

1 Thessalonians 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

The apostle Paul, being more especially the minister of the uncircumcision, and preacher of the Gentiles, in his progress through their cities and countries comes to Thessalonica, a chief city in Macedonia, for thither he was called in a vision, Ac 16:9, *A man of Macedonia prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* In obedience to which he loosed from Troas, and came to Samothracia, from thence to Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi, where he abode certain days, Php 1:12; and after passing through *Amphipolis and Apollonia, came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews, Ac 17:1*, whither, as his manner was, he went, and preached that Jesus was the Christ. Whereupon *some believed, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.* But the Jews which believed not raised a persecution against him, whereupon the brethren sent him and Silas away to Berea, 1Th 1:10, where he also went and preached in the Jews' synagogue. But the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica following him to Berea, he was conducted thence to Athens; and from thence, it is thought by some, he writes this Epistle to the Thessalonians, as is asserted in the postscript. Wherein he gives account of the great success of his preaching among them, for which he gives thanks to God, and makes an honourable mention of them in several places. But because they were new converts, and met with persecution from their own countrymen for the gospel's sake, the apostle was the more solicitous for them, to confirm them in the faith they had received. Whereupon he endeavoured once and again to come to them himself, but some way or other was hindered by Satan, as he tells them, 1Th 2:18. And therefore he sends to them Timothy in his room, to know their faith, and to establish them in it; who bringing an account thereof to him, and of their state, he writes this Epistle to them, according to the account he received by Timothy, and his own observation and knowledge while he was amongst them. Particularly:

1. He gives thanks for the eminency and operation of the graces of God in them, for the special presence of the Holy Ghost in his ministry amongst them, for their exemplary faith and conversation, 1Th 1:1.

2. He puts them in mind of his ministerial labours and personal conversation among them, of the malicious carriage of the Jews both against Christ and his apostles, and particularly against himself, whereof he knew they themselves were eye-witnesses; and declares his present rejoicing and glorying in them, 1Th 2:1-20.
3. He next gives the reason of his sending Timothy to them, and speaks of the good account he gave of them, and the great refreshing and comfort he received thereby; and that he was greatly desirous to see their face; and prays that they might increase in love, and be established in holiness, 1Th 3:1-13.
4. He then proceeds to exhort them about their personal walking, according to the directions and commandments he had given them from the Lord Jesus. And he instanceth in marriage chastity, righteousness in dealing, brotherly love, peaceable carriage, minding their callings, and diligence therein; and not to mourn inordinately for them that die in Jesus, as knowing that they shall rise from the dead, and meet the Lord in the air, as well and as early as those that shall be found alive at his coming, 1Th 4:1-18.
5. He next describes the manner of Christ's coming, that it will be sudden and unexpected, whereby many will be surprised in their security; and therefore exhorts these Thessalonians to be watchful, sober, and armed for that day, which will be to them a day of salvation which they had been appointed to. And then he exhorts them to duties belonging to their church state, and communion; to have a high esteem for their guides and teachers; to warn, support, and comfort one another; not to retaliate evil for evil, &c. And so, in the close of the Epistle, recommends them to God in prayer, begging they would also pray for him, and salute one another, and communicate this Epistle to all the brethren; and so concludes with his usual salutation.

This is the substance of the Epistle.

As to the place whence it was written, we need not inquire, whether it was, as is expressed in the postscript, from Athens; or from Corinth, as Grotius and others imagine.

As to the time, it was surely not long after Paul's coming from Thessalonica; for indeed the present state of the Thessalonians did require that he should not long delay it, as his secret affection to them would not suffer it neither.

And as to the order of the Epistle, that that which is called the Second Epistle should be really the first, and by some carelessness misnamed and misplaced, is a bold, groundless conjecture of Grotius, and needs no confutation.

But this is more probable, that it was the first Epistle that the apostle wrote to any church, though other Epistles are in order set before it. The gospel was more early preached here than at Corinth or Rome, as appears in the Acts of the Apostles, and the success of it was more sudden and eminent than in any other city, and their persecutions more, whereby they might obtain an Epistle from the apostle before any other church.

Chapter Summary

1Th 1:1 The salutation.

1Th 1:2-4 Paul showeth his thankful remembrance of the Thessalonians in his prayers on account of their faith, charity, and patience,

1Th 1:5-10 applauding them for their exemplary reception of the gospel, and improvement under it.

Ver. 1. *Paul and Silvanus*: why not Paul the apostle, as in some other Epistles? Because his apostleship was not doubted of by them, they had such an eminent seal of it upon their hearts; and there was no false apostles among them to question or deny it. And he joins *Silvanus* with him; whom Peter calls *a faithful brother*, 1Pe 5:12, and was a minister of the gospel joining with himself in that work among the Corinthians, 2Co 1:19, as also among these Thessalonians, as appears, Ac 17:4, though there called by contraction of his name, or by another name, *Silas*; who is also mentioned, Ac 15:22, as one *chief among the brethren*, and sent by the church of Jerusalem to accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch; and stiled a prophet, Ac 15:32; and chosen by Paul to accompany him rather than Mark, Ac

15:40. And being an instrument with himself in converting these Thessalonians, and being also in their love and esteem, he joins his name with his own in the Epistle.

And Timotheus; his name is Greek, for *his father was a Greek*, but his mother *a Jewess*, Ac 16:1, whose name was *Eunice*, 2Ti 1:5. He was brought up in the Jewish religion, instructed from a child by his parents in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, but instructed by Paul in the faith of Christ, whom therefore he calls his *son in the faith*, 1Ti 1:2, *well reported of by the brethren*, Ac 16:2; whom Paul laid hands upon with other elders to separate him to the work of the ministry, and the office of an evangelist, and thereby had a *gift of God* bestowed upon him, 2Ti 1:6; called by Paul his *συνεργος*, or *work-fellow*, Ro 16:21, and particularly in the conversion of these Thessalonians, together with Silvanus, as appears, Ac 17:14. He abode with them when Paul was persecuted from them, as there we find; and was sent to them from Athens afterwards by Paul to know their state, and strengthen their faith, 1Th 3:1,2. And thereupon, that his Epistle might obtain the greater respect, he joins his name also in it; as he doth also in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, in his Epistle to the Philippians, and to the Colossians. He being Paul's companion in his ministry among the Gentiles in their first conversion, and a man of great name in the churches, he therefore so frequently joins his name with his own. And also that he might show their consent in the truth they delivered to the churches, which might the more confirm their faith in theirs.

Unto the church of the Thessalonians; the church inhabiting Thessalonica, which was a chief city in Macedonia, a metropolis, famous for antiquity, largeness, pleasant situation, and commerce. *Plin. lib. 1Th 4:10*. First called Thessalia, and being conquered by king Philip, was called Thessalonica. Philippi was also another great city of Macedonia, where was planted another church, to whom the apostle writes; whereby we may see that God had a great work for Paul here, when he called him in a vision to go to Macedonia.

Which is in God the Father; not as the Son of God is in the Father, to be one substance and essence with him; nor as the human nature is in the Divine nature of Christ, to be one person with the Father; but it imports either their forsaking false gods

and joining themselves to the worship of the true God, as in 1Th 1:9, *ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God*; called therefore in a distinction from them: *God the Father*: or else their worshipping God according to the revelation made of him in the gospel, where he is called Father. But in a sense differing from what Plato or Homer, and other heathens, understood when they called the chief God, Father; either with respect to their inferior deities, of whom they styled him Father, or the works of creation proceeding from him as his offspring. And their being in him may yet imply more than this; which is their being joined to God in covenant, as their God and Father; and so believing in him, established upon him as their foundation, and as their centre resting in him. It may also further imply their union and communion with God through the Spirit, whereby the saints are said to abide in God, and to dwell in him, and he in them, 1Jo 2:27,28, yea, to be *in him* who is *the true God*, 1Jo 5:20.

And in the Lord Jesus Christ; these two are put together, because there is no access to God the Father, no true worship of him, no union or communion with him, and so no being in him, but through Jesus Christ. And by both they might see the blessed state they were now brought to by the gospel; being before strangers to God the Father and Jesus Christ, but now in them. And though being in God the Father is first mentioned, yet in the order of nature we are first in Christ, and through him in God the Father. And the apostle the rather asserts this of them, because the gospel came to them not in word only, but in power. And hereby he gives them the character of a true church of Christ, what it is, at least what it ought to be; for to be in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, imports more than literal knowledge, dogmatical faith, or outward profession.

Grace be unto you, and peace; this the apostle calls his salutation with his own hand, *which is my token*, saith he, *in every epistle, so I write*, 2Th 3:17. Read 1Co 1:3 2Co 1:2, &c. And under the Old Testament the Jew's usual salutation was: *Peace be to you*; under the New it is: *Grace and peace*. Peace comprehends all blessings; and grace or favour, the spring out of which they flow. The grace of God is now said to have appeared and to shine forth, Tit 2:2, and the church of God to be blest with all spiritual blessings, Eph 1:3; so that now the apostle Paul salutes the churches with *grace and peace*; and the apostle Peter adds: *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you*, 2Pe 1:2. *Mercy*

*unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied, Jude 1:2. Or if we take *grace* for grace inherent in us, as sometimes it is taken; and *peace* for the inward tranquillity of mind, heart, and conscience; the text may bear it. Yet the former rather meant *to you*, to you that are in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ: not to infidels out of the church; grace to *you*, and peace.*

From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; wherein are showed grace and peace in their original, *from God;* and not from God absolutely considered, but as *our Father:* as a Father he conveys the blessings of grace and peace to his children; but yet not immediately, but through *Jesus Christ*, as merited by his blood, and procured by his intercession. The Holy Ghost is not mentioned, though he must be understood; but he is rather considered as the actual conveyer of these blessings, than the original or procurer of them. And the three Persons work in the same order in the work of redemption as of creation, though more distinctly.

1 Thessalonians 1:2

Ver. 2. *We give thanks to God;* after his salutation he adds his thanksgiving and prayer for them. He saw in them an eminent seal of his apostleship, and effect of his ministry, and advantage to the gospel in their example, and so gives thanks. And his thanks is to God, because the success of the gospel was more from his blessing than his own ministry.

Always; πάντοτε, that is, in a constant course; or *affectu*, though not *actu*, by a grateful sense he had of it continually upon his heart.

For you all; for he had a good report of them all from Timothy, 1Th 3:6, and we find not one reproof in this First Epistle to any one, as in the Second.

Making mention of you in our prayers; he adds also his prayer for them, wherein he made mention of them by name, as some understand the words, μνησθῆναι ὑμῶν ποιούμενοι. Prayer and thanksgiving ought to go together, especially in the ministers of the gospel, and in the work of their ministry. And thus the apostle practised towards other churches also, as Ro 1:8 Php 1:3,

&c.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Ver. 3. *Remembering without ceasing;* the occasion of his constant thanksgivings was his constant remembering of that grace of God that did so abound and work powerfully in them, not as if he had always an actual remembrance of it, but he did not forget it, the habitual sense of it was continually in his mind, and was often actually in his thoughts, especially in his approaches to God; and that is all which is meant in the original word, ἀδιαλείπτως. While the apostle was with them he saw this in them, but being now absent he remembered it; and with such a practical remembrance as stirred up his heart to thanksgiving. That is a good memory where is treasured up matter of prayer and thanksgiving.

Your work of faith; or the work of the faith of you, that is, their faith and the work of it; whereby he intimates their faith was true and real; a faith *unfeigned*, 2Ti 1:5; *the faith of God's elect*, Tit 1:1; and so distinguished from a dead faith, Jas 2:26. They *received the work in much affection, with joy of the Holy Ghost;* they *turned from idols to the service of the true God;* they waited for the coming of Christ, &c.; here was the work of faith.

And labour of love; a labour to weariness, as the word imports; laborious love. True faith hath its work, but love hath its labour; and when faith worketh by love it will work laboriously. Whereby the apostle declares the reality of their love, as well as their faith; it was unfeigned love, yea, fervent love, the labour of it went forth towards that true God whom they now worshipped, that Jesus Christ on whom they now believed, and to the saints that were now their fellow brethren, 1Th 4:10; and particularly to the apostle himself, as in other ways, so particularly in the pains and labour that some of them took to conduct and travel along with him from Thessalonica to Athens, Ac 17:15.

And patience of hope: the apostle had mentioned before their *faith and love*, and now their *hope*; which are called the three cardinal or theological graces, all mentioned together by him, 1Co 13:13; and by which we have all our communion with God on earth. And as their faith had its *work*, and love its *labour*, so

their hope had its *patience* as the fruit and product of it. There is a patience with respect to an expected good, and with respect to an incumbent evil; and both produced by hope. The former is more properly called μακροθυμια, or length of mind, consisting in waiting for and expectation of some desired good; the latter is υπομονη, consisting in patient suffering, or abiding under some present evil. Their former patience is mentioned in 1Th 1:10, they *waited for his Son from heaven*. The latter in the second chapter, 1Th 2:14, *Ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen: as they* (i.e. the churches of Judea) *have of the Jews*. This latter is here specially meant in the text; and for which he gives God thanks, 2Th 1:4. And hope produceth the former patience, as it looks upon the expected good as that which will come at last; and the latter patience, as it looks upon the suffered evil as that which will not always continue. And when with respect to both these the mind of man is kept sedate and quiet, this is the *patience of hope*.

In our Lord Jesus Christ; or, of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the efficient and author of this hope, and of their faith and its work, and love and its labour: or, *in our Lord Jesus Christ*, as here rendered; and so he is the object of this hope, 1Co 15:19 1Ti 1:1. And by this the Christian's hope is distinguished from all other. All hope worketh patience. The husbandman's hope to receive the former and latter rain, maketh him wait for it with patience, Jas 5:7; the hope of the merchant, for the return of his adventure; the hope of the heir, for his inheritance; but the Christian's hope worketh patience as fixed upon Christ: other hope resteth upon the things of this lower visible world, but this is as an anchor sure and stedfast, entering within the veil, where Christ is entered as a forerunner, &c., Heb 6:19,20. Faith and love both have Christ for their object; but considered as present; but the patience of hope in Christ respecteth something future, some revelation of him, and salvation by him, which is yet to come. *If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*, Ro 8:25.

In the sight of God and our Father: these words are not in the Syriac or Arabic version. And they respect either the apostle's thanksgiving and prayer for them, and his remembering the grace of God in them when he solemnly approached God's presence; for in all duties of worship we come before God, and present ourselves in his sight, and their graces he before mentioned, he

remembered them to God, and presented them to his view: or they respect the omniscience of God, that their work of faith, labour of love, &c. were all in God's sight, and he was a delighted spectator of them: or, lastly, they may respect the sincerity of their hearts in all the actings of their faith, love, and hope; they did all this in the sight of God. As the apostle asserts his sincerity in his ministry by this: *We speak as in the sight of God*, 2Co 2:17. And thus the apostle mentions their graces, not as the heathen orators, who made great encomiums of virtue to the praise of men, but to the honour and praise of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:4

Ver. 4. Another ground of his thanksgiving for them. By the manner of their receiving the gospel, and the evident operation of the graces of God's Spirit, the apostle knew their election of God. We cannot know election as in God's secret decree, but as made manifest in the fruits and effects of it. As there is a knowledge of things *a priori*, when we argue from the cause to the effect, so *a posteriori*, when we argue from the effects to the cause. And thus the apostle came to know their election. Not, we hope it, or conjecture it, but we know it; and not by extraordinary revelation, but by evident outward tokens. And if the apostle knew this, why should we think they themselves might not know it also; and the words may be read: Ye knowing your election of God. And election imports the choosing of some out of others; for election cannot comprehend all. Some deny all eternal election of particular persons, and make it a temporal separation of persons to God in their conversion; but is not this separation from a pre-existing decree, God doing *all things after the counsel of his own will*? Eph 1:11. Or, they will yield an eternal election of persons, but only conditional; one condition whereof is perseverance to the end. But the apostle asserts their election at present, before he saw their perseverance.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

Ver. 5. The former part of the verse asserts the reasons on which the apostle built the knowledge of their election, which is the manner of the gospel's coming to them.

Our gospel because preached by him and others to them; or intrusted with them *εγεννηθη εις υμας*.

Came not unto you in word only, but also in power; confirmed by miracles, and had powerful operation upon your hearts. The power of God went along with our ministry, which did not with the false teachers, 1Co 4:19; and *the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power, 1Co 4:20*.

And in the Holy Ghost; either in gifts of the Holy Ghost which ye received, or that power which ye felt from the gospel upon your hearts was through the Holy Ghost: that they might not think it was their ministry, or the word alone, that had this power upon them.

And in much assurance; ye giving full assent to the truth of the gospel, without doubting on your part; or preached to you with much confidence and assurance on our part. The former sense is best. And there is an allusion in the word to a ship riding upon the sea with a full gale, and not turned out of its course by a contrary wind. Your faith triumphed over the waves of all objections, disputes, or hesitations of mind. For doubtings of mind do much hinder the power of the word upon the heart. And this assurance they had from the Holy Ghost.

As ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake; we did not carry ourselves among you like ordinary men, but by our laboriousness and zeal in preaching, our patient suffering for the gospel we preached, by our holy conversation, by our denial of ourselves in labouring with our hands amongst you, and by our great tenderness and affection to you, you might perceive that we were men sent of God, and our ministry was from heaven, and that we sought not yours, but you; whereby you had an advantage to entertain the gospel preached by us with greater assurance. And in all these things we had respect to your salvation. And for the truth of all this, he appeals to their own knowledge, and that mighty presence and assistance of God in their ministry among them; as they could not but perceive it, so it was all for their sake.

And ye became followers of us; as you received our gospel in the power of it into your hearts, so you showed it forth in your conversation, becoming followers or imitators of us in our

patient and cheerful sufferings, and our holy and self-denying carriage. The doctrine of the gospel which we taught you, we practised it before your eyes, and you followed us therein; though before you walked according to the course of the world, and were followers of the religion and manners of the heathen. The examples of ministers ought to be teaching as well as their doctrine.

And of the Lord; we have followed the example of Christ, and ye followed us. So that as you believed on Christ as your Saviour, so you followed his commands and examples as your Lord and Master; as he exhorts the Corinthians: *Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ,* 1Co 11:1.

Having received the word in much affliction: though affliction and persecution attended the word, yet you received, it; and this receiving was not only into your heads by knowledge of it, and into your hearts by all effectual believing it, but into your practice by a walking according to it. For receiving the word, in the Scripture phrase, comprehends all this in it.

With joy of the Holy Ghost; though afflictions attended you, they did not deject your spirits, but you had joy in your hearts by the Holy Ghost; who usually doth give forth his joy most to the saints when under suffering, which is one instance of the gospel's coming to them not in word only, but in the Holy Ghost, as was said before. The glad tidings of the gospel did more comfort them, than all their sufferings did cast them down.

1 Thessalonians 1:7

Ver. 7. As ye followed our example, and of the Lord, so ye were examples yourselves, and such great examples that influenced all the believers both of Macedonia and Achaia. Your example reached beyond the confines of Thessalonica, unto the believers of all Macedonia, yea farther, to the believers of all Achaia. And though the Philippians of Macedonia received the gospel before you, as appears in the story, Ac 16:1-40, yet ye exceeded them, and became examples to them in your faith and patience, &c.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Ver. 8. How could they be examples to persons so remote, amongst whom they had no converse? The apostle here resolves it. It was by way of report. Things that are eminent, and done in eminent places, such as Thessalonica was, easily spread abroad, either by merchants, travellers, or correspondence by letters. And this report is compared to a sound that is heard afar off, that made an echo, as the word implies. And that which *sounded out from you* was *the word of the Lord*. The word is said to sound by the voice of the preacher, 1Co 14:8,9 Ga 6:6, and by the practice of the hearers. The mighty power and efficacy of it was made known abroad, *not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place*; not strictly every where, but here and there, up and down in the world. As it is said of the apostles' ministry, Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world, Ro 10:18; the report of the gospel went farther than the preachers of it, and their receiving the gospel sounded abroad far and near. And not only the word, but *your faith to God-ward is spread abroad*, ἐξέληλυθεν. Your faith being so eminent, it was spoken of far and near. That ye believed so soon at our first entrance, as 1Th 1:9; and though we had been shamefully treated at Philippi a little before our coming to you, and persecution followed us and the gospel we preached to you, yet ye believed, and your faith was eminent in the fruits and operations of it also, as was mentioned before, and is afterwards in the Epistle. And it was faith *God-ward*; it rested not upon men, no, nor only the Man Christ Jesus, whom we preached to you, but upon God himself though through Christ ye became worshippers of the true God, and believed on him with an exemplary faith.

So that we need not to speak any thing, either of the manner of our preaching the gospel, or of your manner of receiving it. Where men's deeds speak and commend men, words may be silent. And the apostle might have thought it needful to have divulged these things abroad for the advantage of the gospel, and the examples of others, if he had not been prevented by the report already spread abroad. The good examples of the people may ease their ministers of some labour in spreading the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

Ver. 9. *For they themselves show of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you: the believers of Macedonia and Achaia do speak of these things απαγγελουσιν, openly, whereby it is evident the word of the Lord sounded forth to them from you, and they, without any information from us, declare the great entertainment you gave us and our gospel at our first entrance among you.*

And how ye turned to God from idols; particularly your forsaking your former idolatry, when you worshipped idols, that were either the images or shapes of the true God, formed by men; or men whom they deified, and set up as gods, and worshipped them and their images; or inanimate creatures, as sun, moon, and stars, or whatever creature they found beneficial to them, the heathens made idols of them. These ye turned from: though it was by the power of God and the gospel upon your hearts, yet it was an act of your own. And though it was the worship of these idols you had been trained up in, and wits generally practised, yet you turned from it. And as to the manner of it, how ye turned from these idols, as in the text; that is, how readily, how sincerely, how speedily, with a holy indignation of them: or, πως, how, that is, by what means; meaning by our entrance amongst you, and the power of our gospel upon your hearts, according to that prophecy, Isa 2:20,21, which refers to gospel times.

*To serve the living and true God; to serve with religious worship proper to God; though the papists would confine the Greek word δουλευειν to some lower worship they give to saints or angels; or it may signify the whole service of God. And here the apostle speaks of their religion in the positive part, the former being negative. *The living God*, so called in opposition to idols, which were either images without life, or inanimate creatures, or men that were dead whom they worshipped; or *living*, because God is so eminently, being life essentially, originally, eternally, immutably, and derivatively to all things that live. *As I live, saith the Lord*, as if none had life but himself, Isa 49:18, &c. And called the *true God* in opposition to false gods. The heathen gods had no deity but what men gave them by worshipping them. They were not gods by nature, Ga 4:8, and so not true. And as these things are spoken to show the power of the gospel, so in a way of commendation, that they did not only turn from idols, but did serve the true God; many profess the true God, but serve him*

not. As also they denote their privilege, that they served a God that could save them, which their idols could not.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Ver. 10. *And to wait for his Son from heaven:* this is added to show the further power of the gospel upon them, they had not only faith to God-ward, as was said before, but to Christ-ward. They did not only turn to the true God, in opposition to the heathen, but to the Son of God as the true Christ, in opposition to the unbelieving Jews. For though he was the Son of David after the flesh, yet he was the Son of God also; and not by creation, as the angels are called the sons of God, nor by adoption, as the saints are, but by eternal generation, though the Man Christ Jesus by his personal union is the Son of God. And their faith respecting the Son of God, was their waiting for him from heaven; not that their faith consisted only in this, but it suited their present state of affliction to wait for Christ's coming as a deliverer and rewarder, therefore here mentioned by the apostle; and their faith, hope, love, and patience may all be included in it. They believed that he was gone to heaven, and would come again, which are two great articles of the Christian faith. And though there was nothing in sense or reason, or any tradition, to persuade them of it, yet they believed it upon the apostle's preaching it. And though the time of his coming was unknown to them, yet their faith presently put them upon waiting for it. And the certain time of his coming is kept secret, that the saints in every age may wait for it. Though he will not come till the end of the world, yet the saints ought to be influenced with the expectation of it in all generations that do precede it. It is to their advantage to wait for it, though they live not to see him come. And here the apostle concludes his account of the glorious effects of the gospel upon these Thessalonians; that which follows in the chapter is by way of doctrine concerning the Son of God.

Whom he raised from the dead: he mentions his resurrection from the dead after his sonship; for he was there *declared to be the Son of God with power*, Ro 1:4. And: *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, applied to Christ's resurrection, Ac 13:33. Or the apostle mentions it to confirm their hope of his coming again. Had they heard of his death, and not of his rising

again, they could not have expected his coming from heaven. It is used as an argument by Paul to the Athenians, that Christ will come again to judge the world by God's raising him from the dead, Ac 17:31. And these believers also might comfortably expect their own resurrection, seeing that he himself is already risen, at his coming; and so be supported under their present sufferings, though they should reach to the killing of the body.

Even Jesus: he that was before called the Son of God, is here called *Jesus*, or Saviour; a name that might more endear him to them, than by calling him the Son of God. And he mentions a great act of his salvation in the next words, and therefore here properly called Saviour; and when he comes, he will come to his people's salvation, Heb 9:28.

Which delivered us from the wrath to come: if we read the word as our translation hath it, *delivered*, it looks to what Christ hath already done and suffered for our deliverance. If in the present tense, as the Greek now hath it, it implies a continued act: he is delivering us from the wrath to come, either by his intercession, or by supplies of his grace delivering us from the power of sin and temptations, and so preserving us in a state of salvation. Or if we read the word in the future tense, who will deliver us, as we often find the present tense both in the Hebrew and Greek to have a future signification, it refers to his last coming; and therefore the saints need not be afraid of the terror of that day, but wait for it; for though the wrath to come is greater than ever yet brake forth in the world, Ro 2:5, yet a drop of it shall not fall upon them. Though they may meet with temporal afflictions and chastisements at present, and may be assaulted by the wrath of men, yet they shall be free from the wrath to come. And this will be done by a powerful rescue of Christ, as the word imports, $\rho\upsilon\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$, notwithstanding all the danger and difficulty that may attend it.

1 Thessalonians 2:1

Chapter Summary

1Th 2:1-12 Paul setteth forth in what manner he had preached the gospel to the Thessalonians,

1Th 2:13-16 and they had received and suffered for it.

1Th 2:17,18 He showeth his desire of coming to them, and the cause which had hitherto prevented him,

1Th 2:19,20 testifying his joy and satisfaction in them.

Ver. 1. *For yourselves;* αυτοι, which some read, they themselves, &c.; and then the words refer to the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, mentioned before, 1Th 1:9,10. Or, if we read, ye yourselves, he appeals to their own experience and knowledge.

Know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain; κενη, was not vain, or empty, without fruit; our very first preaching had great success. Though the gospel is always either the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, yet if no good fruit spring from a man's ministry, it may be said to be vain; as the prophet complains: *I have laboured in vain,* Isa 49:4. Or, as some, our preaching was not about things vain and unprofitable.

1 Thessalonians 2:2

Ver. 2. Here the apostle begins a new discourse, giving an account more particularly of himself, and of his carriage among them, which he mentions as a subordinate reason why his ministry was so successful; for the evil example of ministers often spoils the success of their ministry. And what he speaks would savour of vain-glory, but that he had therein a holy end; as he excuseth his boasting to the Corinthians and other churches upon the same account. And he first mentions his carriage in the discharge of his ministry among them. A little before his coming to them he had *suffered*, and was *shamefully entreated*, at *Philippi*, where he and Silas were beaten, thrust into an inner prison, and set in the stocks as a couple of villains, Ac 16:23,24; yet this did not damp their spirits, nor discourage their coming and preaching to them.

We were bold; επαρρησιασαμεθα, we used great confidence and liberty of speech, we were not afraid to speak the gospel

freely, notwithstanding our sufferings. The same he asserts, 2Co 3:12. And this becomes the gospel, and will be to the advantage of it, and is most commendable in a time of persecution.

In our God; depending upon his protection and help, who is our God, and who sent and called us to the work of the gospel, and particularly in Macedonia: and to show he was not bold beyond his call and duty, or the rules of truth and sobriety.

To speak unto you the gospel of God; the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ; which gospel, though we have called it ours because preached by us, yet it is *the gospel of God*, as being the original author and ordainer of it.

With much contention; with much agony: which is either to be taken actively, for their great earnestness and zeal in speaking, as Lu 13:24; or passively, for the perils they encountered therein, Php 1:30: by both which the Thessalonians might be induced, though not enabled, to believe. As he elsewhere calls the ministry *a warfare*, 1Ti 1:18, and *a fight*, 2Ti 4:7, (the very word used in the text), with respect to the difficulties and dangers attending it, or the opposition of false teachers; they contending for the faith, Jude 1:3.

1 Thessalonians 2:3

Ver. 3. *Our exhortation;* whereby he means either the whole gospel he preached, by a synecdoche, or particularly that which is hortatory; what was first taught doctrinally was followed with exhortations to faith and practice. The decrees of the council at Jerusalem are called an exhortation, Ac 15:31; when Paul, and others with him, were desired to preach in the synagogue, the rulers said: *If ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on*, Ac 13:15; but taken more strictly, Ro 12:8, in a distinction from prophecy and teaching.

Was not of deceit; this refers either to the doctrine taught by them; it was true, not fallacious, not a devised fable, and did not issue out of any error of judgment; and so the apostle gives a reason why they were so bold in preaching it, because they knew it was all truth. Or to their sincerity in preaching; We did not use any impostures, we designed not to seduce men, as the false

apostles did, but we really sought your conversion and salvation.

Nor of uncleanness; εζ ακαθαρσιας. If this refers to the doctrine preached, it denotes the purity of it, which did not tend to gratify the flesh, as that of the Nicolaitanes and Libertines, &c. If we refer it to the manner of their preaching, it denotes the purity of their hearts; they were not acted by any impure lusts in their preaching, as covetousness, pride, or vain-glory. Nor in guile; this seems to be mentioned before, and therefore some expositors refer the two former expressions to the matter that they taught, and this only to the manner, which is most probable. They had no cunning designs upon them, to make merchandise of them, as the false apostles did; but approve their hearts to God, and make themselves manifest to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And the apostle allegeth all this as a further reason of his boldness in preaching, for sincerity breeds boldness; or as some cause also of his great success, for uprightness is usually attended with a blessing; or as an argument to these Thessalonians to continue their affection to him, and to abide in the doctrine preached to them, for suspicion of insincerity in the preacher hinders the efficacy of the word upon the people.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

Ver. 4. *But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel:* this verse gives the reasons of what the apostle spake in the former about his sincerity. The one is taken from his trust; God intrusted him with the gospel, to preserve it from corruption by error, therefore his *exhortation* or doctrine *was not of error or deceit*, but he preached the gospel in simplicity and purity; he did not, he durst not, adulterate or corrupt it, for it was committed to his trust; as he calls the gospel his trust, 1Ti 1:11. And the sense of this great trust kept him also from *uncleanness* and *guile* in the discharge of his ministry. And he had this trust by God's appointment or approbation, God approved of him for this trust, and that upon knowledge and judgment, as the word signifies, *δεδοκιμασμεθα*, and as he speaks, 1Ti 1:12, *he judged me faithful, putting me into the ministry*. Not so before his conversion, being a *persecutor, blasphemer*, &c.; but God fitted him by extraordinary revelations, gifts, graces, and made him faithful, and then put him into the ministry, and intrusted

him with the gospel. And because he speaks in the plural number, *we were allowed of God, &c.*, therefore Silvanus and Timotheus, yea, and other apostles and ministers, are to be understood as comprehended with him in this trust.

Even so we speak; that is, as men thus approved of by God, and intrusted with the gospel, that we may faithfully discharge our trust, and be able to give a good account of it, as stewards of their trust, 1Co 4:1,2.

Not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts: this is another reason of their faithfulness and integrity, mentioned in the foregoing verse, which was the sense of God's omniscience, knowing and trying their hearts. Trying imports more than mere knowing, it is a knowledge upon search and proof, as gold and silver are known by the touchstone. And though God trieth the hearts of all men, yet especially such as are intrusted with the gospel. Or these last words may have a more immediate reference to the foregoing; we speak not as pleasing men, because we know God trieth our hearts. And this confirms what he said before concerning his exhortation, that it was not of deceit, uncleanness, or guile. If it had, he would have so preached as to please men; the opinions, the lusts, the practices of men. In some cases the apostle did seek to please men, 1Co 10:33, *even as I please all men in all things*. But he pleased not men when it stood in competition with his pleasing God; *we speak, not as pleasing men, but God*. Otherwise the rule takes place with all, Ro 15:2: *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification*. Ministers of the gospel are Christ's servants by office, and, as servants, they are to please their own Master. *If I pleased men,* saith Paul, *I should not be the servant of Christ,* Ga 1:10. And this made the apostle have regard not only to his doctrine and outward conversation, but the inward aim and intentions of his heart, as knowing God tried his heart. And expecting the reward of his labours more from God than men, he therefore sought to please God rather than men, and approve his heart unto him. And herein he reflects upon those false apostles that sought to please men, preached up the law of Moses to please the Jews; or others, that preached and abused the doctrine of the gospel to gratify the lusts of men.

1 Thessalonians 2:5

Ver. 5. In the forlner verses the apostle had asserted his integrity more generally; here, and in the next verse, he instanceth in particulars. He vindicates his ministry from the guilt of three vices which too often attend it; flattery, covetousness, and vain-glory.

For neither at any time used we flattering words: first, flattery, εν λογω κολακειας; or, we were not, i.e. conversant, in a word of flattery, as in the Greek; our word was not a word of flattery, as if we sought to please men. When we ascribe to men good things that they have not, or above what they have, or when we applaud or extenuate the evil that is in them, we flatter them. This is reprov'd often in the false prophets of the Old Testament, Isa 30:10 Eze 13:10,18; and in the false teachers in the New. The flattery of ministers is, their preaching of smooth things, rather to please than profit; when they avoid just reproofs, and searching truths, and close applications, that they may not displease; and affect wisdom of words, and rhetorical discourses, that they may please: when they either conceal some part of truth, or pervert it, that people may think their doings better than they are, or their state better than it is.

As ye know: their words in preaching being an overt act, they themselves could judge of, and therefore the apostle doth appeal to their own knowledge in that.

Nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness: in what they could not know, which was their inward aims and designs, he appeals to God, which is a form of swearing; and in all oaths men solemnly do concern God therein; the same in effect that is called protesting, 1Co 15:31. And that wherein he thus appeals is, that he had no covetous design in his ministry, which he calls *a cloak of covetousness*; which lies either in undue withholding what we have, or inordinate desire of more. The latter is here meant, as the Greek word imports. And the word *cloak* is a metaphor as the word is translated here, and Joh 15:22: as that covers the inner garments, so when bad designs are covered with specious pretexts, this we call a cloak. The word in the text, εν προθασει πλεονεξιας, is often used, Mt 23:14 Mr 12:40 Lu 20:47, and sometimes rendered *occasion*, but for the most part *pretence*, and so to be understood here; and in heathen authors

sometimes used for accusation. And this is contrary to what is said of false prophets, 2Pe 2:3: *Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.*

1 Thessalonians 2:6

Ver. 6. *Nor of men sought we glory*: this is the third vice he vindicates his ministry from. The word *glory* first signifies some excellency in any subject; secondly, this excellency as displaying and manifesting itself; thirdly, the opinion and esteem thereof in the minds of men, as the Greek word imports, and so taken in the text: we did not seek men's honour, high esteem, or applause; we sought them not in the inward bent of our thoughts, or the studies of our mind, nor in the outward course of our ministry and conversation, to form them so as to gain glory from men. Though honour and esteem was their due from men, yet they did not seek it. Honour is to follow men, men not to follow it. This Christ reprov'd in the scribes and Pharisees, that in their prayers, alms. fasting, affected habits, and titles, they sought the praise of men, Mt 6:1-34. *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* Joh 5:44. Every man ought, with reference to actions honourable and praiseworthy, and a good name is a blessing; but to seek honour, that is the evil. And as the apostle did not seek it himself, so he forbids it to others, Ga 5:26: *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, &c.*; and notes some false teachers as guilty of it, 2Co 10:12. It is a vice directly opposite to humility, unbecoming a man as man, and highly dishonourable to God, and contrary to the gospel. The heathens cherished it as the spur to great achievements, it is one of Tully's rules for the institution of princes; but the Christian religion, that gives all glory to God, condemns it. And yet we may seek the vindication of our name, when thereby we may provide for the honour of the name of God, as the apostle Paul often did.

Neither of you, nor yet of others; he adds this to show that this was their general practice among others as well as these Thessalonians; they were not guilty of flattery, covetous designs, or seeking the glory of men among any churches, or in any place; their practice in their ministry was uniform, and in all places upright and sincere.

When we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ; or, we were able to be in, or for, a burden, a Hebraism. By burden some understand authority: q.d. We might have used our ministerial authority more than we did, whereby to get greater honour and respect to our persons among you. And indeed all authority and honour have their weight and burden. Others by *burden* understand maintenance. And then he means, we might have been chargeable to you, according to the power given by Christ to his apostles to reap carnal things from them to whom they sowed spiritual things. And at the first sending them forth in Judea, it was so ordained by Christ, that they should be maintained at the people's charge: see 1Co 9:1-27. But they were so far from covetousness, that they took not all that was their due, and what they might of their outward substance, and from seeking their own honour, that they did not use what authority they might to procure it among them; for they laboured with their hands night and day, that they might not be chargeable, 1Th 2:9; though they might have challenged not only maintenance, but honourable maintenance, 1Ti 5:17.

1 Thessalonians 2:7

Ver. 7. *But we were gentle among you:* he next gives account of their carriage more positively: and first he speaks of their gentleness among them; $\eta\pi\iota\sigma\iota$, the Latin takes it for $\nu\eta\pi\iota\sigma\iota$, infants, we were as infants to you, as nurses are as infants with their infants, and children with children. This is one of the fruits of the Spirit, Ga 5:22; it stands opposite to moroseness, austerity, and roughness of temper, and is commendable in all, especially in ministers, 2Ti 2:24; and was eminent in Christ, as was prophesied of him, Isa 40:11 42:3; and the contrary he reproveth in James and John, Lu 9:54,55. It springs from humility, meekness, and patience; as the contraries are pride, passion, and frowardness. In some cases sharpness and severity may be needful; prudence is to direct, therefore, our carriage. The apostle had now to do with young converts, and under the trial of persecution; and not apostates and obstinate sinners, against whom we find he was sometimes severe and sharp, as Jude required, Jude 1:22,23.

Even as a nurse cherisheth her children; and he represents this gentleness by that of a nurse to her children; not of a hired nurse,

but a mother nurse, Nu 11:12, who useth all tenderness towards them, beareth with their frowardness, condescends to the meanest offices and employments, and draws out her breasts to them, and lays them in her bosom, and all this to cherish them. And she doth this not out of hope of gain, but out of motherly affection. Thus, saith the apostle, were we gentle among you. As he converted them to Christ, he was their spiritual father, but his gentleness was like that of a mother, nursing her own children. He considered their weakness in their first believing, and bore with it; their many infirmities, temptations, afflictions that were upon them, had compassion over them, and supported them under them, and cherished them with the sincere milk of gospel truths; and he did all this not for gain, but out of sincere affection and a willing mind. Some extend the word we render *nurse* to the brute creatures themselves, especially birds, that hatch, and then cherish their young with the warmth of their own body, and care in feeding them: τροφος, the word signifies a feeder, and so may have a more general signification: see Job 39:14.

1 Thessalonians 2:8

Ver. 8. A further account of their behaviour among them. The former verse showed their great gentleness, this their great love; expressed, first: In their affectionate desire of them; as the Latin phrase, *cupidissimus fui*, imports love to the person. And it was the desire of their salvation, first in their believing, and then perseverance and progress in faith. It was themselves, not their goods, they desired; as Paul elsewhere saith: *We seek not yours, but you*. Secondly, In the effect of it, which was imparting the gospel to them, whereby they might be saved; which is amplified by two things:

1. That they did this willingly, not out of mere necessity, with a backward mind; the word is εὐδοκοῦμεν, we were well pleased to preach, and with complacency of mind.
2. That they were willing to impart their souls to them; that is, to hazard their lives for them in preaching to them, as Ac 16:1-40; the same word signifying both the soul and life, and he that dies for another gives his life to them. Or, it may refer to their labours and hardships, whereby they endangered their lives for them, *labouring night and day*, 1Th 2:9. Others

understand the words only as an expression of their great affection to them; a man imparts his soul to the person whom he entirely loves, as Isa 58:10; when a man gives relief to a person in want out of love and compassion, he imparts his soul in what he gives. So did they in the gospel thus preached. And the word imparting is used to express relief to the wants of the body, Ro 12:8; and the gospel is the bread of life to give relief to the soul, and used in this sense also, Ro 1:11. The apostle may here further allude to mothers that are nurses, who impart not only other food, but their milk, which is their blood, to cherish their children.

Ye were dear unto us; or, ye have been beloved of us; wherein the apostle more plainly declares their love to them as the ground of all their labours and perils in preaching to them; yea, it may reach to all that he had said before concerning their carriage among them, all was from love.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

Ver. 9. To make good what he had asserted before about their integrity in preaching the gospel, that it was without covetousness, and vain-glory, &c., and about their great affection to them therein, he appeals to their own memory.

Our labour and travail: *labour*, in what we suffered, attended with care and solicitude of mind, as the word imports; and *travail*, in what we did, attended with weariness, as some distinguish of the words.

For labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you; this refers to some bodily labour they used, which I find not mentioned in the story while they were at Thessalonica, though Paul did practise it at Corinth, Ac 18:3. To prevent scandal and misconstruction that may arise from receiving maintenance, and in case of the church's poverty, the apostle would refuse it; but without respect to these he pleaded it at his due, 1Co 9:1, &c. And his refusing was no work of supererogation, as the papists plead hence; for in such cases it was a duty with respect to the honour of his ministry; so that it ought not to pass into a rule, either that ministers in no case may labour with their hands to get their bread, or that they ought so to

do always, as some would conclude hence, and preach freely. However, he commends them that they forgot not the labour and travail they underwent for their sake, and that both *night and day*, which implies assiduity and diligence, as 1Th 3:10 Ps 1:2 Lu 2:37; and so to be taken here. Though it may signify their spending part of the night as well as the day in some bodily labour, (the same we read 2Th 3:8), yet not to be understood as if they spent the whole night and day therein; for how then could they have preached the gospel to them, as he here addeth; and they would take nothing of maintenance from *any* of them, or be chargeable or burdensome to them; not from the poor, to whom it might really be a burden, nor from the rich, who yet might be backward, and account it a burden.

1 Thessalonians 2:10

Ver. 10. The former verses gave account of their carriage in the ministry, this here of their Christian conversation; *holily*, with respect to God; *justly*, with respect to duties commanded towards men; and *unblamably*, in denying themselves in lawful liberty to avoid all occasion of blame from any of them. And for the truth of this he appeals to themselves; yea, to God himself. There is the witness of men, and the witness of conscience greater than of men, and the witness of God greatest of all, 1Jo 3:20. He appeals to them as witnesses about their external actions, and to God about the integrity of their hearts; and he doth this not in a way of boasting, but to be an example to them, and as a further reason of the great success of his ministry. The conversation of ministers hath great influence upon the success of their labours.

1 Thessalonians 2:11

Ver. 11. Besides his public ministry, he dealt more privately with them, as Ac 20:20; and that in a way of exhortation and comfort; by exhortation to quicken them, and by comfort to support them under troubles both outward and inward. And he did this as a father to his children, with much earnestness, compassion, and love, yea, and authority also. He was before represented as a mother, 1Th 2:7; and here as a father, whose work and duty is to exhort, counsel, and comfort his children privately at home; so

did he as well as publicly, for he was their spiritual father, as he begat them to Christ by the gospel, as he tells the Corinthians also, 1Co 4:15. As before he represented his gentleness, so here his fatherly care. Or, at their first conversion he carried it with gentleness as a mother, but afterwards used his fatherly authority. And in this he appeals to their own knowledge also, calling their own consciences to bear witness to what he speaks, that it might leave the greater impression upon them.

1 Thessalonians 2:12

Ver. 12. In the Greek text the word *charged*, mentioned in the former verse, begins this verse; μαρτυρομενοι, it signifies testifying: some read it, we obtested, which is as much as beseeching; others, contested, which is a severe charge, containing a threatening, as Ex 19:21: *Charge the people*, saith God to Moses; in the margin: Contest the people, or wish the people. It is a charge here which the apostle gives solemnly in the name of God to them, calling in the witness of God to it.

That ye would walk worthy of God; that is, suitably to the nature of that God who is the true and living God. That you may walk like a people who belong to such a God, and express the virtues of this God in your conversation, 1Pe 2:9; or, suitably to the great mercy and glorious privileges you have received from him, which he mentions in the following words.

Who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory; or, who is calling you; then by God's kingdom and glory we must understand the future state of heaven: though they were not yet possessed of it, yet by the gospel God had called them to it, as Php 3:14 1Pe 5:10. Or, *who hath called you*, as we read it; then he means their present state since they believed and obeyed the call of the gospel, they were brought thereby into God's kingdom and glory; or, his glorious kingdom, wherein the glory of God, especially the glory of his grace, mercy, love, and wisdom, eminently shine forth. Hereupon a Christian's calling is termed a *high calling*, Php 3:14; a *heavenly calling*, Heb 3:1. And they being called by God out of Satan's kingdom into this glorious kingdom, the apostle chargeth them to walk worthy of God and this calling, by having a conversation suitable thereunto, Eph 4:1 Col 1:10; to walk according to the laws of

this glorious kingdom they were already brought into, and suitably to the glory of heaven that they were called to the hope of.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Ver. 13. The apostle having given the reasons on his part and his fellow ministers', why the gospel had such effect upon them, he next proceeds to show the reason on their part, for which he giveth God thanks. And that is, from their manner of receiving it; though this, as well as the former, are but subordinate reasons.

1. They *heard* it; some will not do that; and therefore the apostle here calls it a word of hearing, a Hebraism, as Ro 10:17: *Faith cometh by hearing*.
2. They *received* it: the word importeth a receiving with affection, as Joseph the virgin Mary to his wife, Mt 1:20.
3. They *received it not as the word of men*, which we receive sometimes doubting, sometimes disputing it; or believing it only with a human faith, upon grounds of reason, as the dictates of philosophy, or on the reports of men, and without the impression of the authority of God upon our minds; or when we receive the word of God because of the eloquence or learning of the preacher, and the affection we bear to him, or admiration of his person; or, as the papists, we believe it because the church believeth it.

But as it is in truth, the word of God; with a divine faith, ready subjection of our souls to it, and with reverent attention, as a word that is from heaven; which the apostle positively asserts in way of parenthesis.

As it is in truth, or truly, they believed, so he dispersed the word to them, and so they received it. And for this cause he gave thanks to God. Having mentioned before the subordinate reasons of the efficacy of the word, he now mentions the principal, which is God himself. That any receive the word as the word of God, it is not from the preachers so much as from God. And it is a great cause of thanksgiving to God, when ministers find a people receive the word with a Divine faith, which is not done

without Divine grace: then they see the fruit of their ministry, for which they ought to give thanks. Which effectually worketh also in you that believe: the powerful working of God is usually expressed by this word, Eph 1:19 Php 2:13; and the working of Satan also, Eph 2:2. Men possessed with the devil are called *energumeni*. And where the word is believed and received as the word of God, there it hath this energy, or worketh effectually, so as to promote love, repentance, self-denial, mortification, comfort, and peace, &c. The apostle had mentioned before their *work of faith, labour of love, patience of hope*, 1Th 1:3; and all from hence, their receiving the word as the word of God, and so retaining it.

1 Thessalonians 2:14

Ver. 14. This proves the assertion of the foregoing verse, as the illative *for* doth show. They were *followers of the churches in Judea*, which showed the word wrought in them effectually. Though the greatest part of the Jews believed not, yet many did, and hereupon we read of churches in Judea. Though there was before but one national church, yet now in gospel times the churches were many. And believing in Christ they are called churches *in* him, gathered together in his name, into his institutions, and by his Spirit; and these Thessalonians became *followers* or imitators of them, or in the same circumstances with them. The churches among the Jews were the first planted, and the Gentile churches followed them, conforming to the faith, worship, and order that was first in them, yea, and imitating their faith and patience in suffering.

For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen; the Jews that believed suffered from the unbelieving Jews of their own country; so did these Thessalonians. But whether the apostle means only the Gentiles of Thessalonica, or the Jews that dwelt there and were born among them, is uncertain; for the persecution mentioned Ac 17:1-34, was chiefly from the Jewish synagogue, though the Gentiles might also join with them therein.

Even as they have of the Jews: they suffered *as* the churches of Judea, namely, in the same kind, as Heb 10:32-34; and in the same cause, and with the same joy, constancy, and courage. And

here Christ's words are fulfilled, that a man's enemies shall be those of his own house, Mt 10:36.

1 Thessalonians 2:15

Ver. 15. *Who both killed the Lord Jesus;* no wonder then though they have persecuted you, and the believing Jews their countrymen. They killed the Lord Jesus by the hands of Pilate, crying: *Crucify him, crucify him.* Though it was by God's determinate counsel, and the Roman power, yet by the Jews' malice they killed him; Mt 21:38: *This is the heir; let us kill him.*

And their own prophets; of their own nation, and directed and sent particularly to them of God; so that it was no new thing in them thus to do. Not that these individual Jews who persecuted Paul killed the prophets, but they were of the same nation, the same blood, and of the same spirit with them, and were *the children of them, that killed the prophets,* as our Saviour charged them, Mt 23:31. The spirit of persecution was natural to them, it descended from one generation to another; their kings were guilty of it, their priests, their false prophets, and the common people. And though better things might be expected of the Jews than any other people, yet thus they did. And it was not only because of the new doctrine or worship that the apostle preached, for they killed their own prophets before them; but it was their love to their lusts, hatred of reproof, enmity to holiness, &c., that was the cause. And Christ himself chargeth them with the same things, Mt 23:37: *O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, &c.;* and foretells it as that which they would yet practise, Mt 23:34.

And they please not God; by the figure called meiosis; it is meant they highly displeased God, and were haters of God, and hated, and now rejected, of him. Though they had the advantages and reasons to please God above all other people, having had the law and ordinances of his worship among them, yet they pleased not God, and particularly in their persecutions of the gospel and the apostles, though they might think that therein they did God good service, as Joh 16:2.

And are contrary to all men; contrary in their worship, laws, and customs. Or rather, *contrary to all men,* in hindering the course

of the gospel appointed for men's salvation. And despising all other nations in comparison of themselves, they were apt to be seditious, and raise tumults every where, and to disdain familiarity and common friendship with the Gentiles.

1 Thessalonians 2:16

Ver. 16. *Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved:* their contrariety to all men is expressed particularly in this instance; they forbade the apostles to preach to the Gentiles, which were the greater number of men; though they opposed also their preaching to the Jewish nation: for the Jews could not endure to hear that the Gentiles should be received into the church, or into special favour with God; as appears by Christ's sermon in the synagogue, Lu 4:28, and in the apostle's apology for himself at Jerusalem, Ac 22:21,22. And their forbidding them implies, not an act of authority, for they had it not, but their hindering them what they could, and stirring up the people and rulers against them, as Ac 17:6.

To fill up their sins alway; to cause it to rise up to such a measure and degree as will at last bring destruction. Though this was not their intention, yet through the just judgment of God it was the event. They killed the prophets; but killing Christ, and persecuting the apostles, and hindering the salvation of mankind thereby, this filled up their sin. The expression alludes to what is said of the Amorites, Ge 15:16, and foretold by Daniel, Da 9:27, called *the consummation*. As here is a perfecting of holiness, and filling up of grace, so also of sin. And sin against the gospel ripens sin more than against the law. And because they made a constant progress in sin, they are said to fill it up; *Fill ye up the measure of your fathers*, Mt 23:32.

For the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: first they filled up their sin, and then comes this wrath, or that wrath foretold by Daniel, Da 9:27; and by our Saviour, Mt 23:38. It was their last destruction by the Romans. God's wrath broke forth upon them several times before, but not to the utmost till now. Or, to the end, as in the Greek. In former punishments God removed his wrath and restored them again, but this continues to the end. Or, some, by the end, understand only the perfection and consummation of this wrath. And its coming may be read in the

Greek, it hath prevented them; as bringing them to judgment beforehand in this world; as the destruction of the old world, Sodom, and Jerusalem, were figures and forerunners of the last judgment. And yet this doth not contradict what the apostle speaks, Ro 11:1-36, and many of the prophets, concerning their calling into the faith and church of Christ before the end of the world. Also we must understand it with an exception of the remnant of God's election that was amongst them.

1 Thessalonians 2:17

Ver. 17. The apostle here makes his apology, for his so soon departing from them, and his continued absence. They were under great sufferings for receiving the gospel he had preached, and for him therefore to leave them so soon as he did, (as appears in the story, Ac 17:1-34), and not presently to return, might discourage their hearts and make them question his love.

1. For his leaving them, he tells them it was not voluntary, but forced by the persecution of the Jews, he being sent away in the night by the brethren to Berea, Ac 17:10; and therefore he calls it a taking away, rather than a going away from them. And (as the Greek word imports) it was:
2. A thing grievous to him, as children that are bereft of father and mother, and left orphans, are greatly troubled. And he was afflicted as a father bereft of children; so were these Thessalonians to him, having begotten them to Christ by the gospel.
3. It was but *for a short time*, for the time of an hour; when he left them, he intended but a short stay from them, only to avoid the present storm: others think he means by the words his sudden leaving them before he took solemn leave of them.
4. He left them *in presence, quoad faciem*, as to outward sight, not in heart: the proper genius of true lovers, who are present with each other in soul when separated in body.
5. He tells them of his endeavours to see their face; and that the more abundantly, because he came away so suddenly from them. And lastly, he did this with great desire, his endeavours

herein were acted with great affection.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

Ver. 18. This he adds further to satisfy them of his real affection to them, that he attempted to come to them *once and again*, that is, often, as Ne 13:20 Php 4:16. And that they might be assured it was not his fellow ministers' desire only to come, therefore he expresseth his own name particularly in a parenthesis (*even I Paul*). Or by his saying, *even I Paul*, he assures them concerning his own desire to come to them; at least I Paul, though others did not so; as the French Bible reads it. And he had come to them had not *Satan hindered* him, either by raising up disputes against the gospel at Athens by the philosophers there, which he was concerned to stay and answer, Ac 17:18; or else by stirring up wicked men to lie in wait for him in the way: or by raising tumults, as the Jews did at Berea, whereby he was constrained *to go as it were to the sea*, Ac 17:14; or by sowing dissensions in other churches, which detained him to end them. Or by what way it was, is somewhat uncertain; but being thus hindered it made his desire the more fervent by the opposition. And hereby we see Satan's enmity to the gospel, especially to churches newly planted, that they might not take rooting.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

Ver. 19. Here the apostle gives the reason of his desire to see them. He first calls them his *hope*; that is, the master of his hope, that among others they should be saved in the day of Christ. Secondly, his *joy*: he at present rejoiced in their ready and sincere receiving the gospel preached by him. Thirdly, his *crown of rejoicing*, which signifies the triumph and height of joy: and seeing he mentions the *presence* and *coming of Jesus Christ*, he looks to the crown that he should receive at that day, which he speaks of, 1Co 9:25; and these Thessalonians, among others, would help to make up this crown of rejoicing to him. And in the words we may observe an eminent gradation, as also that the crown of ministers will arise not only from Christ, but from their people also.

1 Thessalonians 2:20

Ver. 20. He redoubles the expression, to show his great affection, and complacency of heart in them; or to show that they more than others were this occasion of rejoicing to him. And he mentions *glory* as well as *joy*, for the great success of his ministry among them would redound to his glory in the day of Christ; as Da 12:3: *They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.* Or, they were his glory at present, a glory to his ministry, and a seal to his apostleship.

1 Thessalonians 3:1

Chapter Summary

1Th 3:1-5 The apostle showeth that out of his great care for the Thessalonians he had sent Timothy to comfort and strengthen them in the faith,

1Th 3:6-8 whose good report of them had been a great consolation to him in his distresses.

1Th 3:8-10 He testifieth his thankfulness to God, and earnest desire to see them,

1Th 3:11-13 praying God to guide him to them, and for their increase in love and holiness unto the end.

Ver. 1. The apostle proceeds upon the same argument to confirm his love to them, and care of them, that they might not doubt of it because of his long absence from them. Therefore he tells them, that though he could not come himself, yet he sent Timothy to them from Athens; which we find not mentioned in the Acts by Luke: and his love herein is commended the more:

1. Because he sent him out of a strong impulse of affection, he could not *forbear* any *longer*, or bear, it was a heavy burden to him till he had done it, as the word imports.
2. He was content *to be left at Athens alone* by parting with Timothy, though his company was so desirable and useful to him at that time. And he was well pleased so to do for their sakes; εὐδοκῆσαμεν, he had a complacency of mind in so

doing, so much he preferred their good before his own contentment.

(To see numbers 3 and 4: See Poole on "1Th 3:2".)

1 Thessalonians 3:2

Ver. 2. (To see numbers 1 and 2: See Poole on "1Th 3:1".)

3. By the description he gives of him in the text: a man dear to him, and as his right hand in the service of the gospel. And his care of them is commended the more by sending so eminent a person to them.
4. From his end in sending him; which was *to establish them*, that through the fear of suffering, or any temptations, they might not forsake the faith they had received; *and to comfort them concerning their faith*: the word sometimes signifies to exhort, and the sense is good if we so read it; but because the faith they had embraced presented much matter of comfort to them, therefore our translation; well renders the word.

1 Thessalonians 3:3

Ver. 3. The apostle had mentioned before his great afflictions, and they knew well what he himself had suffered both at Thessalonica and Berea, Ac 17:1-34, and therefore might fear they might hereupon be shaken in their faith. And Timothy therefore was sent to comfort and establish them: God could do this without him, but the ministry is his ordinance he works by. And when he saith, *that no man should be moved*, it shows what is a Christian's duty, to be unmoved by sufferings for the gospel. The word here used by the apostle answers another word, used 2Th 2:2, which alludes to the waves of the sea shaken by the winds. Fears, and doubts, or hesitations of mind, do move and shake it, which the apostle sent Timothy to prevent, or remove. And besides, he addeth an argument of his own to confirm them, when he tells them, *ye know that we are appointed thereunto*. The word is used Lu 2:34 1Ti 1:9. But he means, we suffer afflictions according to the purpose and intention of God; they come not by chance, or merely from men's wrath and enmity,

but from the appointment of God. And whether the apostle speaks only of his own sufferings, and other ministers of the gospel, or of all saints in general, as Ac 14:22 Ro 8:17,36 2Ti 3:12, is uncertain; we may well understand it of both; so that he would not have these Thessalonians think it strange, as if some strange thing happened to them, 1Pe 4:12, whereby to be shaken in their minds.

1 Thessalonians 3:4

Ver. 4. The apostle having said that they knew they were appointed to sufferings, tells them here they knew it because he had told them of it. Paul, by some extraordinary instinct or revelation, often foresaw his sufferings, and God more generally told him of them at his first conversion, Ac 9:16; and he told them of them that they might reckon upon sufferings. A faithful minister will not only tell the people of the crown, but of the cross of Christ. And what he foretold of his sufferings, he tells them *came to pass*; whereby they might be strengthened further in their faith about the gospel he had preached to them, and not be offended at his sufferings, being foretold to them, as well as appointed of God.

1 Thessalonians 3:5

Ver. 5. The apostle here gives a further account of the reason why he sent Timothy to them, which was *to know* their *faith*, whether it continued stedfast under all their sufferings and temptations. He feared Satan, whom he calls *the tempter*, might have some way or other *tempted* them, either by false teachers to seduce them, or by sufferings to affright them. He was more concerned about the inward state of their souls, than their outward condition; and commonly temptations go along with persecutions. And the apostle, having bestowed great *labour* upon them, feared lest it might *be in vain*, that the tempter had prevailed. Satan's first work is to keep men from believing, his next is to destroy their faith: young converts are commonly most assaulted. Paul's heart was therefore very solicitous for them, so that (as he said before) he could not any longer forbear sending to know how it was with them.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

Ver. 6. We had before an account of Timothy's sending, now of his return, wherein we have the message he brought, and the effect thereof upon the apostle. The message may be considered:

1. As to its new coming:

But now when Timotheus came, &c.; so that this Epistle seems to be written presently upon his return.

2. As to the good account it brought of them: it *brought good tidings* (the same word is here used that expresseth in the Greek the glad tidings of the gospel) *of their faith*, that it continued still stedfast; and of their *charity*, or love, that they had love joined with their faith, and their faith working by love, which showed it was living, and of a right kind.

And that ye have good remembrance of us always; they forgot him not, though absent some length of time from them; and it was a *good remembrance*, joined with love and esteem of his person, and of his ministry amongst them; and it was *always*, which implies the constancy of it.

Desiring greatly to see us; and not satisfied with this good remembrance of him being absent, they greatly desired his presence, to see him and his fellow labourers. And to answer their love on his part, he addeth, *as we also to see you.* By all which he seeks to satisfy them of his continued care and remembrance of them, which was the effect of this message.

1 Thessalonians 3:7

Ver. 7. He was *comforted by this faith* of theirs *in all his own affliction and distress.* The faithfulness and constancy of a people is the great comfort of their teachers. *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth, 3Jo 1:4.*

1 Thessalonians 3:8

Ver. 8. The comfort of their faith was so great that it would be as life to him, if they stood fast in it; which he calls a standing *fast in the Lord*. Life is not only the union of soul and body; comfort is the life of the soul, especially that which springs from Divine causes. And on the contrary, the apostacy and degeneracy of a people doth kill the hearts of their faithful teachers.

1 Thessalonians 3:9

Ver. 9. This is another effect of the message Timothy brought, it caused in the apostle great thanksgivings to God. First he rejoiced in their faith, and then gives thanks to God for that joy. The matter of his rejoicing was their faith, but the author and upholder of this faith was God; and in giving thanks to God for his joy, he gives thanks also to God for their faith from whence it sprang. The joy that ministers have in their people's faith should break forth into thanksgivings. And the apostle's thanks to God was beyond what he could return or express, as appears by the form of his speech:

For what thanks can we render? &c.; as Ps 116:12: What shall I render unto the Lord? said David. And his rejoicing before God implies both the nature of it, it was divine and spiritual, and his respect to God therein, as David danced before the Lord with all his might, 2Sa 6:14; i.e. with a respect to God's goodness then declared Or the apostle might mean his joy was inward, before God, rather than before men.

1 Thessalonians 3:10

Ver. 10. We have here the last effect of Timothy's message upon the apostle, it put him upon prayer for these Thessalonians; expressed by the assiduity of it, *night and day*, &c., that is, in a constant course; as we noted before, 1Th 2:9. And by the fervency of it, *exceedingly*, or excessively. The Greek word cannot well be Englished, yet is often used by the apostle when he would express any thing with an emphasis, as Eph 3:20, and in this Epistle, 1Th 5:13. And by the matter of it; *that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith*. Though his Epistles might avail towards it, yet his personal presence would do more. There is a peculiar blessing attends oral

preaching, more than reading. The like prayer he made with respect to the Romans, and upon the same account also, Ro 1:10,11. Though the apostle had before commended their faith, yet there was something lacking in it. No faith is made perfect at first; yea, the best faith may have some defects. And the word is used elsewhere to signify something that is wanting, or left behind, 1Co 16:17 Col 1:24. And their faith might be defective:

1. As to the matter of it, some mysteries of faith they might not yet understand; as the disciples did not, till after Christ's ascension; and some of the Corinthians a while doubted the doctrine of the resurrection, 1Co 15:12, &c.
2. As to the clearness of it, with respect to the truths they did already know and believe.
3. As to the lively operations and fruits of it.

The former defects are removed by doctrine, the last by exhortation and comfort, and the apostle desired to see their face on the account of both: and to *perfect* a thing is to make it complete, both as to parts and degrees. The word here used we find often in the New Testament, 2Co 13:11 Ga 6:1, &c.; and variously rendered in the several translations, but yet much to the same sense: the apostle being so suddenly driven from them, he left them as a house half built; but his affection to them was so great, that he longed to return to them for the perfecting of their faith, though he had met but a while before with such great perils at Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Ver. 11. Here his prayer is expressed. The person to whom he prays is God himself, personally considered as God the Father, and relatively, when he styles him *our Father*: so ought believers to address themselves to God, not absolutely, but as to their Father. So Christ taught his disciples to pray: *Our Father*; and so the Spirit of adoption doth prompt the saints to pray: we come to God with greater freedom and confidence when we can come to him as a Father. And he prays also to Christ, whom he styles *our Lord Jesus Christ*. Whence we may have an argument that Christ is God, else he could not be the object of Divine worship:

not that we are to present our prayers distinctly to the Son without considering his union with the Father, nor to the Father distinctly from the Son, but to the Father in and by the Lord Jesus Christ; for so only we can consider him as our Father in prayer. And he speaks of Christ also in his relation to his people: *our Lord Jesus Christ*. And the thing he prays for is, that God would direct his way unto them; that the hinderances of Satan, whatsoever they were, might be removed, and the providence of God open him a way to come to them: the word *direct* signifies in the Greek to make straight, and, 2Th 3:5, is applied to the heart: *The Lord direct your hearts*, &c., which is setting the heart straight towards God; answering to the Hebrew word *Jashar*, which signifies to be upright, and is often used in the Old Testament. The French read it, *address our way*. And hence we learn our duty by the apostle's practice to pray to have our way in all cases directed by God.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

Ver. 12. *Increase and abound*; these two words denote an increasing and overflowing abundance. This is another thing he prays for; the former respected himself, this respected them. He desired to come to them to perfect that which was lacking in their faith, and he prays now for the abounding and increase of their love; not only to love one another, but *to increase and abound* in it; to increase the habits and abound in the fruits of love. They were under sore persecutions, and their love to one another was more necessary at such a time. And not only to one another, but to extend their love *towards all men*. Either all men in general; for love is a general duty we owe to all men: *Owe no man any thing but to love one another*, Ro 13:8; and therefore all our duty to men is comprehended under it. And the apostle requires this love to be added to brotherly kindness, 2Pe 1:7; yea, love is required to enemies, Mt 5:44, though not as enemies, yet as men. Or more particularly, believers; as sometimes *all men* is taken under that restriction, Tit 2:11.

Even as we do toward you: and he setteth before them his own love to them, both as a pattern and motive hereunto. Though the love of Christ is especially to be looked at, and is proposed often by the apostle Paul as the great argument of love to men, yet he mentions his own love to them here to show the constancy of his

affection to them though absent from them, and to show that he persuaded no duty to them but what he practised himself.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

Ver. 13. These words some refer only to the verse immediately preceding: by increasing and abounding in love, their hearts would be established *unblamable in holiness*. Which is true, for that holiness is justly to be suspected, at least is to be blamed, which is without love to men. And love itself is a great part of holiness; and who will blame holiness when it shines forth in love? Yea, it will be unblamable before God and men. And when God doth cause a people to increase in love, he doth hereby establish them in holiness that is unblamable; where love is wanting the heart is not established. The hypocrite will fall off in an hour of temptation, because he wants love; and though he may for a while make a fair show before men, yet he is not unblamable before God, who searcheth the heart: neither will he be found so at the appearance of Jesus Christ; which the apostle prays for here with respect to these Thessalonians, that they might be established *in holiness until the coming of Christ*; or that they might be found unblameable in holiness at his coming. Whereby the apostle signifies there is yet another coming of Christ, when there will a strict trial pass upon men, and therefore the saints should labour to be then found unblamable, or without spot and blemish, as 2Pe 3:14.

At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints; whereof he gives a particular account in the next chapter. Others carry this verse as referring also to 1Th 3:10, where he desired to see their face to perfect their faith, that both by their faith and love they might be established unblamable in holiness.

1 Thessalonians 4:1

Chapter Summary

1Th 4:1-8 Paul exhorteth the Thessalonians to proceed in their endeavours to please God by a holy and just conversation.

1Th 4:9,10 He commendeth their love to one

another, entreating them to abound in it,
1Th 4:11,12 and quietly to follow their
respective callings.

1Th 4:13-18 And that they might not sorrow for
the dead, as men without hope, he briefly
describeth the resurrection of the just, and
Christ's second coming.

Ver. 1. He descends to some particular duties about their walking, which he ushers in by a general exhortation in this first verse; wherein we may observe his style: he calls them *brethren*, and speaks to them with much condescension and earnestness, and in the name of Christ, &c. And the subject he insists on is their walking, the course of their life and conversation, which he describes by the rule of it, *as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk*; he refers them to the directions he had given them about it as the rule; for he did in his ministry not only open gospel mysteries, but explain moral duties. And not only to walk in them, but to *abound more and more*, to press forward to a greater exactness and excellency in their Christian conversation. And he here useth motives:

1. From the Person in whose name he speaks to them, which is *the Lord Jesus Christ*; for he was but Christ's minister and ambassador.
2. From the knowledge they had received of their duty, and therefore they could not plead ignorance.
3. Their walking as they had been instructed by him would *please God*.

1 Thessalonians 4:2

Ver. 2. This explains what he said before; what they had received of him about their walking he here calls *commandments*, not so much his own as the Lord's, as the word itself imports here used, and is expressed in the text.

By the Lord Jesus: though the apostle had authority, yet it was but derivative from Christ; and therefore not to walk as the

apostle had commanded would be disobedience to Christ himself. And he minds them of what they knew, that their knowledge might be exemplified in practice; for as faith, so knowledge, is dead which doth not influence the life; and they knew that he commanded them not in his own name, but in the name of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

Ver. 3. What in the former verse he called commandments from Christ, he here calls *the will of God*; or he had some further duties to lay before them, which he had not yet given commandments about, which were the will of God. There is the secret and revealed will of God, and his revealed will is about things to be believed or practised. The latter is here meant, so that the will of God is put figuratively here for the things he willeth, or commandeth of us. And that which the apostle first mentions is *sanctification*, which is often taken for holiness in general, which consists in men's conformity to the will of God both in the heart and life. But I think not so taken here, but for chastity, as opposite to the sin of uncleanness, as the apostle explains it in the next words. For to *abstain from fornication* is the will of God. And by it is meant all unchasteness, either of persons married or unmarried; and that either in the heart, or in speech, or in the eye, or lascivious gesture, as well as in the very act itself. It was a sin common among the Gentiles, especially the Grecians, and judged as no sin. And therefore it is particularly mentioned and forbidden to the believing Gentiles by the council of Jerusalem, lest they should apprehend it not to be an evil, Ac 15:20. For it is not so evident by the light of nature as many other moral evils; and therefore the apostle tells the Thessalonians that it is the will of God they should abstain from it, and that is a sufficient ground either of doing or not doing. This will of God is expressed in the seventh commandment, which though the Jews well knew, yet these new converted Gentiles might not yet so well understand. And therefore the apostle in his several Epistles to the Gentile churches doth dehort them from it, especially the Corinthians, 1Co 6:9, and that by many arguments. It is a sin which corrupts and effeminates the mind, captivates the heart, consumes the flesh, and wastes men's estates. So that this will of God that forbids it is a good will, Ro 12:2, as all the commandments of

God are said to be for our good, De 10:13.

1 Thessalonians 4:4

Ver. 4. This is added as a means to prevent that sin. By *vessel* some understand the married wife, who is called *the weaker vessel*, 1Pe 3:7; and her husband is to possess her *in sanctification*, in chastity, as the Greek word may signify here.

And honour; for as marriage is honourable to all men, Heb 3:4, so to live chastely in a married estate is honourable also. For by whoredom man gets dishonour, *and his reproach shall not be wiped away*, Pr 6:33. Others by *vessel* understand the body, which is the vessel of the soul; the soul carries it up and down, useth it in the several functions of the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life. And so some understand the words of David to the priest, 1Sa 21:5: *The vessels of the young men are holy*, being kept from women; that is, their bodies. Fornication is said above all other sins to be a sin against the body, 1Co 6:18, and he that keeps his body chaste possesseth his vessel, keeps it under government; whereas by fornication we give it to a harlot, and that which is a member of Christ we make it the member of a harlot, 1Co 6:15; and though the words are directed properly to the masculine sex, the word *εκαστον* being masculine, yet under that the female is comprehended. And because the practice of this duty requires care, skill, and much watchfulness against temptations, therefore saith the apostle that every man may know how to possess his vessel in sanctification. To which is added, *and in honour*; for acts of uncleanness dishonour the body; Ro 1:24: *God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies*, &c. God hath bestowed much curious workmanship upon the body, it is part of Christ's purchase, and, with the soul, is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, in all true saints, all therefore should be possessed with honour. Or it is to be kept to the honour and glory of God, as 1Co 6:20, and to be offered up a holy sacrifice to him, Ro 12:1.

1 Thessalonians 4:5

Ver. 5. Any violence of affection we call passion, whether of

love, or anger, or desire, because the soul is passive, or suffers thereby. The Stoics said passions were not incident to a wise man; and: *They that are Christ's*, saith the apostle, *have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts*, Ga 5:24. And *lust* is usually taken for all inordinate affection, either with respect to the object or degree; though the Greek word doth signify only desire, and is sometimes taken in a good sense, as Php 1:23; for, there are good lustings as well as evil, as Ga 5:17, *the Spirit lusteth against the flesh*; but here the word is taken in a bad sense, for the lust of uncleanness, which the apostle here calls *the lust of concupiscence*. The philosophers distinguish of the affections or passions of the soul, some are irascible, some concupiscible. The former are conversant about evil, to repel it or fly from it; the latter about good, either real or imaginary, to pursue it or embrace it. And the lusts of concupiscence are either of the mind or of the flesh, Eph 2:3: here we understand the latter, that fleshly concupiscence that is conversant about women, which if by *vessel* in the forlner verse is understood man's lawful wife, then he forbids all unchasteness even towards her; if the body, then he forbids all unchaste usage of the body in any kind, or towards any person whatsoever. And, to avoid fornication, he forbids lust that leads to it.

Even as the Gentiles which know not God; which the apostle useth as an argument to them: Though ye are Gentiles by nation as well as others, yet not in state, such as know not God. There is a natural knowledge of God, which the apostle speaks of, Ro 1:21, which the Gentiles had; and supernatural, which is by the Scriptures; to know the mind, will, nature, decrees, and counsels of God as they are there revealed: and the knowledge of God in Christ; this is meant in the text, and this the Gentiles had not, and therefore no wonder though they followed the lust of concupiscence, they wanted the rule of God's word to direct them, and that effectual knowledge of God, and presence of his grace, that would have restrained them from such lust. But these Thessalonians now, since their conversion by the gospel, were come to this knowledge of God, which they had not before, and therefore were not to live as before they did. Knowledge ought to influence our hearts and lives, and to sin against knowledge is the great aggravation of sin, and will make men more inexcusable. But yet where knowledge is wanting what wickedness will not men practise! The Gentiles were *alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them*,

Eph 4:18. The Jews crucified Christ, and Saul persecuted the disciples, through ignorance, 1Ti 1:13. Much more are those Christians to be condemned, who, having more knowledge than the Gentiles, yet practise worse than they; as the apostle upbraids the Jews upon this account, Ro 2:27.

1 Thessalonians 4:6

Ver. 6. This some understand to be another part of sanctification, mentioned before, 1Th 4:3, taking the word *sanctification* in a more general sense. And as before he spake of chastity, so here of commutative justice in commerce and traffic; and the rather because Thessalonica was a city of great trade and merchandise, and it is true that sanctification doth comprehend this righteousness in it, and will restrain men from that which is opposite to it, which, as the apostle speaks, is going beyond and defrauding his brother. To *go beyond*, is that which we call overreaching; when in buying or selling we keep not a just measure, when we observe not a due proportion between the price and the commodity, considering it either in its natural worth, or in such circumstances as make it more or less valuable: or, to take advantage of another's ignorance or necessities, to take unreasonable profit: or, to break covenant with another, answering to the Hebrew word *Gnabhar*, used in this sense, De 17:2: the original word signifies to transgress, or go above the due bounds. And to *defraud* is, when, out of a covetous mind, we exact upon another beyond what is meet. Some refer the former word to injustice by force, and the latter by fraud, 2Co 7:2. And the evil is the greater because done to a *brother*. There is a brother by a common relation, and so all men that partake of human nature are brethren; or by special relation, which is either natural, civil, or spiritual. We may understand the word in all these senses, especially the last, that those that are brethren in Christ and in the faith, should not defraud one another. And when the apostle adds, *in any matter*, the word *any* not being in the Greek, we may better read it, in dealing, or doing; the word is general, and is to be restrained by the subject matter spoken of. There is another sense of the words, agreeable to the former verses, and the verse that follows, and so some understand the apostle as still speaking of chastity; and so here he forbids the invading another's bed, transgressing the bounds of marriage, whereby men go beyond or defraud their brother, usurping the

use of another man's wife, whom he hath no right to. And then *in any matter* we must read, in that matter which he had been speaking of before, or it is a modest expression of the act of adultery. The Hebrew *Bo* is often used in the Old Testament for carnal copulation, and thence the Greek βαινω and υπερβαινω, here used; and the other word, ψλεονεκτειν, denotes excessiveness in it, Eph 4:19. And the reason he adds is: *because the Lord is the avenger of all such. Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord,* De 32:35 Ro 12:19. Whether we understand it of fraud, or overreaching in dealings, when man cannot right and relieve himself, the righteous God will avenge the unrighteousness of men; or of the fraud of the marriage bed, which is done in secret, and man cannot avenge himself, Heb 13:4.

As we also have forewarned you and testified: and this the apostle saith he had forewarned them of, and testified. Though the light of nature told the heathen that God was an avenger of wickedness, Ac 28:4, and the heathen could say, Ἐχει θεος εκδικον ομμα. God hath a revengeful eye; yet the apostle had in his preaching assured it. He had told them of Christ's coming to judge the world, when he would execute vengeance, Jude 1:15; and this they were before ignorant of: and though God sometimes takes vengeance in this world, yet he seems to refer to this last vengeance, because he speaks of it as that which he had forewarned them of, and testified in his ministry, and whereof they had not so clear a testimony in natural conscience.

1 Thessalonians 4:7

Ver. 7,8. These two verses are added, as further arguments to persuade to that chastity he had spoken of, called *sanctification*, 1Th 4:3,4. The first is taken from their Christian calling, which is *not to uncleanness, but to chastity*, called *holiness*. When they were Gentiles in state, they lived in the lust of uncleanness, but they were now called by the power of the gospel, and brought to such a profession that did forbid and condemn it. And the author of their call is *God* himself, though the apostles and other ministers were the instruments. Whence he fetcheth this second argument, 1Th 4:8, that if this chastity he despised, or rejected, as we may read the text, it is not man, but God, that is despised. To despise a minister in a commandment he delivers from God is

to despise God himself, Lu 10:16, &c.; and the apostle doth here intimate, not to obey the commandment of God is a despising God. Or, that the apostle was despised by some because of the outward meanness of his person, or questioning his authority.

Who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit: this he adds as a third argument; so that what he had preached to them, was not from himself, but from the Holy Spirit. Or if by *us* he means these Thessalonians also, as some copies read it, he hath given you, &c., then he argues from the gift of the Holy Spirit they had received against living in the sin of uncleanness. This would be very disagreeable, not only to their holy calling, but the Holy Spirit God had given them. Or else these arguments of the apostle are to persuade to universal holiness, taking sanctification and holiness in a larger sense; and uncleanness, for all sin in general standing opposite thereunto. Sin is often spoken of in Scripture under the notion of filth, defilement, pollution, &c., and so was typed forth under the law; and to be cleansed from sin is a cleansing man from filthiness, 2Co 7:1; so that to live in sin, as the apostle argues, is to live in uncleanness, to contradict our holy calling, to despise God, and to walk contrary to the nature and dictates of his Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Ver. 9. *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you:* the apostle proceeds from chastity and justice to speak of brotherly love, which is love upon a spiritual ground; to love the saints as such, with respect to God as a common Father, and so all his children are brethren, 1Th 2:8,9; so Heb 13:1. And he persuadeth the practice of it by a loving and winning insinuation; Sure you are forward enough of yourselves; as he useth the same artifice, Ac 26:27,28 2Co 9:1; wherein the apostle tacitly commends them, and hereby would engage them to answer the commendation, and good opinion he had of them.

For ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; what need I write to teach you that which you have already been taught of God? The saints have this promise, Isa 54:13 Jer 31:34; fulfilled, 1Jo 2:26,27; and this Divine teaching is always efficacious, for none teacheth like God. Not that all teaching of

men is to be laid aside, as some enthusiasts would hence infer, but that the apostle thought he had less need to teach that which God himself had so effectually taught them. Hereby we perceive that God's teaching doth not only enlighten the mind, but reacheth the affections, and especially inclines the heart to love, for God is love; and though they were taught other things of God besides this love, yet he mentions only this as the most proper work of the Spirit of God by the gospel; and though common love of man to man may be found in mere nature.

1 Thessalonians 4:10

Ver. 10. As an evidence of the truth of their love for which he commended them, and that they were taught it of God, he gives a practical instance of it in this verse; else the apostle might have been thought to flatter, or to command a love that was without fruit; and therefore he saith not, ye profess it, but *ye do it*: so 2Co 8:11, *perform the doing of it*.

Toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia; which was a large province, wherein were planted many churches. Their love was not guided by interests, opinions, civil relations, or self-respects, but it reached to all that were brethren; and that in some real effect of it, in some work of charity, or liberality, or otherwise, not here mentioned, but we read of it, 2Co 8:1,2.

But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; but, however, their love was not yet perfect, and therefore he beseecheth them to abound more and more; either meant as to the extent of it, not to confine it only to Macedonia, or as to the degree of it, to excel men in it, as the Greek word may be rendered: and the same word the apostle useth, and upon the same account, 2Co 8:7. Neither love, nor any other grace, is made perfect at once; even those that are taught of God, are taught by degrees. And love being a grace so suitable to the gospel, and their present suffering state, he therefore especially exhorts to a progress in it.

1 Thessalonians 4:11

Ver. 11. *And that ye study to be quiet:* he exhorts to quietness,

and yet to be diligent; and probably he might see this needful, either by what he himself had observed amongst them, or by what he had heard of them, as appears by what he writes in his Second Epistle, 2Th 3:10,11. To be quiet is to be of a peaceable temper and carriage, as the Greek word ησυχάζειν importeth both; and stands contrary to strife, contention, division, either upon a civil or religious account. And to *study to be quiet*, because the thing may be difficult, especially in some circumstances of times, places, and persons. And the Greek word φιλοτιμεισθαι implies an ambitious study. Quietness we should pursue with a holy ambition, as that which is honourable to ourselves and our profession, Pr 20:3. The same word is used 2Co 5:9, where it is rendered *we labour*, &c. Study is properly the exercise of the mind, yet it here comprehends any kind of labour. This agrees with what the apostle elsewhere exhorteth to, Heb 12:14: see 1Pe 3:11.

And to do your own business: be next commendeth to them diligence, and that in our own business; and this he prescribeth as a good way for quietness, contentions often arising from meddling in the affairs of other men which concern us not; for which he rebukes some in this church, 2Th 3:11. But yet only to seek our own things is a great fault, and lamented by the apostle, Php 2:21. We are to concern ourselves in the affairs of others when called to it, and not otherwise; and then we may reckon them among our own things. A Christian's calling is either general or particular, and what falls not within the compass of one of these, is to be accounted not our own business. And our doing and suffering ought to be kept within the sphere of our calling; for to suffer otherwise, is to suffer as busybodies, which the apostle cautions against, 1Pe 4:15; as a bishop intruding himself into another's office, to which the word there alludes.

And to work with your own hands; this condemneth idleness, and living out of a calling; we are not only to keep within our own sphere, but to stretch forth our hands to work. The same precept he gives to the Ephesians, Eph 4:28, not to steal, but to work with their hands, that they may not only *eat their own bread*, 2Th 3:12, but have to give to him that lacketh. Not that there is no other work but that of the hands; the ministers of the gospel are excused from that, 1Co 9:6, but not from work; there is the work of the head, and the tongue, and the foot, and the lungs, as well as of the hands; but either under one species he

comprehends all, or it may be he fitteth his speech to the condition of the people to whom he writes, who generally had such occupations wherein they wrought with their hands, Thessalonica being a great place of trade. And the apostle speaks of the churches of Macedonia as a poor sort of people, 2Co 8:2, and liberal beyond their power; though some among them might be tempted to idleness by the charity of others to them, which, as some conceive, was the occasion of the apostle's thus writing. But if men have estates, and upon that account need not work, yet no man is to be idle: men's time, parts, or other talents are to be employed, and account thereof is to be given, Mt 25:19; and the unprofitable servant is cast into outer darkness, Mt 25:30. Some way or other every man is to work, and may work, for profit to himself and others, unless under some invincible impediment.

As we commanded you; he means, when he was with them. He might probably observe some occasion for this commandment. Industry is of good report with all; and by meddling in others' affairs, and unquiet carriage and idleness, they might dishonour their Christian profession among the heathen, which might be the chief reason of this commandment: and the apostle doth not act herein as a civil magistrate, commanding about civil affairs for the public welfare; but as a minister of Christ, with respect to a spiritual end, as appears by what follows.

1 Thessalonians 4:12

Ver. 12. He enforceth his commands by a twofold reason, the former is *ab honesto*, the other is *ab utili*. First:

That ye may walk honestly, or decently, as the word is rendered, 1Co 14:40.

Toward them that are without; that is, Gentiles, infidels, so they are described, 1Co 5:12 Col 4:5; as those that were received into the church of Christ are said to be *within*. The apostle would have them honour the gospel before the heathen in such moral actions which they did approve of, and were able to judge of, not understanding the higher mysteries of faith and gospel holiness; which he calls walking *in wisdom towaards them that are without*, Col 4:5. The other reason is *ab utili*:

That ye may have lack of nothing; or, of no man, have no need to beg of any man. It might offend and be a stumblingblock to the Gentiles, to see Christians to beg of any, and especially of themselves, for their necessary relief. Or, of nothing; that you may by your own labour be able to subsist, and not depend upon others, and so not be a burden to friends, or a scandal to strangers. For every man to subsist by his own labour, was the primitive law to Adam, Ge 3:19, commended often by Solomon in his Proverbs, and enjoined by the apostle to believing Christians, 2Th 3:10.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

Ver. 13. The apostle now proceeds to a new discourse, about moderating of their sorrow for the dead, not for all, but the dead in Christ. He had either observed their sorrow in this kind excessive, while with them; or else by Timothy, or some other way, he had heard of it. Wherein observe in general, he doth not condemn their sorrow, but the excess of it. Grace destroys not nature, but regulates it; nor reason, but rectifies it; nor takes away the affections, but moderates them; doth not make us Stoics, or stocks. Affections are good when set upon right objects, and kept within due bounds, and this Christianity doth teach, and grace doth effect. And to mourn for the dead, especially the dead in the Lord, is a duty that both nature and grace teach, and God requireth; and the contrary is reprov'd by God himself, Isa 57:1, and to die unlamented is reckoned as a curse, Jer 22:18,19. It is only then immoderate sorrow the apostle here means; and to prevent it, or remove it, gives many instructions and arguments. And he supposeth their ignorance might be a great occasion of it, and so instructs them about the doctrine of the resurrection, and Christ's personal coming again, which by the light of nature, while Gentiles, they knew nothing of, or were very uncertain in. And the apostle, because of his short stay among them, had not had opportunity to instruct them about these things, and therefore doth it here distinctly and fully; as he doth the Corinthians, hearing there were some among them, even of the church itself, that said there was no resurrection, 1Co 15:12. It is such a mystery to reason, that it is hard to believe it; and the most learned of the heathen doubted of it, and some exploded and scoffed at it, as we find, Ac 17:18,

even such as yet held the immortality of the soul. And hereupon in this verse the apostle doth assert two things in general to relieve them against immoderate sorrow.

1. He calls the death of the saints a *sleep*. (see Da 12:2 Lu 8:52 Joh 11:11 1Co 15:20,51), whether referring to those that are already dead, or do die, or that shall afterwards die; and why should they then excessively mourn? After sleep we know there is awaking, and by sleep nature is revived; and so it shall be with the saints in death. Hereupon the grave is called a bed, Isa 57:2; and the burying place, *cemeteryum*, a place of sleep. And:
2. There is hope in their death, as Pr 14:32; there is hope concerning their happy state after death, and hope of their resurrection, and seeing them again at Christ's coming; it is not an eternal farewell. This the apostle here intends. And they will be then seen in a more excellent state, and probably so seen then as that their Christian friends may know them; else the apostle's argument would not have so much strength, and so well suit the present case. The heathen and infidels buried their dead without this hope, as they are said to be without hope, Eph 2:12; and so were excessive in their sorrows, which they expressed by cutting their flesh, making themselves bald, doleful songs, and mourning ejulations, expressed sometimes upon instruments: and which the Jews had learned from them, as appears by God's often reprovng it, and Christ's putting out the minstrels, Mt 9:23,24; and as that which he forbade them, Le 19:28 De 14:1. And the apostle may refer to this in the text, as that which is not only grievous to nature, but dishonourable to a Christian's faith, hope, and profession. We are hereby the betrayers of our faith and hope, and the things we preach will seem false and feigned. *Cypr. de Mortalitate*. And though man is said to die without hope as to a return to his former state of life here, Job 14:7-10; yet not with respect to the life at the resurrection, in them that die in Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

Ver. 14. As in the former verse the apostle made use of the hope of the resurrection, as an argument against immoderate sorrow,

so here he proves the resurrection by Christ's rising again, &c.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again; he supposeth they did believe that Christ died and rose again; it was that which he had taught them, and which they had received, as being the two first and fundamental points of the Christian faith, without which they could not have been a church of Christ.

Question. But how doth Christ's resurrection prove the resurrection of the saints? He being the eternal Son of God, might have a privilege above all.

Answer. This first shows the thing is possible, God hath already done it in Christ.

2. Christ rose for our justification, Ro 4:25; and in justification sin is pardoned which brought in death, and which alone by its guilt can keep under the dominion of death.
3. Christ rose not as a private person, but as the Head of the body, his church, Eph 1:4,20, &c., and so loosed the bands of death, and conquered the grave, for his people.
4. As *the first-fruits*, 1Co 15:20, which was a pledge and assurance of the whole harvest to follow.
5. God hath predestinated the elect, whom he foreknew, *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, Ro 8:29.
6. He is not complete without them, Eph 1:23.

Lastly: They *sleep in Jesus*, as the text speaks; not only live but die in him, Re 14:13, their union remains with Christ even in death.

Even so them also which sleep in Jesus; by which words also the apostle distinguisheth believers from all others; it is only they shall have the privilege of this blessed resurrection who sleep in Jesus. And perseverance in Christ to the end is here also intimated.

Will God bring with him; and though their resurrection is not expressed in the text, yet it is implied in this saying. By *God* is

meant, as some understand here, the Son of God, who is to come from heaven, 1Th 1:10, and who will bring the spirits of just men, made perfect in heaven, with him, and unite them to their bodies, which cannot be done without their resurrection: whereby the apostle gives another argument against excessive sorrow for the saints departed, they shall return from heaven again with Christ at his coming. Others understand it of God the Father, who will raise the dead, and then bring them to his Son, and bring them with him to heaven. Those that read the text, those that sleep, or die, for Jesus, and so confine it only to martyrs, restrain it to too narrow a sense.

1 Thessalonians 4:15

Ver. 15. The apostle here sets down particularly the manner of the Lord's coming, the method and order how all the saints shall then meet with him and with one another, which we find not so distinctly in any other scripture; and whereby he further prosecutes the argument he is upon.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord; that they might not think that what he speaks was either by some tradition from others, or an invention of his own; and that is ground enough for faith, to which our judgment and reason ought to be captivated.

That we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep: that which he saith here about the resurrection, Christ's coming, the ministry of angels, the sound of a trumpet, the voice of Christ at that day, we have it in the evangelists; but the method and order of all the saints meeting together, and meeting the Lord in the air, we find not in any express words before written; the apostle speaks it here by extraordinary revelation, which is the word of the Lord, though not then written. And this order is expressed:

1. Negatively. The saints then living upon earth shall not be with Christ sooner than those that were fallen asleep, and be caught up into the air while the others are in the grave; and the apostle speaks as if he should be one of that number: surely he could not think the coming of Christ should be in the age wherein he lived; he speaks otherwise, 2Th 2:2; or that his life

should be prolonged to that day; for the time of his *departure*, he saith, was *at hand*, 2Ti 4:6. But he looks upon the whole body of saints together, and himself as one of that number, and so speaks, *we which are alive and remain*, &c.; as in 1Co 15:51: *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*.

2. Affirmatively. *The dead in Christ shall rise first*, that is, before they that are alive shall be caught up into the air; they shall stay till the rest be risen: as 1Co 15:51: *We shall not all sleep, but be changed, and in a moment*; which the apostle calls *clothed upon*, 2Co 5:2, and which he rather desired than to be *unclothed*, 1Th 4:4: and then they that are dead in Christ shall rise, and be united to these in one visible body.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

Ver. 16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout*; the means which effect this. The word *shout* in the Greek signifies a command, or word of command; alluding to mariners or soldiers summoned to be ready with their assistance when called upon; and may refer to the angels whom Christ now summons to attend and assist in that day. And the evangelist speaks of the voice of Christ, Joh 5:28, which is there said to raise the dead. Whether this is an oral shout and voice from the mouth of Christ, or only an expression of his Divine power, whereby he shall awaken them that sleep out of their graves, is a question I shall not be curious about.

With the voice of the archangel: Christ is said to come with *all the holy angels*, Mt 25:31; and to *send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet*, Mt 24:31. But here is mentioned only the archangel and his voice, instead of all the rest, they all coming under his conduct. Though there be not such distinct orders of angels as the schoolmen affirm, yet there is order among them, as *archangel* implies. And whether he will put forth an audible voice or not at that day, or whether this archangel be not the same with Christ himself, who is *the Head of all principality and power*, Col 2:10, I leave it as doubtful; but, however, it is certain the angels shall be ministering to Christ at that day, especially in the resurrection of the elect, Mt 24:31, and severing the righteous from the wicked, Mt 13:41.

And with the trump of God; as 1Co 15:52. And whether this is to be taken literally, and distinct from the shout and voice before mentioned, or used only to show forth the Divine power of God that shall gather all the elect together out of their graves, as the trumpet in war gathers the scattered army, or as the silver trumpets under the law assembled the congregation of Israel, I shall not be positive. And this is the account of the saints that are raised.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

Ver. 17. Christ will have a church to the end of the world, and some will be found alive at his coming, and will be *caught up*, or snatched up, to denote its suddenness, it may be in the arms of angels, or by some immediate attractive power of Christ; and it will be *together with them* that are now raised from the dead; they shall all ascend in one great body, and it will be *in the clouds*; as Christ himself ascended in a cloud, Ac 1:9, and so will return again, Mt 24:30, he making the clouds his chariots, Ps 104:3.

To meet the Lord in the air:

1. To congratulate his coming, when others shall flee and tremble.
2. To put honour upon him; as the angels will also attend him for that end.
3. To receive their final discharge.
4. To be visibly joined to their Head.
5. To be assistants with him in judging of the world, and to reign with him upon earth.

And whether the last judgment will be upon the earth, or in the air, I shall not determine; but after this Christ and his saints shall never part. Their first meeting shall be in the air, and their continuance will be with him while he is in this lower world, and after that they shall ascend with him into heaven, and so be for ever with him. Augustine imagined that the saints that are found

alive shall in their rapture die, and then immediately revive, because *it is appointed to all men once to die*; but the apostle saith expressly: *We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed*, 1Co 15:51.

1 Thessalonians 4:18

Ver. 18. The apostle makes application of all this discourse to the end he designed, which was to comfort them under their sorrows for departed Christian friends; and he saith not, be ye comforted, but *comfort one another*, to put them upon the great duty of Christian sympathy; though this is a duty we owe to all, yet especially to the saints, and more especially of the same particular congregation. And funeral sorrows are usually most afflictive, and therefore need to be allayed with words of comfort; and not with any words, but, saith the apostle, *with these words*, or these things, as the Hebrew, the things or words that he had before laid before them. The philosophers used many arguments against the fears of death, and for comfort under funeral sorrows, but Christians should fetch their comforts from the Scriptures. These are the best, most solid, most durable, and universal, and therefore the apostle commends them to the believing Romans, Ro 15:4, as here to these Thessalonians particularly. These considerations, that those which sleep in Jesus shall rise again, and that we shall meet them again, and we and they shall be for ever with the Lord together, are a great relief against the sorrows of their departure hence. And the comforts arising hence may serve to support under other sorrows as well as these, which the apostle also might intend in the words.

1 Thessalonians 5:1

Chapter Summary

1Th 5:1-11 The apostle proceedeth to show that Christ's coming will be sudden, exhorting Christians to watch and be sober, so as not to be taken by surprise.

1Th 5:12,13 He beseecheth them to respect their spiritual guides,

1Th 5:14-22 and giveth, divers other precepts,

1Th 5:23-28 concluding with a prayer and salutations.

Ver. 1. But when shall these things be? Might some say, as the disciples asked Christ, Mt 24:3,36 Ac 1:6. He tells them: *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons*; not that they knew them in particular already, but there was no need they should know them. It may be some among them were too curious to inquire. He doth not say they could not be known, as being put into God's own power, as Ac 1:7; but, *ye have no need that I write of them*. The apostle, as in his preaching, so in his writing, had respect to what was most needful and profitable for the people: as when the disciples asked: *Are there few that be saved?* Christ answered them in that which was most needful to them, Lu 13:24: and so doth the apostle here; instead of acquainting them with the times and seasons, he puts them upon watchfulness, that they might not be surprised, as in the following verses; and to improve the knowledge they had already, which was this, that Christ's coming would be sudden.

1 Thessalonians 5:2

Ver. 2. By *times and seasons* then, before mentioned, he meant the time: of the Lord's coming, or he applies what he spoke in general to this particular, which he here calls *the day of the Lord*. And though they knew not the particular time, yet they did know this, it would be sudden and unexpected, coming *as a thief in the night*, Re 16:15: the comparison is to be restrained only to the suddenness of it; for his coming will be welcome, and so not as a thief, to all that believe. And it is called *the day of the Lord* here and elsewhere, 1Co 3:13 Php 1:6,10, and *that day*, 2Ti 1:18, not to be taken for a natural day, but a certain period of time. Any eminent manifestation of God, either in works of mercy or judgment, is called his day in Scripture, Isa 2:12 Jer 46:10. And so because Christ will be more eminently manifested now than ever before, therefore his coming is called his day; and that it would be sudden they did not only know, but *know perfectly*, or accurately; Eph 5:15, *circumspectly*: there could be only conjectures about the particular time: the influence hereof was powerful upon their hearts, and so they may be said to know it *perfectly*. In religion, knowledge is not perfect which is not

operative.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

Ver. 3. *For when they shall say, Peace and safety:* by these words the apostle proves that the day of the Lord will come unexpected, by the security that will be then found in the world. They say it in their hearts and practice, if not with their tongues. And he useth two words the better to express the greatness of this security, present peace, and no danger of sliding, as the words import. And as the effect of Christ's coming will be *destruction* to such, which will be *salvation* to others, Heb 9:28; so through their security it will be *sudden destruction*, which he describes under the similitude of *travail upon a woman with child*, which doth for the most part come of a sudden, and is the most exquisite pains in nature, and is often made use of in Scripture to set forth extremity of misery, Isa 13:8 Jer 13:21. And these pains come upon her unavoidably; so saith the apostle of these men's destruction, *and they shall not escape*, or in no wise escape, expressed in the Greek by two negatives, which do strongly affirm.

1 Thessalonians 5:4

Ver. 4. Lest these believing Thessalonians should be terrified in their minds by this discourse, he adds this by way of comfort to them, that they shall not be surprised as others; though they did not know the particular time of Christ's coming, yet it would not find them unprepared for it as the world would be; and the reason he gives is, because they *are not in darkness*.

Darkness is to be taken metaphorically; and so in Scripture it is taken either for sin, ignorance, or misery. The two former are here meant, especially ignorance. These Thessalonians were brought into the light of the gospel; they had the knowledge of Christ, and the way of salvation by him; particularly they knew of his coming, and the manner and ends of his coming, which the infidel world did not; and though Christ's coming would be to others as a thief in the night, yet not to them.

1 Thessalonians 5:5

Ver. 5. And because the night is the time of darkness, and the day of light, he therefore hereby describes their present state:

1. Positively: *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day;* which is a Hebraism: Ye are partakers of a spiritual light, and this light is not the darker light of nature, or the light of prophecy, which the Jews had, compared to a lamp, 2Pe 1:19; but ye are *children of the day*, as the time of the gospel is called *day*, Ro 13:12 2Co 6:2.
2. Negatively: *We are not of the night, nor of darkness;* your state is exceedingly different from other Gentiles, and from what it once was, as the light is from darkness, and day from night: not as if there was no ignorance remaining in them, for the best men see but through a glass, darkly, 1Co 13:12; but the apostle compares them with their former estate when they were Gentiles, and with the Jews under the law; and with respect to their state in Christ, they were not children of the night, or, as to their state, of the night, but children of light, and of the day.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

Ver. 6. The apostle draws this inference from the foregoing verses in a twofold duty:

1. Negative; *Let us not sleep, as do others;* sleep is not proper for the children of the day, but of the night. And as the night and darkness are to be taken metaphorically, so the sleep. And though it hath several acceptations in Scripture, yet it is here taken for security. As the natural sleep binds up the senses, and men are not aware of approaching danger, so doth the sleep of the soul: it darkens the mind, stupifies the spiritual sense, that men prepare not for the coming of Christ, nor to avoid the destruction that will then come suddenly upon them. Ro 13:11,12, is a place parallel to this: *It is high time to awake out of sleep, &c. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. &c.*
2. Positive; *Let us watch:* watching stands contrary to sleep; the

senses are then in exercise, which were bound up by sleep. When the soul is watching, the faculties are in a spiritual exercise to apprehend both our interest and our duty, to take hold of that which is good, and to avoid the evil, the evil of sin and the evil of suffering. But watching here in the text especially refers to the coming of Christ, to prepare for it, that we may not be surprised as others will, and to be in a readiness *to be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless*, 2Pe 3:14.

And be sober: sobriety is reckoned to be one branch of temperance, and one of the fruits of the Spirit, Ga 5:23, and one link of the chain of grace, 2Pe 1:6. It hath its name in the Greek, signifying either soundness of mind, or continency of mind; a mind kept or held within its due bounds. It is usually taken for moderation in meats and drinks, setting bounds to the appetite; but it extends to all earthly things, as honour, riches, pleasures, to have our affections to them, our cares about them, our endeavours after them, kept within due bounds; and all this upon the account of Christ's coming, as a necessary preparation for it: see 1Co 7:29-31 1Pe 4:7. Sobriety and watching are here joined together, and so 1Pe 4:7 5:8. For as intemperance in meats and drinks makes the body dull and sleepy, so without temperance and sobriety the soul will be disenabled to watch.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

Ver. 7. The apostle enforceth the former duties of watchfulness and sobriety from the consideration of their present state. They that sleep choose the night to sleep in, and they that would be drunk choose the night for it: drunkenness being so shameful a vice, especially in the apostles' time, that men were ashamed to be seen drunk in the day-time; see Ac 2:15 Eph 5:12,13; and in ancient times they had their feasts in the night. Ye therefore that are not in the night of your former ignorance, ought neither to be found in the sleep of security nor in the sin of drunkenness, whereby may be meant also any kind of intemperance; for a man may be drnnk, and *not with wine*, Isa 29:9; drunk with pleasure, with cares, with sensual love and desires, with passion, and by spiritual judgments upon the soul, Isa 29:10.

1 Thessalonians 5:8

Ver. 8. The apostle here commands two spiritual duties, and the former is sobriety; which he mentioned before, 1Th 5:6, as a preparation for Christ's coming; but here, as that which was suitable to their present state, and as standing opposite to that drunkenness in the foregoing verse. It is not sufficient to abstain from vice, without practising the contrary virtue. The other duty is, putting on their spiritual armour. The former was to secure them against the good things of the world, the latter against the evil of it, that they be not overcome of either. The armour he mentions is spiritual. Soldiers have their breastplate and helmet for their bodies, so hath the Christian these for his soul. As the breastplate and helmet secure the principal seats of the natural life, the head and the heart, so doth the Christian's armour secure the life of the soul, and therefore these two pieces are only mentioned, as being most necessary. His *breastplate* is *faith and love*.

First, *faith*; in Eph 6:16, it is called a *shield*; here, a *breastplate*. Great things are ascribed to faith in Scripture; it is that whereby we are justified, adopted, united to Christ, have our hearts purified, &c.; but here it is to be considered as a defensive grace; and it doth defend as it assents to the doctrine of the gospel as true, particularly the doctrine of the resurrection, and the coming of Christ, with the effects and attendants thereof, before mentioned. And as it doth depend upon God's faithfulness and all-sufficiency to perform his promises, and applying them to ourselves for our support and comfort, so faith is a breastplate or defence; and as it is a defence against temptations, so particularly against that sudden destruction that will come upon the secure world, before mentioned.

Secondly, *love*; and love is joined with faith to show it to be a true and lively faith, when it *worketh by love*, Ga 5:6; and love, when it worketh, produceth many blessed effects, and particularly, as faith it will be a breastplate of defence. It will defend against the persecutions and afflictions of the world: *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it*, So 8:7. Slavish fear will overcome us if we want love to defend against it, when true religion is under disgrace and persecuted in the world: love will defend against apostacy, and so help us to persevere to the coming of Christ, which the apostle

had been speaking of; and love being seated in the heart, is well compared to a breastplate that encompasseth the heart.

Thirdly, the other piece of armour is the *helmet*, so called in the Greek from encompassing the head; and this helmet is here said to be *the hope of salvation*. In Eph 6:17, we read of *the helmet of salvation*, but the hope of it is there to be understood, for salvation is no grace of the Spirit, and so, of itself, no part of a Christian's armour. Hope of salvation is of great use to a Christian many ways: it is a cordial to comfort him, a spur to quicken him, a staff to support him, a bridle to restrain him, and so also a helmet to defend him: and therefore no wonder that the apostle calls true hope *a lively hope*, 1Pe 1:3. And as itself is lively, so it is a defence to the life of the soul, as a helmet is to the life of the body.

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, saith Solomon; but if quite disappointed and lost, the heart sinks and dies. Let afflictions and distresses break in like a flood, yet hope will keep the head above water; and if Satan assault the soul to drive it into despair, this hope of salvation will be a defence to it. So that the Christian's armour mentioned in this verse are *faith, love, and hope*, which divines call the three theological graces, and placed together by the apostle, 1Co 13:13. And these the saints, who are children of the day, are to put on, whereby they shall be armed for the coming of Christ with this *armour of light*, Ro 13:12, and against the destruction which will then surprise the children of the night.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

Ver. 9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation:* some expositors make these words an argument to all the duties of holiness mentioned both in this and the foregoing chapters; and it is true, that the knowledge of our being elected, or appointed to salvation, doth not in the elect encourage to sin or sloth, as some affirm, but engage to all holiness: but I had rather restrain the words, and that either to the *hope of salvation*, mentioned immediately before, and then the sense to be this, we may well hope for salvation seeing God hath appointed us to it; or, to his whole discourse about the coming of Christ, and so they may give the reason why the dead in Christ must rise, and

must, with the living saints, meet the Lord in the air, and be for ever with him; yea, and why they need not fear the destruction that will come upon others at that day, and why they should be watchful for its coming, because, saith the apostle: *God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation, &c.* Having spoken of two sorts of persons, the children of the day, and children of the night, and the sudden destruction of the one and salvation of the other at the coming of Christ, he here ascends to the first original of both, which is God's appointment, which is an act of God's sovereign will, determining men's final estates; which seems to be more than mere prescience or foreknowledge, an act of God's mind, as appears by Ro 8:29 1Pe 1:2, or more than appointing of the means and way of salvation; but not of persons to be saved, or of persons only materially, as to the number how many, but not formally, or individually, who they are that shall be saved; whereas the apostle writes of some *whose names are in the book of life*, Php 4:3, and that *from the foundation of the world*, Re 17:8, and *chosen before the foundation of the world*, Eph 1:4: otherwise, every man's salvation would depend more upon the uncertainty of man's will, than the eternal and immutable will of God; whereas whatever God works in man's salvation, is *according to the counsel of his will*, Eph 1:11; and God's counsel is certain, immutable, and eternal, extending not only to actions and means, but persons, Ro 8:29,30. Neither is this appointment of God grounded upon the foresight of man's faith; for if faith be the gift of God, this gift proceeds from God's counsel and fore-appointment; else men may say: That I may be saved I must thank God, but that I am saved I must thank myself: and hence there is a possibility for no man to be saved, and all the counsels of God in Christ to be made frustrate. But this is no place for controversy; only where God appoints to salvation, he appoints also to means, and without the means there is no attainment of the end, Eph 1:4 1Pe 1:2. And the apostle here makes salvation stand opposite to wrath; what before he called *destruction*, 1Th 5:3, he here calleth *wrath*, because God's wrath produceth it, and is manifested in it. And those that are saved are delivered from it; and the supreme reason is, because they were not appointed to it, but to salvation, and none that are appointed to the one are appointed to the other. The *vessels of wrath* and *of mercy* are set in an opposite distinction, Ro 9:22,23, and so in the text, to illustrate the mercy of God the more in them that are saved. And whereas the apostle calls it the obtaining of salvation, it implies

man's endeavours for it, though he be appointed of God to it; and speaking positively, not only of himself, but these believing Thessalonians also, he *hath appointed us to obtain salvation*, doth not this also imply that some good assurance of salvation may be obtained in this world.

By our Lord Jesus Christ; the decrees of salvation are executed in him, and by him; and *there is no salvation in any other*, Ac 4:12. And he saveth not only by his doctrine and example, as some have affirmed, but by his blood as the meritorious, and his Spirit as the efficient, cause of salvation. Whether the infinite wisdom of God could have found out another way I shall not inquire, but this it hath pitched upon, wherein mercy and justice are admirably glorified together, and the highest engagement imaginable laid upon men to love, serve, and honour their Creator. And as the freeness of God's grace is manifested in his appointing men to salvation, so the exceeding riches of it, in saving them by Jesus Christ. And whereas two things are necessary to it, the reconciling us unto God, and restoring his image in us, the former we have by the merit of his blood, and the latter by the operation of his Spirit; so that we have no ground for that fond opinion, that if men walk honestly and uprightly, they may be saved in any religion.

1 Thessalonians 5:10

Ver. 10. Some refer these words to the latter end of the foregoing chapter, where the apostle had spoken of the saints' death and resurrection, which is their sleeping and waking, as they are here called. And their being for ever with the Lord, is here called their living together with him. And lest it might be thought that none should be with Christ until they awaked at the resurrection, he therefore speaks of living with Christ even when we sleep. He had spoken of sleep in another sense, 1Th 5:6, as meant of security; but here meant of death, as it is taken 1Th 4:14. And as watching is set opposite to the former sleep, so here waking to the latter, which is a resurrection from death. And we hence gather that the soul doth not sleep with the body, but lives with the Lord when that sleeps in the grave; as the apostle expected to be with the Lord upon the dissolution of his body, Php 1:23, and he mentions it as the privilege of other saints as well as his own, 2Co 5:1. When we sleep we are with him only in our souls; when

we wake we shall be with him both in body and soul. And both these we have from Christ's death. If he had not died, heaven had been shut against our souls, for our entrance into the holiest of all is by his blood, and the veil of his flesh rent for us, Heb 10:19,20; and the grave would have shut up our bodies, and there would have been no resurrection; so that our living with Christ, both when we sleep and when we wake, springs out of his death. Others carry these words no further than the foregoing verse, showing how we are saved by Christ; saith the apostle, he *died for us*. As God appointed persons to be saved, and Christ to be the person to be saved by, so also to be saved by his death; with respect to his Father he is said to be *put to death*, 1Pe 3:18; with respect to his own freedom and willingness, he is said here to die for us. And his dying for us implieth the greatness of our guilt, and expresseth the greatness of his own love, Joh 15:13. He loved us, and thereupon would have us live with him; and he died that we and he may live together. And so he may be said to die for our salvation, the substance whereof consisteth in our living with him. To live with so glorious a Person, and a Person that is full of love to us, and shall then be perfectly beloved of us, and that stands in many near relations to us, and whose presence will have such a blessed influence upon us, and in such a place as heaven is, and that for ever, surely carries the substance of our salvation in it. And if this was the end of his death, surely it was more than to be an example of faith, patience, and submission to God, or to confirm to us the doctrine he preached; it was to satisfy Divine justice, and obtain the pardon of our sin, and merit for us the privilege of living with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Ver. 11. These words are an exhortation to the whole church of Thessalonica, to comfort and edify one another. Though the ministry is appointed to this by especial office, yet private Christians are to practise it to one another; the former doth it in way of authority, the latter in a way of charity.

Comfort yourselves together: the apostle had laid before them many comfortable truths, which they were to comfort one another by; and if we read the words, exhort one another, it refers to the necessary duties of religion he had mentioned in this

and the foregoing chapter.

And edify one another; and this follows from both the former, as alluding to a house that is built up by degrees: and so is every church the house of God; and consisting of living stones, every part is to seek the building up of the whole; and by mutual exhortation and comfort the whole may be edified. Christians, then, are to be blamed that only seek to edify themselves, and much more they who pull down, and divide, and destroy, instead of building up.

Even as also ye do: and what the apostle exhorted them to, they were already in the practice of; for which he here again commends them, as he had done upon several accounts before, not to flatter, but to encourage them to proceed, and to set before other churches their example for imitation.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

Ver. 12,13. The apostle spake before of their private duties as Christians to one another, now of their duties to their pastors and teachers, lest by what he had said they might think the ministry needless. It seems this church was settled under officers, which is called an organical church. And though the apostle himself was driven from them by persecution, yet they were not without ministers and teachers; and they owed a great duty to them, to which he doth lovingly exhort them. And he describes them not by the name of their office, as pastors, elders, or ministers, but by the work of it.

Them which labour among you; the word imports diligent labour, causing weariness, as 1Ti 5:17, *who labour in the word and doctrine;* which shows both the nature of the work of the ministry, it is laborious; and the duty of ministers therein, not to seek the honour and profit of the office, and refuse the labour of it; they have the work of teaching, and of oversight or government, and admonition, and all require labour.

And are over you in the Lord: the same word is used 1Ti 5:17, and translated *rule;* it signifies that superintendency and precedency, which the elders or ministers have over their respective flocks; and it is said to be *in the Lord*, either to

distinguish them from civil officers, or to show both the original, rule, and end of their office; it is from the Lord by institution, and to be managed according to his laws, and directed to his service and glory as its end.

And admonish you: the word is often used in the New Testament, Ac 20:31 Ro 15:14 Col 1:28 3:16; and signifies either the putting into the mind by way of instruction, or upon the mind by way of counsel, threatening, or reproof; and that either publicly or privately. Now the duty they owed to them is:

1. *To know them*, as in the former words; that is, to own them in their office, to have regard to their teaching, and to submit to their government, and to reward their labours; as knowing is often taken in Scripture to express the acts of the will and affection, and the actions also of the outward man, as well as of the mind; as Ps 1:6 101:4.
2. *To esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake;* υπερεκπερισσου see Ro 5:20 2Co 7:4. The words in the Greek carry such an emphasis as cannot well be expressed in English, importing esteem and love to an hyperbole; their love was to be joined with esteem, and esteem with love, and both these to abound and superabound towards them. We read of a *double honour*, 1Ti 5:17, which contains the whole duty of people to their ministers.

For their work's sake; whether of teaching, ruling, or admonition. Their work is in itself honourable, and work that tends to your salvation, and though their persons be meant, yet to esteem and love them for their work; or if upon any other account they deserve it of you, yet their work is to be the chief reason thereof; especially considering that their work more immediately respected them of this church rather than any others; and their labour was amongst them; or, as some read it, in you, to instruct, edify, and comfort your inward man.

And be at peace among yourselves; some copies read it, with them, αυτοις for εαυτοις, by a little alteration of the Greek word; and then it still refers to their teachers, they should be at peace, or live in peace, with them; for oftentimes dissensions arise between ministers and people, whereby their edification is hindered. But I rather follow our own translation; and so it is a

new duty of the people towards one another, to preserve mutual peace among themselves, and yet these words may respect the former. For if the people give honour and respect to their ministers, it may be a means to preserve peace among themselves: among the Corinthians, the applauding of some of their teachers, and the contempt of others, made great schisms and divisions amongst them. Our Saviour useth these very words to his disciples, Mr 9:50, from whence the apostle might take them. And the duty of peace he often presseth in his Epistles, Ro 14:19 1Co 7:15 2Co 13:11 Col 3:15 Heb 12:14; which was to prevent schism, which breaks the bonds of peace, and may make the labours of their teachers less successful.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Ver. 14. *Now we exhort you, brethren:* some think the apostle now turns his speech to their teachers, whom he here calls *brethren* in a more peculiar sense, and because the duties here enjoined do more properly belong to the ministry. But others more truly judge he continues his discourse to the whole church, and the several members of it. The same duties are to be performed by both, though under a different obligation: as in the civil state all are to seek the good of the commonwealth, though the magistrates and the governors are more specially obliged by office.

Warn them that are unruly; or admonish, as the same word is rendered in the former verse, here meant of brotherly, there of ministerial, admonition; wherein great prudence is to be used, as to time, place, persons, manner: and the *unruly* are such as keep not their place, alluding to soldiers that keep not their rank and station, and they are called in the margin *disorderly*, and that:

1. In civil respects, when men live without a calling, or, being in it, neglect it, or intrude into other men's business, and perform not the duties of their civil relations.
2. In natural respects, when men follow not the light of nature, and fulfil not the law of natural relations.
3. In spiritual respects, when men neglect or transgress the rules

and order of their walking in their church state, either with respect to their teachers or one another. Admonition belongs to such, and is the first step of church censure when regularly performed.

Comfort the feeble-minded; ολιγοφυχους, or the pusillanimous, men of little souls, as the word imports, such as dare not venture upon hazardous duties, or faint under the fears or feeling of afflictions, or are dejected under the sense of sin, and their own unworthiness, or fears of God's wrath, and assaulted by temptations which endanger their falling.

Support the weak; αντεχεσθε an allusion to such as lift at one end of the burden, to help to bear it, answering to the word συναντιλαμβανεται, Ro 8:26: *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities*: and the weak are either the weak in knowledge, weak in faith, that understand not their own liberty in the gospel, Ro 14:1 1Co 8:9; and hereupon cannot practise as others do; their conscience is weak, 1Co 8:12; and so were in bondage to some ceremonial rites, when those that were strong stood fast in their liberty. These are to be supported, dealt tenderly with, and not to be despised, or rigorously used. Or, weak in grace, new converts, babes in Christ, tender plants, not well rooted in the gospel.

Be patient toward all men: this duty is universal; the former concerned only the saints. The word signifies longanimity, or long-suffering, and is often attributed to God, Ex 34:6 Ro 9:22. It consisteth in the deferring or moderating of anger, to wait without anger when men delay us, and to suffer without undue anger when they deal injuriously with us, whether they be good men or evil, believers or infidels, the strong or the weak, ministers or people.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Ver. 15. These words seem directed to the guides of the church, who are called *overseers*, Ac 20:28, and therefore the apostle requires them to *see* that none render evil, &c. Or if to the whole church, as before, then it is a solemn charge which they ought to be all circumspect in observing. And the charge is:

1. Negative, not to *render evil for evil*; which is to revenge

themselves; and that is forbidden by the apostle, Ro 12:17,19 1Pe 3:9; and is the resisting of evil forbidden by our Saviour, Mt 5:39. But it is to be understood of private revenge rising out of malice, not of public censures, either civil or ecclesiastical, or of seeking reparations for injuries received in courts of justice according to law and equity. This private revenge cannot consist with that patience that he required towards all men in the foregoing verse, nor is it conformable to the example of Christ, 1Pe 2:23, nor to the Christian calling and profession, 1Pe 2:21.

2. Positive; good in itself, or that which is good to others, as the word is often taken, Mt 7:11 Lu 1:53 Ga 6:6; and so stands opposite here to the rendering of evil. And the word *follow* signifies an earnest following, which is sometimes taken in a bad sense, for persecution, Mt 5:11, and sometimes in a good sense, as Heb 12:14 1Pe 3:11; and to follow good imports more than only to do good, 1Pe 3:11, when the inward bent of the soul and the outward endeavours are towards doing good. And this ought to be *ever*, or always, that is, in all places, times, occasions, company. Man's course of life ought in this to be uniform, though his outward condition vary; sometimes to do good to the souls, sometimes to the bodies of men, and that either in a privative or positive good; preventing evil, or bestowing that which is good.

Both among yourselves, and to all men: Do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, Ga 6:10. As they say of good, the commoner the better; but the contrary of evil. Christians stand in a special relation to one another, but in a common relation to all, and every relation ought to be filled up with good. As love is a common debt to all men, so the fruit of it, which is doing good. Our doing good should not be confined among Christians only of one way, opinion, or congregation; nor to men only under some limiting circumstances; but it should reach all men as we have ability, opportunity, and call, even enemies themselves, as our Saviour requires, Mt 5:44. This is to act like God, and may commend religion to all men, and is not to be looked upon as commended by way of counsel, as the papists say, but commanded by precept. And it is not enough not to do evil, but we must do good: not to save a man's life when we have power to do it, is to kill him, as Christ argues, Mr 3:4; so not to save a man's estate

when we may, is to steal from him.

1 Thessalonians 5:16

Ver. 16. Here the apostle adds more Christian duties, briefly expressed, and set close one to another; and they seem to have a mutual connection, but not so relative to others as those before mentioned, but personal to themselves. He begins with the duty of rejoicing. Joy is an affection of the soul springing from the hope or possession of some suitable good. And it is either natural, which is common to men with beasts, arising from that good that is suitable to their several natures; or spiritual, which is joy wrought by the Spirit, and exercised upon spiritual objects. And this the apostle here means, and is called rejoicing *in the Lord*, Php 4:4, and *joy in the Holy Ghost*, Ro 14:17; arising either from what spiritual good we already possess, or hope to possess, *exhibita et promissa*, Bernard; which is thereupon called a *rejoicing in hope*, Ro 5:2 12:12. The apostle speaks here of the duty indefinitely, only requires it to be *evermore*; so Php 4:4. Though God sometimes calls to mourning, yet it is no where said: Mourn evermore, because rejoicing ought to be in a more constant practice, and all spiritual mourning tends to it, and will end in it; and he commends it as seasonable to these Thessalonians, to support them under their present sufferings. The grounds of a Christian's joy always abide, and he is not only to retain it in the habit, but to mix it with all his sorrows and sufferings, as 1Pe 1:6: *Ye greatly rejoice, though for a season, in heaviness*: whereas carnal mirth is mixed with sadness, Pr 14:13. So that a Christian ought to rejoice in every condition, not only in prosperity but adversity, and especially when called to suffer for righteousness sake; as Mt 5:12 1Pe 4:13. It is not only allowed but commanded. This joy is one great part of God's kingdom even in this world, Ro 14:17; much more in the world to come. And therefore the apostle speaks of rejoicing evermore, whereas mourning is but for a time, and ends to the saints in this life.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Ver. 17. This is a means to maintain our rejoicing, and therefore next mentioned. Prayer is a making known our requests to God,

Php 4:6. And it is either mental, in the heart only, as Hannah's was; or vocal, expressed with the voice; or, as some add, vital: so good works have a voice to bring down blessings, as men's sins cry for vengeance.

Without ceasing; not as the Euchites and Messalians of old, who hence thought no other duties were required, but always praying; but by the word in the text, is either meant a praying without fainting, as in the parable, Lu 18:1, and which the apostle calls a perseverance in prayer, Eph 6:18 Col 4:2; προσκαρτερεῖτε, or praying with strength, as the Greek word there imports, and so not to faint; so Ro 12:12. Or a praying in every thing, as Php 4:6: *In every thing let your requests be made known*, &c. Or, in every season, as Eph 6:18; to take hold of the seasons of prayer. Or, in all seasons and times, whether good or bad, yet still to pray. And all this is meant by the word in the text, which is also used 1Th 1:3 1Th 2:13 Ro 1:9; and implies in general no more but a constant course of prayer, so Col 4:2, to watch unto prayer, as that the course of it be not interrupted by any diversions. As also to preserve a heart disposed to pray at all times, and to mingle ejaculatory prayers with the several actions of our lives: our wants are continual, and God will be acknowledged in all our supplies, and therefore we ought to pray continually.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Ver. 18. *In every thing give thanks*: when we have obtained mercy by prayer, then we are to give thanks, and whatever we may pray for, that we ought to give thanks for. And so by that understand and limit the general expression in the text. We are not to give thanks when we fall into sin, for that we ought not to pray for; yet if we have the pardon of it, or get any good by it, we should then give thanks: and so may be said concerning affliction; we are to give thanks in every condition, either of prosperity or adversity. And with all our supplications, we are to join thanksgivings, Php 4:6 Col 4:2; and thanksgiving properly refers to some mercy received, whether privative or positive, temporal or spiritual, private or public, and we are in all these to give thanks. Though praising God may reach further, which is to adore the excellencies of his being as they are glorious in themselves, or the excellencies of his works as they are in themselves praiseworthy. And thanksgiving for mercy received

is:

1. A taking notice of it as coming from God.
2. Setting a due value upon it.
3. A sense of God's goodness and our own unworthiness.
4. Praising him for it.

For this is the will of God: some carry this as a motive to all the preceding duties; but rather to this last mentioned: as if this was in special the will of God, being a duty so much to his own glory and our good; and by *will* we must by a metonymy understand the thing willed, Eph 6:6 Col 4:12. It is required by the law of nature not written, which is part of God's will. The heathen are reproved for not being thankful, Ro 1:21; and they made laws to punish it, and accounted it the greatest reproach, *ingratum si dixeris omnia dixeris*. And it is required by the law of God that is written. The moral law requires it; and the ceremonial law required offerings by way of thanksgiving, which we call gratulatory. And the gospel requires it, it being one of the gospel sacrifices, Heb 13:15, and pleaseth the Lord better than the greatest of the legal sacrifices, Ps 69:30,31: and it being said to be the will of God in the text, it must needs be pleasing to him.

In Christ Jesus; either meant as this will of his is signified to us by him, not only by the law of nature, of Moses, but by Christ Jesus; and so it may be of greater force upon Christians, and hereby it is to be looked upon as one of the commandments of Christ also. Or we may understand it, upon the attempt of Christ, and the great love of God in him. Though thanksgiving is due for the least mercy, yet God's will especially requires it with respect to Christ. And so especially of Christians who partake of Christ, and the love of God in him; as the apostle here adds, εἰς ὑμᾶς.

Concerning you; or towards you in special: the heathens were obliged to thankfulness for rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, these common blessings; much more are Christians for the special blessings they receive by Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Ver. 19. That ye may be enabled to pray and give thanks, as before:

Quench not the Spirit. And, by the figure meiosis, he means, cherish the Spirit. The Spirit is compared to fire, Mt 3:11; and he came down upon the apostles in the similitude, of tongues of fire, Ac 2:3; but the Spirit himself cannot be quenched; he means it therefore of his gifts and operations; which are either ordinary or extraordinary. Many had extraordinary gifts in the primitive times, of healing, tongues, government, prophecy, &c.; those that had them, without question, should have taken care not, by any fault of their own, to lose them. Especially that of prophecy, which the apostle prefers before all others, 1Co 14:1, and mentions here in the following verse; and which the apostle exhorted Timothy to stir up in himself, 2Ti 1:6, as we stir up the fire to quicken it, so the word *αναζωπυρειν* imports. The like is required of ministers with respect to their ministerial gifts which are now given. But there are ordinary gifts and operations of the Spirit common to all Christians, as enlightening, quickening, sanctifying, comforting the soul: men by sloth, security, earthy encumbrances, inordinate affections, &c., may abate these operations of the Spirit, which the apostle calls the quenching it: the fire upon the altar was kept always burning by the care of the priests. Fire will go out either by neglecting it, or casting water upon it. By not exercising grace in the duties of religion, or by allowing sin in ourselves, we may quench the Spirit; as appears in David, Ps 51:10-12. Not that the habits of grace may be totally extinguished in the truly regenerate, yet they may be abated as to degree and lively exercise. Yet those common illuminations and convictions of the Spirit which persons unregenerate, especially such that live under the gospel, do often find, may be totally lost, Heb 6:4-6; and we read of God's Spirit ceasing to strive with the old world, Ge 6:3, and the scribes and Pharisees resisting the Holy Ghost, Ac 7:51, which were not persons regenerate. He may sometimes strive with men, but not overcome them. And there is a quenching of the Spirit in others its well as ourselves; people may quench it in their ministers by discouraging them, and in one another by bad examples, or reproaching the zeal and forwardness that they see in them.

1 Thessalonians 5:20

Ver. 20. Thereby we may quench the Spirit, which usually works upon men's minds and hearts by it. By prophecy is sometimes meant foretelling of things to come, and speaking by extraordinary revelation, 1Co 14:29,30; sometimes the Scriptures are so called, especially the Old Testament, 2Pe 1:21; and sometimes the interpretation and applying of Scripture, which is the same that we now call preaching, 1Co 14:3. And the duty with respect to it, is not to despise it, to set it at nought as a thing of no worth. The word is often used in the New Testament, Lu 18:9 Ac 4:11 Ro 14:3,10. But the apostle useth again the figure meiosis before mentioned, and means, prize, value, and highly esteem it, attend upon it, have great regard to it; it being an ordinance of God for instruction and edification, yea, and for conversion also, 1Co 14:24,25. Some despise it because of the outward meanness of the persons which prophesy; some, through a proud conceit of their own knowledge; some, by a contempt of religion itself. These Thessalonians had been commended for their great proficiency, and yet were still to attend upon prophesying in the church; which he calls *prophesyings*, in the plural number, referring either to the several prophets that prophesied, or to the several parts of their prophecy, or the times they prophesied. And the prophets were either such as prophesied only by an extraordinary gift, and immediate revelation, which some private members of the church had in those times, 1Co 14:29,30; or such as prophesied not only by gift, but office also, Eph 4:11.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Ver. 21. *Prove all things*; this duty relates to the former; as they were to attend upon prophesyings, so to exercise a discerning judgment about what was prophesied; for *all things* is not to be taken here universally, but for doctrines and opinions in religion which were delivered by the prophets. The same which the apostle John requires: *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, &c.*; δοκιμαζετε and it is the same word there which in this text we read *prove*; alluding to gold or other metals, which are tried in the fire, or by a touchstone, as some think. And though there was a peculiar gift of *discerning of spirits*, 1Co 12:10, yet it is the duty of every Christian to try men's spirits and doctrines

whether from God or no. The apostle speaks here to the saints in general, and so doth the apostle John, 1Jo 4:1. And men's doctrines are to be judged by the Scriptures as the standard of truth, as the Bereans were commended for searching the Scriptures about the apostle's doctrine, Ac 17:11; and the apostle prays for the Philippians, that they might discern things that differ, Php 1:10; and if they had not yet attained it as they ought, yet he prays that they might and not be always babes, but such as the apostle speaks of, who have their senses exercised in the discerning of good and evil, Heb 5:13,14: the people are to look upon them as their guides and leaders, as they they are called, Heb 13:7,17, and such as are to go before them in the searching and dispensing of truth; yet, because the best are but infallible, they ought to try their doctrine by the rule of truth. Which is that judgment of discretion which protestants allow to the people in their disputes with the papists against their doctrine of infallibility and implicit faith, which grounds the people's faith upon the authority of men, which ought to rest upon the authority of God. As we ought not easily to reject the authority and faith of the church, so not to believe with a blind faith, or obey with a blind obedience.

Holdfast to that which is good: the good here meant is truth, which is an intellectual good; the contrary to which is error, which is a mental evil. When we have proved men's doctrines and opinions, what we find agreeable to the Scriptures of truth we ought to hold fast. And though all truth hath a goodness in it, yet especially Divine truth, and the doctrine of the gospel, which the apostle calls, *that good thing* committed to Timothy, 2Ti 1:14. It is good with respect to the soul, and so better than any bodily good; and good that refers to eternity, and so better than any temporal good. Now this good we are to *hold fast*; to hold it fast against adversaries and all opposition, as some understand the word; to hold it as with both hands, against seducing doctrine, Satan's temptations, and the world's persecution. The same word is used concerning the good ground that held fast the seed of the word, Lu 8:15. So 1Co 11:2, we are to retain the truth, but not detain it, as the heathen are said to do, Ro 1:18, where we find also the same word as in the text. It is a duty much pressed by the apostles in their Epistles to the saints and churches that had received the gospel, that they would hold it fast, 2Ti 1:13 Tit 1:9 Heb 4:14 Re 2:13,25 3:3. And there is holding fast the truth as well in practice as opinion, and which

may be the ground of the name given to such as opposed the errors of antichrist before the word *protestant* was known, called *fast-men*.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

Ver. 22. To make this verse have its connection with the former, some expositors understand it of doctrines and opinions only; to take heed of opinions that seem erroneous, and not rashly to receive them without due examination. Though this sense is not to be excluded, yet the verse need not be confined to it, but to extend to practice also; as in worship to abstain from the show of idolatry; as to eat meat in an idol's temple was not always gross idolatry, but had some appearance of it, and therefore the apostle forbids it, 1Co 10:14. And so in civil conversation, not only to abstain from vice, but the appearance of it; as of pride, covetousness, drunkenness, whoredom, &c.; and that both with respect to ourselves, lest by venturing upon that which hath some show of evil, we step into the evil itself; and with respect to others, that we may not occasion the taking offence though not justly given, or do that which may any way encourage a real evil in them by that appearance of it which they see in ourselves; yet we ought not upon this account to forbear the discharge of any necessary duty. Some read the words: Abstain from all kind of evil, $\Pi\alpha\pi\omicron\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \iota\epsilon\delta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \pi\omicron\nu\eta\rho\omicron\upsilon$, and the Greek word is so used by logicians: but here to insist on particulars is infinite. And thus the apostle concludes all these positive duties with a general precept which he leaves with them at the close of his Epistle; having dehorted them from many evils, now he exhorts them to abstain from the appearance of them.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Ver. 23. The apostle here concludes all with prayer, as knowing all his exhortations and admonitions before given would not be effectual without God; and he prays for their sanctification and preservation. Though they were sanctified already, yet but in part, so that he prays for further progress in it to perfection, which he means by *wholly*; a word no where used by the apostle but in this place, and variously rendered; some render it throughout, some, perfectly, some, in every part, some, in all

things, some, fully, and the French, entirely. It may refer to all the parts of holiness, and the degrees of holiness, and to the whole man in the several faculties of soul and body, expressed in the next words by *spirit, soul, and body*, that their whole man may be entirely separated and consecrated to God, offered up to him as a sacrifice, Ro 12:1; and hence we serve that not only the beginning, but progress in grace is from God. The apostle therefore prays for it to God, (whom he calls *the God of peace*, to enforce his exhortation to peace, 1Th 5:3), which confutes the Pelagians, who thought objective grace sufficient to sanctify, or that man's nature needs only at first to be excited by God, and then can go forward of itself, being only maimed, not totally corrupted by the fall. It is true, our faculties co-operate with God, but not of themselves, but as acted by his inherent grace and indwelling Spirit.

And what the apostle prays for:

1. That Christians should endeavour after, which is a progress in sanctification to perfection. We may also note, that true sanctification reacheth to the whole man, spirit, soul, and body.
2. Preservation, which we call perseverance, expressed here both by the subject and term of it. The subject is the whole man, branched into three parts, *spirit, soul, and body*, figured, at least resembled, by the three parts of the temple.

Consider man naturally; and then by *spirit* we mean his superior faculties, as the mind, conscience, rational will.

By *soul*, his sensitive appetite, with the affections and passions.

By *body*, the outward man, the tabernacle and instrument of the soul.

The Jewish rabbins and others think all these are expressed in the creation of man, Ge 2:7; *God formed man of the dust of the ground*, there is his body; *and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*, or lives, *Nishmath Chaiim, Nephesh Chaijah*, that is, the faculties of the rational soul; *and man became a living soul*, that is, the animal and sensitive life. Neither is properly meant here the Spirit of God, for he saith, *your spirit*; nor the

sanctified part of the soul, for he prays for the preserving of their persons. Only observe, when he speaks of their spirit, he calls it their *whole spirit*. And by the figure zeugma, the word *whole* is to be carried also to *soul and body*; so that as he prayed their whole man might be sanctified, so their whole spirit, their whole soul, their whole body might be preserved; and the same word we find Jas 1:4, where it is rendered *perfect*, alluding to the perfect possessing of all inheritance or lot that belongs to a man. And by preserving, he means not so much the substance of the spirit, soul, and body, to preserve them in being, as to preserve them in holiness. And they are preserved, partly by being delivered from the sinful distempers that are naturally in them, as ignorance, vanity, impotency, and enmity in the mind, reluctancy and obstinacy in the will, inordinacy and irregularity in the affections, disobedience to the law of God and the regular commands of the soul in the body. If these prevail, they will bring destruction; as diseases prevailing destroy the natural life. And partly also by being supplied with that grace whereby they act regularly towards God, and are serviceable to the end of man's being, as supply of oil preserveth the lamp burning. And hereby we may understand, that not only the inferior faculties are corrupted in man's fall, but the superior and the supreme of all, else the apostle need not have prayed for the spirit to be sanctified and preserved, as well as the soul and body. And elsewhere he prays for a renewing *in the spirit of the mind*, Eph 4:23. Next we may consider this preservation with respect to the term of it, *preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ*: the same which the apostle means by being preserved to God's heavenly kingdom, 2Ti 4:18 2Pe 3:14. And those that are preserved to that day, are preserved to the end, and will be found blameless; and their whole man, spirit, soul, and body, being first sanctified, and then preserved, shall be saved and glorified. And the apostle insinuates in the word *αμεμπτως*, *blameless*, that strict discovery that will be made of persons at that day, wherein some will be blamed, and others be found without blame. And herein the apostle may have respect both to the teachers and ministers in this church, and the private members of it, that with respect to their several duties belonging to them they may be found blameless; and though, according to the strictness of the law of God, none can be without blame, yet, those that have been sincere, and have their sin pardoned, and their persons accepted in Christ, may be found blameless in the day of Christ: however, it is that which we should strive after.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Ver. 24. We had in the former verse the apostle's prayer, here his faith; and he speaks it by way of consolation to them, that what he had prayed for God would effect. What need he then have prayed? Because God's decrees and promises, though immutable and infallible, yet are to be accomplished in a way of prayer. Prayer is our duty, and God's decrees and promises are no dispensation from our duty: besides, duties are more known to us than God's decrees; and God decree the means as well as the end. But what is it he saith God will do? It is not here expressed, and the word *it* is not in the original, but only *God will do*, God will effect. He had prayed God would sanctify them wholly, and preserve them blameless, &c.; and this he would do or effect. And he grounds his confidence partly upon God's calling them. For the apostle knew that God's *gifts and calling are without repentance; and whom he called, them he justified, and glorified*, Ro 8:30 11:29. And this the apostle saw in these Thessalonians, by that efficacy of the gospel upon their hearts, that they were effectually called and chosen, as 1Th 1:4; whence he concluded they should be at last wholly sanctified and finally preserved, which is a strong argument against final apostacy from a state of grace; though many that are outwardly called are never sanctified, much less wholly. But of this call the apostle speaks not here, at least not only. And partly also upon God's faithfulness, who had called them. He doth not say, God is able to do it, though that is true, but he is *faithful*, and *will do it*. Those that are effectually called are brought into God's covenant, where perfection and perseverance are promised, and God's faithfulness obligeth him to make good his covenant. It is an act of grace and mercy to call men; but when called, God's faithfulness is engaged to preserve them, and perfect the work begun: as, 1Co 1:8, the apostle tells the Corinthians, God will confirm them, to the end they might be blameless in the day of Christ; and his argument is, for *God is faithful, by whom ye were called*, &c., 1Th 5:9.

1 Thessalonians 5:25

Ver. 25. The apostle a little before had prayed for them, now he

begs prayers of them, as he doth of other churches, Ro 15:30 Col 4:3. Ministers and people need each others' prayers, and it is a mutual duty they owe to one another. Ministers are obliged by special office, people by common duty, with respect to the success of the gospel in general, 2Th 3:1, and their own edification by their labours. The apostle, as he did not think it below him to call these Thessalonians brethren, so neither to beg their prayers. Those that stand highest in the church may stand in need of the meanest and lowest; the head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee. Those that preach not the gospel, may yet promote it by their prayers; yet this gives no warrant to beg the prayers of saints departed, for which we have no precept, promise, or example, as we have for the other; and what is without faith is sin. It is at the best doubtful whether they know our state below, or can hear us when we pray; and certainly God never required us to pray upon such uncertainties, and it cannot be in faith.

1 Thessalonians 5:26

Ver. 26. The apostle concludes several of his Epistles with greeting, or salutations, as men usually do at this day; sometimes with salutations from himself alone, sometimes from others, either particular persons, or churches which he sometimes names, as Ro 16:6, &c.; 1Co 16:19; and sometimes commends to the saints their saluting one another, as Ro 16:16 1Co 16:20; so here in the text. The persons to be saluted are *all the brethren*, that is, all believers incorporated into the gospel church, under one common Head and common Father; more particularly, those of this particular church. We call men brethren, sometimes upon a natural, sometimes a civil account; and why not much more upon a spiritual account? And as their love should reach to the brotherhood, 1Pe 2:17, so their salutation should reach all the brethren, poor and rich, high and low, bond and free.

With an holy kiss; εφίληματι αγιω. The rite or ceremony of men kissing each other was much used among the Jews, and in the Eastern countries, in their salutations, Ge 27:26 Pr 24:26 Lu 7:45; and thence it came to be practised in the churches of Christ as an outward symbol and token of love and friendship; which is not now practised with us amongst men, but is of the same signification with joining of hands; the uniting of lips or hands

together denoting the inward conjunction of the heart. The word in the Greek signifies love or friendship, and is called *a kiss of charity*, 1Pe 5:14. And though the ceremony is ceased, yet that which it signified is to be preserved in all churches, places, and ages. It was practised in the time of Justin Martyr, *Just. Mar. Apolog. 2.*, and Tertullian, *Tertul. de Oratione*; and called *oscutum pacis*, a kiss of peace; and used especially at their meeting together at the Lord's supper, their love feasts, and other solemn assemblies. It is called *a holy kiss*, to distinguish it from the treacherous kiss of Judas, or the lustful kiss of the harlot, Pr 7:13. And why it is not used among us now, we need say only, as concerning washing of feet also: *We have no such custom, nor the churches of Christ*; or, as the apostle speaks, Php 4:8: *Whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report, &c.*

1 Thessalonians 5:27

Ver. 27. The apostle having now finished the Epistle, lays a solemn charge upon them all, especially their elders and teachers, to have this Epistle published. He now being himself hindered from preaching to them, he sends this Epistle to them to be read to all. He wrote it for public use, and therefore would have none ignorant of it, whereby they might all understand what he had written about his great love and care of them, and the commendations he had given of them, and the instructions, admonitions, exhortations, and comforts that were contained therein, of great use to them all. And his charge herein is in a way of adjuration, $\text{Ορκίζω υμας τον Κυριον}$, imposing it on them as by an oath; as Abraham did upon his servant in the case of providing a wife for Isaac, Ge 24:3. And so the high priest said to Christ: *I adjure thee by the living God, &c.*, Mt 26:63; answering to the Hebrew word *Hishbagnti*, I adjure you; So 5:8: *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, &c.* It imports the requiring of a thing in the name and authority of God, with a denunciation of vengeance if it be not done. And all this charge is about the reading of this Epistle; as he commands the Epistle to the Colossians to be read in the church of the Laodiceans, and that from Laodicea to be read to them, Col 4:16, but not with that solemn charge as this is. Hence we may gather the duty of reading the Scriptures in the church assemblies, as the law of Moses was read in the synagogues. And, very early in the

Christian churches there were some appointed to be readers. Julian the Apostate was a reader in the church at Nicomedia. And if this was the first Epistle written by the apostle, as some suppose it, he lays this solemn charge first for the reading of this, to show the duty of the several churches to the rest of the Scriptures, as they should come to their hand. The word of God should dwell richly and plentifully in the people, and therefore reading it is necessary, together with expounding and applying it. And we hence also may prove against the papists, it ought to be made known to the people, even all the holy brethren, and not confined to the clergy; and to be read in their own tongue, for so, without question, was this Epistle read in a language which the people understood. The apostle was not for confining of knowledge, and keeping the people in ignorance, as those are who make it the mother of devotion.

1 Thessalonians 5:28

Ver. 28. Having exhorted them to salute one another, he now sends them his own salutation; not in a lip compliment, as the mode now is, but in a serious expression of the desire of his soul: and this, or words to the same purpose, are his salutation in every Epistle, which he makes to be his *token*, 2Th 3:17. And by *grace* here he means favour and good will, rather than inherent grace: and all blessings which spring from grace, as sometimes all are comprehended under the word *peace*. Yet grace and peace are sometimes in his salutations both joined together. And though here Christ is only mentioned, yet in many other places God the Father is mentioned with him, 2Th 1:2 2Pe 1:2; yea, and God the Holy Ghost also, 2Co 13:14; and where they are not mentioned, yet are all to be understood, for in all works *ad extra* they cooperate. And because grace is so eminently manifested in the whole work of our salvation, therefore the apostle doth still mention it in all his salutations. And with this he concludes this Epistle, and with this St. John concludes the whole Bible, Re 22:21. And the seal added, not to shut up, but confirm the whole is: *Amen*; and is added as the voice of the whole church upon reading the Epistle, as some think, and not by the apostle himself.

The first (epistle) unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens. These postscripts to the apostle's Epistles are judged to

be added by some scribes that copied them out, and not by the apostle himself, as might be made evident; and they are not found in any Epistles but in St. Paul's alone. But as it is usual to date letters from the places where they are written, so is this dated from Athens. Hither he was conducted by some brethren after his persecution at Thessalonica and Berea, Ac 17:15, and here we read he stayed for some time; but that from thence he wrote this Epistle, either then, or any time after, is but conjecture; it is more probable he wrote it from Corinth, because he sends it from Timotheus and Silvanus, as well as from himself, and they came to him from Macedonia when he was at Corinth, as Ac 18:5.