that he may shew that it is not a time to sleep. It is true that he does not make use of the term *war* ; but when he arms us with a *breastplate* and a *helmet*, he admonishes us that we must maintain a warfare. Whoever, therefore, is afraid of being surprised by the enemy, must keep awake, that he may be constantly on watch. As, therefore, he has exhorted to vigilance, on the ground that the doctrine of the gospel is like the light of day, so he now stirs us up by another argument—that we must wage war with our enemy. From this it follows, that idleness is too hazardous a thing. For we see that soldiers, though in other situations they may be intemperate, do nevertheless, when the enemy is near, from fear of destruction, refrain from gluttony ^{f111} and all bodily delights, and are diligently on watch so as to be upon their guard. As, therefore, Satan is on the alert against us, and tries a thousand schemes, we ought at least to be not less diligent and watchful. ^{f112}

It is, however, in vain, that some seek a more refined exposition of the names of the kinds of armor, for Paul speaks here in a different way from what he does in ^{<490614>} Ephesians 6:14 for there he makes *righteousness* the *breastplate*. This, therefore, will suffice for understanding his meaning, that he designs to teach, that the life of Christians is like a perpetual warfare, inasmuch as Satan does not cease to trouble and molest them. He would have us, therefore, be diligently prepared and on the alert for resistance: farther, he admonishes us that we have need of arms, because unless we be well armed we cannot withstand so powerful ^{f113} an enemy. He does not, however, enumerate *all the parts of armor*, (*πανοπλίαν*), but simply makes mention of two, the *breastplate* and the *helmet*. In the mean time, he omits nothing of what belongs to spiritual armor, for the man that is provided with *faith*, *love*, and *hope*, will be found in no department unarmed.

9. *For God hath not appointed us.* As he has spoken of the *hope of salvation*, he follows out that department, and says that God has appointed us to this—that we *may obtain salvation through Christ*. The passage, however, might be explained in a simple way in this manner—that we must *put on the helmet of salvation*, because God wills not that we should perish, but rather that we should be saved. And this, indeed, Paul means, but, in my opinion, he has in view something farther. For as the

day of Christ is for the most part regarded with alarm,^{f114} having it in view to close with the mention of it, he says that we are *appointed to salvation*.

The Greek term *περιποίησις* means *enjoyment*, (as they speak,) as well as *acquisition*. Paul, undoubtedly, does not mean that God has called us, that we may procure salvation for ourselves, but that we may obtain it, as it has been acquired for us by Christ. Paul, however, encourages believers to fight strenuously, setting before them the certainty of victory; for the man who fights timidly and hesitatingly is half—conquered. In these words, therefore, he had it in view to take away the dread which arises from distrust. There cannot, however, be a better assurance of salvation gathered, than from the decree^{f115} of God. The term *wrath*, in this passage, as in other instances, is taken to mean the judgment or vengeance of God against the reprobate.

10. *Who died*. From the design of Christ's death he confirms what he has said, for if he died with this view—that he might make us partakers of his life, there is no reason why we should be in doubt as to our salvation. It is doubtful, however, what he means now by *sleeping* and *waking*, for it might seem as if he meant *life* and *death*, and this meaning would be more complete. At the same time, we might not unsuitably interpret it as meaning ordinary sleep. The sum is this—that Christ died with this view, that he might bestow upon us his life, which is perpetual and has no end. It is not to be wondered, however, that he affirms that we now *live with Christ*, inasmuch as we have, by entering through faith into the kingdom of Christ, *passed from death into life*. (<⁴³⁰⁵²⁴> John 5:24) Christ himself, into whose body we are ingrafted, quickens us by his power, and the Spirit that dwelleth in us is *life, because of justification*.^{f116}

<520511> 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11—14

11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.	11. Quare exhortamini (vel, consolamini) vos invicem, et aedificate singuli singulos, sicut et facitis.
12. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;	12. Rogamus autem vos, fratres, ut agnoscatis eos, qui laborant in vobis, et praesunt vobis in Domino, et admonent vos:
13. And to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake. And be at peace among yourselves.	13. Ut eos habeatis in summo pretio cum caritate propter opus ipsorum: pacem habete cum ipsis, (vel, inter vos.)
14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble—minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.	14. Hortamur autem vos, fratres, monete inordinatos, consolamini pusillanimos, suscipite infirmos, patientes estote erga omnes.

11. *Exhort.* It is the same word that we had in the close of the preceding chapter, and which we rendered *comfort*, because the context required it, and the same would not suit ill with this passage also. For what he has treated of previously furnishes matter of both—of *consolation* as well as of *exhortation*. He bids them, therefore, communicate to one another what has been given them by the Lord. He adds, that they may *edify one another*—that is, may confirm each other in that doctrine. Lest, however, it might seem as if he reproved them for carelessness, he says at the same time that they of their own accord did what he enjoins. But, as we are slow to what is good, those that are the most favourably inclined of all, have always, nevertheless, need to be stimulated.

12. *And we beseech you.* Here we have an admonition that is very necessary. For as the kingdom of God is lightly esteemed, or at least is not esteemed suitably to its dignity, there follows also from this, contempt of pious teachers. Now, the most of them, offended with this ingratitude, not so much because they see themselves despised, as because they infer from this, that honor is not rendered to their Lord, are rendered thereby more indifferent, and God also, on just grounds, inflicts vengeance upon the

world, inasmuch as he deprives it of good ministers,^{f117} to whom it is ungrateful. Hence, it is not so much for the advantage of ministers as of the whole Church, that those who faithfully preside over it should be held in esteem. And it is for this reason that Paul is so careful to recommend them. To *acknowledge* means here to *have regard* or respect; but Paul intimates that the reason why less honor is shewn to teachers themselves than is befitting, is because their labor is not ordinarily taken into consideration.

We must observe, however, with what titles of distinction he honors pastors. In the *first* place, he says that they *labor*. From this it follows, that all idle bellies are excluded from the number of pastors. Farther, he expresses the kind of labor when he adds, *those that admonish*, or instruct, *you*. It is to no purpose, therefore, that any, that do not discharge the office of an instructor, glory in the name of pastors. The Pope, it is true, readily admits such persons into his catalogue, but the Spirit of God expunges them from *his*. As, however, they are held in contempt in the world, as has been said, he honors them at the same time, with the distinction of presidency.

Paul would have such as devote themselves to teaching, and preside with no other end in view than that of serving the Church, be held in no ordinary esteem. For he says literally—*let them be more than abundantly honored*, and not without good ground, for we must observe the reason that he adds immediately afterwards—*on account of their work*. Now, this *work* is the edification of the Church, the everlasting salvation of souls, the restoration of the world, and, in fine, the kingdom of God and Christ. The excellence and dignity of this work are inestimable: hence those whom God makes ministers in connection with so great a matter, ought to be held by us in great esteem. We may, however, infer from Paul's words, that judgment is committed to the Church, that it may distinguish true pastors.

^{f118} For to no purpose were these marks pointed out, if he did not mean that they should be taken notice of by believers. And while he commands that honor be given to those that *labor*, and to those that by teaching^{f119} govern properly and faithfully, he assuredly does not bestow any honor upon those that are idle and wicked, nor does he mark them out as deserving of it.

Preside in the Lord. This seems to be added to denote spiritual government. For although kings and magistrates also preside by the

appointment of God, yet as the Lord would have the government of the Church to be specially recognized as *his*, those that govern the Church in the name and by the commandment of Christ, are for this reason spoken of particularly as *presiding in the Lord*. We may, however, infer from this, how very remote those are from the rank of pastors and prelates who exercise a tyranny altogether opposed to Christ. Unquestionably, in order that any one may be ranked among lawful pastors, it is necessary that he should shew that he *presides* IN THE LORD, and has nothing apart from him. And what else is this, but that by pure doctrine he puts Christ in his own seat, that he may be the only Lord and Master?

13. *With love*. Others render it BY *love*; for Paul says *in love*, which, according to the Hebrew idiom, is equivalent to *by* or *with*. I prefer, however, to explain it thus—as meaning that he exhorts them not merely to respect them,^{f120} but also love them. For as the doctrine of the gospel is lovely, so it is befitting that the ministers of it should be loved. It were, however, rather stiff to speak of *having in esteem* BY *love*, while the connecting together of love with honor suits well.

***Be at peace*.** While this passage has various readings, even among the Greeks, I approve rather of the rendering which has been given by the old translator, and is followed by Erasmus—*Pacem habete cum eis, vel colite*—(*Have or cultivate peace with them.*)^{f121} For Paul, in my opinion, had in view to oppose the artifices of Satan, who ceases not to use every endeavor to stir up either quarrels, or disagreements, or enmities, between people and pastor. Hence we see daily how pastors are hated by their Churches for some trivial reason, or for no reason whatever, because this desire for the cultivation of peace, which Paul recommends so strongly, is not exercised as it ought.

14. *Admonish the unruly*. It is a common doctrine—that the welfare of our brethren should be the object of our concern. This is done by *teaching*, admonishing, correcting, and arousing; but, as the dispositions of men are various, it is not without good reason that the Apostle commands that believers accommodate themselves to this variety. He commands, therefore, that the *unruly*^{f122} be admonished, that is, those who *live dissolutely*. The term *admonition*, also, is employed to mean sharp reproof, such as may bring them back into the right way, for they are deserving of

greater severity, and they cannot be brought to repentance by any other remedy.

Towards the *faint-hearted* another system of conduct must be pursued, for they have need of consolation. The *weak* must also be assisted. By *faint-hearted*, however, he means those that are of a broken and afflicted spirit. He accordingly favors them, and the *weak*, in such a way as to desire that the *unruly* should be restrained with some degree of sternness. On the other hand, he commands that the *unruly* should be admonished sharply, in order that the weak may be treated with kindness and humanity, and that the *faint-hearted* may receive consolation. It is therefore to no purpose that those that are obstinate and intractable demand that they be soothingly caressed, inasmuch as remedies must be adapted to diseases.

He recommends, however, *patience towards all*, for severity must be tempered with some degree of lenity, even in dealing with the *unruly*. This *patience*, however, is, properly speaking, contrasted with a feeling of irksomeness,^{f123} for nothing are we more prone to than to feel wearied out when we set ourselves to cure the diseases of our brethren. The man who has once and again comforted a person who is *faint-hearted*, if he is called to do the same thing a third time, will feel I know not what vexation, nay, even indignation, that will not permit him to persevere in discharging his duty. Thus, if by admonishing or reproving, we do not immediately do the good that is to be desired, we lose all hope of future success. Paul had in view to bridle impatience of this nature, by recommending to us moderation towards all.

<520515> 1 THESSALONIANS 5:15-22

15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man ; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.	15. Videte, ne quis malum pro malo cuiquam reddat: sed semper benignitatem sectamini, et mutuam inter vos, et in omnes.
16. Rejoice evermore.	16. Semper gaudete.
17. Pray without ceasing.	17. Indesinenter orate.
18. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.	18. In omnibus gratias agite: haec enim Dei voluntas in Christo Iesu erga vos.
19. Quench not the Spirit.	19. Spiritum ne extinguatis.
20. Despise not prophesyings.	20. Prophetias ne contemnatis.
21. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.	21. Omnia probate, quod bonum est tenete.
22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.	22. Ab omni specie mala abstinete.

15. *See that no one render evil for evil.* As it is difficult to observe this precept, in consequence of the strong bent of our nature to revenge, he on this account bids us take care to be on our guard. For the word *see* denotes anxious care. Now, although he simply forbids us to strive with each other in the way of inflicting injuries, there can, nevertheless, be no doubt that he meant to condemn, at the same time, every disposition to do injury. For if it is unlawful to *render evil for evil*, every disposition to injure is culpable. This doctrine is peculiar to Christians—not to retaliate injuries, but to endure them patiently. And lest the Thessalonians should think that revenge was prohibited only towards their brethren, he expressly declares that they are to *do evil to no one*. For particular excuses are wont to be brought forward in some cases. “What! why should it be unlawful for me to avenge myself on one that is so worthless, so wicked, and so cruel?” But as vengeance is forbidden us in every case, without exception, however wicked the man that has injured us may be, we must refrain from inflicting injury.

But always follow benignity. By this last clause he teaches that we must not merely refrain from inflicting vengeance, when any one has injured us,

but must cultivate beneficence towards all. For although he means that it should in the first instance be exercised among believers mutually, he afterwards extends it to all, however undeserving of it, that we may make it our aim to *overcome evil with good*, as he himself teaches elsewhere. (<451221> Romans 12:21) The first step, therefore, in the exercise of patience, is, not to revenge injuries; the second is, to bestow favors even upon enemies.

16. *Rejoice always.* I refer this to moderation of spirit, when the mind keeps itself in calmness under adversity, and does not give indulgence to grief. I accordingly connect together these three things—to *rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks to God in* all things. For when he recommends constant praying, he points out the way of rejoicing perpetually, for by this means we ask from God alleviation in connection with all our distresses. In like manner, in <500404> Philippians 4:4, having said,

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known to all. Be not anxious as to anything. The Lord is at hand.

He afterwards points out the means of this—

but in every prayer let your requests be made known to God, with giving of thanks.

In that passage, as we see, he presents as a source of joy a calm and composed mind, that is not unduly disturbed by injuries or adversities. But lest we should be borne down by grief, sorrow, anxiety, and fear, he bids us repose in the providence of God. And as doubts frequently obtrude themselves as to whether God cares for us, he also prescribes the remedy—that by prayer we disburden our anxieties, as it were, into his bosom, as David commands us to do in <193705> Psalm 37:5 and <195522> Psalm 55:22; and Peter also, after his example. (<600507> 1 Peter 5:7.) As, however, we are unduly precipitate in our desires, he imposes a check upon them—that, while we desire what we are in need of, we at the same time do not cease to give thanks.

He observes, here, almost the same order, though in fewer words. For, in the first place, he would have us hold God's benefits in such esteem, that the recognition of them and meditation upon them shall overcome all

sorrow. And, unquestionably, if we consider what Christ has conferred upon us, there will be no bitterness of grief so intense as may not be alleviated, and give way to spiritual joy. For if this joy does not reign in us, the kingdom of God is at the same time banished from us, or we from it. ^{f124} And very ungrateful is that man to God, who does not set so high a value on the righteousness of Christ and the hope of eternal life, as to rejoice in the midst of sorrow. As, however, our minds are easily dispirited, until they give way to impatience, we must observe the remedy that he subjoins immediately afterwards. For on being cast down and laid low we are raised up again by prayers, because we lay upon God what burdened us. As, however, there are every day, nay, every moment, many things that may disturb our peace, and mar our joy, he for this reason bids us *pray without ceasing*. Now, as to this constancy in prayer, we have spoken of elsewhere. ^{f125} *Thanksgiving*, as I have said, is added as a limitation. For many pray in such a manner, as at the same time to murmur against God, and fret themselves if he does not immediately gratify their wishes. But, on the contrary, it is befitting that our desires should be restrained in such a manner that, contented with what is given us, we always mingle thanksgiving with our desires. We may lawfully, it is true, ask, nay, sigh and lament, but it must be in such a way that the will of God is more acceptable to us than our own.

18. *For this is the will of God*—that is, according to Chrysostom’s opinion—that we *give thanks*. As for myself, I am of opinion that a more ample meaning is included under these terms—that God has such a disposition towards us in Christ, that even in our afflictions we have large occasion of thanksgiving. For what is fitter or more suitable for pacifying us, than when we learn that God embraces us in Christ so tenderly, that he turns to our advantage and welfare everything that befalls us? Let us, therefore, bear in mind, that this is a special remedy for correcting our impatience—to turn away our eyes from beholding present evils that torment us, and to direct our views to a consideration of a different nature—how God stands affected towards us in Christ.

19. *Quench not the Spirit*. This metaphor is derived from the power and nature of the Spirit; for as it is the proper office of the Spirit to illuminate the understandings of men, and as he is on this account called our light, it is with propriety that we are said to *quench* him, when we make void his grace. There are some that think that it is the same thing that is said in this

clause and the succeeding one. Hence, according to them, to *quench the Spirit* is precisely the same as to *despise prophesyings*. As, however, the Spirit is *quenched* in various ways, I make a distinction between these two things—that of a *general* statement, and a *particular*. For although *contempt of prophesying* is a *quenching of the Spirit*, yet those also *quench the Spirit* who, instead of stirring up, as they ought, more and more, by daily progress, the sparks that God has kindled in them, do, by their negligence, make void the gifts of God. This admonition, therefore, as to not *quenching the Spirit*, has a wider extent of meaning than the one that follows as to not *despising prophesyings*. The meaning of the *former* is: “Be enlightened by the Spirit of God. See that you do not lose that light through your ingratitude.” This is an exceedingly useful admonition, for we see that those who have been *once enlightened*, (^{<580604>} Hebrews 6:4) when they reject so precious a gift of God, or, shutting their eyes, allow themselves to be hurried away after the vanity of the world, are struck with a dreadful blindness, so as to be an example to others. We must, therefore, be on our guard against indolence, by which the light of God is choked in us.

Those, however, who infer from this that it is in man’s option either to *quench* or to *cherish* the light that is presented to him, so that they detract from the efficacy of grace, and extol the powers of free will, reason on false grounds. For although God works efficaciously in his elect, and does not merely present the light to them, but causes them to see, opens the eyes of their heart, and keeps them open, yet as the flesh is always inclined to indolence, it has need of being stirred up by exhortations. But what God commands by Paul’s mouth, He himself accomplishes inwardly. In the mean time, it is our part to ask from the Lord, that he would furnish oil to the lamps which he has lighted up, that he may keep the wick pure, and may even increase it.

20. *Despise not prophesyings.* This sentence is appropriately added to the preceding one, for as the Spirit of God illuminates us chiefly by doctrine, those who give not teaching its proper place, do, so far as in them lies, *quench the Spirit*, for we must always consider in what manner or by what means God designs to communicate himself to us. Let every one, therefore, who is desirous to make progress under the direction of the Holy Spirit, allow himself to be taught by the ministry of prophets.

By the term *prophecy*, however, I do not understand the gift of foretelling the future, but as in ^{<461403>} 1 Corinthians 14:3, the science of interpreting Scripture, ^{f126} so that a *prophet* is an interpreter of the will of God. For Paul, in the passage which I have quoted, assigns to *prophets teaching for edification, exhortation, and consolation*, and enumerates, as it were, these departments. Let, therefore, prophecy in this passage be understood as meaning—interpretation made suitable to present use. ^{f127} Paul prohibits us from *despising* it, if we would not choose of our own accord to wander in darkness.

The statement, however, is a remarkable one, for the commendation of external preaching. It is the dream of fanatics, that those are children who continue to employ themselves in the reading of the Scripture, or the hearing of the word, as if no one were spiritual, unless he is a despiser of doctrine. They proudly, therefore, despise the ministry of man, nay, even Scripture itself, that they may attain the Spirit. Farther, whatever delusions Satan suggests to them, ^{f128} they presumptuously set forth as secret revelations of the Spirit. Such are the Libertines, ^{f129} and other furies of that stamp. And the more ignorant that any one is, he is puffed up and swollen out with so much the greater arrogance. Let us, however, learn from the example of Paul, to conjoin the Spirit with the voice of men, which is nothing else than his organ. ^{f130}

21. *Prove all things.* As rash men and deceiving spirits frequently pass off their trifles under the name of *prophecy*, *prophecy* might by this means be rendered suspicious or even odious, just as many in the present day feel almost disgusted with the very name of *preaching*, as there are so many foolish and ignorant persons that from the pulpit blab out their worthless contrivances, ^{f131} while there are others, also, that are wicked and sacrilegious persons, who babble forth execrable blasphemies. ^{f132} As, therefore, through the fault of such persons it might be, that *prophecy* was regarded with disdain, nay more, was scarcely allowed to hold a place, Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to *prove all things*, meaning, that although all do not speak precisely according to set rule, we must, nevertheless, form a judgment, before any doctrine is condemned or rejected.

As to this, there is a twofold error that is wont to be fallen into, for there are some who, from having either been deceived by a false pretext of the name of God, or from their knowing that many are commonly deceived in

this way, reject every kind of doctrine indiscriminately, while there are others that by a foolish credulity embrace, without distinction, everything that is presented to them in the name of God. Both of these ways are faulty, for the former class, saturated with a presumptuous prejudice of that nature, close up the way against their making progress, while the other class rashly expose themselves to all *winds* of errors. (<490414> Ephesians 4:14) Paul admonishes the Thessalonians to keep the middle path between these two extremes, while he prohibits them from condemning anything without first examining it; and, on the other hand, he admonishes them to exercise judgment, before receiving, what may be brought forward, as undoubted truth. And unquestionably, this respect, at least, ought to be shewn to the name of God—that we do not *despise prophecy*, which is declared to have proceeded from him. As, however, examination or discrimination ought to precede rejection, so it must, also, precede the reception of true and sound doctrine. For it does not become the pious to shew such lightness, as indiscriminately to lay hold of what is false equally with what is true. From this we infer, that they have the spirit of judgment conferred upon them by God, that they may discriminate, so as not to be imposed upon by the impostures of men. For if they were not endowed with discrimination, it were in vain that Paul said—*Prove: hold fast that which is good*. If, however, we feel that we are left destitute of the power of *proving* aright; it must be sought by us from the same Spirit, who speaks by his prophets. But the Lord declares in this place by the mouth of Paul, that the course of doctrine ought not, by any faults of mankind, or by any rashness, or ignorance, or, in fine, by any abuse, to be hindered from being always in a vigorous state in the Church. For as the abolition of prophecy is the ruin of the Church, let us allow heaven and earth to be commingled, rather than that prophecy should cease.

Paul, however, may seem here to give too great liberty in teaching, when he would have *all things proved*; for things must be heard by us, that they may be *proved*, and by this means a door would be opened to impostors for disseminating their falsehoods. I answer, that in this instance he does not by any means require that an audience should be given to false teachers, whose *mouth* he elsewhere teaches (<560111> Titus 1:11) *must be stopped*, and whom he so rigidly shuts out, and does not by any means set aside the arrangement, which he elsewhere recommends so highly (<540302> 1 Timothy 3:2) in the election of teachers. As, however, so great diligence

can never be exercised as that there should not sometimes be persons prophesying, who are not so well instructed as they ought to be, and that sometimes good and pious teachers fail to hit the mark, he requires such moderation on the part of believers, as, nevertheless, not to refuse to hear. For nothing is more dangerous, than that moroseness, by which every kind of doctrine is rendered disgusting to us, while we do not allow ourselves to *prove* what is right.^{f133}

22. *From every evil appearance.* Some think that this is a universal statement, as though he commanded to abstain from all things that bear upon their front an *appearance of evil*. In that case the meaning would be, that it is not enough to have an internal testimony of conscience, unless regard be at the same time had to brethren, so as to provide against occasions of offense, by avoiding every thing that can have the appearance of evil.

Those who explain the word *speciem* after the manner of dialecticians as meaning the subdivision of a general term, fall into an exceedingly gross blunder. For he^{f134} has employed the term *speciem* as meaning what we commonly term *appearance*. It may also be rendered either—*evil appearance*, or *appearance of evil*. The meaning, however, is the same. I rather prefer Chrysostom and Ambrose, who connect this sentence with the foregoing one. At the same time, neither of them explains Paul's meaning, and perhaps have not altogether hit upon what he intends. I shall state briefly my view of it.

In the first place, the phrase *appearance of evil*, or *evil appearance*, I understand to mean—when falsity of doctrine has not yet been discovered in such a manner, that it can on good grounds be rejected; but at the same time an unhappy suspicion is left upon the mind, and fears are entertained, lest there should be some poison lurking. He, accordingly, commands us to abstain from that kind of doctrine, which has an appearance of being evil, though it is not really so—not that he allows that it should be altogether rejected, but inasmuch as it ought not to be received, or to obtain belief. For why has he previously commanded that *what is good* should be *held fast*, while he now desires that we should *abstain* not simply from evil, but from *all appearance of evil*? It is for this reason, that, when truth has been brought to light by careful examination, it is assuredly becoming in that case to give credit to it. When, on the other hand, there is any fear of false

doctrine, or when the mind is involved in doubt, it is proper in that case to retreat, or to suspend our step, as they say, lest we should receive anything with a doubtful and perplexed conscience. In short, he shews us in what way *prophecy* will be useful to us without any danger—in the event of our being attentive in *proving all things*, and our being free from lightness and haste.

<520523> 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-28	
23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.	23. Ipse autem Deus pacis sanctificet vos totos: et integer spiritus vester, et anima et corpus sine reprehensione in adventu Domini nostri Iesu Christi custodiatur:
24. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.	24. Fidelis qui vos vocavit, qui et faciet.
25. Brethren. pray for us.	25. Fratres, orate pro nobis.
26. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.	26. Salutate fratres omnes in osculo sancto.
27. I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.	27. Adiuro vos per Dominum, ut legatur epistola omnibus sanctis fratribus.
28. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.	28. Gratia Domini nostri Iesu Christi vobiscum. Amen.
The first epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens.	Ad Thessalonicenses prima scripta fuit ex Athenis.

23. *Now the God of peace himself.* Having given various injunctions, he now proceeds to prayer. And unquestionably doctrine is disseminated in vain, ^{f135} unless God implant it in our minds. From this we see how preposterously those act who measure the strength of men by the precepts of God. Paul, accordingly, knowing that all doctrine is useless until God engraves it, as it were, with his own finger upon our hearts, beseeches God that he would *sanctify* the Thessalonians. Why he calls him here the *God of peace*, I do not altogether apprehend, unless you choose to

refer it to what goes before, where he makes mention of brotherly agreement, and patience, and equanimity. ^{f136}

We know, however, that under the term *sanctification* is included the entire renovation of the man. The Thessalonians, it is true, had been in part renewed, but Paul desires that God would perfect what is remaining. From this we infer, that we must, during our whole life, make progress in the pursuit of holiness. ^{f137} But if it is the part of God to renew the whole man, there is nothing left for free will. For if it had been our part to co—operate with God, Paul would have spoken thus—”May God aid or promote your sanctification.” But when he says, *sanctify you wholly*, he makes him the sole Author of the entire work.

And your entire spirit. This is added by way of exposition, that we may know what the *sanctification of the whole man* is, when he is kept *entire*, or pure, and unpolluted, in spirit, soul, and body, until the day of Christ. As, however, so complete an entireness is never to be met with in this life, it is befitting that some progress be daily made in purity, and something be cleansed away from our pollutions, so long as we live in the world.

We must notice, however, this division of the constituent parts of a man; for in some instances a man is said to consist simply of *body* and *soul*, and in that case the term *soul* denotes the immortal spirit, which resides in the body as in a dwelling. As the *soul*, however, has two principal faculties—the understanding and the will—the Scripture is accustomed in some cases to mention these two things separately, when designing to express the power and nature of the *soul* ; but in that case the term *soul* is employed to mean the seat of the affections, so that it is the part that is opposed to the *spirit*. Hence, when we find mention made here of the term *spirit*, let us understand it as denoting reason or intelligence, as on the other hand by the term *soul*, is meant the will and all the affections.

I am aware that many explain Paul’s words otherwise, for they are of opinion that by the term *soul* is meant vital motion, and by the *spirit* is meant that part of man which has been renewed; but in that case Paul’s prayer were absurd. Besides, it is in another way, as I have said, that the term is wont to be made use of in Scripture. When Isaiah says,

“My SOUL hath desired thee in the night, my SPIRIT hath thought of thee,” (<232609> Isaiah 26:9)

no one doubts that he speaks of his understanding and affection, and thus enumerates two departments of the *soul*. These two terms are conjoined in the Psalms in the same sense. This, also, corresponds better with Paul's statement. For how is the whole man *entire*, except when his thoughts are pure and holy, when all his affections are right and properly regulated, when, in fine, the body itself lays out its endeavors and services only in good works? For the faculty of understanding is held by philosophers to be, as it were, a mistress: the affections occupy a middle place for commanding; the body renders obedience. We see now how well everything corresponds. For then is the man pure and entire, when he thinks nothing in his mind, desires nothing in his heart, does nothing with his body, except what is approved by God. As, however, Paul in this manner commits to God the keeping of the whole man, and all its parts, we must infer from this that we are exposed to innumerable dangers, unless we are protected by his guardianship.

24. *Faithful is he that hath called you.* As he has shewn by his prayer what care he exercised as to the welfare of the Thessalonians, so he now confirms them in an assurance of Divine grace. Observe, however, by what argument he promises them the never-failing aid of God—because he has *called* them; by which words he means, that when the Lord has once adopted us as his sons, we may expect that his grace will continue to be exercised towards us. For he does not promise to be a Father to us merely for one day, but adopts us with this understanding, that he is to cherish us ever afterwards. Hence our *calling* ought to be held by us as an evidence of everlasting grace, for he *will not leave the work of his hands incomplete*. (<19D808> Psalm 138:8) Paul, however, addresses believers, who had not been merely called by outward preaching, but had been effectually brought by Christ to the Father, that they might be of the number of his sons.

26. *Salute all the brethren with an holy kiss.* As to the *kiss*, it was a customary token of salutation, as has been stated elsewhere. ^{f138} In these words, however, he declares his affection towards all the saints.

27. *I adjure you by the Lord.* It is not certain whether he feared that, as often happened, spiteful and envious persons would suppress the Epistle, or whether he wished to provide against another danger—lest by a mistaken prudence and caution on the part of some, it should be kept among a few. ^{f139} For there will always be found some who say that it is of

no advantage to publish generally things that otherwise they recognize as very excellent. At least, whatever artifice or pretext Satan may have at that time contrived, in order that the Epistle might not come to the knowledge of all, we may gather from Paul's words with what earnestness and keenness he sets himself in opposition to it. For it is no light or frivolous thing to *adjure by the name of God*. We find, therefore, that the Spirit of God would have those things which he had set forth in this Epistle, through the ministry of Paul, to be published throughout the whole Church. Hence it appears, that those are more refractory than even devils themselves, who in the present day prohibit the people of God from reading the writings of Paul, inasmuch as they are no way moved by so strict an adjuration.

END OF THE COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

FOOTNOTES

^{ft1} See p. 16.

^{ft2} “Ayant ouy qu’il y estoit suruenu des persecutions, et qu’elles continuoyent;”—“Having heard that there were some persecutions that had broken out there, and that they were still continuing.”

^{ft3} “En mettant en auant sur ce propos beaucoup de choses frivoles et curieuses;”—“By bringing forward upon this subject many frivolous and curious things.”

^{ft4} “En nos prieres, sans cesse ayans souuenance; *ou*, En nos prieres sans cesse, Ayans souuenance;”—“In our prayers, without ceasing having remembrance; *or*, In our prayers without ceasing, Having remembrance.”

^{ft5} “De vous pour l’ŷuvre de la foy, et pour le trauail de vostre charite; *ou*, de l’effect de vostre foy, et du trauail de vostre charite;”—“Of you for the work of faith, or for the labor of your love; *or*, of the effect of your faith, or of the labor of your love.”

^{ft6} “Freres bien— aimez, vostre election estre de Dieu; *ou*, freres bien— aimez de Dieu, vostre election; *ou*, vostre election, qui est de Dieu;”— “Brethren beloved, your election to be of God; *or*, brethren beloved of God, your election; *or*, your election, which is of God.”

^{ft7} “Est vn benefice procedant de la liberalite de Dieu;”—“Is a kindness proceeding from God’s liberality.”

^{ft8} The words are ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου. —*Ed*.

^{ft9} The rendering of the Vulgate is as follows: “*Sine intermissione memores operis fidei vestrae.*” Wiclif (1380) renders as follows: “With outen ceesyng hautyng mynde of the werk of youre feithe.” Cranmer, (1539,) on the other hand, renders thus: “And call you to remembrance because of the work of your faith—*Ed*.”

^{ft10} “Quant a la substance du propos;”—“As to the substance of the matter.”

^{ft11} The rendering of Erasmus is as follows: “*Memores vestri propter opus fidei;*”—“Mindful of you on account of your work of faith.”

- ft12 “D’afflictions quasi sans nombre;”—“By afflictions, as it were, without number.”
- ft13 “Foibles et debiles en la foy;”—“Weak and feeble in faith.”
- ft14 “Ce point a nommeement este adiousté par Saint Paul;”—“This point has been expressly added by St. Paul.”
- ft15 “Car ce n’estoit vne petite consideration pour inciter St. Paul et les autres, a auoir les Thessaloniciens pour recommandez, et en faire esteme;”—“For it was no slight motive to induce St. Paul and others to hold the Thessalonians in estimation, and to regard them with esteem.”
- ft16 “A l’este comme seellé et ratifié par bons tesmoignages et approbations suffisantes;”—“Had been there, as it were, sealed and ratified by good testimonies and sufficient attestations.”
- ft17 “Et en estoit l’auteur;”—“And was the author of it.”
- ft18 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, Volume 1
- ft19 “Au reste, les mots de ceste sentence sont ainsi couchez au texte Grec de Saint Paul, Scachans freres bien— aimez de Dieu, vostre election: tellement que ce mot *de Dieu*, pent estre rapporté a deux endroits, ascauoir Bien— aimez de Dieu, ou vostre election estre de Dieu: mais c’est tout vn comment on le prene quant au sens;”—“Farther, the words of this sentence are thus placed in the Greek text of St. Paul; knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election: in such a way, that this phrase *of God* may be taken as referring to two things, as meaning beloved of God, or, your election to be of God; but it is all one as to the sense in what way you take it.”
- ft20 “Quels auoyent este St. Paul et ses compagnons;”—“What manner of persons St. Paul and his associates had been.”
- ft21 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, Volume 2.
- ft22 “Si viue et vertueuse;”—“So lively and virtuous.”
- ft23 “Auoit resonné haut et clair;”—“Had resounded loud and clear.”
- ft24 “Tellement que la chose n’a point besoin d’estre par luy diuulgee et magnifiée d’auantage;”—“So that the matter does not need to be farther published and extolled by him.”

- ft25 “Par laquelle Dieu auoit orné et magnifiquement autorisé son Euangile;”—“By which God had adorned and magnificently attested his gospel.”
- ft26 “De toute religion;”—“Of all religion.”
- ft27 “Que ne nous lassions et perdions courage;”—“That we do not give way and lose heart.”
- ft28 “Jettent sur nous leurs rayons;”—“Cast upon us their rays.”
- ft29 “Aux autres;”—“To others.”
- ft30 “Mais’ au dernier iour sera veu a l’oeil le fruit de ceste deliurance, et de quelle importance elle est;”—“But on the last day will be visible to the eye the fruit of that deliverance, and of what importance it is.”
- ft31 “En delices et plaisirs de la vie spirituelle, lesquels nous ne voyons point;”—“In the delights and pleasures of the spiritual life which we do not see.”
- ft32 “Et faire demeurer fermes;”—“And make us remain firm.”
- ft33 “A laquelle ceci se rapporte;”—“To what this refers.”
- ft34 “Laquelle il a vne fois monstree en sa personne;”—“Which he once shewed in his own person.”
- ft35 “Veuës et esprouuez;”—“Seen and experienced.”
- ft36 “Soustenu et fortifié;”—“Sustained and strengthened.”
- ft37 “Tellement que ce soit vne ruse ou finesse, semblable a celle de ceux qui tendent les filets pour prendre les oiseaux;”—“So that it is a trick or artifice, similar to that of those who set traps for catching birds.”
- ft38 “De toute apparence de preeminence et maieste;”—“From all appearance of preeminence and majesty.”
- ft39 “De toute hautesse et presumption;”—“From all haughtiness and presumption.”
- ft40 The rendering of Wicliff (1380) is, as usual, in accordance with the Vulgate—“we weren made litil.”—*Ed.*
- ft41 “Abaissement et humilite;”—“Abasement and humility.”
- ft42 “Pour vne vraye amour et non feinte qu’ils portent a ceux, ausquels ils scauent que Dieu les a conionts et liez ou obligez;”—“From a true and

unfeigned love which they bear to those, to whom they know that God has conjoined, and tied, or bound them.”

ft43 “Entre les Thessaloniens;”—“Among the Thessalonians.”

ft44 “La liberte que Dieu donne;”—“The liberty that God gives.”

ft45 “Il n’a point fait de conscience de prendre lors des autres Eglises;”—
“He made no scruple to take at that time from other Churches.”

ft46 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, Volume 2.

ft47 “Les Thessaloniens;”—“The Thessalonians.”

ft48 “Tout le corps de ceste Eglise—la;”—“The whole body of the Church there.”

ft49 “Il n’y a point este par acquit, comme on dit;”—“It had not been in the mere performance of a task, as they say.”

ft50 “La paresse et nonchalance de la chair;”—“Indolence and negligence of the flesh.”

ft51 “Fortifiez ou soulagez en leur rafraichissant le goust des biens celestes;”—“Strengthened or comforted in the way of refreshing their taste with heavenly blessings.”

ft52 CALVIN refers here to the harmony which happily subsisted between the preaching of Paul and the faith of the Thessalonians.—*Ed.*

ft53 “Il ne se pent faire que nous ne venions quant et quant a auoir vne sainte affection d’obeir;”—“It cannot but be that we come at the same time to have a holy disposition to obey.”

ft54 “Aussi lois d’une opinion, ou d’un cuider;”—“As far above opinion, or imagination.”

ft55 “Les Docteurs, c’est a dire ceux qui ont la charge d’enseigner;”—
“Teachers, that is to say, those that have the task of instructing.”

ft56 “En renouvelant et reformant la vie des Thessaloniens;”—“In renewing and reforming the life of the Thessalonians.”

ft57 “Car il n’a pas prins garde que c’estoit yci vne façon de parler prinse de la langue Hebraïque;”—“For he did not take notice that it was a manner of expression taken from the Hebrew language.”

ft58 “Aux Thessaloniens;”—“To the Thessalonians.”

ft59 “De Juif;”—“Of Jew.”

- ft60 “A tout le corps du peuple;”—“To the whole body of the people.”
- ft61 “Il insiste si longuement a deschiffrer et toucher au vif la malice des Juifs;”—“He insists to so great a length in distinctly unfolding and touching to the quick the malice of the Jews.”
- ft62 “Et condemnation;”—“And condemnation.”
- ft63 “Chacun iour;”—“Every day.”
- ft64 “Pour vn moment du temps;”—“For a moment of time.”
- ft65 “The original word is here very emphatical. It is an allusion to that grief, anxiety, and reluctance of heart, with which dying, affectionate parents take leave of their own children, when they are just going to leave them helpless orphans, exposed to the injuries of a merciless and wicked world, or that sorrow of heart with which poor destitute orphans close the eyes of their dying parents.”—*Benson*.—*Ed*.
- ft66 “Le mot Grec signifie l’estat d’un pere qui a perdu ses enfans, ou des enfans qui ont perdu leur pere;”—“The Greek word denotes the condition of a father that has lost his children, or of children that have lost their father.”
- ft67 Hujus propositi tenacem. See Hor. Od. 3, 3. 1.—*Ed*.
- ft68 “Sur la premiere aux Corinth., chap. 1:d. 31;”—“On ^{<460131>} 1 Corinthians 1:31.”
- ft69 “Vne affection promptte et procedante d’un franc coeur;”—“A prompt disposition, proceeding from a ready mind.”
- ft70 “En parlant ainsi;”—“By speaking, thus.”
- ft71 “Plus vaillamment et courageusement;”—“More valiantly and courageously.”
- ft72 “Ample et abondante;”—“Large and overflowing.”
- ft73 “Ceste façon de tesmoigner la ioye qu’il sent de la fermete des Thessaloniens;”—“This manner of testifying the joy which he feels in the steadfastness of the Thessalonians.”
- ft74 “Τεσπέρημα πίστεως. —*Afterings of faith*, as it may be significantly enough rendered, let but the novelty of the expression be pardoned.”—*Howe’s Works*, (London, 1822,) volume 3 page 70.—*Ed*.
- ft75 “Les Docteurs et ceux qui ont charge d’enseigner en l’Eglise;”—“Teachers and those that have the task of instructing in the Church.”

- ft76 “*Night and day praying exceedingly*—Supplicating God at *all times* ; mingling this with all my prayers; ὑπὲρ ἑχπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι, abounding and superabounding in my entreaties to God, to permit me to revisit you.”—*Dr. A. Clarke.—Ed.*
- ft77 “Nous ne pouuons d’un costé ne d’autre faire vn pas qui proufite et viene a bien;”—“We cannot on one side or another take a step that may be profitable or prosperous.”
- ft78 “Il faut reconnoistre et entretenir;”—“We must recognize and maintain.”
- ft79 “Nous prescrit en ses commandemens la regle de viure;”—“Prescribes to us in his commandments the rule of life.”
- ft80 “Nous fautes et infirmités vicieuses;”—“Our faults and culpable infirmities.”
- ft81 “Que de les contraindre rudement et d’une façon violente;”—“Rather than constrain them rudely and in a violent manner.”
- ft82 “Il n’y a mesure ne fin de desbauchement et dissolution;”—“There is no measure or end of debauchery and wantonness.”
- ft83 “Au regard du mari;”—“In relation to her husband.”
- ft84 “Nous vous auons testifié et comme adjuré;”—“We have testified to you, and, as it were, adjured.”
- ft85 “Comme pour son propre heritage et particulier;”—“As for his peculiar and special inheritance.”
- ft86 The Epistles of John, along with those of James, Peter, and Jude, “were termed *Canonical* by Cassiodorus in the middle of the sixth century, and by the writer of the prologue to these Epistles, which is erroneously ascribed to Jerome.... Du Pin says that some Latin writers have called these Epistles *Canonical*, either confounding the name with Catholic, or to denote that they are a part of the *Canon* of the books of the New Testament.”—*Horne’s* Introduction, vol. 4:p. 409. On the origin and import of the epithet *General*, or *Catholic*, usually applied to these Epistles, the reader will find some valuable observations in *Brown’s* Expository Discourses on Peter, vol. 1.
- ft87 “En cest endroit;”—“In this matter.”
- ft88 “Courageusement et d’un grand desir;”—“Courageously and wait a great desire.”

ft89 “Entre dormir, et estre du tout reduit a neant;”—“Between sleeping, and being altogether reduced to nothing.”

ft90 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 2.

ft91 “Ruine et destruction;”—“Ruin and destruction.”

ft92 “Pour introduire et establir entre les Chrestiens ceste façon tant estrange, que les Stoiciens requeroient en l’homme, ascauoir qu’il ne fust esmeu de douleur quelconque, mais qu’il fust comme de fer et stupide sans rien sentir;”—“For introducing and establishing among Christians that strange manner of acting, which the Stoics required on the part of an individual—that he should not be moved by any grief, but should be as it were of iron, and stupid, so as to be devoid of feeling.”

ft93 “Mais seulement de corriger ou reprimer;”—“But merely to correct or repress.”

ft94 “Prins des sermons de Christ;”—“Taken from the sermons of Christ.”

ft95 “L’a affermee et testifiee assureement par ses propos;”—“Has affirmed and testified it with certainty in his discourses.”

ft96 “Commencera par ceux qui seront decedez auparauant;”—“Will commence with those who shall have previously departed.”

ft97 “Ne viendrait si tost;”—“Would not come so soon.”

ft98 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 2.

ft99 “En la confession de nostre foy;”—“In the confession of our faith.”

ft100 Our author manifestly refers here to the Formula of Confession, commonly called the “Apostles’ Creed,” which the reader will find explained at considerable length by CALVIN in the “Catechism of the Church of Geneva.” See CALVIN’s *Tracts*, vol. 2.

ft101 “Sans aucune figure;”—“Without any figure.” Our author, in his French translation, appends the following marginal note:—“C’est a dire sans le prendre comme ceux qui entendent par ces mots les bons et les mauuais;”—“That is to say, without taking it as those do, who understand by the words the good and the bad.”

ft102 “Ceux qui dorment, c’est a dire qui seront morts auant le dernier iour;”—“Those who sleep, that is to say, who will have died before the last day.”

- ft103 See CALVIN'S *Institutes*, vol. 2.
- ft104 "Quand il viendra en iugement;"—"When he will come to judgment."
- ft105 "De ce qu'ils en doyuent croire;"—"Of what they must believe."
- ft106 "Plenement et certainement;"—"Fully and certainly."
- ft107 "Leur denonce ruine et confusion;"—"Threatens them with ruin and confusion."
- ft108 "Ceste paresse tant dangereuse et mortelle;"—"This indolence so dangerous and deadly."
- ft109 "It is 'day' with them. It is not only 'day' *round about* them, (so it is wherever the gospel is afforded to men,) but God hath made it 'day' *within*."—*Howe's Works*, (Lond. 1822,) vol. 6:p. 294.—*Ed*.
- ft110 "The *refuse*, as the word λοιποὶ emphatically signifies, or the reprobate and worst of men.... The word χαθεύδωμεν, signifies a deeper or a more intense sleep. It is the word that is used in the Septuagint to signify the sleep of death." (^{<271202>} Daniel 12:2)—*Howe's Works*, (Lond. 1822,) vol. 6:p. 290.—*Ed*.
- ft111 "Et yurognerie;"—"And drunkenness."
- ft112 "Pour le moins ne deuons—nous pas estre aussi vigilans que les gendarmes?"—"Should we not at least be as vigilant as soldiers are?"
- ft113 "Si puissant et si fort;"—"So powerful and so strong."
- ft114 "D'autant que volontiers nous auons en horreur et craignons le iour du Seigneur;"—"Inasmuch as we naturally regard with horror, and view with dread the day of the Lord."
- ft115 "Du decret et ordonnance de Dieu;"—"From the decree and appointment of God."
- ft116 "Comme il est dit en l'Epistre aux Romans 8:b. 10;"—"As is stated in the Epistle to the Romans ^{<450810>} Romans 8:10."
- ft117 "Fideles ministres de la parolle;"—"Faithful ministers of the word."
- ft118 "Et les ministres fideles;"—"And faithful ministers."
- ft119 "Et admonestant;"—"And admonishing."
- ft120 "De porter honneur aux fideles ministres;"—"To do honor to faithful ministers."
- ft121 Wiclif (1380) renders as follows: "Haue ye pees with hem."

- ft122 “The whole phraseology of this verse is military’ *Ἀτάχτους*—those who are *out of their ranks*, and are neither in a *disposition* nor *situation* to perform the work and duty of a soldier: those who will not do the work prescribed, and who will meddle with what is not commanded.”—*Dr. A. Clarke.—Ed.*
- ft123 “A l’ennuy qu’on conçoit aiseement en tels affaires;”—“To the irksomeness which one readily feels in such matters.”
- ft124 “N’est point en nous, ou pour mieux dire, nous en sommes hors;”—“Is not in us, or as we may rather say, we are away from it.”
- ft125 Our author probably refers here to what he has said on this subject when commenting on ^{<490618>}Ephesians 6:18.—*Ed.*
- ft126 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1.
- ft127 “Interpretation de l’Ecriture appliquee proprement selon le temps, les personnes, et les choses presentes;”—“Interpretation of Scripture properly applied, according to time, persons, and things present.”
- ft128 “Leur souffle aux aureilles;”—“Breathes into their ears.”
- ft129 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 2.
- ft130 “L’organe et instrument d’celuy;”—“His organ and instrument.”
- ft131 “Leurs speculations ridicules;”—“Their ridiculous speculations.”
- ft132 “Horribles et execrables;”—“Horrible and execrable.”
- ft133 “Tellement que nostre impatience ou chagrin nous empesche d’esprouuer qui est la vraye ou la fausse;”—“So that our impatience or chagrin keeps us from proving what is true or false.”
- ft134 “S. Paul;”—“St. Paul.”
- ft135 “Que proufitera—on de prescher la doctrine?”—“What profit will be derived from preaching doctrine?”
- ft136 “Repos d’esprit;”—“Repose of mind.”
- ft137 “En l’estude et exercice de saintctete;”—“In the study and exercise of holiness.”
- ft138 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 2.
- ft139 “Qu’aucuns par vne prudence indiscrete, la communicassent seulement a quelque petit nombre sans en faire les autres participans;”—“That

some by an ill—advised prudence, would communicate it only to some small number without making others participate in it.”