

**A COMMENTARY ON (I AND II)
THESSALONIANS (KJV)**

DR. JOHN GILL.

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by John Gill

This commentary written by John Gill (1697 - 14 October 1771) is a verse by verse comment on each verse of the Apostle Paul's epistles 1 and 2 Thessalonians. It is part of his 3 volume set of the New Testament (1735-38).

He was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

John Gill was awarded in 1748, an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author.

His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated (London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1735–38), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746–48), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748–63) forms his magnum opus
- A Collection of Sermons and Tracts[1]
- A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)[1]
- A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
- A Body of Practical Divinity (1770).

Publishers Note

KING JAMES VERSION (KJV)

This is the English bible and was published in 1611 and known as the Authorized Version (AV). It is the New Testament that was translated from Greek manuscripts known as the Textus Receptus into English.

By the first half of the 18C, the Authorized Version had become effectively unchallenged as the English translation of the scriptures and used in Anglican and English Protestant Churches. Since this time Christians have used the KJV and all their theological and devotional writings are based on the KJV. Christians have by continued use of the KJV have learned to identify those words and phrases that need clarification. A revision is not necessary.

In 1881 Westcott and Hort published a different

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version of the greek new testament called, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, (1881). This differed from the textus receptus in over 5,700 places¹. They claimed it to be the oldest and most reliable text of the New Testament.

All translations from this greek text and its eclectic sources have proved to be unreliable and for this reason the KJV is the preferred version of the bible.

Dr. John Gill taught and maintained the Doctrines of grace and contended with the Arminianism of John Wesley. He has been classified, by some, as a Hyper Calvinist. His views on Eschatology were Historic however his treatment of the Olivet Prophecy in Matthews Gospel and 1 and 2 Thessalonians show he noted the significance of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and it is believed by the publisher that had Dr. Gill known James Stuart. Russell and the eschatology taught in his book, "The Parousia", he would have been enabled to further the cause of God and Truth and clearly teach a fulfilled view of prophecy.

It is hoped this commentary will be a great help to those Preterist who have no knowledge of Calvinistic soteriology and encourage those with futuristic eschatological views to examine fulfilled eschatology.

Edward E. Stevens writes in his book² "**Final Decade Before The End**" (Jewish and Christian History Just Before The Jewish Revolt)

AD 51-52 – 1 Thessalonians

Written by Paul while he was at Corinth (2nd missionary journey). The church in Thessalonica was established in AD 51 - Acts 17:1-9. Acts 17:1-15; 1 Thess. 3:1-6; Acts 18:1-5. The two Thessalonian epistles were evidently written by Paul soon after his epistle to the Galatians.

AD 52-53 – 2 Thessalonians.

Paul wrote Second Thessalonians while still at Corinth (on his second missionary journey). 2 Cor. 1:19; Acts 18:18-21.

Paul had taught them about a great tribulation that would usher in the Day of the Lord (Second Coming, Resurrection, Judgment).

Because the Thessalonians were experiencing a heavy persecution at that time (but it was only a local persecution, not empire-wide), they were tempted to think that the Day of the Lord must have arrived (2 Thess. 2:2). But Paul reminded them of all the things

¹ https://jesus-is-savior.com/Bible/all_corrupt.htm

² See Further Publication at the end of this book.

that were still yet to happen before the Day of the Lord could come.

The revealing of the Man of Lawlessness had to occur before the Day of the Lord (the Parousia). Note that this epistle was written in AD 52-53, at least one year before Nero became Emperor (AD 54). His adopted father (Claudius) was still reigning.

However, it seems more likely that the Man of Sin was fulfilled by **Eleazar b. Ananias**, the son of the same Ananias who arrested and tried Apostle Paul in AD 58. This may shed some light on Paul's comments in 2 Thess 2 that the Man of Lawlessness would not be revealed until the revolt in AD 66. Eleazar was the instigator of that revolt. More on all this below when we get to the year AD 66. Ed. Stevens.

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INTRODUCTION TO THESSALONIANS

Thessalonica was a very large, populous, and flourishing city, it was “liberae conditionis”, as Pliny says ³, a free city, and the metropolis of Macedonia; it was formerly called Halis ⁴, and had the name of Thessalonica given it by Philip king of Macedon, on account of his conquest of Thessalia, which this name signifies; and some say he gave this name to a daughter of his on that occasion, who was afterwards the wife of Cassander; who, others say, called this place by his wife’s name ⁵, which before was Therme: its name with the Italians is Salonichi, and is now in the hands of the Turks, as all Greece is: here the Apostle Paul came after he had been at Philippi, and stayed about three weeks, and preached every sabbath day, and his ministry was blessed to the conversion of some Jews, a multitude of devout Greeks, and many of the chief women of the place, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church; to which the apostle wrote this epistle, and is the first of all the epistles he wrote: the occasion of it was this; the unbelieving Jews, vexed to see the apostle’s success, raised a mob of the baser sort of people, and assaulted the house of Jason, where the apostle and his companions were; but Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Berea, which the rabble understanding, followed them thither; when Paul was sent as if he was going to the sea, but was conducted by the brethren to Athens, who gave orders that Silas and Timothy should come to him with all speed, as they did; and Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the young converts there; and returning with good news of their faith, and charity, to the apostle at Corinth, he sent them from thence this epistle, and not from Athens, as some have thought: the design of which is to encourage them under their afflictions and sufferings; to exhort them to stand fast in the Lord, to abide by his truths and ordinances, and to live an holy life and conversation, and to regard the several duties of religion, towards God and one another, and those that were set over them; and in it he instructs them concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the coming of Christ, articles of very great importance and concern: the writing of this epistle is placed by Dr. Lightfoot in the 51st year of Christ, and in the 11th of Claudius Caesar.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS

³ Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 10.

⁴ Ptolom. l. 3. c. 13.

⁵ Strabe, l. 7.

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle’s salutation of the persons it is written to; his thanksgiving for blessings received by them; an account of the manner in which the Gospel came to them, how they behaved when it was preached to them, and of the success of it in their conversion. The inscription which expresses the names of the persons concerned in the epistle, and describes those to whom it is written, and also the salutation, which is the same as in other epistles, are in 1Th 1:1 and then follows a thanksgiving to God made in prayer to him for the special graces of the Spirit bestowed on them, as faith, hope, and love, and the lively exercise of them in which they were; the source and spring of which was the electing love of God, 1Th 1:2 and the evidence of their election of God to the apostle, was the manner in which the Gospel came to them; not merely in the external ministry of it, but in the internal efficacy of it, through the power of the Holy Ghost, 1Th 1:5 and the effects of it upon them; it found an hearty reception among them, in much affliction, and with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that they not only professed it, and became the followers of Christ and his apostles, but were examples unto others, 1Th 1:6 for the fame of the Gospel being preached unto them, and of their faith, were spread everywhere, so that the apostle had no need to say anything about it, 1Th 1:8 the manner of their entrance among them, and the issue of it, their conversion, were so manifest to all; which is described by what they were turned from, idols; and by what they were turned to, the living God; and by the ends of it, which were to serve God, and wait for Jesus Christ; the arguments engaging to which are, his relation to God as his Son, his being raised from the dead by him; his being in heaven, exalted at his right hand there, from whence he is expected; and his having, by his sufferings and death, delivered his people from wrath to come, 1Th 1:9.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER I (Verses 1-10)

1 The Thessalonians are given to understand both how mindful of them St Paul was at all times in thanksgiving, and prayer; 5 and also how well he was persuaded of the truth and sincerety of thier faith, and conversation to God.

1 Thessalonians 1

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

[2] We give thanks to God always for you all, making

mention of you in our prayers;

[3] Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

[4] Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

[5] For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

[6] And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

[7] So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

[8] For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

[9] For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

[10] And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

JOHN GILL’S COMMENTARY CHAPTER I

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Ver. 1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,

.... These are the persons concerned in this epistle, and who send their greetings and salutations to this church; Paul was the inspired writer of it, and who is called by his bare name, without any additional epithet to it, as elsewhere in his other epistles; where he is either styled the servant, or apostle, or prisoner of Christ, but here only Paul: the reason for it is variously conjectured; either because he was well known by this church, having been lately with them; or lest these young converts should be offended and stumble at any pompous title, which they might imagine carried an appearance of arrogance and pride; or because there were as yet no false apostles among them, who had insinuated anything to the disadvantage of Paul, as in other places, which obliged him to assert his character and magnify his office; or rather because this was the first epistle he wrote, and he being conscious to himself of his own meanness, and that he was the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be called one, chose not to use the title. Silvanus is the same with Silas, who was with the apostle at Thessalonica and

at Corinth, when he wrote this epistle; he was originally a member of the church at Jerusalem, and was one of the chief of the brethren there, and a prophet; see Ac 17:4, Timothy was also with the apostle at the same place, and was sent back by him from Athens to know their state, and returned to Corinth to him with Silas; he stands last, as being the younger, and perhaps was the apostle’s amanuensis, and therefore in modesty writes his name last: the reason of their being mentioned was because, having been with the apostle at this place, they were well known by the church, who would be glad to hear of their welfare; as also to show their continued harmony and consent in the doctrines of the Gospel; they stand in the same order in 2Co 1:19,

unto the church of the Thessalonians:

which consisted of several of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, both Jews and Gentiles;

See Gill on “Ac 17:4”, who were called under the ministry of the word by the grace of God, out of darkness into marvellous light, and were separated from the rest of the world, and incorporated into a Gospel church state. This was a particular congregated church of Christ. Some have thought it was not as yet organized, or had proper officers in it; since no mention is made of pastors and deacons, but the contrary is evident from 1Th 5:12, where they are exhorted to know, own, and acknowledge them that laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and esteem them highly for their works’ sake. This church is said to be

in God the Father;

were interested in his love and free favour, as appears by their election of God, 1Th 1:4, and they were in the faith of God the Father, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the profession of it, and so were distinguished from an assembly of Heathens that were in the faith of idols, and not of the one true and living God, and especially as the Father of Christ; they were in fellowship with God the Father, and they were drawn by the efficacy of his grace to himself and to his Son, and were gathered together and embodied in a church state under his direction and influence; he was the author of them as a church, and they were plants of Christ’s heavenly Father’s planting, not to be plucked up; and they were, as the Arabic version renders it, “addicted” to God the Father; they were devoted to his service; they had his word among them, which they had received not as the word of men, but as the word of God; and his ordinances were duly and faithfully administered among them, and attended on by them:

and in the Lord Jesus Christ;

they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; they were chosen in him as their head and representative; they were in him as members of his body, and as branches in the vine; they were openly in him by the effectual calling and conversion, were in the faith of him, and in the observance of his commands, and in communion with him; and so were distinguished from a Jewish synagogue or congregation: all this being true, at least of the far greater part of them, is said of them all, in a judgment of charity, they being under a profession of the Christian religion:

grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the apostle's usual salutation and wish in all his epistles to the churches; See Gill on "Ro 1:7", the words "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" are left out in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and the Arabic version omits the last clause, "and the Lord Jesus Christ"; and the Ethiopic version only reads, "peace be unto you and his grace".

1 Thessalonians 1:2

Ver. 2. **We give thanks to God always for you all,**... For all the members of this church, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, officers or private Christians; for their being a church, for the gifts bestowed on them, for the graces hereafter mentioned that were wrought in them and exercised by them; the glory of all which is given to God, and thanks for the same, which shows them to be gifts of his, and not in the least owing to any merits of men: the apostle ascribes nothing to their free will, previous dispositions and qualifications, diligence and industry; nor does he attribute anything to himself and to his companions, who were only ministers by whom these believed; but he refers all to God, to his grace and goodness: and he returned thanks to him for it, and that "always"; whenever he thought of it, made mention of it, or was at the throne of grace, as follows,

making mention of you in our prayers;

to God, daily, both in private and in public, at which times thanksgivings to God were made on their account; for thanksgiving is a part of prayer, and requests are always to be made known unto God with thanksgiving. The Ethiopic version renders this clause in the singular number, "and I am mindful of you always in my prayer"; and leaves out the word "all" in the former clause.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Ver. 3. **Remembering without ceasing,**

.... The phrase "without ceasing", is, by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, joined to the last clause of the preceding verse; and the remembrance the apostle speaks of is either a distinct thing from the mention made of them in prayer, and suggests that they bore them on their minds at other times also; or it is the same with it; or rather a reason of their mentioning of them then, because they remembered them, and the following things of theirs:

as your work of faith;

by which is meant not the principle of faith, for as such that is God's work, the product of his grace, and the effect of his almighty power; but the operative virtue and exercise of it under the influence of the grace of God: the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, "the work of your faith"; and so some copies, and the Syriac version, "the works of your faith". The Targumist in Hab 1:12 represents God as holy *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*, "in works of faith": faith is a working grace, it has a deal of work to do, it has its hands always full, and is employed about many things; it is the grace by which a soul goes to God, as its covenant God, lays hold on him as such, pleads his promises with him, asks favours of him, and is very importunate, and will have no denial; and by which it goes to Christ as at first conversion, afterwards for fresh supplies of grace, out of that fulness of grace that is in him; it receives him and all from him, and through him pardon, righteousness, adoption of children, and an eternal inheritance; and it is that grace which carries back all the glory to God and Christ, and to free grace; it glorifies God, exalts Christ, humbles the creature, and magnifies the grace of God, it has much work to do this way; and it works by love, by acts of love to God, to Christ, and to the saints; and it puts the soul upon a cheerful obedience to every ordinance and command, and hence obedience is styled the obedience of faith; and indeed all good works that are properly so are done in faith, and faith without works is dead; it is greatly engaged against the world and the devil; it is that grace by which Satan is opposed and overcome, and by which the believer gets the victory over the world; so that he is not discouraged by its frowns, and cast down by the trials and afflictions he meets with in it, nor drawn aside by its snares and allurements; something of this kind the apostle had observed and remembered in these believers: he adds,

and labour of love;

love is a laborious grace when in lively exercise; love to God and Christ will constrain a believer to engage in, and go through, great hardships, difficulties, toil, and

labour, for their sakes; and love to the saints will exert itself, by serving them in things temporal and spiritual, ministering cheerfully and largely to their outward wants, for which reason the same epithet is given to love in Heb 6:10 as here; regarding and assisting them in their spiritual concerns; praying for them and with them; building them up in their most holy faith; communicating their experiences, and speaking comfortable words unto them; reproving them for sin in love, and with tenderness; restoring them when fallen in a spirit of meekness; and stirring them up to love and good works: love has much toil and labour, not only in performing the several duties of religion, both towards God and man; but in bearing all things, the burdens of fellow Christians; the infirmities of weak believers, forbearing them in love, forgiving their offences, and covering their sins:

and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ,

or "of our Lord Jesus Christ". These persons had a good hope through grace given unto them, and which was founded in Christ Jesus, in his person, blood, and righteousness, and so was as an anchor sure and steadfast; and it had him for its object, it was an hope of interest in him, of being for ever with him, of his second coming and glorious appearance, and of eternal life and happiness through him; and this was attended with patience, with a patient bearing of reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, for the sake of Christ, and a patient waiting for his coming, his kingdom and glory; and this as well as the others were remembered by the apostle, and his fellow ministers, with great pleasure: and that

in the sight of God and our Father;

or before God and our Father; which may be read in connection either with the above graces, which were exercised, not only before men, but before God, and in his sight, who sees not as man seeth, and who cannot be deceived and imposed upon; and so shows that these graces were true and genuine, faith was unfeigned, love was without dissimulation, and hope without hypocrisy: or with the word remembering, as it is in the Syriac version, which reads, "remembering before God and our Father"; that is, as often as we appear before God, and lift up our hands and our hearts unto him in prayer, we bear you upon our minds before God; and particularly remember your operative faith, laborious love, and patient hope of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:4

Ver. 4. **Knowing, brethren beloved, your election**

of God.

Which intends not an election to an office, for this epistle is written not to the officers of the church only, but to the whole church; nor to the Gospel, the outward means of grace, since this was common to them with others, and might be known without the evidence after given; nor does it design the effectual calling, sometimes so called for this is expressed in the following verse as a fruit, effect, and evidence of the election here spoken of, which is no other than the eternal choice of, them to everlasting life and happiness: this is of God, an act of God the Father, made in Christ Jesus before the world began, and which springs from his sovereign will, and is the effect of his pure love and free favour; and therefore these persons who are the objects of it are said to be "beloved of God"; for so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read the words, and which agree with 2Th 2:13 for this choice does not arise from the merits of men, or any conditions in them, or from the foresight of their faith, holiness, and good works, but from the free grace and good pleasure of God; and is the source and spring of all grace, and the blessings of it, and even of good works; and is a sure, immutable, and irreversible act of God, being founded on his own will, and not on the works of men; the knowledge they had of this was not what the Thessalonians themselves had, though they might have, and doubtless had the knowledge of this grace, and which may be concluded with certainty from the effectual calling; and is a privilege which many particular believers may, and do arrive unto the knowledge of, without any extraordinary revelation made unto them: but here it intends the knowledge which the apostle and his companions had of the election of the members of this church; not by inspiration of the Spirit of God, but by the manner of the Gospel's coming unto them, and the effects it had upon them, as expressed in the following verses; and from their faith, hope, and love, mentioned in the preceding verse; and which was the ground and foundation of their thanksgiving for them; see on Gill "2Th 2:13".

1 Thessalonians 1:5

Ver. 5. **For our Gospel came not unto you,**

.... The apostle calls the Gospel "our Gospel", not because he and his fellow ministers were the authors of it; for in this respect it is solely of God, being the produce of his wisdom and grace, and by the revelation of Jesus Christ, hence he calls it the Gospel of God in 1Th 2:2 nor because they were the subject of it, for they preached not themselves, but a crucified Christ, and

him only, though it was a stumblingblock to some, and foolishness to others; but because it was committed to their trust, and they were the preachers of it, and agreed in the ministration of it; and it is opposed to, and is distinct from, that which was preached by the false teachers; and here intends not barely the Gospel itself, but chiefly their preaching of it: and this came unto them being sent of God, for wherever the Gospel comes, it comes with a mission and commission from God; and being brought unto them by the apostles, who were bringers and publishers of the good tidings of good things, it came unthought of, unsought and unasked for by them; and that not only externally, which to have is a great blessing, but internally, $\epsilon\iota\omega\ \upsilon\mu\alpha\omega$, “into you”; it came not barely into their ears vocally, and into their heads notionally; but into their hearts, and worked effectually there; it was mixed with faith, and was profitable; it became the ingrafted word, and dwelt richly in them: for it came to them not

in word only;

it did come in word, it could not come without words, there is no interpreting of Scripture, no preaching of the Gospel, nor hearing of it without words, without articulate sounds; but not only with these, nor with wisdom of words, with enticing words of man’s wisdom, with words which man’s wisdom teacheth; as also not in the mere notion and letter of the Gospel, which when it comes in that manner is a dead letter, and the savour of death unto death:

but in power;

not merely preached in a powerful way, or attended with miraculous operations, though doubtless both were true; for the apostle was a powerful preacher, and his ministry was confirmed by signs and wonders and mighty deeds; but from neither of these could he conclude the election of these people: but the preaching of the Gospel was accompanied with the powerful efficacy of the grace of God, working by it upon them; so that it became the power of God unto salvation to them; it came to them in the demonstration of the Spirit of God, and of power, quickening them who were dead in trespasses, and sin, enlightening their dark understandings, unstopping their deaf ears, softening their hard hearts, and delivering them from the slavery of sin and Satan; from whence it clearly appeared that they were the chosen of God, and precious:

and in the Holy Ghost;

the Gospel was not only preached under the influence, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and attended with his extraordinary gifts for the

confirmation of it, which it might be, and be no proof of the election of these persons to eternal life; but it came by the power of the Holy Spirit to their souls, working and implanting his graces in them, as faith, hope, and love, and every other; and he himself was received along with it, as a spirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and of faith and adoption; all which gave full evidence of their election:

and in much assurance;

not on the preacher’s side, as if the Gospel was preached by him with great assurance, boldness, and confidence; or with great strength of evidence, giving clear and full proof of what was delivered sufficient to ascertain it, and persuade anyone to the belief of it; or with “much fulness”, as some render the words, that is, of the Gospel of Christ, and of the gifts of the Spirit, and to a multitude of persons; all which might be, and yet be no proof of the choice of these persons in Christ to eternal salvation; but the Gospel preached to them was blessed to produce in them much assurance, or a large assurance, if not a full one, of the grace of faith in Christ, and of hope of eternal life by him, and of understanding of the doctrines of the Gospel, and of interest in the blessings of grace held forth in them; and this being a fruit, was an evidence of electing grace:

as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

The apostle appeals to themselves for the truth of what he had said; who must have observed, and could not but remember, with what meanness they appeared, with what fear and trembling, with what plainness and simplicity, without the enticing words of man’s wisdom; what a contemptible figure they made, how they wrought with their own hands, and endured reproach and persecution for their sakes, that they might obtain salvation by Christ with eternal glory; and had nothing to recommend them to them, to win upon them, and engage their attention, and strike their affection; or persuade them to receive their persons, and believe their doctrines; wherefore the effects their ministry had upon them were not owing to the charms of words, the force of language, and power of oratory; or to any external thing in them, or done by them; but must be ascribed to the Spirit of God, and to the power and efficacy of his grace.

1 Thessalonians 1:6

Ver. 6. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord,

.... So far followers of them as they were of Christ, in embracing the Gospel, submitting to the ordinances of it, professing the name of Christ, and suffering for his sake; the Alexandrian copy reads, “of God”, and others, “of Christ”:

having received the word;

the Gospel, the word of truth, peace, and righteousness, and of salvation by Christ; which they received not as the word of man, but of God; and that

in much affliction;

referring to the uproar made by the baser sort of people, instigated by the unbelieving Jews, and the trouble they gave to Jason and other brethren, mentioned in Ac 17:1 and this is a considerable commendation of them, that at a time when others were offended and fell off from hearing the word, and a profession of the Gospel, they should receive it, and that

with much joy of the Holy Ghost;

not with a carnal joy, or with a mere flash of natural affection, as in the stony ground hearers, and in the Jews, who rejoiced for a while in John’s ministry, and in Herod, who sometimes heard him gladly; but with a spiritual joy of the Holy Ghost’s producing in them, applying the word with power to them, giving them a spiritual gust of it, and pleasure in it, raising in their souls a joy upon the most solid foundation.

1 Thessalonians 1:7

Ver. 7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe,

.... They were not only followers of Christ and his apostles, whom they took for examples of faith, holiness, courage, meekness, and patience; but they were patterns of good works; and of suffering afflictions to other believers, even to all that knew them, or heard of them, particularly

in Macedonia;

as at Philippi and other places: though the Gospel was first preached there, and they had received it, and a Gospel church state was formed there; yet these were more forward in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty, and were even ensamples to them to copy after; so the first are sometimes last, and the last first:

and Achaia;

another part of Greece, the metropolis of which was Corinth, where there also was a very considerable church; but these saints at Thessalonica set them an example in many things, and particularly in acts of beneficence and liberality, being one of the churches of Macedonia spoken of in 2Co 8:1.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Ver. 8. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord,

.... By which is meant the Gospel, and is so called because it is from the Lord, as the author of it: and it is of the Lord, as the subject of it; and it is by the Lord, as the minister or dispenser of it; and it is owing to the efficacy of his grace that it is useful and successful, and ought to be attended to, received, and obeyed, not as the word of man, but as the word of the Lord. This is said to have “sounded out”, alluding to the blowing of a trumpet, to which the Gospel is sometimes compared, as to the silver trumpet under the law, for the gathering of the people of Israel; or to the trumpet blown in the years of jubilee, which proclaimed liberty, release of debts, and restoration of inheritances, as the Gospel in a spiritual sense does; or to the trumpet used in war to prepare for the battle, and therefore should not give an uncertain sound; or as used musically, the Gospel being a joyful sound; and this sounding of it may denote the clear publication and open declaration, and large spread of it far and near: though, when it is said to sound forth from the Thessalonians, it is not to be understood as if the Gospel first began to be preached among them, and from thence went to other places; it was preached at Philippi before it came to them, and at many other places before it was there; the word of the Lord, according to the prophecy of Isa 2:2 came from Jerusalem; Christ and his apostles first preached there, and from thence their words and sound went to the ends of the earth; but not so much the preaching of the Gospel, as the fame and report of its being preached in this place, is here meant: and so the Latin translation of the Syriac version renders it, “for from you went the report of the word of our Lord”; the fame of its being preached and received at Thessalonica, in the manner it was, spread itself,

not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place;

not only at Philippi, Berea, Athens, and Corinth, and other cities and towns in those countries, but also in other parts of the world; and what greatly contributed to it were the uproar that was made at Thessalonica, and continued at Berea upon the first preaching of the Gospel in those parts by the unbelieving Jews; as also the large numbers both of Greeks and Jews, and of devout women of considerable families, that were converted: to which may be added, that Thessalonica was the metropolis of Macedonia, and a city of great trade, and much frequented from all parts both by sea

and land; and by this means it came to pass, that not only the fame of the preaching of the word among them went abroad everywhere; but, as the apostle adds,

your faith to God-ward is spread abroad;

meaning the grace of faith bestowed on them, by which they received the Gospel in the love of it, assented to it, and professed it, and which has God for its object, and is very valuable, since such public notice is taken of it; and which shows that it was not kept to themselves, and lay hid in their own breasts; but they declared it both by words and by deeds, by making a profession of it, and by walking agreeably to it:

so that we had no need to speak anything;

the Syriac version adds, “concerning you”; concerning the preaching of the Gospel among them, their faith in it and profession of it, all being so well known in the several places where they came; for it seems it was usual with the apostles, when they came to any place, to speak of their success in others, and of the faith, and hope, and joy of other Christians, for the encouragement of, and as ensamples to those to whom they minister; but with relation to the Thessalonians this was unnecessary.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

Ver. 9. **For they themselves show of us,**

.... Either the above reports of the preaching of the Gospel to the Thessalonians, and of their faith in God; or rather the persons to whom these reports were brought, openly and publicly, and largely declared concerning

the apostles, what manner of entering in we had unto you;

under what difficulties they laboured, what contention they had with the unbelieving Jews, what reproaches were cast upon them, and what persecutions they endured when they first entered their city and synagogue, and preached the Gospel to them; and in what manner they did preach it, with what boldness, sincerity, uprightness and affection, and without flattery, covetousness, and vain glory; and with what power it came to them, and what success attended it, and how readily, cheerfully, and reverently both they and that were received by them:

and how ye turned to God from idols;

immediately and at once, upon the preaching of the Gospel to them, being first turned by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; for the first work of conversion is God’s work; then they themselves, under the influence of the same grace, turned to the one God, from their internal idols, their sins and lusts, and from

their external idols, their many false and fictitious deities: for the Thessalonians before the Gospel came among them were idolaters; here the “Dii Cabiri”, the great and chief gods of the Gentiles, were worshipped; as Jupiter and Bacchus, Ceres and Proserpina, Pluto and Mercury, Castor and Pollux, and Esculapius; these the Macedonians, and particularly the Thessalonians, worshipped with great devotion and reverence ⁶: but now they turned from them and forsook them,

to serve the living and true God;

who is called the living God, because he has life in and of himself, and is the fountain of life to others; from whom all living creatures have their life, and are supported in it by him; and in opposition to the above idols, which were inanimate things made of wood or metal, and were images of men that had been dead long ago: and the “true” God, because he is truth itself, and cannot lie, who faithfully performs all his promises, and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and in opposition to the nominal and fictitious deities of the Gentiles, which were only in name, not in truth and reality, or by nature gods: now though these Thessalonians had before done service to these idols, they now turned from them to serve the one living and true God; not only externally, by embracing and professing his Gospel, submitting to his ordinances, and walking according to the rules prescribed by him; but also internally, in the exercise of faith, hope, love, and every other grace.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Ver. 10. **And to wait for his Son from heaven,**

.... The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the natural, essential, and eternal Son of God; and whoever is truly converted, is not only turned to God the Father, and believes in him; but also believes in, receives, embraces, and professes his Son Jesus Christ; who became incarnate, and, in the human nature he assumed, obeyed, suffered, and died and rose again, and ascended into heaven, where he now is, and will be till the time of the restitution of all things; when he will descend from thence, and come and judge the world in righteousness; and from thence the saints expect him, and look and wait by faith for eternal glory and happiness by him, and with him at his appearance and kingdom; so that many articles of faith are contained in this expression, which these Thessalonians were acquainted with, believed, and acted upon: and Christ the Son of God is further

⁶ Gutherlothus de mysteriis Deor. Cabirorum, c. 15. p. 94, 95. Jul. Firmicus. de errore prof. relig. p. 18.

described as that person

whom he raised from the dead;

that is, God the Father raised from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the Son of God; and which supposes his dying for the sins of his people, as it expresses his rising again for their justification; things which the faith of these believers was led unto, and in which light they viewed him:

even Jesus, which delivered us from wrath to come;

which is revealed from heaven against sin, and comes upon the children of disobedience; which all men are deserving of, even God’s elect themselves, but shall not partake of, because they are not appointed to it, but to salvation; and because they are justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and so are saved from it; not from all fears about it, and apprehensions of it, which they are filled with, especially under first awakenings, and sometimes afterwards when under afflictive providences; but they are delivered from the thing itself, by which is meant vindictive punishment, even from all punishment in this life, for there is no wrath mixed with any of their mercies or their chastisements; and from all punishment in the world to come, which will fall heavy on others; and that because Christ has bore their sins, and the wrath of God and curse of the law, due unto them, in their room and stead.

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 2

The apostle in this chapter gives a further account of his ministry among the Thessalonians, of the nature, manner, and success of it, and of his regard to them, and conduct and conversation when with them; and commends their readiness in receiving the Gospel, and excuses his present absence from them. He appeals to them themselves for the truth of it, that his entrance to them, or preaching among them, was not in vain and without success, 1Th 2:1 that it was with all boldness and intrepidity of mind, notwithstanding what he had suffered before for it, 1Th 2:2 and with all integrity and faithfulness to the trust reposed in him by the Lord, without deceit and guile, or seeking to please men, but God the searcher of hearts, who had committed this trust unto him, 1Th 2:3 and that neither then, nor at any other time, he had used flattery, or showed covetousness; which he calls God to witness, 1Th 2:5 nor of them or others sought glory and honour, even that which was due unto him by virtue of his office, 1Th 2:6 but had showed all gentleness, humanity, and, affection; which he illustrates by the simile of a nurse cherishing her

children 1Th 2:7 and by the willingness he showed not only to preach the Gospel to them, but to lay down his life for them, had it been necessary; so great was his affection for them, 1Th 2:8 and, as a proof of this, he puts them in mind of his labours, both in preaching the word, and in working with his own hands; because he would not be burdensome and chargeable to them, 1Th 2:9 and as for his conversation among them, he appeals both to God and them, how holy, just, and unblemished it was, 1Th 2:10 and reminds them of his tenderness, diligence, and faithfulness, in exhorting, comforting, and charging them, particularly to walk worthy of God; since he had called them to his kingdom and glory, 1Th 2:11 and then he expresses his thankfulness to God for their reception of the worth of the Gospel; not as an human invention, but as of God, which wrought effectually in them, 1Th 2:13 the evidence of which were partly their imitation of the churches of Christ in Judea, in doctrine and practice; and partly their suffering the same things they did, of the Jews, 1Th 2:14 who are described by their ill usage of, and cruelty to, Christ, their own prophets, and his apostles, by their not pleasing God, and by their opposition to men; an instance of which is given in prohibiting the apostles to preach to the Gentiles, whose end in so doing with respect to the Gentiles, was that they might not be saved; but God’s end in suffering them so to do, was with respect to them that they might fill up their iniquity, and so entire wrath and ruin come upon them, as had been foretold, 1Th 2:15 and then the apostle concludes the chapter, by expressing his affectionate concern in parting with them, which was not in heart but in body; by declaring his earnest desire and endeavour to see them again; and by observing to them the reason he had not and could not come unto them, because Satan hindered him, 1Th 2:17 the cause of his being so desirous to see them, was their being his hope, joy, glory, and crown of rejoicing, both now and hereafter, 1Th 2:19.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 2 (Verses 1-20)

1Thessalonians 2

[1] For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

[2] But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

[3] For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

[4] But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust

with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

[5] For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

[6] Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

[7] But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

[8] So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

[9] For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

[10] Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

[11] As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

[12] That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

[13] For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

[14] For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

[15] Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

[16] Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

[17] But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

[18] Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

[19] For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

[20] For ye are our glory and joy.

JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY CHAPTER 2

1 Thessalonians 2:1

Ver. 1. **For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you,**

.... The apostle having observed in 1Th 1:9 that those persons to whom the report of the Gospel being preached at Thessalonica, and the success of it there was made, showed everywhere both what manner of entrance he and his fellow ministers had in that place, and the conversion of many souls there; he enlarges upon the latter, and here reassumes the former, and appeals to the Thessalonians themselves, who must know full well, and better than others, what an entrance it was; and which is to be understood not merely of a corporeal entrance into their city and synagogue, but of their coming among them, by the preaching of the Gospel, as the ministers of the word and ambassadors of Christ:

that it was not in vain;

it was not a vain show with outward pomp and splendour, as the public entrances of ambassadors into cities usually are; but with great meanness, poverty, reproach, and persecution, having been lately beaten and ill used at Philippi; nor was it with great swelling words of vanity, with the enticing words of man's wisdom, to tickle the ear, please the fancy, and work upon the passions of natural men, in which manner the false teachers came: but the apostle came not with deceit and guile, with flattering words or a cloak of covetousness, or with a view to vain glory and worldly advantage; nor was the message they came with, from the King of kings, a vain, light, empty, and trifling one; but solid and substantial, and of the greatest importance; the doctrine they taught was not comparable to chaff and wind; it was not corrupt philosophy and vain deceit, the traditions and commandments of men, but sound doctrine, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ: nor was it fruitless and without effect; the word did not return void and empty; but was powerful and efficacious to the conversion of many souls. Christ was with them both to assist them in their ministry, and to bless it to the salvation of men; nor was their coming to Thessalonica an human scheme, a rash enterprise, engaged in on their own heads, on a slight and empty foundation; but upon good and solid grounds, by divine direction and counsel; see Ac 16:9.

1 Thessalonians 2:2

Ver. 2. **But even after that we had suffered before,**

.... Before they came to Thessalonica, which they would not have done, had their ministry been a light and empty one in itself, and unprofitable to others; and especially had this been the case, they would never have rashly engaged in it again, and exposed themselves to fresh sufferings and dangers, as they did:

and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi;

being beaten with many stripes, and put into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, at the instigation of the masters of the damsel that had a spirit of divination, by whom they got much gain, and which Paul dispossessed; see Ac 16:16

we were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention:

and which still made it more manifestly appear, that the errand they came upon was a matter of importance, and that they did not proceed on a slight foundation: what they spoke was "the Gospel", salvation by Christ, and not by the works of the law; the pure Gospel, and not a mixed one, free from the mixture of all human doctrines and inventions of men, without any adulteration and inconsistency; the whole of the Gospel, and not a part of it only; they declared the whole counsel of God, and kept back nothing that might be profitable: and this is styled the Gospel of God, to distinguish it from the Gospel of men, or that which the false teachers taught, and which was called the Gospel, though it was not so; and to express the excellency of it, from the author of it, who is God, it being the produce of his wisdom and grace; and from the matter of it, it containing the good will of God to men, setting forth the grace of God in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and glorification, and expressing things relating to the kingdom of God, a meetness for it, and a right unto it; and it being so called shows it to be something divine, a message sent from God to sinful men; and gives a reason why the apostles were so bold to speak it, because it was not of men, but God. The Syriac version renders it the "Gospel of Christ"; see Ro 1:16 and it being so, they "were bold to speak it"; or they spoke it both with liberty of mind, the Spirit of God being with them, and with freedom of speech, a door of utterance being opened for them; as also with great courage and intrepidity, notwithstanding what they had suffered before, and the ill treatment they had met with at Philippi; and though they knew that the Gospel they spoke was contrary to the Jews, was a stumblingblock to them, and they had an inveterate prejudice against it; and was foolishness to the Greeks, and was derided

by them, and they were sure to meet with reproach and persecution on account of it: yet they boldly and faithfully preached it, fearing not the face of men, nor their revilings: though it was

with much contention;

referring to the tumult raised by the baser sort, who, instigated by others, assaulted Jason and the brethren, where the apostles were, Ac 18:5 or to the disputes which they had with the unbelieving Jews, who contradicted and blasphemed what they said; or to the division the Gospel made, as through the corruption of nature it makes wherever it comes, between the nearest relations and friends, some being for it, and others against it; or this may be expressive of the zeal with which the apostles preached, who earnestly contended for it, as persons in a combat or agony; they fought the good fight of faith valiantly, they endured hardness as good soldiers of Christ, and gave not way to the enemy, no, not for an hour: and all this was "in our God"; or "by the confidence" of our God, as the Syriac version renders it; trusting in him and relying upon him, being assisted by his grace, and strengthened by his power, and receiving much encouragement from a view of him as a covenant God; faith in God as a covenant God, will make a man bold in his cause; see Da 3:17.

1 Thessalonians 2:3

Ver. 3. **For our exhortation,**

.... Or "consolation"; for the ministry of the Gospel, which is here meant, consists of doctrines full of comfort to distressed minds, such as free justification by the righteousness of Christ, full pardon by his blood, and complete satisfaction by his sacrifice; as well as of exhortations to the exercise of grace and discharge of duty: and this was

not of deceit;

or "error", was not "fallacious", as the Ethiopic version renders it; it consisted of nothing but truth, it was the word of truth, and the truth as it is in Jesus; nor did it proceed from any intention to deceive and impose on persons; it was no imposture:

nor of uncleanness;

it did not spring from any impure affection for any sin, for popular applause, or worldly interest; nor did the ministers of it connive at uncleanness in others, or practise it themselves, as did the false teachers; but bore their testimony against it, both by word and example, and taught no doctrine that encouraged to it; but, on the contrary, the doctrine which is according to godliness, and which teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly

lusts:

nor in guile;

as there was no deceitful design in the ministry of the word, nor anything impure and immoral in the matter of it; so there was no artifice used in the dispensing of it; it was plain and simple, without any colour and guile, without the hidden things of dishonesty, without craftiness and handling the word deceitfully; and this is a reason why the apostles preached it with so much freedom and boldness, because there was nothing false, impure, or artful in it.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

Ver. 4. **But as we were allowed of God,**

.... Or, “approved of God”; not that there were any previous fitness and worthiness in them to be ministers of the word; but such was the good will and pleasure of God, that he from all eternity chose and appointed them to this work; and in his own time by his grace called them to it, and by his gifts qualified them for it, who otherwise were unworthy of it, and insufficient for it:

to be put in trust with the Gospel;

which is of great worth and value, a rich treasure, and of the last importance; which to be trusted with is a very great honour; and the discharge of such a trust requires great faithfulness, and which the apostles had:

even so we speak;

the Gospel as delivered to them, both as to matter and manner; neither taking from it nor adding to it, nor mixing it with anything of their own, nor disguising it with any artifice:

not as pleasing men;

to gain favour and affection, esteem, applause, and honour from them; to escape reproach and persecution, and obtain worldly advantages by dropping, concealing, or blending of truths to make them more agreeable to the taste of natural men:

but God, which trieth our hearts; studying to approve themselves to God, whose Gospel was committed to them, from whom they received gifts to preach it, and to whom they were accountable for all; and who being the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, knows the intentions and designs of men, and the springs of all actions; and sees through all artifices, and from whom nothing can be hidden, and who will, in his own time, bring to light the hidden things of darkness; under a sense of which faithful ministers act, as of sincerity, and as in the sight of an omniscient God.

1 Thessalonians 2:5

Ver. 5. **For neither at any time used we flattering words,**

.... To introduce them into the affections, and gain the esteem and good will of men; they did not in their ministry deliver such things as flattered men with a good opinion of themselves: they did not preach up the purity of human nature, but on the contrary the doctrine of original sin, the imputation of Adam’s transgression to his posterity, and the corruption of all human nature; they asserted the universal pollution of it, of all men, and of all the powers and faculties of their souls, that they are all under the power and dominion of sin, are involved in the guilt of it, and are all guilty before God, and liable to everlasting wrath and punishment; and that unless they repented of their sins and believed in Christ, they would perish eternally; thus they dealt roundly and freely with men’s consciences, and plainly, openly, and faithfully told them their case as it was: nor did they cry up the power of man’s free will, which would have been grateful to Jews and Gentiles; but they declared the reverse, they asserted the weakness and impotency of man, to anything that is spiritually good; and represented him as a weak and strengthless creature, and unable to do anything, even to think a good thought of himself; and ascribed all that a man is, or has, or does, that is good, to the grace and power of God, who works in him both to will and to do: nor did they plead for the sufficiency of man’s righteousness to justify him before God, a doctrine very pleasing to human nature; but, on the contrary, they gave out that there was none righteous, no, not one of the sons of Adam, in and of themselves, or by virtue of any righteousness of their own; so far from it that they were full of all unrighteousness, and were not capable of working out a righteousness, or of attaining to the righteousness of the law; that what they did pretend to was not a justifying righteousness, and would give no right and title to eternal glory; and that the righteousness of Christ was the only righteousness, by which a man could be justified from all things, and in which he could be found safe. They did not blend and mix their doctrine to suit with the tastes of different men, but with all sincerity and plainness preached the truth, as it is in Jesus; they did not connive at the sins of men, cry Peace, Peace, when there was none, or sow pillows under their armholes, or promise them life, though they should not return from their wicked way; but they with great freedom inveighed against the sins of men, and exhorted them to repentance and reformation, as well as to faith in Christ for pardon and righteousness;

nor did they wink at the sins of professors, or of one another, the Apostle Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed; and when they praised men for their gifts and graces, and the exercise of them, they took care to ascribe them to the grace of God, and give him the glory, and prevent men from boasting in themselves; in short, they acted the reverse of the false teachers, who had men’s persons in admiration because of advantage, and by good words and fair speeches deceived the hearts of the simple; but so did not the apostles of Christ, no, never, not “at any time”: when they first came to Thessalonica during their stay there, either in public or in private: and though this was true of any other time and place, yet here must be confined to this, since the apostle appeals to this church for the truth of what he said,

as ye know;

for flattering words may be discerned; a flatterer is known by his words; though in general such is the weakness of human nature, that men love to be flattered, though they know they are:

nor a cloak of covetousness;

or “an occasion of” it, they did not take the opportunity or advantage by the ministry of the word, to indulge a covetous disposition, or to amass wealth and riches to themselves; or an “excuse” for covetousness, which covetous men are never at a loss to make, always pretending one thing or another to hide and cover their evil; but the apostles made no excuses, nor used any cloak, nor needed any to cover their covetousness, because they had not the thing; they did not pretend one thing and mean another; they did not, as the false apostles did, pretend to serve Christ, preach his Gospel, seek the glory of God and the good of souls, and mean themselves, and design their own worldly advantage; they did not make these a “pretence” for covetousness, they sincerely served Christ, faithfully preached his Gospel, truly sought the glory of God, and were heartily concerned for the good of souls without any mercenary and selfish views; for the truth of which they could appeal to the heart searching and rein-trying God, as the apostle here does, saying,

God is witness;

which is properly an oath, a solemn appeal to God; for since covetousness is an internal and secret sin, and may be so coloured and disguised as not easily to be discerned, as flattering words may, the apostle therefore calls God to witness the truth of what he had said.

1 Thessalonians 2:6

Ver. 6. **Nor of men sought we glory,**

.... Honour, esteem, and popular applause; for though there is an honour that is due to the faithful ministers of the word, who are highly to be esteemed for their works’ sake, and as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God; and especially there was an honour and glory that belonged to the apostles of Christ as such, who were set in the highest office and place in the church; yet they did not seek after it as the Pharisees and false teachers did, who received honour one of another, and sought not that which comes from God only: but so did not the apostles; they took no steps this way to procure glory and esteem among men, but all the reverse; they preached doctrines which were not of men, nor according to men, nor agreeable to them; and these they delivered in a disagreeable way, not with enticing words of men’s wisdom, they did not seek to please men, but spoke and did everything that rendered them mean and despicable in their eyes; so that they looked upon them as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things: nor was this any disappointment to them, for to gain the favour of men was not their end and view; they did not seek for glory neither of the men of the world,

neither of you;

the church at Thessalonica, and the inhabitants of that place:

nor yet of others;

of other men, and churches elsewhere:

when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ:

or “have used authority”, which was given them, though not for destruction, but for edification; put on a magisterial air, and made use of the apostolic rod; appeared with some severity and rigour, and so have commanded awe, respect, and reverence: or “have been in honour”; insisted upon being treated in an honourable way, as the apostles of Christ, his ambassadors, who were sent and came in his name, and represented his person; and therefore to be received as he himself; though the phrase may rather have regard to an honourable maintenance, as in 2Co 11:9 which as the apostles of Christ they might have required as their due, but they chose rather to relinquish their right, and labour with their own hands, that they might not be chargeable: and so “glory” in the former clause may mean the same, even great and glorious things for themselves, a maintenance answerable to their high character and office, which they did not seek; but were content with a poor pittance, and such as they could get

with their own hand labour; in which sense the phrase, “double honour”, seems to be used in 1Ti 5:17 as appears by the reason given in the next verse.

1 Thessalonians 2:7

Ver. 7. **But we were gentle among you,**

.... Meek and humble, mild and moderate; not using severity, or carrying it in a haughty imperious manner; assuming power and dominion, lording it over God's heritage, and commanding persons to do homage and honour to them, and forcing themselves upon them, and obliging them to maintain them. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, instead of “gentle”, read, “little children”; as the word signifies, by adding a letter to it, and expresses much the same as the other, that they were harmless and modest, and disinterested; and sought not themselves neither honour nor wealth, but the real good of others, and were kind and tender, and affectionate to them:

even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

or “the children of her own self”; her own children, and so designs a nursing mother, one whose the children are, has bore them as well as nurses them, and therefore has the most tender concern for them; she lays them in her bosom, and hugs them in her arms, and so warms and cherishes them; gives them the breast, bears with their frowardness, condescends to do the meanest things for them; and that without any self-interest, from a pure parental affection for them: and such were the apostles to these Thessalonians; they were their spiritual parents, of whom they travailed in birth, till Christ was formed in them; they used them with the greatest kindness and tenderness; they fed them with the sincere milk of the word; they bore patiently all the slighting and ill treatment they met with; and condescended to men of low estates, and did them all the good offices they could, without any selfish views or sinister ends: a like simile is used by the Jews ⁷, who say,

“he that rises in the night to study in the law, the law makes known to him his offences; and not in a way of judgment, but כְּאִמָּה, as a mother makes known to her son, “with gentle words:”

but the ministration of the Gospel is much more gentle.

1 Thessalonians 2:8

Ver. 8. **So being affectionately desirous of you,**

⁷ Zohar in Lev. fol. 10. 2.

.... Not of theirs but them; not of glory from them, nor a maintenance by them, but of their spiritual and eternal welfare; were as fond of them as a nursing mother is of her children, who, when absent from them but ever so little a while, longs to see them; see 1Th 2:17 and 1Th 3:1,

we were willing:

took the utmost pleasure, delight, and complacency:

to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only;

the sincere milk of the word, which they did freely, fully, and for their spiritual good and profit, without any regard to any advantage of their own:

but also our own souls,

or “lives”; which is the highest expression and strongest proof of love that can be given; and respect is still had to the similitude of the nursing mother, who may be said to impart her blood, for such it her milk diversified, for the nourishment of her children: and such was the great concern of the apostles for the interest of Christ, the spread of the Gospel, and the good of souls, that their lives were not dear unto them, so that these ends might he answered: because ye were dear unto us; both because they were loved by God, redeemed by Christ, regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and had the image of Christ stamped upon them; and also because that they were their spiritual children; and as children are dear to their parents, so were these to them, even to such a degree, as that, were there a necessity for it, they could freely have laid down their lives for them.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

Ver. 9. **For ye remember brethren, our labour and travail,**

.... The great pains they took, even to weariness. The Vulgate Latin version renders the last word, “weariness”; and the Arabic version, “anxiety”; and the Ethiopic version, “affliction”; it is to be understood both of corporeal and spiritual labour, working with their hands and preaching the Gospel; this could not but be remembered by them, since it was not a year ago they were with them:

for labouring night and day;

at our handicraft, or “at the work of our hands”, as the Syriac version renders it; which they continually attended to, even night and day, when they were not preaching the Gospel, or disputing with the Jews, or praying and conversing with those that believed, or refreshing themselves with food and rest. The apostle's

business was making of tents, See Gill on “Ac 18:3”,

because we would not be chargeable to any of you;

neither to the whole body, nor to any single person; which shows that they did not seek their own ease and worldly interest; and proves what is before asserted, that they did not use a cloak of covetousness, but chose to forego, and not insist on what they had a right to, lest the Gospel should be hindered or reproached:

we preached unto you the Gospel of God;

freely and with great application and diligence; for this is the other part of their labour and travel; for the ministry of the word is a work, and a laborious one, when closely attended to; a preparation for it by prayer, reading, meditation, and much study, are wearisome and fatiguing; and to preach the word in season and out of season, with all longsuffering and doctrine, is very laborious; to which no man is sufficient of himself, and is a work which requires great faithfulness, application, and industry; and is oftentimes made the more heavy through the malice and opposition of enemies, and the weakness of friends.

1 Thessalonians 2:10

Ver. 10. **Ye are witnesses, and God also,**

.... Not so much to what goes before as to what follows after, relating to their holy walk and conversation among them, the more open part of which they were witness of; and for the more secret part God is appealed to, who is acquainted with the springs of actions, as well as with actions themselves:

how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.

The Syriac version joins the last clause of the preceding verse with this, and reads the whole thus, “ye are witnesses, and God also, how purely and justly we preached unto you the Gospel of God, and how unblamable we were among all that believed”; referring the former part to the purity and integrity in which they preached the Gospel, and the latter to their unblemished conduct among the saints; but the whole of it refers to their conversation, which was holy, externally holy, arising from internal principles of holiness in their hearts, and free from that impurity and filthiness with which the false teachers were polluted; and confirms what is before said, that their exhortation was not of uncleanness: and it was likewise “just”, they were righteous in the sight of God through the justifying righteousness of Christ, and in consequence of this lived righteously before men, and were injurious to no man's person nor property: and their conversation

was also “unblamable”; not that they were, without sin, and so without blame in themselves, or without the commission of sin by them, or that they passed without censure in the world, for they went through honour and dishonour, through good report and bad report, and had all manner of evil spoken of them falsely for Christ's name's sake; but by the grace of God, they had their conversation among them that believed so, that there was nothing material to be alleged against them, or any just cause of blame to be laid either on their persons or their ministry; and which is mentioned for imitation.

1 Thessalonians 2:11

Ver. 11. **As you know,**

.... This is added to the end of the last verse in the Arabic version, and which begins this verse thus, “as one of you, and as a father comforting his sons, so we”, &c. but for what is said in the former verse, an appeal is made both to God and to the Thessalonians, so that there is no need of adding such a clause there; it properly stands here in connection with what follows,

how we exhorted;

to flee from wrath to come, and to Christ for refuge; to look to, and believe in him, as the only Saviour of lost sinners; to perform the duties of religion, and to continue in the faith; to cleave to Christ, and walk on in him as they had received him, and to abide by the truths and ordinances of the Gospel they had embraced:

and comforted;

under a sense of sin, with the soul comforting doctrines of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, of full pardon by his blood, and of a plenary satisfaction and atonement by his sacrifice; and under all their afflictions and persecutions for the sake of Christ, with exceeding great and precious promises of the presence, grace, and strength of Christ here, and glory hereafter:

and charged everyone of you;

not only publicly, but privately, going from house to house; not in an austere and domineering way, but with the greatest tenderness, and yet faithfulness: even

as a father doth his children;

not only in an authoritative, but in an affectionate way, and also with solid wisdom and judgment; for in such a relation, in a Spiritual sense, did the apostle and his fellow ministers stand in to them; see 1Co 4:15 and the substance of the charge is as follows:

1 Thessalonians 2:12

Ver. 12. **That ye would walk worthy of God,**

.... In imitation of him; not of his perfections, which are inimitable, but of his works; and these not of his power and wisdom, but those of kindness and beneficence, and of righteousness and holiness; and in conformity to his revealed will, which is good, perfect, and acceptable; and agreeably to his Gospel, that that may be adorned, and not blasphemed; and particularly, in a manner worthy of the calling wherewith saints are called by him: since it follows,

who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory; which instance of the grace of God carries in it many arguments, and lays many obligations on the persons interested in it, to walk in their lives and conversations worthy of God; which may be taken from the nature of this call, which is not a mere external one by the outward ministry of the word, but an internal and effectual one, by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; it is a call of persons out of darkness into light, and therefore it becomes them to walk as children of the light, and honestly, as in the daytime; and from a state of bondage to sin and Satan, unto liberty, and therefore ought not to walk after the dictates of corrupt nature, nor the suggestions of Satan, but after the Spirit of God, who is a spirit of liberty; and from fellowship with the world, and the men of it, to communion with Christ, and therefore should not walk as other Gentiles do, nor run with them in the same excess of riot; in short, such are called with an holy calling, and to holiness, and have in their effectual calling principles of holiness implanted in them, and therefore should be holy in all manner of conversation: moreover, arguments may be taken from the consideration of him that calls, God, who is a holy Being, and therefore as he that hath called them is holy, so should they be likewise; he is the God of all grace that has called them, and he has called them by his grace, and to special blessings of grace, and that according to his sovereign will and pleasure; and has called them the most unworthy, base, mean, and despicable, and not others, which greatly enhances the obligation to walk worthy of him: to which add, that he that calls is God that dwells on high in heaven, and changes not, and such is his call; hence it is styled the high calling of God, and the heavenly calling, and said to be without repentance; and therefore the saints should live and walk as pilgrims and strangers here, and be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: likewise the consideration of what they are called to should engage them to a becoming walk, being called “to his kingdom”; to the kingdom of grace, which lies in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,

and which cannot be moved, and where they are kings and priests unto God; and unto a Gospel church state, and to all the privileges and immunities of it; and unto the kingdom of heaven, prepared by God for them from the foundation of the world, their Father’s free gift to them, of which they are born heirs apparent in regeneration, and have both a meetness for it, and a right unto it; and therefore ought to behave suitable to this high honour and dignity which belong unto them: and this latter sense is the rather to be chose, since it follows, “and glory”: or “to his glory”, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; to the glory of God, to the beholding of the glory of God through Christ, and the glory of Christ himself; and to a participation of that glory which God has provided, and is in the hands of Christ for them, where it is hid, who when he shall appear, they will appear with him in glory; which will be both upon their souls and bodies; and this will be an eternal glory, a glory that fades not away, and not like the glory of this world, which is transient, and soon passes away, but this will abide for ever; and therefore since the saints are called to the obtaining of this, it is a reason why their conversation should be in heaven now, and as becomes God and his Gospel.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Ver. 13. **For this cause also thank we God without ceasing,**

.... As for their election of God, 1Th 1:4 so for their effectual calling by his grace, to his kingdom and glory, just now mentioned, as well as for their reception of the word of God as such, hereafter expressed; since their having it and receiving it, and the effectual operation of it in them, were owing to the goodness and grace of God, and therefore required a constant sense of the favour, and thankfulness, without ceasing, for it. The apostle having at large considered the manner of his and his fellow ministers’ entrance among them without guile, flattery, covetousness, or any sinister view, and with all simplicity, integrity, labour, diligence, affection, and tenderness, returns to observe the reception their ministry met with, and the influence and effect it had upon them:

because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us;

or “the word of hearing of God”, as the Vulgate Latin version from the Greek text literally renders it; that is, the Gospel which was preached by the apostles, and was heard and received by these Thessalonians: and it is called the word of God, because God is the

author of it; it comes from him, and is ministered by his authority, and is a part of that written word which is given by his inspiration; and because his grace in choosing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, adopting, regenerating, and giving eternal life to men, and the declaration of his will concerning saving them by his Son Jesus Christ, are the subject matter of it; and because he owns and blesses it, for the conversion and comfort of his people: and it may be called the word of hearing of God, because coming from him, and containing his will, and preached by his order, and succeeded by his power, hearing comes by it; it is divinely breathed by him; he speaks in it by his ministers, and he is heard of in it by his people; as he was by these believers, who heard his word both externally and internally; and received it into their understandings, so as to know it spiritually and experimentally; into their minds, not merely notionally, and so as to assent to the truth of it, and give credit to it, but so as to believe in Christ revealed in it; and into their affections, in the love of it, and with joy in the Holy Ghost; they received it gladly, and with meekness and readiness, so that it became the ingrafted word, and brought forth fruit in them: the manner in which they received it follows,

ye received it not as the word of men:

which is often fallacious and deceitful, at least dubious and uncertain, and not to be depended on; nor did they receive it as the words of wise men are received, and because it was clothed with the wisdom, eloquence, and oratory of men, for it was destitute of these; nor upon the credit and authority of men, no, not of the apostles themselves:

but as it is in truth the word of God:

it appearing to be agreeably to the perfections of his nature, and to the Scriptures of truth, and it bearing his impress and divine authority, they received it with much assurance and certainty, as infallible truth; and which was inviolably to be adhered to, without any alteration, without adding to it or taking from it; and to be had and retained in the greatest esteem and reverence, and never to be departed from: and that they received it in this manner, appears from its operation in them,

which effectually worketh also in you that believe: the Vulgate Latin version reads, “who worketh”; referring it to God, as indeed it may be referred to him, as well as to his word; but the sense is much the same, for God works by and with his word, and his word only effectually works when it comes in power; or is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe; and when it does come with a divine commission and power,

it effectually works to the quickening of dead sinners, the enlightening of dark minds, the unstopping of deaf ears, the softening of hard hearts, producing faith which works by love, encouraging hope, delivering from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and comforting and establishing the hearts of the saints under all afflictions, trials, and persecutions.

1 Thessalonians 2:14

Ver. 14. **For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God,**

.... As of the Lord and of the apostle, 1Th 1:6 so of the churches of God that were before them, who were gathered out of the world by the grace of God; and who were united in the fear of God, and assembled together for his worship, to bear a testimony to his truth and ordinances, and for the glory of his name: these they followed in the faith and order of the Gospel, and “became like” them, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the word; or “equal” to them, were upon an equal foot with them, as the Arabic; that is, in suffering reproach and persecution for the Gospel, as the latter part of the verse shows; and their bearing these with patience, courage, and constancy, was a proof that the word of God had a place, and wrought effectually in them; otherwise they would never have endured such things as they did, and as other churches did:

which in Judea are in Christ Jesus;

for besides the church at Jerusalem, there were many churches in Judea and Galilee; see Ac 9:31 which shows that the primitive churches were not national, but congregational: and these were in Christ Jesus; “in the faith” of Jesus Christ, as the Arabic version renders it; which distinguishes them from the synagogues, or congregations of the Jews, which did not believe in Christ; See Gill on “1Th 1:1”.

For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen;

the inhabitants of Thessalonica, the baser sort of them, who were stirred up by the unbelieving Jews of that place, to make an uproar in the city, and assault the house of Jason, in order to seize upon the apostles; see Ac 17:6.

Even as they have of the Jews;

in like manner as the churches of Judea suffered by the Jews their countrymen; see Ac 8:1, Heb 10:32.

1 Thessalonians 2:15

Ver. 15

.... For though Pilate condemned him to death, and the Roman soldiers executed the sentence, yet it was through the malice and envy of the Jews that he was delivered to him, who brought charges against him, and insisted upon the crucifixion of him; and who are therefore said to have taken him with wicked hands, and crucified and slain him; and to have killed the Prince of life, and to have been the betrayers and murderers of him; and therefore it is no wonder that such persons should persecute the followers of Christ, whether in Judea or elsewhere:

and their own prophets;

whom God sent unto them; these they not only mocked and misused, and persecuted, but many of them they put to death, as Isaiah and others; and though this was done by their fathers, yet the present generation were the children of them that killed the prophets; and showed themselves to be of the same principles, and by their practices approved of what they had done: hence our Lord addresses the city of Jerusalem thus, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets", Mt 23:31. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the phrase "their own", and so does the Alexandrian copy; but it stands in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and is rightly retained, it having an emphasis in it; these prophets being of their own nation, born among them, and raised up in the midst of them, and sent unto them particularly, and yet were so used; and therefore it need not seem strange that they should treat in an ill manner persons of a lower character, that did not agree with them; the consideration of which serves to support under reproach and persecution; see Mt 5:12.

And have persecuted us;

the apostles of Christ; have drove us out of our own country, and pursued us from place to place, and caused us to flee from one city to another:

and they please not God:

though they reckoned themselves his chosen people, the favourites of heaven, and whom God delighted in; but neither their persons nor their actions were pleasing to him, their carnal minds being enmity to him, to his law and to his Gospel; and they in the flesh, or in an unregenerate estate, and without faith in Christ, without which it is impossible to please God, and their actions such as before described: and are contrary to all men; not only Christians, but Heathens; to all the Gentiles, who are called all men, the nations of the world, the world, and the whole world; they were contrary to these, both in their religious and civil principles, and had an aversion to them, of which the following is a full

instance.

1 Thessalonians 2:16

Ver. 16. **Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved,**

.... Speaking or preaching the Gospel is the ordinary means of saving souls, or of acquainting them with the way of salvation, the necessity of it, and of the application of it to them, and with this end and view it is preached: now though the Jews disbelieved the Gospel, and despised the ministry of it, and disavowed any such use and end of it, yet such was their envy at the Gentiles, and their hatred of them, that could they have believed it to be the means of salvation, they would have forbidden the preaching of it to them, as they now did; and it is certain, that even the believing Jews, through ignorance, did at first disapprove of the ministry of the word to the Gentiles; see Ac 11:1 such was the aversion of that nation to all others, and which perfectly agrees with their general sentiments, which forbid the explanation of the law to the Gentiles; and therefore it need not be wondered at, that they should do all that in them lay to hinder the entrance and spread of the Gospel among them, of which take the following proof ⁸:

"whoever has not the holy name sealed and bound in his flesh (i.e. is not circumcised) דאורייתא אירלאודא ליה מלה "it is forbidden to make known to him a word of the law", and much less to study in it--and whoever is not circumcised, and they give to him דאורייתא אה זיך דאורייתא, "the least thing in the law", it is as if he destroyed the world, and dealt falsely with the name of God--Hillel and Shammai did not make known to Onkelos a word of the law, until he was circumcised--and the traditions are, that even though a man is circumcised, yet if he does not do the commands of the law, lo, he is as a Gentile in all things, and "it is forbidden to teach him the words of the law":

may, it is a rule with the Jews ⁹, that

"if a Gentile studies in the law, he is guilty of death:"

and thus were they left in providence, to judicial blindness and hardness of heart,

⁸ Zohar in Lev. fol. 30. 2, 3.

⁹ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 10. sect. 9.

to fill up their sins alway;

the measure of their own and their fathers' iniquities; see Mt 23:32 a phrase expressive of the abounding of their sins, and of their being under a divine appointment, and of their being limited and restrained by a divine power, and overruled by infinite wisdom, to answer some ends and purposes of God's glory;

for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost:

which is to be understood, not of their wrath and fury being come to its highest degree and pitch against the followers of Christ, but of "the wrath of God", as the Vulgate Latin version and Beza's ancient copy express it; and designs not so much "eternal punishment", as the Ethiopic version renders the phrase, or everlasting wrath and damnation on the reprobate part of that people, as temporal ruin and destruction, which was now near at hand, and hung over their heads; and therefore is said to be come to them, and which in a little time fell upon their nation and city, and temple, even to the uttermost, to the last degree; and was, as the Arabic version renders it, "wrath consuming"; or "the consummation, and that determined poured upon the desolate", spoken of in Da 9:27 and which, as it is come upon them, will remain "unto the end", as the phrase may also be rendered; unto the end of the world, until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and then God's elect among the Jews shall obtain mercy, and be called, and so all Israel shall be saved, Ro 11:25.

1 Thessalonians 2:17

Ver. 17. **But we, brethren, being taken from you,**

.... Here more properly should begin the third chapter, in which the apostle having before observed the manner of his entrance among these people, the nature of his ministry, the reception the word of God met with among them, and the powerful effect it had upon them, insomuch that they patiently and cheerfully bore persecution for the sake of it; he excuses his not having been with them again as yet, which he knew was proper and necessary, as he was their apostle and spiritual father; and expresses an affectionate concern at his parting with them in the manner he did, which was not his own choice and voluntary act, but was obliged to it, being hurried away at once, at an unawares in the night, by reason of the uproar made in the city by the baser sort of people, instigated by the unbelieving Jews; so that he and his fellow ministers had not the opportunity of taking their leave of them, as they would have done: hence he says,

we being taken from you;

they were, as it were, passive in it; they were forced away on a sudden, they did not go of themselves; the word used is very uncommon and emphatical, and may be literally rendered, "we being orphanized from you"; which represents this parting to be like the separation made by death, between parents and children; when either parents are deprived of their children, or children of their parents, and are left orphans or fatherless; and just in such a destitute and desolate condition were the apostle and his companions in, in their account; nor need it to be wondered at, when they are before compared to a nursing mother and a tender father, as they were to these their spiritual children: and he further observes, that this removal from them, was

for a short time,

or "for the time of an hour"; which may either denote the suddenness of it, being as it were at an hour's warning, having no more notice of it than for the space of an hour; or it may express the great affection he and his fellow ministers had for them, insomuch that they could not bear an absence from them, though but for an hour; or it may be said by way of comfort, that this parting was but for a short time, and that in a little while they might hope to see them again; and if not in this life, yet in the future state, when they should meet and never part more, and which would be but in a short time at longest: moreover, this separation was only

in presence;

in person, in face, in sight, in body, it was but a corporeal one: not in heart; the apostle's heart was with them, as much as if present; they were always in his mind, and remembered by him, at the throne; he had as it were the images of them continually before him, as parents have of their children when at a distance from them; his heart was after them, and his affections moved strongly towards them: and the effect this distance had on him, and those that were with him, was this, that they endeavoured the more abundantly, he observes, to see your face with great desire; it made them but the more desirous of seeing them face to face again, and put them upon attempting with more abundant earnestness and diligence to come and see them.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

Ver. 18. **Wherefore we would have come unto you,** They not only had a will, and purposed in themselves, and entered into some resolutions to come unto them, but endeavoured to put them into execution:

even I Paul:

as well as Silas and Timothy; the latter of which had

been with them, and the others had as good a will, and especially Paul: and that

once and again:

or “once and twice” so the Jews used ¹⁰ to speak וְשֵׁנִי וְשֵׁנִי רַבּוֹתָא “one time and a second”; that is, several times:

but Satan hindered us.

The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “hindered me”; by moving the mob which rose at Thessalonica, to go to Berea, and disturb the apostle there; which obliged him, contrary to his will, to go to Athens instead of returning to Thessalonica, as he intended; and when at Athens, from whence also he might purpose to return thither, he was hindered by the disputes the Jews and the Stoics, and Epicurean philosophers, had with him; and after that, might be prevented by the lying in wait of the Jews for him, of which he might be informed; or by disturbances raised in the church, or churches where he was, by the false teachers; which required his stay with them, to oppose and refute error and heresy and to make up differences that arose among true Christians, fomented by Satan and his emissaries; see Ro 1:13. Satan does all he can to hinder the preaching of the Gospel, the hearing of the word, the profession of religion, and the saints coming together, and having spiritual conversation with each other; being, as his name “Satan” signifies, an enemy to Christ and his interest, and to the souls of men: indeed he can do nothing but by divine permission, nor can he hinder the will of God, and the execution of that, though he often hinders the will of man, or man from doing his will; he hindered the apostle from doing what he willed and purposed, but he did not hinder the will of God, which was that Paul should be employed in other work elsewhere.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

Ver. 19. **For what is our hope, or joy,**

.... The apostle here gives a reason why they were so concerned at parting with the Thessalonians, and were so desirous of seeing them again, and attempted it so often, cause they were their “hope”; not the foundation of it, which was Christ; nor the thing hoped for, which was eternal life; nor the ground of their hope, which was the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; but they were persons whom they hoped well of, and of whom their hope was steadfast; as of their election of God, of their redemption by Christ, of their effectual calling, of their perseverance in faith and holiness, notwithstanding all reproach and persecution; and of

¹⁰ Maimon. in Hilch. Chobel, c. 5. sect. 10.

meeting the Lord, and being together with him for ever: and they were also their “joy”; their conversion was a matter of joy to them, because of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, displayed therein; because of the abundant grace bestowed on these persons; and because that hereby the kingdom of Satan was weakened, and the kingdom of Christ enlarged and his churches increased and beautified; and their own ministry was blessed and confirmed, and their hearts and hands strengthened, and they encouraged to go on in it: and they continued to be their joy, inasmuch as they stood fast in the Lord, walked on in the truth, and had their conversations as became the Gospel of Christ; and they were persuaded would be their joy hereafter, at the second coming of Christ; when they should give up their account of them with joy, and not with grief: and it is added,

or crown of rejoicing;

or of “glorying”, or “boasting”; not that they gloried in them, for they gloried not in men, but in the Lord, in his righteousness, riches, wisdom, strength, and grace, in the person, blood, and cross of Christ; but they gloried of them, as trophies of divine grace, as a prey taken out of the hand of the mighty, and as lawful captives delivered from the power of Satan, and of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. The Alexandrian copy reads, as we render it,

crown of rejoicing:

which is but a stronger phrase, to press the joy they had in their conversion and perseverance, in allusion to crowns wore at times of rejoicing, as at marriage feasts, and the like: hence we read ¹¹ of the crowns of the bridegrooms, and of the brides, which were forbidden the use of in the war of Vespasian; the latter were made of gold, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, and from thence called golden cities ¹²; and the former, some say, were made of salt and sulphur, to put them in mind of the destruction of the Sodomites, for their unnatural lusts ¹³; others of a salt stone as clear as crystal, or of the stone Bdelium, painted in the colour of sulphur ¹⁴; and some were made of myrtles and roses, but in the war of Vespasian only those made of reeds were used ¹⁵; these crowns at weddings seem to be the “beautiful crowns” in Eze 23:42 where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here, στεφανων κατακτησεωσ, “a crown of rejoicing”, or “glorying”: the Hebrew phrase טָרַחַת הַפְּאֵרָה, may be

¹¹ Misna Sota. c. 9. sect. 14.

¹² Maimon. in Misna Sota, & in Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 1.

¹³ Ez Hechaim M. S. apud Wagenseil in Sota ib.

¹⁴ Bartenora in Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 14.

¹⁵ Bartenora in Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 14.

rendered “a crown of glory”, as the phrase here is by the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; but does not mean the crown of glory, life, righteousness, and immortality, the apostle expected at the hands of Christ another day; nor that his being an instrument of the conversion of these persons was the ground of such an expectation, or was what entitled him to such a crown; since he knew that conversion work was owing to the powerful grace of God, and the crown of eternal life was his free gift; but that it would be an honour to him, and give him abundant joy and pleasure at the coming of Christ, to be encircled with such a number of souls he had been useful to, and who were his spiritual children; just as children’s children are the crown of old men, Pr 17:6 all this is put by way of question, which strongly affirms,

are not even ye;

or “ye also”, as well as others, as the Corinthians and Philippians; see 2Co 1:7.

In the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

to judge the quick and dead, when both they and these should meet him, and stand before him with confidence, being clothed with his righteousness, and clad with robes of immortality and glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:20

Ver. 20. **For ye are our glory and joy.**

Or “our joy”, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; this is a repetition, and a confirmation of what is before said; and signifies that these saints were then the glory of the apostles, being the seals of their ministry; and whom they gloried of and rejoiced in, and hoped and believed they would be such, as would be their joy and crown in time to come, and for ever.

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 3

In this chapter the apostle expresses his great love to the Thessalonians, by sending Timothy to them, to establish and comfort them; and declares his satisfaction with the things he brought of them, and concludes the chapter with fervent prayers for them: such was his affection for them, that he chose rather to be left alone at Athens, and send Timothy to them, though so very dear and useful to him, as his characters show, to the end that they might be established and comforted, 1Th 3:2 and not be shaken with the afflictions the apostles met with, seeing these were no other than what God had appointed them to; and besides, they had been apprized of them before hand by the apostle, 1Th 3:3 but however, lest Satan should get an advantage of them,

the apostle could not be easy without sending to know how things stood with them, 1Th 3:5 next he proceeds to give an account of the success of this mission, and the satisfaction it gave him and his fellow ministers to hear of their faith and charity, their remembrance of them, and desire to see them, 1Th 3:6 which comforted them under their afflictions, made them lively and cheerful, filled them with joy and thankfulness, and put them upon praying to God to see their face, and perfect what was lacking in their faith, 1Th 3:7 and then follow the petitions themselves, which are made both to God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that their way might be directed to them, that they might increase and abound in love to one another, and to all men, as they did to them, and that God would establish them in holiness in his sight, at the coming of Christ, 1Th 3:11.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 3 (Verses 1-13)

[1] Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

[2] And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

[3] That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

[4] For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

[5] For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

[6] But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:

[7] Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

[8] For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

[9] For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

[10] Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

[11] Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

[12] And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as

we do toward you:

[13] To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY CHAPTER 3

1 Thessalonians 3:1

Ver 1. **Wherefore when we could no longer forbear,**

.... Or "bear", as the word properly signifies; or "bear that", as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, "that desire", as the Arabic version renders it; that ardent and longing desire of seeing them again, expressed in the latter part of the preceding chapter; which was as fire in their bones, and was retained with great pain and uneasiness; but now they could hold it no longer, and like Jeremiah, Jer 20:9 were weary with forbearing, and could not stay; or it was like a burden, which they stood up under as long as they could, even Paul, Silas, and Timothy, but now it became insupportable:

we thought it good to be left at Athens alone:

that is, Paul and Silas, or Paul only, speaking of himself in the plural number; for he seems to have been alone at Athens, at least at last; he considering everything, thought it most fit and advisable when at Athens, where he waited for Silas and Timothy, having ordered them to come thither to him from Berea, Ac 17:14 either to send orders to Berea for Timothy to go from thence to Thessalonica, to know the state of affairs there, and Silas elsewhere; or if they came to him to Athens, of which Luke gives no account, he immediately dispatched Timothy to Thessalonica, and Silas to some other part of Macedonia, for from thence they came to him at Corinth, Ac 18:5 such was his desire of knowing how things were at Thessalonica, that he chose rather to be left alone at Athens, disputing with the unbelieving Jews, and Heathen philosophers of the Epicurean and Stoic sects, sustaining all their scoffs and jeers alone; and was content to be without his useful companions, Silas and Timothy, who might have been assisting to him at Athens, in hope of hearing of his dear friends at Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 3:2

Ver. 2. **And sent Timotheus our brother,**

.... In a spiritual relation, having the same heavenly Father, and belonging to the same Jerusalem, which is free, and the mother of us all; of the same household and in the same relation to Christ, the firstborn among many brethren; or their brother in the ministry, who

was employed in the same business, and did the same work they did; or he is so called, on account of that strict and intimate friendship which subsisted between them, by virtue of which they stuck as close as brethren, or closer to one another than brethren usually do:

and minister of God;

of his making, and not man's; of his calling and sending, and of his blessing and succeeding; and who was a minister of the things of God, of the mysteries of God, of the truths of his Gospel; and who ministered according to the ability God gave him, and was faithful to him:

and our fellow labourer in the Gospel of Christ;

he was a labourer, and not a loiterer in the Lord's vineyard; one that laboured in the word and doctrine, that studied to show himself a workman, that gave himself wholly to meditation, reading, exhortation, and doctrine, and preached the word in season and out of season and was a fellow labourer with him who laboured more abundantly than any of the apostles; and not in the law, but in the Gospel, even in the Gospel of Christ, of which he is the sum and substance, author and preacher. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out these words, and so do Beza's ancient copy and the Alexandrian manuscript, "and our fellow labourers", reading the latter part of the clause in connection with the former thus, "a minister of God in the Gospel of Christ", as the former of these versions, "in the doctrine of Christ", as the latter. These characters are given of Timothy, partly to show what honour was done the Thessalonians, in sending such a messenger to them; and partly that they might receive him with the greater respect, and treat him according to his character, office, and dignity; and chiefly to observe to them the apostle's great affection for them, in parting with so dear and useful a minister for their good and advantage, as follows:

to establish you;

which though the work of God, it is usually done by the ministry of the word; and then is the end of the Gospel ministration answered to the churches, when they are established by it; for notwithstanding the saints are in a stable condition, as in the arms of love, and in the hands of Christ, and in the covenant of grace, and upon the rock of ages, and in a state of regeneration, justification, and adoption, from whence they can never fall totally and finally; yet they are often very unstable in their hearts and frames, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in their adherence to the cause and interest, Gospel and ordinances of Christ,

through the prevalence of corruption, the temptations of Satan, and the reproaches and persecutions of men: and these Thessalonians were young converts, and just planted together as a church; and at their first setting out, sustained a considerable shock of afflictions, which made the apostle concerned for their establishment in the faith which they had received:

and to comfort you concerning your faith.

This is another end of the Gospel ministry, to comfort afflicted minds, and distressed consciences; it is the will of God that his people should be spoke comfortably to; the doctrines of the Gospel are calculated for that purpose, and the ministers of it should be Barnabases, sons of consolation. These saints might be in some doubt about the grace of faith, whether it was right or not, or about the doctrine of faith they had received; and therefore Timothy is sent to comfort them under their afflictions, which might have created these doubts, and to remove them, by showing them that their faith was like precious faith with the apostles; and that the doctrine of faith they embraced was the faith once delivered to the saints, and was the true faith of Christ: the words will bear to be rendered, "to exhort you concerning your faith", as the Vulgate Latin version renders them; that is, to exhort you to continue in the faith, to stand fast in it, in the exercise of the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of faith, and in the profession of both. The Syriac version renders it, "to ask", or inquire of you concerning your faith, being willing to know how it stood, since they left them, as in 1Th 3:5.

1 Thessalonians 3:3

Ver. 3. **That no man should be moved by these afflictions,**

.... Which the apostle endured for the sake of preaching the Gospel among them, and which he feared might be a means of troubling their minds, of shaking their faith, and moving them from the hope of the Gospel; for though none of these things moved him, who was an old soldier of Christ, and used to hardness, and an apostle of Christ; yet these were young converts, and not used to such things, and therefore might be staggered at them, and be offended, as stony ground hearers are; and though the apostle hoped better things of them, yet was he concerned for them, that no one among them might be unhinged by them, or succumb under them:

for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto;

by the immutable decree of God: afflictions, as to

their nature, measure, and duration, are appointed for the people of God, and they are appointed for them; this is the case of all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, and especially of Gospel ministers; of which these saints had been apprized by the apostle, and therefore was nothing new, unheard of, and unexpected, or to be looked upon as a strange thing; and seeing this was the appointment of heaven, and the will of God, they should be patiently endured, and quietly submitted to.

1 Thessalonians 3:4

Ver. 4. **For, verily, when we were with you,**

.... In presence, in person, as they then were in heart and affection; when they were first among them, and preached the Gospel to them:

we told you before;

before it came to pass;

that we should suffer tribulation:

which they might say by virtue of Christ's prediction to all his disciples, that they should have tribulation in the world; and upon its being the common case of God's people, and the usual way through which they enter the kingdom; and the Apostle Paul might foretell this, upon the discovery that was made to him how many things he should suffer for the sake of Christ, and which therefore he always, and in every place expected; and he might have a particular revelation of the disturbance and opposition he was to meet with at Thessalonica:

even as it came to pass, and ye know;

referring to the tumult and uproar in Ac 17:5, and which should be considered so far from being a discouragement, that it was a great confirmation of the truth of their mission and ministry; nor could it be so surprising to them as it might have been had they had no previous taste of it.

1 Thessalonians 3:5

Ver. 5. **For this cause, when I could no longer forbear,**

.... Or "bear" the above vehement desire of seeing them, or of hearing from them. Here the apostle speaks in the singular number, and seems to intimate, as if what was said before of the like kind is to be understood singly of him; for these words are a repetition and summary of the foregoing, with some diversity:

I sent to know your faith; how it stood, whether it was staggering

through these afflictions, or firm; whether it was weak or strong, what was wanting in it; and whether it grew and increased. The Arabic version adds, "and

charity”; for of this, as well as of faith, Timothy brought an account, as appears from the following verse.

Lest by some means the tempter;

Satan, so called from his common and constant employ in tempting men to sin; see Mt 4:3

have tempted you with success,

and got an advantage over them, improving these afflictions to such a purpose as to move them from the hope of the Gospel, and relinquish the profession of it; for otherwise there was no question to be made but he had tempted them, or solicited them to it; for none of the saints are free from his temptations; the apostle himself was not, nor indeed our Lord Jesus Christ: but the apostle’s fears were, lest he should so have tempted them as to have gained upon them, and have persuaded them to have turned their backs upon the Gospel, and not expose their name and credit, and hazard the toss of worldly substance, and even life itself, for the sake of it.

And our labour be in vain:

in preaching the Gospel among them; not with respect to God, to whom the word never returns void and empty; nor with regard to the apostles, whose judgment was with the Lord, and their work with their God, who will of his own grace reward them; but with respect to the Thessalonians, to whom, should Satan gain his point, it would be of no use and service, for which the concern was. The Ethiopic version reads, “and your labour be in vain”: in receiving the apostles, embracing and professing the Gospel, and suffering for it; see Ga 3:4 but the common reading is best, and agrees with what the apostle elsewhere says, Ga 4:11.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

Ver. 6. **But now when Timotheus came from you unto us,**

.... At Corinth, as appears from Ac 18:5 which shows that this epistle was not written from Athens, as the subscription to it asserts, but from Corinth; for as soon as ever Timothy came from Thessalonica, to the apostle at Corinth, and made the report to him, he immediately sent them this epistle which is here suggested: “but, now”, &c. just now; “lately”, as the Syriac version renders it, a very little while ago, Timothy was just come:

and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity;

of their faith, the grace of faith, that it was of the right kind; as far as could be judged, it was the faith of God’s elect, like precious faith with theirs; an unfeigned one, strong and lively, operative and growing: or of the doctrine of faith, as received and embraced by them; as

that they were greatly led, and had much light into it, and had, for the time, made considerable proficiency in it; that they held it fast, and stood fast in it, and contended for it, notwithstanding all the afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions which they either saw in the apostles, or endured themselves for the sake of it; and likewise of the profession of both the grace and doctrine of faith, which they held fast, and without wavering, and that in a pure conscience, which was good news indeed. Timothy also brought an account of their “charity”, or love, which faith works by; these two graces are always found together; they are wrought in the soul by one, and the same hand, and at the same time; where the one is, the other is; and as the one flourishes and increases, so does the other. And by this grace is meant love to God, to Christ, to his truths, ordinances, ways, and worship, and to one another, and even to all men; and which was without dissimulation, in sincerity, in deed, and in truth, and was constant and fervent: and this was not the whole of the report, for it follows,

and that ye have a remembrance of us always

they bore in memory the persons of the apostles; and when they made mention of their names, it was with the greatest respect and reverence; nor were they forgetful hearers of the word, but remembered with great affection and pleasure the truths, the doctrines, and exhortations they delivered to them, so as to put them in practice, and longed for another visit from them, to have their memories refreshed by them:

desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you,

they had an equal desire to see their spiritual fathers, as they had to see their spiritual children. Now such a report as this concerning their steady faith in Christ, their fervent love to one another, and their affectionate regard to the ministers of the word, was a sort of a Gospel, as the word used signifies; or it was good news and glad tidings to the apostle, and those that were with him.

1 Thessalonians 3:7

Ver. 7. **Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over, you,**

.... Or “in you”, as the Vulgate Latin version; or “from you”, as the Arabic; or “by you”, as the Syriac; or “for you”, as the Ethiopic; that is, on account of them, either by what they had heard was in them, or had heard from them. This gave abundant consolation

in all our affliction and distress:

which they met with at Corinth, where the apostle laboured with his own hands, and ministered to his own, and the necessities of others, and was greatly opposed,

reproached, and persecuted; see Ac 18:3, but the news of the good estate and condition the Thessalonians were in, was a great relief and comfort to him, particularly their faith:

by your faith:

by the report of it, that it grew exceedingly, and that they walked in the truth; see 1Jo 5:4. The Alexandrian copy reads, “in all your distress and affliction, and by your faith.”

1 Thessalonians 3:8

Ver. 8. **For now we live,**

.... Before they were dead men, lifeless, disconsolate, dispirited, carrying about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus, and death working in them, and they, as it were, under the sentence of that, being killed all the day long for Christ’s sake; but now, upon this news, in the midst of all their sore trials and troubles, their spirits revived, and they became alive and cheerful; see Ps 22:26, it was like life from the dead unto them:

if ye stand fast in the Lord:

or “our Lord”, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; that is, “in the faith of the Lord”, as the Arabic version renders it: they were in the Lord secretly by electing grace, and openly by regenerating grace, and they abode in him; and by persevering grace, they were rooted and built up in Christ, and established in the faith of him, of his person, office, and grace; they were steady in the exercise of grace upon him, and stood fast in the liberty wherewith he had made them free, and continued steadfastly in the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; for the “if” here is not expressive of doubting, but of reasoning, “seeing ye stand fast in the Lord”; of which they were assured by Timothy: and this gave them fresh spirit and life amidst the deaths in which they often were.

1 Thessalonians 3:9

Ver. 9. **For what thanks can we render to God again or you,**

.... They had given thanks to God for them before, for their faith, love, and patience; see 1Th 1:2 and now having received a further account of them, they looked upon themselves bound to give fresh thanks to God for them, for the increase of their faith and love, and for their perseverance, as they did; see 2Th 1:3 since these are gifts of God’s grace; but they knew not where to begin, what to render, and when to end: the phrase is much like that in Ps 116:12 “what shall I render unto the Lord”, &c.

for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God:

the joy they had was all joy, perfect and complete in its kind; see Jas 1:2 and it was not for themselves, on their own account, because of any worldly interest or advantage they had therein, but for the sake of these Thessalonians, whose spiritual welfare they rejoiced at: nor was their joy of a carnal nature, but spiritual; it was a joy in the Holy Ghost, and which was hearty and sincere: it was “before God our” God, their covenant God and Father; it was in his sight and presence, who sees and knows all things, all actions, and the principles of them. Though this last clause, “before our God”, is in the Syriac version, placed at the beginning of the next verse, according to which, it refers, not to thanks or joy before God, but to prayer before him.

1 Thessalonians 3:10

Ver. 10. **Night and day praying exceedingly,**

.... This good news, not only comforted their hearts, and revived their spirits, and filled them with joy and thankfulness, but also sent them to the throne of grace to pray without ceasing, continually, night and day, and as often as they went thither, and that with great fervency and earnestness, in a multitude of petitions; or, as the Arabic version renders it, “with prayers exceeding a multitude”; with innumerable requests:

that we might see your face:

once more, and converse face to face:

and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

in the grace of faith; for though they remembered their work of faith with pleasure, and had had good tidings of it very lately, and were thankful that it grew exceedingly as it did, yet they knew it was not perfect, there was unbelief attending them: and though it is God’s work to increase faith, as well as to produce it, yet, as the ministry of the word is the means of the first planting of it, so it also is of the increase of it. This may likewise be understood of the doctrine of faith, which though they had received in the love of it, and had made considerable progress in their knowledge of it; yet they knew but in part, and needed to be taught the way of God, and truths of the Gospel more perfectly; and the ministry of the word is for the perfecting of the saints in the knowledge of the Son of God, and of other truths; wherefore the apostle desired greatly to see them, that he might be an instrument of instructing them, more perfectly in the knowledge of divine things; and in this, and in the following epistle, he does particularly instruct

them about the rise and fall of antichrist, the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, articles of faith in which they seemed to have been deficient: but now, though these saints had deficiencies in their faith, yet they were not what the Jews call ¹⁶ hnma yrowxm, “such as are deficient in faith”, or want faith entirely, a phrase somewhat like this which is here used.

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Ver. 11. **Now God himself, and our Father,**

... The Oriental versions leave out the copulative “and”, and read, “God himself, our Father” the first person in the Trinity, who is God himself, truly and properly so; and who is a God that hears prayer; and who is omnipotent, and able to do more than the saints can ask or think; and omniscient, and knows their persons and cases, and what is proper for them, and how and when to help and supply them; and he is also the God of all grace, the author and giver of it, and who is able to make it abound, and increase it, and so a very proper object of prayer: and who is likewise the Father of Christ, and of all the saints, not only by creation, in which sense he is the Father of all men, but by adopting grace; and which is mentioned to encourage freedom and boldness in prayer, which children may use with a father, and to raise an expectation of succeeding and receiving an answer; for if earthly parents hear their children, and give good things to them, how much more will not our heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit, and all other good gifts, unto his children? And this shows that the apostle prayed to God in the manner Christ directed, Mt 6:9

and our Lord Jesus Christ:

who is equally the object of prayer with God his Father and ours; who is sometimes distinctly prayed unto, as in Ac 7:59 and often in conjunction with his Father, as in all those places in the epistles, where grace and peace are wished for from them both; see Ro 1:7, and sometimes he is set before the Father, as in 2Th 2:16 to show the entire equality between them, and that he is equally addressed as he, being truly and properly God, who knows all things, and is the Almighty, and whose grace is sufficient for us, and therefore rightly applied unto, as here: the petition put up to them both is, that they would

direct our way unto you:

a journey is not to be taken without the will of God, without seeking to know it, without submission to it, and dependence on it; nor is there any prosperous one,

¹⁶ Maimon. Hilch. Mechira, c. 7. sect. 8, 9.

but by it; see Jas 4:13. Men may devise their own ways, but God directs their goings; especially a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord, and particularly ministers; who, as they are often directed to subjects and matter, in a very providential way, so to places, and are ordered both where and when to go; see Ac 16:6. The apostle was aware, that there were obstacles in his way of coming to Thessalonica, for he had attempted it once and again, but Satan, and his emissaries, hindered; and therefore he desires that God and Christ would remove them out of the way, and make his way straight and plain, as the word signifies, that he might once more see their faces.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

Ver. 12. **And the Lord make you to increase,**

... That is, the Lord the Spirit; so that the object of prayer, addressed by the apostle, is Father, Son, and Spirit, as in Re 1:4. The Alexandrian copy reads “God”. The Spirit is God, equally with the Father and the Son, and so a fit object of prayer with them, which otherwise he would not be. The request is, that he would cause these saints to increase in number, as the first churches greatly did: and in the gifts of the Spirit, which he divides to men severally as he will; and in his graces, as in faith, in hope, in holiness, in humility, in knowledge, in spiritual joy and strength, an increase in all which is from him:

and abound in love one towards another;

for though they were taught of God to love one another, and did do so, and the apostle had had good tidings of their love; yet it was not perfect, there was room for a further exercise of it, by serving each other by it, in things spiritual and temporal; and he had his request, for it did abound in everyone of them towards each other, 2Th 1:3

and towards all men;

the men of the world, who were without, were not members of the church, nor professors of the Christian religion, but enemies to that, and to Christ, and to them; and yet they were to love them as men, and pray for them, and do them all the good that lay in their power:

even as we do towards you;

for the love of the apostle, and those with him, abounded more and more towards these saints, and was so far from being weakened, that it was increased by their absence from them; and they were more abundantly desirous of seeing them, and were even quite impatient until they sent to them, and heard of them.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

Ver. 13. **To the end he may stablish your hearts,**

.... Which are very unstable and inconstant in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, and have need to be established in the love of God, against the fears of men, the frowns of the world, the temptations of Satan, and in, and with the doctrines of grace; See Gill on “1Th 3:2”,

unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father.

There is no holiness in men naturally; what is in them without the grace of God is only a show; true holiness is from the Spirit of God; and this is a stable thing in itself, and can never be removed or taken away; but the acts of it, through the prevalence of corruption, the force of Satan's temptations, and the snares of the world, are fickle and inconstant; and the saints need to be established in the discharge of duty, as well as in the exercise of grace: and whereas the apostle prays, that they might be “unblamable in holiness”, the Alexandrian copy reads, “in righteousness” so one of Stephens's; it must be observed, that no man is perfectly holy in this life; no man is without sin in himself, or lives without the commission of it; holiness in the best is imperfect; no man, as yet, is in himself sanctified wholly; there is no unblamable holiness but in Christ; and in him the saints are without spot and blemish, who is their sanctification and their righteousness; but in themselves they are full of spots and stains; yet through the grace of God their hearts may be so established with principles of holiness, and they may be so assisted in the acts of it daily, as to give no just cause of blame to men, and so to behave as to approve themselves “before God”, who sees the heart, and knows from what principles all actions flow: and this the apostle desires may be at the coming of our Lord Jesus; or unto the coming of him, as in 1Th 5:23 Either at death, when he comes into his garden, and gathers his lilies, and takes his to himself to be for ever with him; or at the day of judgment, when he comes to judge the quick and dead; and which coming of his is certain, and will be quickly and suddenly, and with great glory and power: and, as it is here added,

with all his saints;

meaning either his holy angels, or rather the souls of his people, whom he will bring with him, and will raise their dead bodies, and reunite them to their souls, when they shall be for ever with him; and then shall they be unblamable in holiness, both in soul and body, and shall be presented by him, first to himself, and then to his Father, faultless, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, “Amen”; and so does Beza's ancient copy,

and the Alexandrian manuscript.

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 4

In this chapter the apostle proceeds to exhort in general to the performance of good works, particularly to purity of life, to brotherly love, to quietness, diligence, and industry in the several callings of life, and not to mourn in an excessive and immoderate manner for deceased friends; which leads him to say some things concerning the second coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. The general exhortation to holiness is in 1Th 4:1 which is pressed in a way of entreaty for the sake of Christ; and the duties urged to were the commandments of Christ, and which the apostles had given them, and they had received, and were well acquainted with; and besides, a walk according to these commands was well pleasing to God, and sanctification in general was his will: and in particular the apostle exhorts to abstain from fornication, and all uncleanness; since it is a dishonouring the body of man; acting the part of the ignorant Gentiles that know not God; a defrauding another man, as is uncleanness with another man's wife; the vengeance of God will light on such; it is contrary to that calling with which the saints are called, that being to holiness, and not uncleanness; and to despise this exhortation, is casting contempt, not upon man, but God himself, 1Th 4:4. Brotherly love is the next thing exhorted to, which seemed needless to write about, since, in regeneration, these saints were taught to exercise it, and had exercised it towards all the brethren throughout Macedonia, though it was necessary to exhort them to abound more and more in it, 1Th 4:9 and to study peace and quietness, and be industrious in their business, that so they might live an honest life among their carnal neighbours, and not be in want of anything from them, 1Th 4:11 and whereas some of them had lost some of their dear friends and relations by death, and were ready to exceed due bounds in their sorrow for them, he dehort from such immoderate sorrow, as being like that of those that had no hope of a resurrection from the dead; whereas, seeing it was an article of their faith, that Christ was risen from the dead, they might assure themselves that those that sleep in him shall be brought along with him when he shall appear a second time, 1Th 4:13 which will not be prevented by those that are alive when Christ comes; for as they will be changed, the dead in Christ will be raised at his coming; which coming of his will be in person, from heaven, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God; and then both shall be caught up together to meet him in the air, and be for

ever with him; and therefore they had no need to sorrow as others, since they should meet again, and never part more, and with which words they should comfort one another under their present loss, 1Th 4:15.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 4 (Verses 1-18)

[1] Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

[2] For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

[3] For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

[4] That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

[5] Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

[6] That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

[7] For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

[8] He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

[9] But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

[10] And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

[11] And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

[12] That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

[13] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

[14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

[15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

[16] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

[17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the

Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY CHAPTER 4

1 Thessalonians 4:1

Ver. 1. **Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren,**

... Or request of you in the most kind and tender manner, from real and hearty love and affection for you, and with a view to your good, and the glory of God:

and exhort you:

or beseech and entreat you. The apostle does not lay his commands upon them as he might have done, and sometimes does, but endeavours to work upon them by way of entreaty, and which he doubtless thought the most effectual method to win upon them, and gain them; for some minds are more easily wrought upon by entreaty than by authority: and this he does in the most moving and powerful manner, even

by the Lord Jesus;

or "in the Lord Jesus"; in his name and stead, as personating him, and as though he did beseech and entreat them by him, and his fellow ministers; or for his sake, intimating, that if they had any regard to him, any value for his name, if that had any weight with them, or they had any concern for his honour and interest, then he begs their attention to the following exhortation; or by the Lord Jesus, by all that is in him, or done for them by him; in whom they were chosen, by whom they were redeemed, in whom they were made new creatures, to whose image they were to be conformed, whose followers they professed to be, whose Gospel they embraced, and by whose name they were called.

That as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God.

The walk of believers is twofold, either internal or external. Their internal walk is by faith, which is the going out of the soul by faith to Christ for every supply of grace. Their external walk is not as it was before conversion, according to the course of this world, or as other Gentiles walk, but in a holy religious life and conversation; and this requires spiritual life, strength and direction from Christ; for neither dead men, nor, if alive, yet weak, can walk; nor is it in a spiritual man, that walketh to direct his steps; and such a walk also denotes continuance, in well doing, and a progression or going on in it, and supposes ways to walk in. Christ, he is the chief and principal way, and there are other paths which regard him, or relate and lead unto him; as the way of truth, the path of ordinances, and of religious worship,

both public and private, and the ways of righteousness, holiness, and good works: the manner in which saints are to walk is as Christ himself walked, after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, according to the rule of the word, which is the standard of faith and practice, with prudence, wisdom, circumspection, and worthy of God, and of that calling wherein they are called: and of such a walk there is a necessity; it "ought", it must be both on the account of God, it being his will, and for his glory, and the contrary would show great ingratitude to him; and on the account of the saints themselves, to adorn them, and their profession, and preserve them from shame and disgrace, to show their faith, and demonstrate their calling and election to others; and likewise on account of others, partly for the winning of some, by recommending in this way the Gospel to them, and partly for the bringing of others to shame and silence, who falsely accuse their good conversation. Now when the apostle, and those that were with him, were at Thessalonica, they gave these saints directions and instructions about their walk and conversation, to order it in such a manner as might "please God"; which is not to be understood of rendering their persons acceptable to God hereby, for the saints' acceptance with God is only in Christ the beloved; nor of their gaining the love and favour of God by such means, for the love of God is from everlasting, and is free, and sovereign, and does not arise from, or depend upon the holiness and obedience of men; or of making peace with God by such a walk, for peace is only made by the blood of Christ; but of doing those things, and in such a way God approves of: unregenerate men cannot please God, nor anything they do, because they are destitute of the Spirit of God, and are without Christ, and his grace and have not faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God; but what a believer does in faith, from a principle of love, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God, is approved of by God, and is acceptable to him through Christ, and for his sake; and there are many things of this kind, as prayer, praise, acts of beneficence to the poor, and indeed every good work and holy action: and inasmuch as they had been thus taught and instructed how to behave and conduct in their outward walk and conversation, they are entreated and exhorted to go on and abound in the work of the Lord:

so ye would abound more and more:

that is, be more and more in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty, making advances in holiness of life, and perfecting it in the fear

of God. Beza's ancient copy, and another manuscript, as also the Alexandrian copy, and some others, add between the preceding, and this last clause, "as ye also walk"; and so the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions seem to have read; commending them for their present and past walk and conversation, in order to persuade and encourage them to go forward.

1 Thessalonians 4:2

Ver. 2. **For ye know what commandments we gave you,**

... When among them; such as those of faith and love, the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's supper, and all such as relate to the worship and service of God, to the discipline of Christ's house, to their behaviour one towards another, and their conduct in the world: and which were delivered to them, not as from themselves, and by their own authority, but

by the Lord Jesus;

in his name, and by his authority, and as ordered by him; for their commission ran to teach men all things, whatsoever Christ commanded: now since they knew what these commandments were, and whose they were, and the obligation they lay under to regard them, the apostle makes use of it as a reason or argument to engage them to obedience to them; for he that knows his Lord's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, Lu 12:47.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

Ver. 3. **For this is the will of God,**

even your sanctification,.... Which is another reason to enforce the above exhortation. "Sanctification" is internal or external. Internal sanctification is the work of the Spirit of God, and is a principle of spiritual life in the soul, a divine and spiritual light in the understanding, a flexion of the will to the will of God, and a settlement of the affections on divine things, and is an implantation of every grace in the heart. External sanctification arises from this, and lies in holiness of life and conversation; and is what is chiefly designed, as appears both by what goes before, and follows after: and this is "the will of God"; the will of his purpose and decree; for in the same decree that he wills the salvation of any by Jesus Christ, he also wills their sanctification in heart and life, and here and hereafter: and this is his approving will, or what is well pleasing in his sight, being agreeable to his nature, and divine perfections, particularly his holiness, in which he is glorious; and it is his will of command, and what he requires in his law, which is holy, just, and

good, and perfectly agrees with the sound doctrine of the Gospel, and the revelation of his will in both.

That ye should abstain from fornication:

which is particularly mentioned, abstinence from it being a branch of external holiness; and because that this sin was common among the Gentiles, and not esteemed a sin by them; as also to observe to these Christians, that as simple fornication was not to be allowed of, much less other acts of uncleanness, as adultery, incest, sodomy, and the like, which were iniquities that greatly prevailed among the Heathens. The Syriac version renders it, “from all fornication”; on this subject the apostle enlarges in some following verses.

1 Thessalonians 4:4

Ver. 4. **That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel,**

.... By which may be meant, either a man’s wife, or his body, and it is not very easy to determine which, for the Jews call both by this name. Sometimes they call ¹⁷ a woman גוֹלָם, which the gloss says is a “vessel” unfinished. It is reported ¹⁸, that when R. Eleazar died, Rabbenu Hakkadosh would have married his widow, and she would not, because she was כְּלוּסָה שֶׁל קְדוּשָׁה, “a vessel of holiness”, greater than he. Moreover, it is said ¹⁹, that

“he that forces (a young woman) must drink wuyueb, “in his own vessel” how drink in his own vessel? though she be lame, though she be blind, and though she is stricken with ulcers.”

The commentators ²⁰ on the passage add,

“in the vessel which he has chosen; that is to say, whether he will or not, he must marry her;”

see Pr 5:15. And again, they sometimes call a man’s wife his tent: hence that saving ²¹,

“there is no tent but his wife”, as it is said, De 5:30, go, say to them, get you into your tents again.”

And certain it is, that the woman is called the “weaker

vessel” in 1Pe 3:7, between which passage and this there seems to be some agreement. The same metaphor of a “vessel” is made use of in both; and as there, honour to be given to the weaker vessel, so here, a man’s vessel is to be possessed in honour; and as there, husbands are to dwell with their wives according to knowledge so here, knowledge is required to a man’s possessing his vessel aright. Now for a man to possess his vessel in this sense, is to enjoy his wife, and to use that power he has over her in a becoming manner; see 1Co 7:4, and which is here directed to “in sanctification and honour”; that is, in a chaste and honourable way; for marriage is honourable when the bed is kept undefiled; and which may be defiled, not only by taking another into it, and which is not possessing the wife in sanctification and honour, it is the reverse, for it is a breaking through the rules of chastity and honour; but it may even be defiled with a man’s own wife, by using her in an unnatural way, or by any unlawful copulation with her; for so to do is to use her in an unholy, unchaste, wicked, and dishonourable manner; whereas possessing of her according to the order and course of nature, is by the Jews, in agreement with the apostle, called {u}, wmuē vđqm, “a man’s sanctifying himself”, and is chaste, and honourable. And it may be observed, that the Jews use the same phrase concerning conjugal embraces as the apostle does here. One of their canons runs thus ²²:

“though a man’s wife is free for him at all times, it is fit and proper for a disciple of a wise man to use himself בקְדוּשָׁה, “in”, or “to sanctification””

When these things are observed, this sense of the words will not appear so despicable as it is thought by some. The body is indeed called a “vessel”; see 2Co 4:7, because in it the soul is contained, and the soul makes use of it, and its members, as instruments, for the performance of various actions; and, with Jewish writers, we read of wpmg ylk, “the vessel of his body” ²³; so then, for a man to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, is to keep under his body and bring it into subjection, and preserve it in purity and chastity; as the eyes from unchaste looks, the tongue from unchaste words, and the other members from unchaste actions; and to use it in an honourable way, not in fornication, adultery, and sodomy; for, by fornication, a man sins against his own body; and by adultery he gets a wound, and a dishonour, and a reproach that will not be wiped

²² Maimon. Hilch Deyot, c. 5. sect. 4.

²³ Caphtor, fol. 57. 2.

away; and by sodomy, and such like unnatural lusts, men dishonour their own bodies between themselves: particularly by “his vessel”, as Gataker thinks, may be meant the “membrum virile”, or the genital parts, which, by an euphemism, may be so called; see 1Sa 21:5

1 Thessalonians 4:5

Ver. 5. **Not in the lust of concupiscence,**

.... Or “passion of lust”; for the mere gratifying and indulging of that; for a man so to possess his vessel, is to cherish the sin of concupiscence, the first motions of sin in the heart, by which a man is drawn away, and enticed; to blow up the flame of lust, and to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof:

even as the Gentiles which know not God;

for, though they knew him, or might know him with a natural knowledge, by the light and works of nature, yet they knew him not savingly and spiritually, as he is revealed in the word, of which they were destitute; or as the God of all grace, and the God and Father of Christ, or as he is in Christ: and though by the light of nature they might know there was a God, yet they knew not who that God was; nor did they act up to that light and knowledge they had; they did not glorify him as God, by ascribing to him what was his due; nor were they thankful for the mercies they received from him; nor did they fear, love, worship, and serve him; nor did they like to retain him in their knowledge, and therefore were given up to judicial blindness and hardness, to a reprobate mind, and to vile affections, and so did things very inconvenient, unnatural, and dishonourable. Wherefore, for a man to use either his wife or his body in any unchaste and dishonourable manner, for the gratifying of his lusts, is to act an Heathenish part; a like argument, dissuading from things unlawful, is used in Mt 6:32.

1 Thessalonians 4:6

Ver. 6. **That no man go beyond, and defraud his brother in any matter,**

.... Or “in this matter”, as the Syriac version. This is commonly understood of transgressing the bounds of justice and equity between men and men; and of cheating and defrauding in trade and business, by increasing or lessening the value and prices of goods by the buyer and seller, by not keeping to the bargain, contract, covenant, or sample, by false weights and measures, and by taking the advantage of the weakness and ignorance of men; all which is aggravated by dealing thus with a brother; see 1Co 6:8 and this hint is thought

the rather necessary, since Thessalonica was a place of great trade and business. But the matter, or business referred to, is not trade, but the subject of chastity or uncleanness the apostle is speaking of, both before and after; and the phrases used either design the act of adultery, coveting a brother’s wife, and lying with her, and so a defrauding and wronging of him by defiling his bed; or rather sodomitical practices, an unnatural lust and desire in men after men, and copulation with them; for υπερβαινειν, rendered, “go beyond”, answers to le ab, “to go upon”, or “lie with”, so often used in Jewish writings for lying with women, men, and beasts, in an unlawful way. Thus, for instance ²⁴,

“these are to be burned, הַבֵּא לְ אִשָּׁה, “he that lies with a woman”, and her daughter, &c.”

And again ²⁵,

“these are to be beaten, הַבֵּא לְ, “he that lies with” his sister, or his father’s sister, &c.”

And the word πλαουεκτειν, translated “defraud”, signifies a greedy, insatiable, and unnatural lust and desire after a man, a brother, or the committing of sodomitical practices with greediness: see Eph 4:19 which abominable iniquities are dissuaded from by the following reasons,

because that the Lord is the avenger of all such;

or “with respect to all these things”, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; or “for all these things”, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; as fornication, adultery, lasciviousness, and all sorts of abominable uncleanness. The person that commits these things the Lord avenges, either in this life, by the hand of the civil magistrate, who is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that does evil; or by a violent death, as in the case of Zimri and Cozbi, and twenty four thousand more at the same time; or by some awful judgment from heaven, as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah; or in the world to come; for the law of God is made and lies against such persons; these living and dying in such sins God will judge, to whom vengeance belongs; these shall not inherit the kingdom of God, but have their part and portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

As we have also forewarned you and testified;

not by a former epistle, as if this was the second to them, and what follows the first, as Grotius thought;

²⁴ Misna Sanhedrim, c. 9. sect. 1.

²⁵ Misna Maccot, c. 3. sect. 1.

¹⁷ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol 22. 2.

¹⁸ Juchasin, fol. 48. 2. Shalshleth Hakkabala, fol. 23.

1.

¹⁹ Misna Cetubot, c. 3. sect. 4, 5.

²⁰ Jarchi & Bartenora in ib.

²¹ Caphtor, fol. 57. 2.

but they did this when they were in person with them, knowing that these abominable vices greatly prevailed in their city; therefore they bore their testimony against them, and exposed the evil of them, and warned them of the danger by them, so that they could not now plead ignorance. The Ethiopic version reads in the first person singular, “as I have before said unto you, and testified to you”.

1 Thessalonians 4:7

Ver. 7. **For God hath not called us,**

.... The Syriac version reads “you”. This is another reason to enforce the above exhortations, and to caution them against the above unclean practices, taken from the end of the effectual calling by the efficacious grace of God, which is not

unto uncleanness

of any sort, as before specified. This they had lived in before their calling, and were now called from it into communion with Christ, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and by the Gospel, which teaches to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to forsake all impurity, both of flesh and spirit:

but

this call is

unto holiness

of life and conversation in general, and to chastity in thought, look, word, and actions in particular; for God that calls is holy, and therefore those who are called ought to be so; the calling with which they are called is an holy calling, principles of grace and holiness are wrought in their souls, when they are called; and the end of their calling is to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and then, and then only, do they walk worthy of that calling wherewith they are called, and of God who has, by his grace, called them to his kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 4:8

Ver. 8. **He therefore that despiseth,**

.... The Vulgate Latin adds, “these things”; these exhortations now delivered, the commandments given by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the will of God above declared; he that rejects these things with contempt, takes no notice of them, and acts not according to them,

despiseth not man;

not men only, the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the Gospel; for, by despising these exhortations, they themselves were despised, though not alone: but God; Father, Son, and Spirit; God the Father, whose will was

their sanctification, even to abstain from fornication, and every act of uncleanness, which, if not attended to, was a despising of him; and the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, and for whose sake they were entreated and exhorted, and in whose name, and by whose authority the apostle gave them these commandments; wherefore to slight them, was to slight Jesus Christ himself; and, by the way, this is a proof of the true and proper deity of Christ. Moreover, such despisers also, in some sense, do despite unto the spirit of grace, by whom the apostles spake, or who spoke in them these things, as follows,

who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit;

as he did to the prophets of the Old Testament, and therefore what they said was equally by divine inspiration of God; and hence despising them, was despising the Spirit of God that spake by them. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, “who hath given unto you his Holy Spirit”; and so all Stephens’s copies; which furnishes out a fresh reason or argument, dissuading from uncleanness, since God had given them his “Spirit” to convince them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, so that they were not ignorant of the things warned against; and he had given them his Spirit as an “holy” Spirit, as a Spirit of sanctification, to begin and carry on that work in them, to which uncleanness was very opposite; and he had given his Spirit unto, or “into” them, to dwell in them, as in his temple, and therefore should be careful not to defile it; and to cause them to walk in his statutes, and to assist them to keep his judgments, and do them, and as an earnest of their inheritance, and a sealer of them up unto the day of redemption; wherefore it became them not to grieve him by an impure life; and they were laid under obligations to live in the Spirit, and to walk after him, and not after the flesh.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Ver. 9. **But as touching brotherly love,**

.... Another branch of sanctification; which is distinct from love to God and Christ, though it always accompanies it, and from love to all mankind; and is what is peculiar to brethren in a spiritual relation, and ought to be universal, fervent, and sincere, and as Christ has loved them: concerning which the following things are said,

ye need not that I write unto you.

The Vulgate Latin version reads, “we have no need to write unto you”; and so some copies. It seems that it was needful to write unto them about other things, as to refresh their memories with the instructions they had given them, when with them, how they should

walk and please God; and to put them in mind of the commandments given them by Christ, and that their sanctification was the will of God; and particularly it was necessary to write unto them about chastity, and purity of life, whether in or out of the conjugal state; but as for brotherly love, there was no immediate absolute necessity to write about that, either about the nature of it, or to describe the objects of it, or point out instances of it, or to exhort to it in a pressing manner: the reason is,

for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another;

not merely by the light of nature, which teaches men to be kind, courteous, affable, and beneficent; nor by the law of Moses, which obliges men to love their neighbours as themselves; nor only doctrinally by the ministry of the Gospel, which frequently inculcates the exercise of this grace as a matter of great importance and consequence; nor only by the new commandment, and example of Christ; but by the Spirit of God internally in regeneration, who, according to the tenor of the new covenant, writes this law of love, and of Christ, upon the heart; and this being written upon the hearts of the Thessalonians, by the finger of the Spirit of God, whereby they were dearly directed, and powerfully taught to exercise this grace, and discharge this duty, and under the influence of the same spirit did exercise it, it was unnecessary for the apostle to write about it, and press them to it.

1 Thessalonians 4:10

Ver. 10. **And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren,**

.... Whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, greater or lesser believers, and whether related in the bonds of nature or not; they exercised this grace of love without respect of persons, to all, and not only to all the brethren in the particular community at Thessalonica, but

which are in all Macedonia;

throughout the whole country, particularly at Philippi and Berea, and other places:

but we beseech you, brethren.

The Alexandrian copy reads, “beloved brethren”; and the Syriac version, “I beseech you, my brethren: that ye increase more and more”; in showing love to the brethren; which may be done both by administering to them in things temporal, by assisting them in distress, by sympathizing with them, and by giving them counsel and advice; and in things spiritual, by bearing their

burdens, forbearing with them, and forgiving them; by admonishing them in love, by stirring them up to love and good works, by praying with them and for them, and by instructing and building them up in their most holy faith; and this increase, and abounding in the exercise of this grace, may respect not only the more frequent and fervent use of it, but also the larger extent of it to other objects; as not only to all the brethren in their own church, and to all that were in Macedonia, to which it did extend, but likewise to all the brethren in other parts of the world, and which are more distant and remote; and even to the poor saints at Jerusalem in particular; and accordingly we find that their love did abound unto them; see Ro 15:25, this shows, that though brotherly love was much practised by these saints, yet it was not perfect; nor is any grace perfect as to degrees; nor is any saint perfect in the discharge of duty in this life.

1 Thessalonians 4:11

Ver. 11. **And that ye study to be quiet,**

.... To live peaceably in their own families, and to give no disturbance to other families, by talebearing, whispering, and backbiting; to behave with quietness in the neighbourhood, town, or city, they dwell in, and to seek the peace thereof; and to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, in the commonwealth, and under the government to which they belong; and not to create and encourage factions, divisions, animosities, and contentions, in their own church, or in any of the churches of Christ; and it becomes saints to make this their study, to be very solicitous for it, to strive for it, and pursue after it: the word used signifies to be ambitious of it, as what is a man’s glory and honour, to emulate and strive to outdo each other, as who shall have the honour of being the quietest person, and the most peaceable member in the community:

and to do your own business:

or private business, or what is proper and peculiar to a man’s self; to abide every man in his own calling wherein he is called, and attend the business of it, and not thrust himself into other families, and officiously take upon him, under a pretence of zeal, affection, and friendship, to inspect, direct, or manage the business of others: in short, he should not meddle with other people’s business, but mind his own: and this is what the Jews call Ura Krd, “the way of the earth”, or the business of life:

“there are four things, (they say ²⁶) in which a man should employ himself continually, with all his might, and these are they, the law, and good works, and prayer, and the business of life;”

upon which the gloss has this note by way of explanation,

“if a man is an artificer (let him attend) to his art; if a merchant to his merchandise, and if he is a soldier to war;”

and which may serve to illustrate the apostle’s sense: **and to work with your own hands;**

the reason of this is, because there were some among them, who would not work at all; see 2Th 3:11 and by this instruction it appears, that the members of this church, in common, were such as were brought up to handicraft trades and businesses, and were poor and mean; and this was the general case of the primitive churches: it pleased God to choose and call the poor of this world, to whom the Gospel was preached, and they received it; few of the rulers among the Jews believed in Christ, and not many mighty, rich, or noble among the Gentiles were called; some there were, and in this church there were some of the chief women of the city, Ac 17:4, and though these and others of the better sort, as well as ministers of the Gospel among them, who laboured in the word and doctrine, were not obliged by this to perform manual work and labour, yet were not exempted from all concern in the exhortation; it being proper and necessary, that all sorts of persons be employed in one sort of business or another, and to use diligence and application in it: the apostle’s view being chiefly to inveigh against sloth and idleness, and to exhort to labour and industry as the most effectual method to preserve peace and quietness, and to keep persons from being troublesome and hurtful, in families, churches, and commonwealths: the reasons enforcing this follow in this and the next verse,

as we commanded you;

and the command of an apostle carries weight and authority with it, and ought to be obeyed; yea, they not only strictly enjoined a diligent application to business, but set them an example themselves, see 1Th 2:9.

1 Thessalonians 4:12

Ver. 12. **That ye may walk honestly,**

.... Decently, in good credit and reputation, providing

things honest in the sight of all men, for themselves and families, and honestly paying every man his own; on which account it became them to mind their own business, and work at their trades; otherwise their walk and conversation would be scandalous, and not honest and honourable:

toward them that are without:

the men of the world, who were without the church; see 1Co 5:12 profane sinners, unconverted Gentiles, that were without Christ and hope, and God in the world, and were aliens and strangers; and yet care should be taken that no occasion be given to such to reproach the name of God, the ways of Christ, and the doctrines of the Gospel:

and that ye may have lack of nothing;

but have wherewith to supply the necessaries of life, and give to them also that stand in need, which is more blessed and honourable than to receive; or might not need any such instruction and exhortation, or any reproof for sloth and idleness; or not stand in need of “any man”, as the Syriac version renders it; of the help and assistance of any, of any of those that are without, which would be dishonourable; or of them that are within, of the church, which might be burdensome. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “that ye may not desire anything of anyone”; as the slothful man covets greedily all the day long what is another’s, and this desire kills him, Pr 21:25 he covets an evil covetousness, and craves in a scandalous way the bread of others; when it would be more honourable for him to work with quietness, and eat his own bread got by honest labour, and not be beholden to another.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

Ver. 13. **But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,**

.... As they seem to have been, about the state of the pious dead, the rule and measure of mourning for them, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the second coming of Christ, and the future happiness of the saints; wherefore the apostle judged it necessary to write to them upon these subjects: the Alexandrian copy and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “we would not have you to be ignorant”, &c.

concerning them which are asleep;

that is, dead: it was in common use among the Eastern nations, when they spoke of their dead, to say they were asleep. This way of speaking is used frequently both in the Old and the New Testament; see 1Ki 2:10,

1Co 15:20 and very often with the Targumists; so the Targum on Ec 3:4 “a time to weep”, paraphrases it,

“a time to weep לְ שָׂכִיבָא, “over them that are asleep”.”

and in Ec 4:2.

“I praised יְהוָה שְׂכִיבָא “those that are asleep”,”

the dead: the reason of this way of speaking was, because there is a likeness between sleep and death; in both there is no exercise of the senses, and persons are at rest, and both rise again; and they are common to all men, and proper and peculiar to the body only. The apostle designs such persons among the Thessalonians, who either died a natural death, or were removed by violence, through the rage and fury of their persecutors, for whom their surviving friends were pressed with overmuch sorrow, which is here cautioned against: that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope; the apostle’s view is not to encourage and establish a stoical apathy, a stupid indolence, and a brutal insensibility, which are contrary to the make of human nature, to the practice of the saints, and even of Christ and his apostles, and our apostle himself; but to forbid excessive and immoderate sorrow, and all the extravagant forms of it the Gentiles ran into; who having no notion of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, had no hope of ever seeing their friends more, but looked upon them as entirely lost, as no longer in being, and never more to be met with, seen, and enjoyed; this drove them to extravagant actions, furious transports, and downright madness; as to throw off their clothes, pluck off their hair, tear their flesh, cut themselves, and make baldness between their eyes for the dead; see

De 14:1 practices forbidden the Jews, and which very ill become Christians, that believe the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead: the words are to be understood not of other Christians, who have no hope of the eternal welfare of their deceased friends; not but that the sorrow of those who have a good hope of the future Well being of their dear relatives, must and ought to be greatly different from that of others, who have no hope at all: it is observed by the Jews ²⁷ on those words in Ge 23:2 and “Abraham came to mourn for Sarah”, &c. that

“it is not said to weep for Sarah, but to mourn

²⁷ Tzeror Hamnaor, fol. 23. 4.

for her; “for such a woman as this, it is not fit to weep”, after her soul is joined in the bundle of life, but to mourn for her, and do her great honour at her funeral; though because it is not possible that a man should not weep for his dead, it is said at the end, “and to weep for her”.”

but here the words are to be understood of the other Gentiles that were in a state of nature and unregeneracy, who had no knowledge of the resurrection of the dead, or and hope of a future state, and of enjoying their friends in it: they are called οἱ λουῖποι, “the rest”; and the Syriac version renders it, “other men”.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

Ver. 14. **For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again,**

.... As every Christian does, for both the death and resurrection of Christ are fundamental articles of faith; nothing is more certain or more comfortable, and more firmly to be believed, than that Christ died for the sins of his people, and rose again for their justification; on these depend the present peace, joy, and comfort of the saints, and their everlasting salvation and happiness: and no less certain and comfortable, and as surely to be believed, is what follows,

even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

The saints that are dead are not only represented as asleep, as before, but as “asleep in Jesus”; to distinguish them from the other dead, the wicked; for the phrase of sleeping in death is promiscuously used of good and bad, though most commonly applied to good men: and so say the Jews ²⁸,

“we used to speak of just men, not as dead, but as sleeping; saying, afterwards such an one fell asleep, signifying that the death of the righteous is nothing else than a sleep.”

To represent death as a sleep makes it very easy and familiar; but it is more so, when it is considered as sleeping in Jesus, in the arms of Jesus; and such as are asleep in him must needs be at rest, and in safety: some join the phrase “in”, or “by Jesus”, with the word bring, and read the passage thus, “them that are asleep, by Jesus will God bring with him”; intimating, that God will raise up the dead bodies of the saints by Christ, as God-man and Mediator; and through him will bring

²⁸ Shebet Juda, p. 294. Ed. Gent.

²⁶ T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2.

them to eternal glory, and save them by him, as he has determined: others render the words, “them which sleep through”, or “by Jesus”; or die for his sake, and so restrain them to the martyrs; who they suppose only will have part in the first resurrection, and whom God will bring with Jesus at his second coming; but the coming of Christ will be “with all his saints”; see 1Th 3:13 wherefore they are best rendered, “them that sleep in Jesus”; that is, “in the faith of Jesus”, as the Arabic version renders it: not in the lively exercise of faith on Christ, for this is not the case of all the saints at death; some of them are in the dark, and go from hence under a cloud, and yet go safe, and may be said to die, or sleep, in Jesus, and will be brought with him; but who have the principle, and hold the doctrine of faith, are, and live and die, true believers; who die interested in Christ, in union with him, being chosen and blessed, and preserved in him from everlasting, and effectually called by his grace in time, and brought to believe in him; these, both their souls and bodies, are united to Christ, and are his care and charge; and which union remains in death, and by virtue of it the bodies of the saints will be raised at the last day: so that there may be the strongest assurance, that such will God bring with him; either God the Father will bring them with his Son, or Jehovah the Son will bring them with himself; he will raise them from the dead, and unite them to their souls, or spirits, he will bring with him; the consideration of which may serve greatly to mitigate and abate sorrow for deceased friends.

1 Thessalonians 4:15

Ver. 15. **For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord,....**

The apostle having something new and extraordinary to deliver, concerning the coming of Christ, the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the saints, the change of the living saints, and the rapture both of the raised and living in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, expresses himself in this manner; either in allusion to the prophets of old, to whom the word of the Lord is said to come, and who usually introduced their prophecies with a “Thus saith the Lord”; or in distinction from his own private sense, sentiment, and opinion of things; signifying, that what he was about to say, was not a fancy and conjecture of his own, the fruit and produce of his own brain, but what he could assert upon a sure foundation, upon the best and greatest authority, even the word of the Lord; and has respect either to some particular word of Christ, as some think,

such as Mt 24:30 or rather to a particular and peculiar revelation, and special instruction in these things, he had immediately from Christ; and it may be when he was caught up into the third heaven himself, and had an experience in himself of somewhat of that which both the living and raised saints shall feel, when they are caught up together in the clouds; since the change of the living saints, at the time of the resurrection of the dead, is a mystery which seems to have been first made known unto, and discovered by the Apostle Paul; see 1Co 15:51.

That we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord:

not that the apostle thought that he and the saints then in the flesh should live and continue till the second coming of Christ; for he did not imagine that the coming of Christ was so near, as is manifest from 2Th 2:1 though the Thessalonians might take him in this sense, which he there corrects; but he speaks of himself and others in the first person plural, by way of instance and example, for illustration sake; that supposing he and others should be then in being, the following would be the case: and moreover, he might use such a way of speaking with great propriety of other saints, and even of those unborn, and that will be on the spot when Christ shall come a second time; since all the saints make up one body, one family, one church and general assembly; so that the apostle might truly and justly say, “we which are alive”; that is, as many of our body, of our family, of our church or society, that shall be living at the coming of Christ; and he might choose the rather to speak in this form, person, and tense, to awaken the care, circumspection, diligence, and watchfulness of the saints, since it could not be known how soon the Lord would come: however, from hence it appears, that there will be saints alive at Christ’s second coming; he will have a seed to serve him till he comes again; he always had in the worst of times, and will have, and that even in the last days, in the days of the son of man, which are said to be like those of Noah and of Lot: and these are said to “remain”, or to be “left”, these will be a remnant, the residue and remainder of the election of grace, and will be such as have escaped the fury of antichrist and his followers, or of the persecutors of the saints: now these

shall not prevent them that are asleep;

that is, that are dead, so the Ethiopic version; the reason why the dead are so called, see in the note on the preceding verses: the sense is, either they “shall not come up to them that are asleep, or dead”, as the

Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render the words; they shall not come into the state of the dead, they shall undergo a change equivalent to death, but not death itself; see 1Co 15:51 or rather they “shall not go before” them; they shall not get the start of them, and be in the arms of Jesus, and enjoy his presence when he comes, before the dead in Christ, which might be thought, but this will not be the case; for the dead saints will rise before the living ones are changed, and both will be caught up together to meet the Lord, as is said in the following verses; so that the one shall not come or go before the other, or come at, or into the enjoyment of Christ first, but both together.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

Ver. 16. **For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven,**

.... Not by proxy, or by representatives; not by the ministry of angels, as on Mount Sinai; nor by the ministers of the word, as under the Gospel dispensation; nor by his spirit, and the discovery of his love and grace, in which sense he descends in a spiritual manner, and visits his people; but in person, in his human nature, in soul and body; in like manner as he went up to heaven will he descend from thence, so as to be visible, to be seen and heard of all: he will come down from the third heaven, whither he was carried up, into which he was received, and where he is retained until the time of the restitution of all things, and from whence the saints expect him: and this descent will be

with a shout;

the word here used is observed by many to signify such a noise or shout as is made either by mariners, when they pull and row together; and shout to direct and encourage one another; or to an army with the general at the head of it, when about to undertake some considerable action, to enter on a battle, and make the onset; Christ will now appear as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, as the Judge of the whole earth, attended with the host, or armies of heaven, and the shout of a king will be among them: perhaps the same is intended, as by the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and of mighty thunderings upon the coming of Christ, the destruction of antichrist, and the marriage of the Lamb, in Re 19:1. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it, “in”, or “with command”; and the Arabic version, “with his own government”, or “authority”; that is, he shall descend, either by the command of his Father, as man and Mediator, having authority from him, as the son of man, to execute

judgment; or with his commanding power and authority over the mighty angels, that shall descend with him: it follows, C versus Raiders that is

with the voice of the archangel;

so Michael is called, in Jude 1:9 with which compare Re 12:7 and who perhaps is no other than Christ himself, who is the head of all principality and power; and the sense be, that Christ shall descend from heaven with a voice, or shall then utter such a voice, as will show him to be the archangel; or as the Syriac version renders it, “the head”, or “prince of angels”; and which whether, it will be an articulate voice, such as was expressed at the grave of Lazarus; or a violent clap of thunder, which is the voice of God; or the exertion of the power of Christ, is not certain: it is added,

and with the trump of God;

called “the last trump”, 1Co 15:52 because none will be blown after it, and may be the same with the seventh trumpet, Re 11:15 and here the trump of God, because blown by his order; or by Christ himself, who is God, and so be the same with the voice of the archangel; and these figurative expressions are used, to set forth the grandeur and magnificence in which Christ will come; not in that low, mean, and humble form in which he first came, but with great glory, and marks of honour and respect; with angels shouting, trumpets blowing, and saints rejoicing. This is said in allusion to the trumpet which was heard on Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, and of which the Jews say ²⁹, that it באהאמירייה, “quickened the dead”; for they have a notion, that, when the Israelites first heard the voice of the Lord, they died; but upon hearing it the second time, they returned to life ³⁰: and they suppose also in the time, to come, at the resurrection of the dead, a trumpet will be blown, which will quicken the dead ³¹, and the day of judgment ³²; and this is reckoned by them as one of the signs of the Messiah’s coming ³³:

“Michael shall shout with a great shout, and the graves of the dead shall be opened at Jerusalem, and the holy blessed God will restore the dead to life, and Messiah the son of David shall come,” &c.

And the dead in Christ shall rise first;
the same with those that are asleep in Jesus, 1Th 4:14

²⁹ Targum Jon. in Exod. xx. 18.

³⁰ Kettoreth Hassamamim in ib.

³¹ Mechilta in ib. & Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 11. 4.

³² Zohar in Lev. fol. 42. 2. 4.

³³ Abkath Rocel, p. 138. Ed. Huls.

not only the martyrs that died for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; nor merely those who die in the lively exercise of faith in Christ; but all that die interested in him, and in union with him: and these shall “rise”, in consequence of their being his; being given to him, made his care and charge, and engaged for by him, and in virtue of their union to him; and shall rise to an entire conformity to his glorious body, and in order to enjoy eternal life and glory with him: and these will rise “first”, before the wicked, which is the first resurrection, Re 20:5 even a thousand years before them; the righteous will rise in the morning of the resurrection, and so will have the dominion in the morning, Ps 49:14 even at the beginning of the thousand years, as soon as Christ will come; but the wicked will not rise till the evening of that day, or till the close of the thousand years: and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, who thought that some will rise before others; ‘

‘Wheresoever thou findest the dead, take them and bury them, and I will give thee the first place in my resurrection.’ (2 Esdras 2:23)

Having mentioned those words in Ps 116:9 “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living”, it is asked³⁴,

“is there no land of the living but Tyre and its neighbours, and Caesarea, and its neighbours, where is cheapness and fulness? says R. Simeon ben Lekish, in the name of Bar Kaphra, the land in which the dead live, תחילה, “first”, in the days of the Messiah:”

and on the same place elsewhere³⁵ they observe, that

“our Rabbins say two things, or give two reasons, why the fathers loved to be buried in the land of Israel, because the dead in the land of Israel חיים תחילה, “live”, or “rise first”, in the days of the Messiah, and shall enjoy the years of the Messiah:”

and in another place³⁶ they take notice of what is written in Isa 26:19 “and the earth shall cast out the

³⁴ T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 3. & Cetubot, fol. 35. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 74. fol. 65. 1.

³⁵ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 96. fol. 83. 4. & 84. 1. & Shemot Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 135. 2.

³⁶ Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 4.

dead”: says R. Jochanan,

“the dead which are in the land (i.e. of Israel), they shall “live first”; as it is said, “thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise”: these are they that are without the land; “awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust”, these are they that die in the wilderness:”

and again³⁷,

“as it is said, Isa 40:26 “that bringeth out their host by numbers”, come see, it is said, all that die in the land of Israel יקומו בקרמיתא, “shall rise first”, because the holy blessed God shall awake them, and raise them, according to Isa 26:19.”

Once more they say³⁸,

“they that study in the law as they ought, these are they that shall “rise first” to everlasting life, as it is said Da 12:2, “and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life”, &c. and these are for everlasting life, because they study in everlasting life, which is the law:”

to which may be added the following passage³⁹, “they that are worthy to be buried in the land of Israel, shall “be raised first”--and they shall be raised and quickened before the rest of the children of the world, who draw the waters of the law; and they draw, because they study to draw out of the waters of the law; and they are strengthened by the tree of life, and they shall go out “first”, because the tree of life is the cause why they shall “rise first”:

they sometimes endeavour to fix the time, how long they will rise before the rest⁴⁰;

“many of those that sleep”, &c. these are the righteous that shall “go before” others in life, and how many years shall they go before them? R. Judah says, two hundred and ten years; R. Isaac says, two hundred and fourteen; according to others, the righteous shall go (or be raised) a

³⁷ Zohar in Gen. fol. 79. 3.

³⁸ Ib. fol. 100. 3.

³⁹ Ib. fol. 103. 1.

⁴⁰ Ib. fol. 83. 1.

year before the rest of men; says R. Nachman, it will be according to the computation (of time) that the carcass has been in the dust; R. Jose replies, if so, there will be many resurrections.

“These instances may suffice to show, that the Jews had a notion of some persons rising before others, to which the apostle may have some reference; though his sense is not only this, but also that the dead in Christ shall rise before the living saints are changed, and taken up to be with Christ, and so shall not go before to him; which illustrates and proves what he had before asserted.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

Ver. 17. **Then we which are alive and remain,**See Gill on “1Th 4:15”.

shall be caught up;

suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and with force and power; by the power of Christ, and by the ministry and means of the holy angels; and to which rapture will contribute, the agility which the bodies both of the raised and changed saints will have: and this rapture of the living saints will betogether with them; with the dead in Christ, that will then be raised; so that the one will not come before the other, or the one be sooner with Christ than the other; but the one being raised and the other changed, they will be joined in one company and general assembly, and be caught up together:

in the clouds;

the same clouds perhaps in which Christ will come, will be let down to take them up; these will be the chariots, in which they will be carried up to him; and thus, as at our Lord’s ascension a cloud received him, and in it he was carried up out of the sight of men, so at this time will all the saints ride up in the clouds of heaven:

to meet the Lord in the air;

whither he will descend, and will then clear the regions of the air of Satan, and his posse of devils, which now rove about there, watching all opportunities, and taking all advantages to do mischief on earth; these shall then fall like lightning from heaven, and be bound and shut up in the bottomless pit, till the thousand years are ended: here Christ will stop, and will be visible to all, and as easily discerned by all, good and bad, as the body of the sun at noonday; as yet he will not descend on earth, because it is not fit to receive him; but when that and its works are burnt up, and it is purged and purified by fire, and become a new earth, he will descend upon

it, and dwell with his saints in it: and this suggests another reason why he will stay in the air, and his saints shall meet him there, and whom he will take up with him into the third heaven, till the general conflagration and burning of the world is over, and to preserve them from it; and then shall all the elect of God descend from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, and he with them, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men; see Re 21:1. The resurrection by the Mahometans is called לקא אללה⁴¹, “a meeting of God”, or a going to meet God: **and so shall we ever be with the Lord;**

now the saints are with him at times, and have communion with him, but not always; but then they shall be ever with him; wherever he is; first in the air, where they shall meet him; then in the third heaven, where they shall go up with him; then on earth, where they shall descend and reign with him a thousand years; and then in the ultimate glory to all eternity: and this will be the issue and accomplishment of the counsel and covenant of grace, of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of his preparations and prayers.{q} Alkoran, Surat. 6. v. 31. p. 113. Ed. Hinckelman.

1 Thessalonians 4:18

Ver. 18. **Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**

Or doctrines; as that the saints, when they die, do not cease to be, but are asleep, and asleep in Jesus; that their souls are with him, and their bodies sleep in his arms, and are his care; that these will be as soon with Christ, as the saints that will be alive when he comes; that the coming of Christ will be with great power and glory; that the righteous will rise first in the morning of the resurrection, and before the living saints are changed, and are with Christ; that they will both be taken up together to meet him; and that they shall all be with him, and that for ever, and never part more; than which nothing can yield more true and solid comfort, under all the trials and troubles of this life, under all diseases and distempers of body, under all afflictions and persecutions for Christ’s sake, under the loss of near and dear relations, and in a view of death and eternity: some copies read, “with these words of the spirit”; and so the Arabic version, “with these spiritual words”: for such they are, being the word of God, as in 1Th 4:15.

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 5

In this chapter the apostle discourses concerning the suddenness of Christ’s coming, and the necessity of

⁴¹ Alkoran, Surat. 6. v. 31. p. 113. Ed. Hinckelman.

sobriety and watchfulness, and being on our guard with respect unto it, and then proceeds to exhort to several duties of religion, and closes the epistle with prayers for the saints, salutations of them, advice unto them, and with his usual benediction. Having spoken of the coming of Christ in the preceding chapter, the apostle signifies he had no need to write of the time and season of it; since it was a well known thing that it would be sudden, and at an unawares, like the coming of a thief in the night, and the travail of a woman with child, though certain and inevitable; and would bring sure destruction on wicked men, unthought of by them, 1Th 5:1 but such was the state and condition of the saints, being not in the night of nature's darkness and unregeneracy, but enlightened by the spirit of God, that they were not ignorant of these things, nor liable to be surprised unawares hereby, 1Th 5:4, however, in consideration of their being in the light, and not in darkness, it became them to behave accordingly, and not indulge themselves in sleep and sloth, but be watchful and sober, and on their guard, having on their spiritual armour, 1Th 5:6 and the rather, since they were not appointed to the wrath they deserved, but to salvation by Christ; whose end in dying for them was, that they might live together with him, and therefore should exhort and comfort, and edify one another, 1Th 5:9 and then follow various exhortations, some, which respect their ministers, their knowledge of them, love to them, and esteem for them, on account of their dignity, office, work, and usefulness, 1Th 5:12 others, which concern themselves and one another, as church members, 1Th 5:13 others, which regard also them that are without, 1Th 5:14 and others which relate to joy and thanksgiving, to prayer and praise; to the gifts of the spirit, and the ministry of the word; and to a trial and examination of what is good, and an abiding by it, and an abstinence from all evil, and every appearance of it, 1Th 5:16 and the whole is concluded with prayers for them, for their perfect sanctification, and entire preservation to the coming of Christ; which were put up in faith, grounded upon the faithfulness of God who had called them to grace and glory, 1Th 5:23 and with a request to them to pray for him, and other ministers of the Gospel, and to salute all the brethren, 1Th 5:25 and with a charge to read this letter to them all, 1Th 5:27 and with his usual benediction, 1Th 5:28.

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 5 (Verses 1-28)

[1] But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

[2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

[3] For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

[4] But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

[5] Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

[6] Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

[7] For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

[8] But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

[9] For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

[10] Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

[11] Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

[12] And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

[13] And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

[14] Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

[15] See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

[16] Rejoice evermore.

[17] Pray without ceasing.

[18] In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

[19] Quench not the Spirit.

[20] Despise not prophesyings.

[21] Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

[22] Abstain from all appearance of evil.

[23] And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[24] Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

[25] Brethren, pray for us.

[26] Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

[27] I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be

read unto all the holy brethren.

[28] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY CHAPTER 5

1 Thessalonians 5:1

Ver. 1. **But of the times and the seasons, brethren,** Of the coming of Christ, his "appointed time" and "his day", as the Ethiopic version renders it; of the resurrection of the dead in Christ first, and of the rapture of all the saints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, things treated of in the preceding chapter: and which might excite a curiosity to know the times and seasons of them; as in what year they would come to pass; in what season of the year, whether winter or summer; in what month, and on what day of the month; and whether in the night season, or in the daytime; and in what hour, whether at midnight, cockcrowing, morning, or noonday: to repress which the apostle observes,

ye have no need that I write unto you;

to write to them concerning the things themselves was necessary and useful, to stir up and encourage their faith, hope, and expectation of them; to allay their grief for departed friends, and to comfort one another under the various trials and exercises of life; but to write to them about the time of these things would be trifling and unnecessary, would be an idle speculation, and an indulging a vain curiosity; and, besides, was impracticable: for of that day and hour knows no man; the times and seasons the Father hath put in his own power; for these things are equally true of Christ's second coming, as of the kingdom of Christ coming with power and glory, and of the destruction of Jerusalem, Mt 24:36. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "ye have no need that we write unto you"; the reason follows;

1 Thessalonians 5:2

Ver. 2. **For yourselves know perfectly,**

.... With great exactness and accuracy, with great clearness and perspicuity, as a certain truth, which was made plain and evident to them, and about which there could be no question; and which perfect knowledge they had, either from the words of Christ, Mt 24:42, or from the ministration of the apostle and his fellow labourers, when among them:

that the day of the Lord;

of the Lord Jesus, when he will show himself to be King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the Judge of the

whole earth; and which is sometimes styled the day of the Son of man, and the day of God, for Christ will appear then most gloriously, both in his divine and human nature; the day of redemption, that is, of the body from the grave, and from corruption and mortality; and the last day in which will be the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment, in which Christ will come to judge the quick and dead: and which

so cometh as a thief in the night;

at an unawares, and the Lord himself in that day will so come, Re 3:3 respect is had not to the character of the thief, nor to the end of his coming; but to the manner of it, in the dark, indiscernibly, suddenly, and when not thought of and looked for; and such will be the coming of Christ, it will be sudden, and unknown before hand, and when least thought of and expected: and since the Thessalonians knew this full well, it was needless for the apostle to write about the time and season of it; which they were sensible of, could no more be known and fixed, than the coming of a thief into anyone of their houses.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

Ver. 3. **For when they shall say,**

.... Or men shall say, that is, wicked and ungodly men, persons in a state of unregeneracy:

peace and safety;

when they shall sing a requiem, to themselves, promise themselves much ease and peace for years to come, and imagine their persons and property to be very secure from enemies and oppressors, and shall flatter themselves with much and long temporal happiness:

then sudden destruction cometh upon them;

as on the men of the old world in the times of Noah, and on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot; for as these, will be the days of the Son of man, as at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, so at the last day; see Lu 17:26 and as was the destruction of literal Babylon, so of Babylon in a mystical sense, or antichrist and his followers: and which will be

as travail upon a woman with child;

whose anguish and pains are very sharp, the cause of which is within herself, and which come suddenly upon her, and are unavoidable; and so the metaphor expresses the sharpness and severity of the destruction of the wicked, thus the calamities on the Jewish nation are expressed by a word which signifies the sorrows, pangs, and birth throes of a woman in travail, Mt 24:8, and likewise that the cause of it is from themselves, their own sins and transgressions; and also the suddenness

of it, which will come upon them in the midst of all their mirth, jollity, and security; and moreover, the inevitableness of it, it will certainly come at the full and appointed time, though that is not known:

and they shall not escape;

the righteous judgment of God, the wrath of the Lamb, or falling into his hands; to escape is impossible, rocks, hills, and mountains will not cover and hide them; before the judgment seat of Christ they must stand, and into everlasting punishment must they go.

1 Thessalonians 5:4

Ver. 4. **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness,**

.... In a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness, blindness, and ignorance, and which is the condition of all men by nature; they are born in darkness, and are brought up in it, and willingly, walk in it; they are covered with it, as the earth was covered with darkness in its first creation; and dwell in it, as the Egyptians did for some days, in thick darkness, darkness which might be felt; their understandings are darkened with respect to the true knowledge of God, the nature of sin, the way of salvation by Christ, the work of the spirit of God upon the soul, and the necessity of it, the Scriptures of truth, and the mysteries of the Gospel; and which is the case of God's elect themselves, while unregenerate: but now these persons were called out of darkness, turned from it, and delivered from the power of it; and therefore knew that the day of the Lord comes as above described, by the metaphors of a thief in the night, and a woman with child, and needed not to be informed about that matter: or

that that day should overtake you as a thief;

or seize and lay hold upon you as a thief who comes in the dark, and lays hold upon a person suddenly; but these saints were not in the dark, but in the light, and so could see when the day of the Lord came; and would not be surprised with it, as a man is seized with terror and fright, when laid hold on by a thief; since they would be, or at least should be on their watch, and be looking out for, and hasting to the coming of the day of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:5

Ver. 5. **Ye are all children of light,**

.... Or enlightened persons, whose understandings were enlightened by the spirit of God, to see their lost state by nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their righteousness to justify them before God, the fulness, suitableness, and excellency of Christ's righteousness, the way of salvation by Christ,

and that it is all of grace from first to last; to understand in some measure the Scriptures of truth, and the mysteries of the Gospel; to have knowledge of some things that are yet to be done on earth, as the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the change of living saints, and the rapture of both up into the air to meet Christ, the burning of the world, and the new heavens and new earth, where Christ and his saints will dwell; as also to have some glimpse of the heavenly glory, of the unseen joys, and invisible realities of the other world: and this the apostle says of them all, in a judgment of charity, as being under a profession of the grace of God, and in a church state, and nothing appearing against them why such a character did not belong to them:

and the children of the day;

of the Gospel day, in distinction from the night of Jewish darkness; and of the day of grace which was come upon their souls, in opposition to the night of ignorance and infidelity, which was past; and of the everlasting day of glory, being heirs of, and having a right unto, and a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light:

we are not of the night, nor of darkness;

that is not the children of darkness, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; and the former changes the person, and reads, "ye are not the children of the night", &c. of the night of the legal dispensation, or of Gentile ignorance; or of a state of natural darkness, in unregeneracy and was no need to write unto them concerning the time and season of Christ's coming, and lays a foundation for the following exhortations.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

Ver. 6. **Therefore let us not sleep as do others**

.... As the rest of the Gentiles, as unconverted persons, who are in a state of darkness, and are children of the night; let us not act that part they do, or be like them; which professors of religion too much are, when they indulge themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures, and are careless and thoughtless about the coming of the day of the Lord; and get into a stupid, drowsy, and slumbering frame of spirit; when grace lies dormant as if it was not, and they grow backward to, and slothful in the discharge of duty, and content themselves with the bare externals of religion; and become lukewarm and indifferent with respect to the truths and ordinance of the Gospel, the cause of God, the interest of religion, and glory of Christ; and are unconcerned about sins of omission or commission: and are willing to continue in

such a position, being displeased at every admonition and exhortation given them to awake; but this is very unbecoming children of the light, and of the day:

but let us watch;

over ourselves, our hearts, thoughts, affections, words and actions; and over others, our fellow Christians, that they give not into bad principles and evil practices; and against sin, and all appearance of it; against the temptations of Satan, the snares of the world, and the errors of wicked men, who lie in wait to deceive; and in the word and ordinances, and particularly in prayer, both unto it, in it, and after it; and for the second coming of Christ, with faith, affection, and patience; and the rather, because of the uncertainty of the time of it;

and be sober;

not only in body, abstaining from excessive eating and drinking, using this world, and the good things of it, so as not to abuse them, or ourselves with them; but also in mind, that the heart be overcharged with the cares of this world; for men may be inebriated with the world, as well as with wine; and the one is as prejudicial to the soul as the other is to the body; for an immoderate care for, and pursuit after the world, chokes the word, makes it unfruitful, and runs persons into divers snares and temptations, and hurtful lusts. The Arabic version renders it, "let us repent"; and the Ethiopic version, "let us understand"; as intending the sobriety of the mind, repentance being an after thought of the mind, a serious reflection on past actions with sorrow and concern; and thinking soberly, and not more highly than a man ought to think of himself, his gifts, his attainments and abilities, in opposition to pride, vanity, and self-conceit, is very becoming; and shows a true and well informed understanding and judgment, and that a man is really sober and himself.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

Ver. 7. **For they that sleep, sleep in the night,**

.... The night is the usual season for sleep, and sleep is only for such who are in darkness, and are children of the night; and not proper to be indulged by such who are children of the day, and of the light:

and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night;

drunkenness is a work of darkness, and therefore men given to excessive drinking love darkness rather than light, and choose the night for their purpose. To be drunk at noon is so shameful and scandalous, that men who love the sin, and indulge themselves in it, take

the night season for it; and equally shameful it is, that enlightened persons should be inebriated, either with the cares of this life, or with an over weening opinion of themselves.

1 Thessalonians 5:8

Ver. 8. **But let us, who are of the day, be sober,**

.... As in body, so in mind; let us cast off the works of darkness, and have no fellowship with them; since the day of grace has passed upon us, the darkness is gone, and the true light shines, let us walk as children of the light, living soberly, righteously, and godly:

putting on the breastplate of faith and love;

this is the coat of mail, 1Sa 17:5 which was made of iron or brass; and the Ethiopic version here calls it, "the iron coat." The allusion seems to be to the high priest's breastplate of judgment, in which were put the Thummim and Urim, which signify perfections and lights; faith may answer to the former, and love to the latter: these two graces go together, faith works by love, and love always accompanies faith; as there can be no true faith where there is no love, so there is no true love where faith is wanting: "faith" is a considerable part of the Christian soldier's breastplate, and answers the end of a breastplate, it being that grace which preserves the vitals of religion, and keeps all warm and comfortable within; and secures the peace and joy of the saints, as it has to do with Christ and his righteousness; wherefore this breastplate is called "the breastplate of righteousness", Eph 6:14, it fortifies the soul, and preserves it from Satan's temptations, from his fiery darts entering, and doing the mischief they would; it defends the heart against the errors of the wicked, for a man that believes has a witness in himself to the truths of the Gospel, and therefore cannot be easily moved from them; and strengthens a man against the carnal reasonings of the mind, for faith in the promises of God surmounts all the difficulties that reason objects to the fulfilling of them; and secures from the fears of death, the terrors of the law, and dread of the wrath of God: and love is the other part of the breast plate; love to God and Christ is a means of keeping the believer sound both in faith and practice; for a soul that truly loves God and Christ cannot give in to principles that depreciate the grace of God, and derogate from the glory and dignity of the person and office of Christ, or the work of the Spirit; and such love the ordinances and commands of Christ, and hate every false way of worship, or invention of men; and love to the saints is the bond of perfectness, knits them together, preserves unity and peace, and fortifies

against the common enemy:

and for an helmet, the hope of salvation;

the helmet is that part of armour which covers the head, and was made of brass, 1Sa 17:5 and used to be anointed with oil, that it might shine the brighter, last the longer, and more easily repel blows; to which this grace of the Spirit, hope of salvation by Christ, is fitly compared: for by "salvation" is meant salvation by Christ, spiritual salvation, and that as complete in heaven; and hope is a grace wrought in the soul by the spirit of God, which has for its foundation Christ and his righteousness, and for its object the heavenly glory; it covers the head in the day of battle, and preserves from being overcome by sin and Satan, when one that is destitute of it says there is no hope, and we will walk every man after the imagination of his own evil heart; it erects the head in time of difficulty, amidst tribulation and afflictions; it defends it from fears of divine wrath which is revealed from heaven, and sometimes in appearance seems to hang over it; and it preserves from Satan's temptations, and being carried away with the error of the wicked, from the hope of the Gospel: and thus a Christian clothed and armed with these graces, faith, hope, and love, should be so far from indulging himself in sin and sloth, that he ought always to be sober and watchful, and prepared to meet the enemy in the gate; and be ready, always waiting for his Lord's coming.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

Ver. 9. **For God hath not appointed us to wrath,**

.... To destruction and ruin, the effect of wrath; though there are some that are vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, of old ordained to condemnation, and who are reserved for the day of evil; but there are others who are equally children of wrath, as deserving of the wrath of God in themselves as others, who are not appointed to it; which is an instance of wonderful and distinguishing grace to them:

but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ;

salvation is alone by Christ, he alone has wrought it out; it is in him, and in no other; he was appointed to this work, was called and sent, and came to do it, and has done it; and God's elect, who were chosen in him, are appointed in the counsel and purpose of God, to obtain, possess, and enjoy this salvation; and which, as this appointment may be known, as it was by these Thessalonians; the Gospel having come to them, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as it is an encouragement to faith and hope, so it excites to sobriety and watchfulness, and the

discharge of every duty. The doctrine of predestination does not lead to despair, but encourages the hope of salvation; and it is no licentious doctrine, for election to salvation by Christ is through sanctification of the Spirit, and unto holiness; and good works are the fruits of it, and are what God has foreordained his people should walk in.

1 Thessalonians 5:10

Ver. 10. **Who died for us,**

.... The elect of God, who are not appointed to wrath, but to salvation by Christ, on which account he died for them; not merely as a martyr to confirm his doctrine, or only by way of example, but as a surety, in the room and stead of his people; as a sacrifice for their sins, to make atonement for them, and save them from them; so that his death lays a solid foundation for hope of salvation by him:

that whether we wake or sleep:

which phrases are to be understood, not in the same sense in which they are used in the context; as if the sense was, whether a man indulges himself in sin, and gives way to sleep and sloth, and carnal security, or whether he is awake and on his watch and guard, he shall through the death of Christ have eternal life secured to him; not but that there is a truth in this, that eternal life and salvation by Christ, as it does not depend on our watchfulness, so it shall not be hindered by the sleepy, drowsy frame of spirit, the children of God sometimes fall into: but rather natural sleep and waking are intended; and the meaning is, that those for whom Christ died are always safe, sleeping or waking, whatever they are about and employed in, and in whatsoever situation and condition they are in this world; though it may be best of all to interpret the words, of life and death; and they may have a particular regard to the state of the saints at Christ's second coming, when some will be awake, or alive, and others will be asleep in Christ, or dead; and it matters not which they are, whether living or dead; see Ro 14:7 for the end of Christ's dying for them, and which will be answered in one as well as in another, is, that

we should live together with him:

Christ died for his people, who were dead in trespasses and sins, that they might live spiritually a life of sanctification from him, and a life of justification on him, and by him; and that they might live a life of communion with him; and that they might live eternally with him, in soul and body, in heaven, and reign with him there, and partake of his glory; and this all the saints will, whether they be found dead or alive at his coming;

for the dead will immediately arise, those that sleep in the dust will awake at once, and they that are alive will be changed, and both will be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and be for ever with him: now the consideration of the death of Christ, and this end of it, which will certainly be answered, serves greatly to encourage hope of salvation by him, and faith in him, and an earnest expectation of his second coming.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Ver. 11. **Wherefore comfort yourselves together,**

.... Either with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the second coming of Christ, and the thoughts of being for ever with him, and one another, and so may be a repetition of the advice in 1Th 4:18 or with this consideration, that they were not in a state of darkness, ignorance, and infidelity, but were children of the light, and of the day, being called out of darkness into marvellous light, and should enjoy the light of life; and with the doctrine of predestination, they being appointed not to that wrath they were deserving of, but to be possessed of salvation by Jesus Christ, of which they could never fail, since the purpose of God according to election always stands sure, not upon the foot of works, but upon his own sovereign and unchangeable grace; or with the doctrine of Christ's sufferings and death, in their room and stead, whereby the law was fulfilled, justice satisfied, their sins atoned for, pardon procured, an everlasting righteousness brought in, and their salvation fully accomplished, things the apostle had spoken of in the context: the words will bear to be rendered, "exhort one another"; that is, not to sleep, as do others, or indulge themselves in sin and sloth; but to be sober, and upon their watch and guard, and in a posture of defence against the enemy; to put on the whole armour of God, and particularly the plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation:

and edify one another;

by praying together, conversing with each other about the doctrines of the Gospel, and the dealings of God with their souls; abstaining from all corrupt communication, which has a tendency to hurt each other's principles or practices, or to stir up wrath and contention; attending only to those things which are for the use of edifying, whereby their souls might be more and more built upon Christ, and their most holy faith; and be a rising edifice, and grow up unto an holy temple in the Lord, and for an habitation of God through the Spirit:

even as also ye do;

which is said in their commendation, and not through flattery, but to encourage them to go on in this way; and from whence it may be observed, that mutual consolation, exhortation, and edification, are things the saints should be stirred up to frequently, even though they are regarded by them, and much more then should these be pressed upon them who are careless and negligent of them.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

Ver. 12. **And we beseech you, brethren,**

.... Not in a natural or civil, but spiritual relation; and what follows relating to the ministers of the word, the apostle addresses this church on their behalf, not in an imperious and authoritative manner, but by way of entreaty, with great humility and strong affection:

know them that labour among you;

who were not non-residents, but were upon the spot with them; and where indeed should pastors be, but with their flocks? and husbandmen and vinedressers, but in their fields and vineyards? and stewards, but in the families where they are placed? and parents, but with their children? nor were they loiterers in the vineyard, or slothful servants, and idle shepherds, but labourers; who laboured in the word and doctrine; gave up themselves to meditation, reading, and prayer; laboured hard in private, to find out the meaning of the word of God; and studied to show themselves workmen, that need not be ashamed; and preached the word in season and out of season; faithfully dispensed all ordinances, and diligently performed the duties of their office; and were willing to spend and be spent, for the glory of Christ, and the good of souls, and earnestly contended for the faith of the Gospel; and all this they did, as among them, so for them, for their spiritual good and welfare: some render the words, "in you"; they laboured in teaching, instructing, and admonishing them; they laboured to enlighten their understandings, to inform their judgments, to raise their affections, and to bring their wills to a resignation to the will of God; to refresh their memories with Gospel truths; to strengthen their faith, encourage their hope, and draw out their love to God and Christ, and the brethren: and what the apostle directs them to, as their duty towards these persons, is to "know" them; that is, not to learn their names, and know their persons, who they were; for they could not but know them in this sense, since they dwelt and laboured among them, and were continually employed in instructing them; but that they would make themselves known to them, and converse freely and familiarly with

them, that so they might know the state of their souls, and be better able to speak a word in season to them; and that they would take notice of them, show respect to them, and an affection for them; acknowledge them as their pastors, and account of them as stewards of the mysteries of God, and own them as ministers of Christ; and reckon them as blessings to them, and acknowledge the same with thankfulness; and obey them, and submit unto them in the ministry of the word and ordinances, and to their counsel and advice, so far as is agreeable to the word of God: the Arabic version renders it, “that ye may know the dignity of them that labour among you”; and so conduct and behave towards them accordingly:

and are over you in the Lord;

are set in the highest place in the church, and bear the highest office there; have the presidency and government in it, and go before the saints, and guide and direct them in matters both of doctrine and practice, being ensamples to the flock; the Syriac version renders it, “and stand before you”; ministering unto you in holy things, being servants to you for Jesus’ sake: and this “in the Lord”; or by the Lord; for they did not take this honour to themselves, nor were they appointed by men, but they were made able ministers of the word by God; received their gifts qualifying them for this work from Christ, and were placed as overseers of the church by the Holy Ghost: and it was only in things pertaining to the Lord that they were over them; not in things civil, which distinguishes them from civil magistrates; nor in things secular and worldly, they had nothing to do in their families, to preside there, or with their worldly concerns, only in the church of Christ, and in things pertaining to their spiritual welfare; and though they were over them, yet under Christ, and in subjection to him, as their Lord and King; governing not in an arbitrary and tyrannical way, lording it over God’s heritage, usurping a dominion over the faith of men, coining new doctrines, and making new laws; but according to the word of God, and laws of Christ, in the fear of the Lord, and with a view to the glory of God, and in love to souls: hence the Arabic version renders it, in the love of the Lord; the phrase, “in the Lord”, is omitted in the Syriac version:

and admonish you;

or instruct you, put into your minds good and wholesome things, and put you in mind of the doctrines of the Gospel, of the duties of religion, of former experiences; and give warning of sin and danger, and reprove and rebuke with faithfulness; and as the case requires, either in public or private, and with sharpness

or tenderness.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

Ver. 13. **And to esteem them very highly,**

.... Or, as the Ethiopic version renders it, “honour them abundantly”; for such are worthy of double honour, and to be had in reputation; they should be honourably thought of, and be high in the affections of the saints, who should esteem them better than themselves, or others in the community; and should be spoke well of, and their characters vindicated from the reproach and obloquy of others; and should be spoke respectfully to, and be honourably done by; should be provided for with an honourable maintenance, which is part of the double honour due to them in 1Ti 5:17 and this should be

in love;

not in fear, nor in hypocrisy and dissimulation; not in word and in tongue only, but from the heart and real affection: the Syriac version renders it, “that they be esteemed by you with more abundant love”; with an increasing love, or with greater love than is shown to the brethren in common, or to private members: and that for their works’ sake; for the sake of the work of the ministry, which is a good work as well as honourable; is beneficial to the souls of men, and is for the glory of God, being diligently and faithfully performed by them; on which account they are to be valued, and not for an empty title without labour.

And be at peace among yourselves.

The Vulgate Latin version reads, “with them”; and so the Syriac version, connecting the former clause with this, “for their works’ sake have peace with them”; that is, with the ministers of the word; do not disagree with them upon every trivial occasion, or make them offenders for a word; keep up a good understanding, and cultivate love and friendship with them; “embrace them with brotherly love”, as the Ethiopic version renders the words, understanding them also as relating to ministers; a difference with them is of bad consequence, and must render their ministry greatly useless and unprofitable to those who differ with them, as well as render them very uncomfortable and unfit for it. The Arabic version renders it, “in yourselves”; as referring to internal peace in their own souls, which they should be concerned for; and which only is attained to, enjoyed, and preserved, by looking to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: or else it may regard peace among themselves, and with one another as brethren, and as members of the same church; which as it is for their credit and

reputation without doors, and for their comfort, delight, and pleasure within, in their church state and fellowship, so it tends to make the ministers of the Gospel more easy and comfortable in their work: thus the words, considered in this sense, have still a relation to them.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Ver. 14. **Now we exhort you, brethren,**

.... This is said either to the ministers of the word that laboured among them, presided over them, and admonished them; and the rather, because some of these things here directed to are pressed upon the members of the church in 1Th 5:11 and which otherwise must make a repetition here; or to the members in conjunction with their pastors:

warn them that are unruly;

or disorderly, idle persons, working not at all, busying themselves with other men’s matters, and living upon the church’s stock, reprove them for their sloth, exhort them to work with their own hands, to do their own business, and with quietness eat their own bread; or such who keep not their places in the church, but are like soldiers that go out of their rank, desert their companies, and fly from their colours, or stand aside, rebuke these, and exhort them to fill up their places, to abide by the church, and the ordinances of Christ; or such who are contentious and quarrelsome, turbulent, headstrong, and unruly, that cause and foment animosities and divisions, check them, admonish them, lay them under censure, for such a custom and practice is not to be allowed of in the churches of Christ.

Comfort the feebleminded:

such as are not able to bear the loss of near and dear relations; are ready to stagger under the cross, and at the reproaches and persecutions of the world; and are almost overset with the temptations of Satan; and are borne down and discouraged with the corruptions of their hearts, speak a comfortable word to them, encourage them with the doctrines of grace, and the promises of the Gospel.

Support the weak;

who are weak in faith and knowledge, strengthen them, hold them up; or as the Syriac version renders it, “take the burden of the weak” and carry it, bear their infirmities, as directed in Ro 15:1,

be patient towards all men;

towards the unruly, the feebleminded, and the weak as well as to believers; give place to wrath, and leave vengeance to him to whom it belongs; exercise longsuffering and forbearance with fellow creatures and

fellow Christians.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Ver. 15. **See that none render evil for evil unto any man,**

.... Not an ill word for an ill word, railing for railing, nor an ill action for an ill action; no, not to any man whatever, not to an enemy, a persecutor, a profane person, as well as not to a brother, a believer in Christ; and this the saints should not only be careful of, and guard against in themselves, but should watch over one another, and see to it, that no such practice is found in each other.

But ever follow that which is good;

honestly, morally, pleasantly, and profitably good; even every good work, which is according to the will of God, is done in faith, from love, and to the glory of God; and particularly acts of beneficence and liberality to the poor; and which are not to be once, or now and then done, but to be followed and pursued after, and that always;

both among yourselves, and to all men;

not only to the household of faith, though to them especially, and in the first place, but to all other men, as opportunity offers, even to our enemies, and them that persecute us, and despitefully use us; do good to their bodies, and to their souls, as much as in you lies, by feeding and clothing the one, and by praying for, advising, and instructing the other.

1 Thessalonians 5:16

Ver. 16. **Rejoice evermore.**

Not in a carnal, but in a spiritual way, with joy in the Holy Ghost; and which arises from a view of pardon by the blood of Christ, of justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; not in themselves, as the wicked man rejoices in his wickedness, and the hypocrite and formalist in his profession of religion, and the reputation he gains by it; and the Pharisee and legalist in his morality, civility, negative holiness, and obedience to the rituals of the law; for such rejoice in their boastings, and all such rejoicing is evil; but in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the greatness, fitness, fulness, and glory of his person, in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in what he is in himself, and is made unto his people, and in what he has done, and is still doing for them, and particularly in the salvation he has wrought out; and not in the things of this life, and the attainments of it, either of body, or of mind, or of estate, as in strength, wisdom, or riches; but in things spiritual, that our names are written in heaven, and we are redeemed by the blood of Christ,

and called by his grace, and shall be glorified together with him; and not only in prosperity, but in adversity, since all things work together for good, and afflictions serve for the exercise of grace; and especially, since to suffer reproach and persecution for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, is a great honour, and the Spirit of God, and of glory, rests on such, and great will be their reward in heaven: and there is always reason, and ever a firm ground and foundation for rejoicing with believers, let their circumstances or their frames be what they will; since God, their covenant God, is unchangeable, and his love to them is from everlasting to everlasting invariably the same; the covenant of grace, which is ordered in all things, and sure, is firm and immovable; and Jesus, the Mediator of it, is the same today, yesterday, and for ever.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Ver. 17. **Pray without ceasing.**

Not that saints should be always on their knees, or ever lifting up their hands, and vocally calling upon God; this is not required of them, and would clash with, and break in upon other parts of religious worship, and the duties of civil life, which are to be attended to, as well as this, and besides would be impracticable; for however willing a spiritual man might be to be engaged in this work always, yet the flesh is weak, and would not be able to bear it; and it requires food and drink, sleep and rest, for its refreshment and support; for all which there must be time allowed, as well as for other actions of animal life, and the business of a man's calling. But the meaning is, that believers should be daily, and often found in the performance of this duty; for as their wants daily return upon them, and they are called to fresh service, and further trials and exercises, they have need of more grace, strength, and assistance, and therefore should daily pray for it; and besides certain times both in the closet, and in the family, in which they should attend the throne of grace, there is such a thing as mental prayer, praying in the heart, private ejaculations of the soul, which may be sent up to heaven, while a man is engaged in the affairs of life. The Ethiopic version renders the words, "pray frequently"; do not leave off praying, or cease from it through the prevalence of sin, the temptations of Satan, or through discouragement, because an answer is not immediately had, or through carelessness and negligence, but continue in it, and be often at it; see Lu 18:1. These words are opposed to the practice of such, who either pray not at all, or, having used it, have left it off, or who only pray in a time of trouble and distress, and bear hard on those who think

they should not pray but when under the influences of the Spirit, and when his graces are in a lively exercise: the reason for this rule of praying with frequency and constancy is, because the saints are always needy, they are always in want of mercies of one kind or another, and therefore should continually go to the throne of grace, and there ask for grace and mercy to help them in time of need.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Ver. 18. **In everything give thanks,**

.... That is, to God the Father, in the name of Christ; see Eph 5:20 thanks are to be given to him for all things, as the Ethiopic version renders it; for all temporal good things; for our beings, the preservation of them; for food and raiment, and all the mercies of life; for the means of grace, the word and ordinances, and the ministers of the Gospel; for spiritual blessings, for electing, redeeming, regenerating, adopting, pardoning, justifying, and persevering grace: for a meetness for heaven, a right unto it, and a good hope of it; and especially for Jesus Christ, for such an husband, such an head, such a surety and Saviour, and advocate with the Father, as he is; and for life, peace, joy, comfort, righteousness, and salvation in him: and thanks should be given to God in every circumstance of life; in adversity, as Job did; when not in so comfortable and agreeable a frame of soul as to be wished for, since it might be worse, and is not black despair; even under the temptations of Satan, since they might be greater and heavier, and since the grace of God is sufficient to bear up under them, and deliver out of them, and since there is such a sympathizing high priest and Saviour; and in afflictions of every kind, since they are all for good, temporal, or spiritual, or eternal.

For this is the will of God;

which may refer either to all that is said from 1Th 5:11 to this passage, or particularly to this of giving thanks; which is the revealed and declared will of God, is a part of that good, perfect, and acceptable will of his, and what is well pleasing in his sight, and grateful to him; see Ps 69:30 and is

in Christ Jesus concerning you;

either declared in and by him, who has made known the whole of the will of God, and so the Arabic version, "which he wills of you by Jesus Christ"; or which is exemplified in Christ, who for, and in all things, gave thanks to God, and had his will resigned to his in every circumstance of life; or, which being done, is acceptable to God through Christ. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for this is the will of God towards you in Christ Jesus";

that is, with respect to you who are in Christ secretly by election, and openly by the effectual calling; and who, of all men in the world, have reason to be thankful for everything, and in every circumstance.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Ver. 19. **Quench not the spirit.**

By which is meant, not the person of the Spirit, but either the graces of the spirit, which may be compared to light, and fire, and heat, to which the allusion is in the text; such as faith, which is a light in the soul, a seeing of the Son, and an evidence of things not seen; and love, which gives a vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench; and zeal, which is the boiling up of love, the fervency of it; and spiritual knowledge, which is also light, and of an increasing nature, and are all graces of the spirit: and though these cannot be totally extinguished, and utterly put out and lost, yet they may be greatly damped; the light of faith may become dim; and the flame of love be abated, and that wax cold; the heat of zeal may pass into lukewarmness, and an indifference of spirit; and the light of knowledge seem to decline instead of increasing; and all through indulging some sin or sins, by keeping ill company, and by neglecting the ordinances of God, prayer, preaching, and other institutions of the Gospel; wherefore such an exhortation is necessary to quicken saints, and stir them up to the use of those means, whereby those graces are cherished and preserved in their lively exercise; though rather the gifts of the Spirit are intended. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, bestowed on the apostles at the day of Pentecost, are represented under the symbol of fire, to which perhaps the apostle may here have respect; and the more ordinary gifts of the Spirit are such as are to be stirred up, as coals of fire are stirred up, in order that they may burn, and shine the brighter, and give both light and heat, 2Ti 1:6 and which may be said to be quenched, when they are neglected, and lie by as useless; when they are wrapped up in a napkin, or hid in the earth; or when men are restrained from the use of them; or when the use of them is not attended to, or is brought into contempt, and the exercise of them rendered useless and unprofitable, as much as in them lies. And even private persons may quench the Spirit of God, his gifts of light and knowledge, when they hold the truth in unrighteousness, imprison it, and conceal it, and do not publicly profess it as they ought.

1 Thessalonians 5:20

Ver. 20. **Despise not prophesyings.**

Or "prophecies"; the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the first coming of Christ, concerning his person, office, and work, his obedience, sufferings, and death, his resurrection from the dead, ascension and session at God's right hand; for though all these are fulfilled, yet they have still their usefulness; for by comparing these with facts, the perfections of God, his omniscience, truth, faithfulness, wisdom, &c. are demonstrated, the authority of the Scriptures established, the truths of the Gospel illustrated and confirmed, and faith strengthened; and besides, there are many prophecies which regard things to be done, and yet to be done under the Gospel dispensation, and therefore should not be set at nought, but highly valued and esteemed: also the predictions of Christ concerning his own sufferings and death, and resurrection from the dead, and what would befall his disciples afterwards, with many things relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, his second coming, and the end of the world, these should be had in great esteem; nor should what the apostles foretold concerning the rise of antichrist, the man of sin, and the apostasy of the latter days, and the whole book of the Revelations, which is no other than a prophecy of the state of the church, from the times of the apostles to the end of the world, be treated with neglect and contempt, but should be seriously considered, and diligently searched and inquired into. Yea, the prophecies of private men, such as Agabus, and others, in the apostle's time, and in later ages, are not to be slighted; though instances of this kind are rare in our times, and things of this nature should not be precipitantly, and without care, given into: but rather prophesyings here intend the explanation of Scripture, and the preaching of the word, and particularly by persons who had not the gift of tongues, and therefore men were apt to despise them; see 1Co 13:2. Just as in our days, if persons have not had a liberal education, and do not understand Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, though they have ministerial gifts, and are capable of explaining the word to edification and comfort, yet are set at nought and rejected, which should not be.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Ver. 21. **Prove all things,**

.... That are said by the prophets, all the doctrines which they deliver; hear them, though they have not the gift of tongues, and all desirable advantages; do not reject them on that account, and refuse to hear them, for so, many useful men may be laid aside, and the Spirit of God in them be quenched; try their gifts, and attend to

their doctrines, yet do not implicitly believe everything they say, but examine them according to the word of God the test and standard of truth; search the Scriptures, whether the things they say are true or not. Not openly erroneous persons, and known heretics, are to be heard and attended on, but the ministers of the word, or such who are said to have a gift of prophesying; these should make use of it, and the church should try and judge their gift, and accordingly encourage or discourage; and also their doctrines, and if false reject them, and if true receive them. Hold fast that which is good; honest, pleasant, profitable, and agreeable to sound doctrine, to the analogy of faith, and the Scriptures of truth, and is useful and edifying, instructive both as to principle and practice; such should be held fast, that no man take it away; and be retained, though a majority may be against it, for the multitude is not always on the side of truth; and though it may be rejected by men of learning and wealth, as Christ and his doctrines were rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the people; and though it may be reproached as a novel, upstart notion, or a licentious one, since these were charges against the doctrine of Christ, and his apostles; and though it may be attended with affliction and persecution, yet none of these things should move from it, or cause to let it go.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

Ver. 22. **Abstain from all appearance of evil.**

Of doctrinal evil. Not only open error and heresy are to be avoided, but what has any show of it, or looks like it, or carries in it a suspicion of it, or may be an occasion thereof, or lead unto it; wherefore all new words and phrases of this kind should be shunned, and the form of sound words held fast; and so of all practical evil, not only from sin itself, and all sorts of sin, lesser or greater, as the ⁴² Jews have a saying,

“take care of a light as of a heavy commandment,”

that is, take care of committing a lesser, as a greater sin, and from the first motions of sin; but from every occasion of it, and what leads unto it, and has the appearance of it, or may be suspected of others to be sin, and so give offence, and be a matter of scandal. The Jews have a saying very agreeable to this ⁴³,

“remove thyself afar off (or abstain) from filthiness, and from everything, לֹא הִדְיוּמָה לוֹ, “that is like unto it”.

⁴² Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 1.

⁴³ Apud Drusium in loc.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Ver. 23. **And the very God of peace,**

... Or “the God of peace himself”. The apostle follows his exhortations with prayer to God, knowing the weakness and impotency of the saints to receive them, and act according to them, and his own insufficiency to impress their minds with them; and that unless the Lord opened their ears to discipline, and sealed instruction to them, they would be useless and in vain: wherefore he applies to the throne of grace, and addresses God as “the God of peace”; so called, because of the concern he has in peace and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ, and because he is the giver of peace of conscience, and the author of peace, concord, and unity among the saints, and of all happiness and prosperity, both in this world, and in that which is to come; See Gill on “Ro 15:33”. And the apostle might choose to address God under this character, partly to encourage boldness, freedom, and intrepidity at the throne of grace, and partly to raise hope, expectation, and faith of having his requests answered, since God is not an angry God, nor is fury in him, but the God of peace: and the petitions he puts up for the Thessalonians are as follow: and first, that God would

sanctify you wholly;

or “all of you”, as the Arabic version; or “all of you perfectly”, as the Syriac version. These persons were sanctified by the Spirit of God, but not perfectly; the Gospel was come to them in power, and had wrought effectually in them, and they were turned from idols to serve the living God, and had true faith, hope, and love, implanted in them, and which they were enabled to exercise in a very comfortable and commendable manner; but yet this work of grace and sanctification begun in them was far from being perfect, nor is it in the best of saints. There is something lacking in the faith of the greatest believer, love often waxes cold, and hope is not lively at all times, and knowledge is but in part; sin dwells in all; the saints are poor and needy, their wants continually return upon them, and they need daily supplies; the most holy and knowing among them disclaim perfection in themselves, though desirous of it. Their sanctification in Christ is perfect, but not in themselves; there is indeed a perfection of parts in internal sanctification, every grace is implanted, there is not one wanting; the new creature, or new man, has all its parts, though these are not come to their full growth; there is not a perfection of degrees, and this is what the apostle prays for; for sanctification is a progressive, gradual work, it is like seed cast into the earth, which

springs up, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, and is as light, which shines more and more to the perfect day. Sanctified persons are first as newborn babes, and then they grow up to be young men, and at last become fathers in Christ; and this work being begun, is carried on, and will be performed, fulfilled, and made perfect: and it is God’s work to do it; he begins, and he carries it on, and he will finish it; and therefore the apostle prays to him to do it; this is his first petition: the second follows,

and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A like division of man is made by the Jews: says one of their writers ⁴⁴

“a man cannot know God, unless he knows וְנוֹפֵר וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ וְנִפְשׁוֹ וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ, “his soul, his breath, or his spirit, and his body”.

Says ⁴⁵ R. Isaac

“worthy are the righteous in this world, and in the world to come, for lo, they are all holy; their body is holy, their soul is holy, their spirit, and their breath is holy”

See Gill on “Heb 4:12”. Some by “spirit” understand the graces and gifts of the Spirit in a regenerate man; and by “the soul”, the soul as regenerated, and as it is the seat and subject of these graces; and by the body, the habitation of the soul, which is influenced by the grace that is last; and this is a sense not to be despised. Others by “the spirit” understand the rational and immortal soul of man, often called a spirit, as in Ec 12:7 and by the soul, the animal and sensitive soul, which man has in common with brutes; see Ec 3:21 and by the “body”, the outward frame of flesh and blood, and bones; but rather “spirit” and “soul” design the same immaterial, immortal, and rational soul of man, considered in its different powers and faculties. The “spirit” may intend the understanding, Job 32:8 which is the principal, leading, and governing faculty of the soul; and which being enlightened by the Spirit of God, a man knows himself, Christ Jesus, and the things of the Spirit, the truths of the Gospel, and receives and values them. The “soul” may include the will and affections, which are influenced by the understanding; and in a regenerate man the will is brought to a resignation to the will of

⁴⁴ Aben Ezra in Exod. xxxi. 18.

⁴⁵ Zohar in Lev. fol. 29. 2.

God, and the affections are set upon divine things, and the body is the instrument of performing religious and spiritual exercises: and these the apostle prays may be

preserved blameless;

not that he thought they could be kept from sinning entirely in thought, word, or deed; but that they might be preserved in purity and chastity from the gross enormities of life, and be kept from a total and final falling away, the work of grace be at last completed on the soul and spirit, and the body be raised in incorruption, and glory; and both at the coming of Christ be presented faultless, and without blame, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, first to himself, and then to his Father.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Ver. 24. **Faithful is he that calleth you,**

... Into the fellowship of his Son, and to his kingdom and glory, and who continues to do so, not only externally by his word, but internally by his Spirit and grace. Who also will do it. Two things the apostle mentions as the ground of confidence that the above petition, would be heard and answered; that is, that God would wholly sanctify them, and preserve the whole of them blameless to the coming of Christ; and they are the faithfulness of God, and the effectual calling of his saints. God is faithful to his word, his covenant and promises; he has promised to sanctify and cleanse his people from all their sins, and to preserve them safe to his kingdom and glory; agreeably the Arabic version renders this last clause, “and will execute his promise”: and the effectual calling is a sure pledge of glorification; whom God calls he justifies and glorifies; as sure as he gives grace, he will give glory; and whom he calls to his eternal glory, he will make perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle. The Complutensian edition reads, “who also will make your hope firm”; that is, with respect to the above things.

1 Thessalonians 5:25

Ver. 25. Brethren, pray for us. Which is added with great beauty and propriety, after the apostle had so earnestly and affectionately prayed for them; and this is directed, not to the pastors of the church only, but to all the members of it, whom the apostle styles “brethren” in a spiritual relation, as he often does; and of whom he requests, that they would pray for him, and the rest of his fellow ministers and labourers in the word, that God would more and more qualify and fit them for their work, assist in private studies and meditations, give them freedom of thought, liberty of expression, and a

door of utterance, and follow their ministrations with a divine blessing and success, and deliver them out of the hands of unreasonable men; See Gill on “Heb 13:18”.

1 Thessalonians 5:26

Ver. 26. **Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.**

In opposition, to an unchaste and hypocritical one. His meaning is, that they would salute the members of the church in his name, and give his Christian love and affections to them. And his view is to recommend to them brotherly love to each other, and to stir them up to the mutual exercise of it more and more.

1 Thessalonians 5:27

Ver. 27. **I charge you by the Lord,**

.... Or “I adjure by the Lord”; by the Lord Jesus: it is in the form of an oath, and a very solemn one; and shows that oaths may be used on certain and solemn occasions:

that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren;

to all the members of the church, who are called “holy”, because they were sanctified or set apart by God the Father in election; and were sanctified by the blood of Christ, or their sins were expiated, or atoned for by the sacrifice of Christ in redemption; and were sanctified or made holy by the Spirit of God in regeneration; and were enabled by the grace of God to live holy lives and conversations. Now this epistle being directed only to some of the principal members of the church, it may be to one or more of their elders; lest he or they should be tempted on any account to conceal it, the apostle in a very solemn manner adjures, that it be read publicly to the whole church whom it concerned, that all might hear, and learn, and receive some advantage from it; from whence we may learn, as is observed by many interpreters, that the sacred Scriptures, neither one part nor another, nor the whole of them, are to be kept from private Christians, but may be read, and heard, and used by all.

1 Thessalonians 5:28

Ver. 28. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen.**

This is the apostle’s usual salutation in all his epistles, and the token of the genuineness of them, 2Th 3:17. See Gill on “Ro 16:20”, See Gill on “1Co 15:23”, See Gill on “2Co 13:14”. The subscription to this epistle is not genuine, which runs thus, “The first Epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens”; whereas it appears from 1Th 3:1 compared with Ac 18:1 that it

was written from Corinth, and not from Athens; nor are these last words, “from Athens”, in Beza’s Claromontane copy; though they stand in the Syriac and Arabic versions of the London Polygot Bible, which add, “and sent by Timothy”, and in the Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS

This second epistle was written, not from Athens, as the subscription testifies, nor from Rome, as Athanasius⁴⁶ supposes; but from Corinth, from whence was sent the former, and where the apostle and Timothy, and Silvanus met; and which was sent about half a year after the other. The design of which is to comfort and support the Thessalonians under the afflictions and persecutions they endured for the sake of the Gospel; and to rectify a mistake they had gone into, and which might be occasioned by what the apostle had said in his former epistle, concerning the second coming of Christ, as though it was just at hand; which might lead them to neglect their worldly business, and duties of civil life, and give the enemies of the Gospel an advantage against the whole of it as false, should not this prove true; as also to exhort this church to take notice of disorderly persons such as were idle, and busy bodies, and withdraw from them, and remove them from their communion, as being not only burdensome to them, but a reproach to their profession.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS 1

This chapter, besides the inscription and salutation, contains a thanksgiving for the flourishing condition in which the graces of the Spirit were in these saints, and consolation for them under their suffering circumstances. The inscription and salutation are in 2Th 1:1 and are as usual: the thanksgiving is in 2Th 1:3 for the growth of their faith, the abounding of their love, and their constant patience under persecutions and afflictions, insomuch that the apostle also gloried of them for these things among other churches, 2Th 1:4 and as an encouragement to them to continue patient under sufferings, he observes that this was a token of the righteous judgment of God, and that they were reckoned worthy of his kingdom for which they suffered, 2Th 1:5 and of which righteous judgment they might be assured, from the nature of God himself, whose justice required a retribution of vengeance to their persecutors, and rest to them with the apostles, 2Th 1:6 the time of which rest

⁴⁶ Synopsis Sacr. Script. Tom. ii. p. 129.

and ease is pointed at, as that it will be at the coming of Christ; which is described by the place from whence he comes, heaven; by his retinue, his mighty angels; by the manner in which he shall come, in flaming fire; and by the vengeance he will execute: the objects of which are also described, by their ignorance of God, and by their disobedience to the Gospel of Christ; and by the nature of the punishment inflicted on them, which will lie in an expulsion from the presence, power, and glory of God, and in an everlasting destruction of soul and body, 2Th 1:7 but as for them, the persecuted saints, and which is mentioned for their comfort, Christ shall at this day be glorified and admired in them, and by them, 2Th 1:10 wherefore the apostle prays for this perseverance of them, that the good work of faith might be performed in them, and they enjoy the glory they were called unto; and that Christ might be glorified in them, and they in him; not according to their works, but according to the grace of God through him, 2Th 1:11.

2 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 1 (Verses 1-12)

[1] Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

[2] Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3] We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

[4] So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

[5] Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

[6] Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

[7] And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

[8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

[9] Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

[10] When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our

testimony among you was believed) in that day.

[11] Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

[12] That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

JOHN GILL’S COMMENTARY CHAPTER 2

2 Thessalonians 1:1

Ver. 1. **Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,....**

See Gill on “1Th 1:1”.

2 Thessalonians 1:2

Ver. 2. **Grace be unto you, and peace,....**

See Gill on “Ro 1:7”.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

Ver. 3. **We are bound to thank God,**

.... Since all blessings, temporal and spiritual, come from him: and that always: seeing he is ever giving out fresh favours, or continuing former ones; and because those, especially which are of a spiritual nature, always abide, such as faith and love; which the apostle particularly takes notice of, the members of this Church had, and were increasing in them: for it was not for himself, but for them he gives thanks,

for you, brethren:

who were so, not in a natural or civil relation, but in a spiritual one, being the children of God, and brethren of Christ; and to do this for them, he looked upon himself with others under an obligation:

as it is meet;

just, proper, and fitting; it not only becomes the persons who have received mercies from God to be thankful for them; but it is very right for others to join with them in it, and especially the ministers of the Gospel, who are bound, and whom it becomes: it is agreeable to their office and profession to give God the praise and glory of all the grace, and the increase of it, which those, who attend their labours, are favoured with, since this is not of them, but of God; and it was for an increase of grace the apostle here gives thanks, as he judged he was obliged to do, and it was fit he should.

Because that your faith groweth exceedingly.

Their faith was not a faith of miracles, nor a mere historical faith, or a counterfeit and temporary one, but the faith of God's elect; which is the evidence of things not seen, of an unseen Christ, and the glories of another world; that grace by which a man goes out of himself to Christ for righteousness, life, and salvation; by which he is justified, and by which he lives on Christ, and walks on in him as he has received him. This was theirs; it was not of themselves, the produce of nature, or the fruit of their natural power and free will; but it was the gift of God, and of his operation; a fruit of the Spirit of God, and of which Christ was the author and finisher; and was only theirs, as being given unto them, implanted in them, and exercised by them under the influence of the Spirit of God, and for their use, comfort, and advantage. This was, at first, but like a grain of mustard seed, very small, but gradually increased, and grew exceedingly; and from seeing of Christ, and looking at him, and which at first might be very dim and obscure, it proceeded to going or coming to him; and which might be in a very feeble manner, and was not without being drawn and led, and great encouragements, many invitations, and large assurances; and from thence to a laying hold upon him, though it may be but in a trembling way, and not without being called to stretch forth the hand of faith, and be no more faithless, but believing; and from thence to a leaning and relying on him, trusting in him with all, and for all; and from thence to claiming an interest in him, saying, my Lord, and my God, which is the full assurance of faith; and when it is come to this, it is grown exceedingly, which might be the case of these Thessalonians; which the apostle knew by the aboundings of their love, for faith works by love; and by their patience, firmness, and resolution in suffering for Christ; all which are in proportion to faith, and the growth of it; and for this he gives thanks to God, for faith is a precious thing; and as that itself, so the increase of it is from God, and therefore to him the praise belongs:

and the charity of everyone of you towards each other aboundeth;

as their faith in Christ, so their love to one another was increasing, and showed itself in serving one another both in temporals and spirituals; and this was not the case of a few only, or of the greater part, but of everyone of them; which made their communion with one another very comfortable and delightful. For what is more pleasant than for brethren to dwell together in unity?

2 Thessalonians 1:4

Ver. 4. **So that we ourselves glory in you,**

... Or "of you"; for though they were the subject concerning which, yet not the object in which they gloried; the apostle elsewhere advises not to glory in men, but only in the Lord; nor was this his practice contrary to his advice, for he did not boast of these persons with respect to their carnal things; he did not glory in their flesh, nor in their riches, nor wisdom, nor strength, nor any external gift; he gloried indeed of their graces, and of the exercise and increase of them; but of these not as of themselves, or as owing to him, and his fellow ministers, but as instances of the grace of God, and for which he gives thanks to him: and besides, he did not glory of these in the presence of God, in whose presence none should glory, but

in the churches of God;

the other churches in Macedonia and Achaia, as Philippi, Berea, Corinth, &c. he gave thanks to God for them, and gloried of them before men, or among the saints, to the glory of the grace of God in them, and in order to stir up other churches to an emulation and imitation of them. And the particulars he gloried of them for were as follow,

for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

many and sore were the reproaches, the afflictions, and persecutions that befell them for the sake of Christ, and their profession of him, and his Gospel; and which is more or less the case of everyone that will live godly in Christ Jesus: and these they endured, they bore and stood up under, they were not shocked, and staggered, and moved from the hope of the Gospel by them; which shows that the truth of grace was in them; for where there is not the root of the matter, when tribulation and affliction arise because of the profession of the word, such are offended, stumbled, and quickly gone; but these saints endured their afflictions, and with great patience, without murmuring and repining, and with great constancy, firmness, and resolution of mind. They stood fast in the grace and doctrine of faith, and in the profession of both, which they held without wavering, and none of the things they met with could move them from it. The apostle had mentioned their faith before, and he takes notice of it again, because their patience, constancy, and perseverance in sufferings, arose from it; for the trying of faith works patience, Jas 1:3. The Ethiopic version leaves out the word "faith", but very wrongly.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

Ver. 5. **Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God,**

... That is, according as some think, that God should glorify those that are persecuted, and punish their persecutors: this sense indeed may seem to agree with what follows; but the apostle is speaking not of something future, but of something present; not of what God will do hereafter, but of the present sufferings of the saints. According to others the sense is, that God's suffering affliction and persecution to befall his own people, as a chastisement of them, that they may not be condemned with the world, is an evidence of his strict justice, that he will not suffer sin in any to go unobserved by him; and is a manifest token how severely and righteously he will punish the wicked hereafter, see 1Pe 4:17. But rather the meaning of the words is this, that whereas good men are afflicted and persecuted in this life, they have now their evil things, and bad men prosper and flourish, and have their good things, so that justice does not seem to take place; which seeming inequality in Providence has been sometimes the hardening of wicked men, and the staggering of the righteous, which should not be; this is now a manifest token, and a clear case, that there will be a righteous judgment, in which things will be set aright, and justice will take place; for God is neither unrighteous nor careless, or negligent; and this is observed to support the saints under their sufferings, and to animate them to bear them patiently:

that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer;

either of the Gospel, which is sometimes so called, and for which they suffered, and so judged themselves worthy of it; as those that put it away from them, and care not to suffer the least reproach for it, show themselves to be unworthy of it, and of eternal life also: or of a Gospel church state, and a name, and a place in it, for which the people of God likewise suffer; and those who shun reproach and sufferings for it are not worthy to have a place, or their names there: or rather of the heavenly glory; for the hope of which saints suffer much here, whereby their graces are tried, and so they are counted worthy, not by way of merit of it, but meetness for it; many tribulations are the way, or at least lie in the way to this kingdom. In the school of afflictions the saints are trained up for it; and though these are not worthy to be compared with their future happiness, yet they work for them an eternal weight of glory; by the means of these the graces of the Spirit of God are exercised and increased, their hearts are weaned from

the world; and coming up out of great tribulations, they wash their garments, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, and are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light.

2 Thessalonians 1:6

Ver. 6. **Seeing it is a righteous thing with God,**

... That which is righteous in itself, is righteous in the sight of God, but it is not always so with men; men may think it a righteous thing that they should be rewarded for persecuting the followers of Christ, supposing they hereby do God good service; but on the contrary, with God, and in his sight and account, it is a righteous thing, or a point of justice,

to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you: persecution is an affliction, or a trouble to the saints; persecutors trouble them in their minds and bodies, in their persons and property; they trouble their minds by casting reflections and reproaches upon them, by severe revilings, and cruel mockings, which all are not alike able to bear; and they trouble and afflict their bodies by imprisonment and bonds, by scourging and beating, and various cruel and torturing deaths; and they disturb them in the possession of their estates, by spoiling their goods, and confiscating them to their own use; and it is but according to "lex talionis", the law of retaliation, to render tribulation to such troublers of God's Israel; and to them it is recompensed, either in this world, or in the world to come: sometimes in this world persecutors are manifest instances of God's judgments and wrath upon them, as Herod, who stretched out his hands to vex certain of the church, killed James the brother of John, and imprisoned Peter, and was smitten by the angel of the Lord, and was eaten of worms; and the Jews, who were now the only and the implacable persecutors of the saints, in a short time had the wrath of God come upon them to the uttermost, even upon their nation, city, and temple, upon their persons and property. And if not in this life, it is a certain thing that hereafter such shall have indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; they shall be cast into outward darkness, into the lake of fire; and the hottest place in hell will be their portion, even devouring flames, and everlasting burnings; and are what is designed by tribulations here.

2 Thessalonians 1:7

Ver. 7. **And to you who are troubled, rest with us,**

... This is another branch of the justice of God, in rendering to them who are afflicted and persecuted for righteousness sake, "rest"; a relaxation or rest from

persecutions, for a while at least; as the churches of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had, from that persecution raised at the death of Stephen, Ac 9:31 and as the Christians had at the destruction of Jerusalem; which though it was a day of vengeance to the unbelieving Jews, were times of refreshing to the saints, who were now delivered from their persecutors: or rather this designs a rest which remains for the saints after death in the grave, and at the coming of the Lord, and to all eternity; when they shall rest from all their toil and labour, and be freed from sin, and all disquietude by it, and from the temptations of Satan, and likewise from the persecutions of men; see Job 3:17. And this will be enjoyed in company with the apostles, and other believers; and as it is some alleviation to the sufferings and afflictions of saints now, that the same are accomplished in others, so it will enhance the heavenly glory, rest, and felicity, that they will be partners and sharers in it with the apostles of Christ Jesus, and have the same crown of glory they have; and indeed their company and conversation will be a part of their happiness.

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven;

then will the justice of God take place in both the above branches and instances of it, rendering tribulation to persecutors, and rest to the persecuted. Christ, ever since a cloud received him out of the sight of the apostles up to heaven, has been, as it were, hid, and has not been seen with corporeal eyes by men on earth ever since, but by a very few, as Stephen, and the Apostle Paul; he has only been seen by an eye of faith; at his second coming there will be a revelation of him, and every eye shall see him: and this revelation of him will be “from heaven”: thither he was received at his ascension, and there he now is; and here he is received, and will be retained until the end of all things; and from hence the saints expect him, and from hence will he descend in person, and then he will be revealed, and appear to the view of everyone: and that

with his mighty angels;

which will add to the glory, majesty, and solemnity of that appearance: these are called his angels, because he is the Creator of them, and the object of their worship and adoration, and he is the Lord and head of them, and they are ministering spirits to him and his; and “mighty” angels, because they excel all other creatures in strength; a remarkable instance of the might and strength of angels is in 2Ki 19:35. The words from the original text may be rendered, “with the angels of his power”; as they are by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and

Ethiopic versions, for they will be the ministers of the power of Christ in gathering the elect from the four winds, and all nations, before Christ; and in taking out of his kingdom all that offend, and do iniquity; and in severing the righteous from the wicked; and in casting the latter into the furnace of fire. The Syriac version reads the words, “with the power of his angels”.

2 Thessalonians 1:8

Ver. 8. **In flaming fire,**

... Which may either refer to Christ, who will be revealed from heaven in such a manner; and whose coming will be as the lightning, not only sudden, but glorious, illustrious, and visible; he will be seen and easily discerned; there will be such a light and flaming fire about him, which, as it will serve to make him visible, will greatly add to the majesty of his appearance, and strike terror to his enemies, and burn them up round about; see Da 7:7 or else it may refer to the angels, who shall descend in fiery forms, which is agreeably to their nature, Ps 104:4 and so they appeared in the forms of horses of fire, and chariots of fire, when Elijah was carried up to heaven. And it is a tradition of the Jews⁴⁷, that the angel Gabriel descended *בשלהובא דאשא*, “in a flame of fire”, to burn Moses, as he was in the inn, when upon his journey from Midian to Egypt: or this clause may be read in construction with the following, as it is in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, “in flaming fire taking vengeance”; and so expresses the manner in which vengeance will be taken on the wicked by Christ, the Judge of all, to whom it belongs: and the punishment of ungodly men is often signified by fire, and flames of fire, by the fire of hell, and a lake which burns with fire and brimstone, by a furnace of fire, everlasting fire, and fire that cannot be quenched, to set forth the endless torture and inconceivable misery of the damned; and it may be, some regard is had to the general conflagration, which will be at the coming of Christ, when the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all that is in it, shall be burnt up, when the bodies of the wicked, then living, will be consumed in flames of fire, and their souls feel the wrath of the Almighty. The persons who will then be punished, and on whom vengeance will be taken, are described as follows,

on them that know not God; which is a periphrasis, or common character of the Gentiles, 1Th 4:5 who know not the one, true, and living God; or know him not so as to glorify him as God, and be thankful to him for

⁴⁷ Zohar in Gen. fol. 63. 2.

the mercies they receive from him, and still less know him in Christ Jesus; which ignorance of theirs is not without sin, nor will it excuse from punishment; for though vengeance will not be taken on them, because they have not a spiritual saving knowledge of God, in the Mediator Jesus Christ, who never was revealed to them; yet forasmuch as they had the light and law of nature, by which the being of God, and the invisible perfections of his nature might be seen and understood, and much of his will, with respect to moral good and evil, be known, against both which they have rebelled, and having sinned, will perish without law: though it may also include all such persons, who having been favoured with an external revelation, have professed to know God, and yet in works have denied him:

and that obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ;

of which Christ is the author, was the preacher, and is the sum and substance; which is good news and glad tidings of the grace of, God, of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation by Christ; which may be said to be obeyed, when it is received and embraced by faith, with and from the heart, and confession is made of it with the mouth, and the ordinances of it are submitted to; and which is called the obedience of faith, because faith without obedience is not right, and obedience without faith is of no avail: but all that hear the Gospel do not obey it; there are some that disbelieve and reject the doctrines and ordinances of it, and others that, do profess it, and do not yield a cordial and cheerful obedience to it; both may be reckoned among the disobeyers of it: and though the unbelieving Jews may be chiefly designed here, yet deists of every age and place, where the Gospel revelation has come, and carnal professors, and profane despisers everywhere, may be included; whose condemnation will be aggravated by the external light which has shone around them, and they have hated; the severest punishment will be inflicted on them; it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, than for such persons; see 1Pe 4:17.

2 Thessalonians 1:9

Ver. 9. **Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction,**

... With destruction both of soul and body, though not with the annihilation of either; their gnawing worm of conscience will never die, and the fire of divine wrath will never be quenched; the smoke of their torment will ascend for ever. Sin being committed against an infinite

and eternal Being, will be infinite in its duration; nor will it cease to be in the persons punished, who will not be in the least reformed or purged from sin by punishment; which will make the continuance of it just and necessary. And these will be driven

from the presence of the Lord;

as the former clause may express the punishment of sense the wicked will feel in their own breasts, this may intend the punishment of loss; or what they will be deprived of, the presence of the Lord, in which the happiness of angels, and of glorified saints lies; and may also signify how sudden and terrible their destruction will be. As soon as the Lord appears, they will perish at his presence like wax before the fire; and so awful will be his appearance, they will flee from it with the utmost terror, and call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of the Lord, and to screen them from his wrath:

and from the glory of his power;

or his glorious power, in which he shall come, and which will be exerted, and shown in raising the dead, and gathering all nations before him, in passing sentence on them, and in executing it. For he has power, as to save, so to destroy, as to glorify the bodies and souls of his saints, so to destroy the wicked, both body and soul, in hell; and the glory of his power will be seen in the one, as well as in the other. And now it will be, that tribulation will be rendered to the troublers of the Lord's people.

2 Thessalonians 1:10

Ver. 10. **When he shall come to be glorified in his saints,**

... Or by them who are set apart for holiness and happiness by God the Father; whose sins are expiated by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; to whom he is made sanctification; and who are sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God; and in whom Christ has a peculiar interest, through his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of his grace: and when he comes a second time he will be glorified in these persons; he will appear glorious to them; he will come in his own glory both as God and man; and in his Father's glory, authority, and majesty, conferred on him as the Judge of the whole earth; and with the glory of his angels, who will accompany him. And he will also bestow a glory on them; their souls will be endowed with perfect knowledge and holiness; and their bodies will be made like to his glorious body; and both will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father; and this glory on

the members of Christ will redound to the glory of him their head. And as he will then, in the most full and clear manner, display the glory of his person and perfections, of his wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness, set off the glory of his offices, and, the administration of them, and open the riches both of his grace and glory to them; so they will, in return, ascribe honour, praise, and glory, to him, and give him the glory of their salvation to all eternity:

and to be admired in all them that believe;

who are the same with the saints; these are convertible terms; for no man can be a saint, unless he is a believer in Christ, let him make what pretensions to holiness he will: and no man can be a true believer in Christ, unless he is a saint; for true faith works by love, and in a way of holiness; and in those, or by those that are sanctified by faith in him, will he be admired when he appears a second time. He is admired by them now; he is with them the chiefest among ten thousands, and altogether lovely: they wonder at the glory and beauty of his person, and the fulness of his grace; and are amazed that such as they are should be admitted to communion with him; and how much more will they wonder, when they shall see him as he is? and he will be admired by others on the account of them, when they shall see those that they have despised, and persecuted, and accounted as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, received into the arms of Jesus with all the expressions of tenderness and love; placed at his right hand, and set down with him on his throne, clothed with white robes, and crowns on their head, and palms in their hands: and he himself will be admired with them, when they shall see him whom they took to be a mere man, and who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, and was loaded with reproach and ignominy, and at last suffered a shameful death, coming in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory as the Judge of quick and dead; thus will he be admired by them, in them, and with them.

(Because our testimony among you was believed) in that day; the phrase, “in that day”, belongs to all that goes before, as that Christ shall take vengeance on wicked men, and they shall be punished by him, and he shall be glorified and admired in and by his people in that day, when he shall be revealed from heaven, and come to judge both quick and dead. Though some versions read it in construction with the clause immediately preceding, “because our testimony among you was believed in that day”; or concerning that day; that is, you gave credit to the testimony we bore, when among you, concerning

this illustrious day of the Lord; or our testimony, the ministry of the word by us, in which we bore a testimony to the person and grace of Christ, to his first, and to his second coming, was received and embraced by you with a view to this day, and to the enjoyment of the glory of it. The Arabic version renders it, “for our testimony will be true in that day”; that is, it will appear to be so, everything we have said will be accomplished then. The Syriac version is very remote, “that our testimony concerning you may be believed in that day”: but it is best to read this clause in a parenthesis, as in our version; which is an application of what is said to the Thessalonians, who might conclude, that since they had embraced the testimony of the Lord Jesus, borne unto him by his apostles, they would be found among the number of the saints and believers, in whom Christ would be glorified and admired; the consideration of which might animate and encourage them to endure afflictions and persecutions with patience, and to hold out to the end, and at last enjoy the heavenly glory, for which the apostle next prays.

2 Thessalonians 1:11

Ver. 11. **Wherefore also we pray always for you,**

.... Not only observe the above things to your comfort, to support you under sufferings, but we add our prayers, and not only now, but always, that you may be among them in whom Christ will be glorified and admired; in order to which we most sincerely pray,

that our God would count you worthy of this calling.

The Syriac version reads, “your calling”, as in 1Co 1:26. The Vulgate Latin reads, “his own calling”, meaning their effectual calling. This is indeed of God, and not of man; and is owing, not to any previous worthiness in man, as appears from the instances of Matthew the publican, Zacchaeus, the Apostle Paul, the Corinthians, and others, but entirely to the free grace of God, who counts them worthy, not for any worthiness there is in them; but “vouchsafes”, as the word may be rendered, this blessing of grace, their effectual calling, of his own good will and pleasure: but this cannot be meant here, because these persons were partakers of that grace, God had called them to his kingdom and glory; unless the sense of the petition is, that God would cause them to walk worthy of the calling with which they were called, which becoming walk is owing to the grace of God: or else the meaning may be, that God would grant unto them perseverance in the grace, by and to which they were called, that so they might enjoy eternal glory;

which though certain, should be prayed for by saints, both for themselves and others: the words may be rendered, “that our God would count you worthy of the call”; of the call of Christ when he shall be revealed from heaven, and come a second time; for then will he first call the saints out of their graves, as he did Lazarus, and they shall hear his all powerful voice, and come forth to the resurrection of life, the first and better resurrection, which those that have part in will be secure from the second death; this the apostle was desirous of attaining to himself, and prays that God would vouchsafe it to others; of this Job speaks in Job 14:15. And next Christ will call the righteous, when raised and set at his right hand, to inherit the kingdom and glory prepared by his Father for them; and happy are those who by the grace of God will be counted worthy of this call or rather by calling here is meant, the ultimate glory itself, which the saints are called unto; this God gives a right unto in the justifying righteousness of his Son, and makes meet for by his own grace; and the thing itself is a free grace gift of his through Jesus Christ. In this sense calling seems to be used in Eph 4:4 and to this agrees the Ethiopic version here, “that God may impart unto you that to which he hath called you”; and that is eternal glory, which though certainly and inseparably connected with the effectual calling, may, and should be prayed for:

and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness;

not providential, but special goodness; not the good pleasure of his strict justice in the condemning of the wicked, denying his grace to them, and hiding from them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which is a part of his good pleasure, even of the good pleasure of his righteousness; but this is the good pleasure of his grace and kindness in Christ Jesus, and intends the whole of his gracious designs towards his people: and to express the free, rich, sovereign grace of God in them, the apostle uses a variety of words, calling them “his pleasure”, “his good pleasure”; and, as if this was not enough, “the good pleasure of his goodness”; and desires that all of it might be fulfilled; it consisting of many things, some of which were fulfilled, and others remained to be fulfilled. It consists of the choice of persons in Christ, and the predestination of them to the adoption of children, which is according to the good pleasure of the will of God; the redemption of them by Christ, in which are displayed the exceeding riches of his grace; the free justification of them by the righteousness of Christ; the full pardon of all their sins, and their adoption into the household of God, and their regeneration, of rich grace, and abundant mercy; all

these instances of the good pleasure of divine goodness were fulfilled in these persons; what remained were the carrying on and finishing the work of grace upon their souls, and their enjoyment of the heavenly glory: and for the former, in order to the latter, the apostle prays in the next clause,

and the work of faith with power;

faith is not only an operative grace, See Gill on “1Th 1:3” and is attended with good works; but it is a work itself, not of man’s, for he cannot produce it in himself, nor exercise it of himself; but it is the work of God, of his operation which he works in his people; it has not only God for its object, and therefore the Arabic version reads, “the work of faith on him”; but it has God for its author: and this now, though it had grown exceedingly in these believers, was not as yet fulfilled or perfect; something was still lacking in it; wherefore the apostle prays that he who was the author would be the finisher of it: and this will be done “with power”; not of man’s, for this work is neither begun, nor carried on, nor will it be finished by the might and power of men; but the same hands which laid the foundation of it, raise it up, carry it on, and give the finishing stroke to it; it is done by the power of God, and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, “by his own power”: which is greatly displayed in the production of faith at first; for a poor sensible sinner, in a view of all his sins, and the just deserts of them, to venture his soul on Christ alone for salvation; for a man to go out of himself and renounce his own righteousness, and trust to the righteousness of Christ for his justification before God, and acceptance with him, is owing to the exceeding greatness of God’s power to them that believe; and the same power is seen in enabling faith to do the things it does; see Heb 11:1 and in encouraging, supporting, and maintaining it under the most difficult circumstances, as in the case of Abraham; and to make it stand fast under the severest persecutions, and at the hour of death, and in the view of an awful eternity, when it receives its full completion.

2 Thessalonians 1:12

Ver. 12. **That the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you,**

.... This is the end of the apostle’s prayer, and which is answered by the fulfilment of the things prayed for; as the name of Christ and his Gospel are dishonoured, by the unbelief, cowardice and the unworthy walk of professors; so they are glorified in and by the saints, by their faith, patience, and good works in this world; which not only themselves adorn the doctrine of God

our Saviour, but cause others to glorify him likewise; and Christ will be glorified in them hereafter, by the glory which will be conferred upon them, and which will reflect glory upon him; when all the gracious designs of God are accomplished on them and the work of faith is finished in them; for should not these be completed, Christ would lose the glory of redemption and salvation, which by means of these will be given by the saints to him to all eternity:

and ye in him;

that is, that ye may be glorified; the saints are now glorified in him as their head and representative, being raised together and made to sit together in heavenly places in him; and when the work of grace is finished upon their souls, they will be glorified together with him and by him; and in the resurrection morn shall appear in glory with him both in soul and body, and shall be made like him, and everlastingly enjoy him and see him as he is; the Alexandrian copy reads and us “in him”; and all this will be as it is wished for, “according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ”; according to the grace and free favour of God in election, and of Jesus Christ in, redemption, and of the blessed Spirit in sanctification; for election, redemption, calling, justification, pardon, adoption, and the whole of salvation from first to last are of grace and not of works; and according to this, all these things must be prayed for the application of, and must be expected only on such a foot; and to this must all be ascribed, the glory of which is the ultimate end of God, in all he has done, does, or will do for his people.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS 2

In this chapter the apostle guards against a notion, as if the second coming of Christ was at hand; declares that, previous to it, there must be a great apostasy, and a revelation of antichrist; comforts the saints against fears of being included in this defection; exhorts them to stand fast in the faith, and closes this chapter with petitions for them. He entreats them in a most tender and solemn manner not to imagine that the day of Christ was at hand, and that they would not be disturbed and moved at it; and points unto the several ways, and cautions against them, they might be imposed upon and deceived by men with respect to it, 2Th 2:1 and assigns his reasons why it could not be yet, because before this time there was to be a general apostasy, and antichrist must appear; whom from his character, he calls the man of sin, and from his end, the son of perdition; and

describes him as an opposer of God, an exalter of himself above all that is called God, as sitting in the temple of God and declaring himself to be God, 2Th 2:3 of which things he had told them before, 2Th 2:5 nor were they ignorant of what at present hindered the revelation of the man of sin, who was then in being, and was working and growing up apace; only there was something (the Roman empire) which hindered, and would continue to do so, until the fixed time of his revelation was up, 2Th 2:6 when he should be manifest; though he should not always continue, being to be consumed and destroyed by the breath of Christ’s mouth, and the splendour of his coming, 2Th 2:8 and the appearance of antichrist in the world, being a matter of considerable importance, it is described by being after the working of Satan, and as attended with lying and false miracles, and with all deceitful and unrighteous doctrines and practices; which reprobate men would be left to give into, as a punishment of their not receiving cordially the truth of the Gospel; upon which account God would give them to such judicial blindness, as to give credit to a lie, which would bring on their final damnation, they not believing the truth, but taking pleasure in unrighteousness, 2Th 2:9, but lest this account of things should be discouraging to the saints at Thessalonica, the apostle styles them brethren; asserts them to be the beloved of the Lord; gives an instance of it, for which he gives thanks, namely, their election of God; the date of which was from everlasting; the means sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; the end salvation by Jesus Christ; and the evidence of which was their effectual calling by the Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of Christ, 2Th 2:13 and then he exhorts them to stand fast in the doctrines that had been taught them, either in an epistolary way, or by the ministry of the word, 2Th 2:15 and concludes the chapter with petitions for them made to God the Father, and to Christ who had loved and comforted them, and given them good hope of everlasting things; that they might be comforted more and more, and be established in every good doctrine and practice, 2Th 2:16.

2 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 2 (1-17)

[1] Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

[2] That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

[3] Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

[4] Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

[5] Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

[6] And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

[7] For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

[8] And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

[9] Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

[10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

[11] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

[12] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

[13] But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

[14] Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[15] Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

[16] Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

[17] Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

JOHN GILL’S COMMENTARY CHAPTER 2

2 Thessalonians 2:1

Ver. 1. **Now we beseech you, brethren,**

.... The apostle having finished his first design in this epistle, which was to encourage the saints to patience under sufferings, proceeds to another view he had in writing it, and that is, to set the doctrine of Christ’s coming, as to the time of it, in its proper light; and

this is occasioned by what he had said concerning it in the former epistle, which was either misunderstood or misrepresented; and as he addresses the saints with a very affectionate appellation as his “brethren”, so by way of entreaty “beseeching”, and yet in a very solemn manner:

by the coming of our Lord Jesus:

which is to be understood not of the coming of Christ in the flesh, to procure the salvation of his people; nor of his coming in his kingdom and power to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their rejection of him as the Messiah; but of his coming to judge the quick and dead, than which nothing is more sure and certain, being affirmed by angels and men, by prophets and apostles, and by Christ himself, or more desirable by the saints; wherefore the apostle entreats them by it, that whereas they believed it, expected it, and wished for it, they would regard what he was about to say: so that the words, though an entreaty, are in the form of an adjuration; unless they should be rendered as in the Ethiopic version, as they may, “concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”; and so express subject matter of the discourse now entering upon, with what follows:

and by our gathering together unto him;

which regards not the great gatherings of the people to Christ the true Shiloh upon his first coming, and the preaching of the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, when there were not only great flockings to hear it, but multitudes were converted by it; nor the greater gatherings there will be in the latter day, at the time of the conversion of the Jews, and when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in; nor the conversion of particular persons, who are gathered in to Christ, and received by him one by one; nor the assembling of the saints together for public worship, in which sense the word is used in Heb 10:25 but the gathering together of all the saints at the last day, at the second coming of Christ; for he will come with ten thousand of his saints, yea, with all his saints, when their dead bodies shall be raised and reunited to their souls, and they with the living saints will be caught up into the air, to meet the Lord there and be ever with him; when they will make up, complete and perfect, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven: this will be the gathering together of all the elect of God; and so the Arabic version reads, “the gathering of us all”; and which, as it is certain, is greatly to be desired; it will be a happy meeting and a glorious sight; by this the apostle entreats and adjures them to regard what follows.

2 Thessalonians 2:2

Ver. 2. **That ye be not soon shaken in mind,**

... Or “from your mind or sense”, as the Vulgate Latin version; or “from the solidity of sense”, as the Arabic version; that is, from what they had received in their minds, and was their sense and judgment, and which they had embraced as articles of faith; that they would not be like a wave of the sea, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; or be moved from the hope of the Gospel, from any fundamental article of it, and from that which respects the second coming of Christ particularly; and especially, that they would not be quickly and easily moved from it; see Ga 1:6

or be troubled;

thrown into consternation and surprise, for though the coming of Christ will not be terrible to saints, as it will be to sinners; yet there is something in it that is awful and solemn, and fills with concern; and to be told of it as at that instant might be surprising and shocking: the several ways in which their minds might be troubled and distressed with such an account are enumerated by the apostle, that they might guard against them, and not be imposed upon by them:

neither by spirit;

by a prophetic spirit, by pretensions to a revelation from the Spirit, fixing the precise time of Christ's coming, which should not be heeded or attended to; since his coming will be as a thief in the night:

nor by word:

by reason and a show of it, by arguments drawn from it, which may carry in them a show of probability; by enticing words of man's wisdom; by arithmetical or astronomical calculations; or by pretensions to a word, a tradition of Christ or his apostles, as if they had received it “viva voce”, by word of mouth from any of them:

nor by letter,

as from us; by forging a letter and counterfeiting their hands, for such practices began to be used very early; spurious epistles of the Apostle Paul were carried about, which obliged him to take a method whereby his genuine letters might be known; see 2Th 3:17 or he may have respect in this clause to his former epistle, wherein he had said some things concerning the Coming of Christ, which had been either wrongly represented, or not understood; and as if his sense was, that it would be while he and others then living were alive and on the spot: wherefore he would not have them neither give heed to any enthusiastic spirits, nor to any plausible reasonings of men, or unwritten traditions; nor to any

letters in his name, or in the name of any of the apostles; nor even to his former letter to them, as though it contained any such thing in it,

as that the day of Christ is at hand;

or is at this instant just now coming on; as if it would be within that year, in some certain month, and on some certain day in it; which notion the apostle would have them by no means give into, for these reasons, because should Christ not come, as there was no reason to believe he would in so short a time, they would be tempted to disbelieve his coming at all, at least be very indifferent about it; and since if it did not prove true, they might be led to conclude there was nothing true in the Christian doctrine and religion; and besides, such a notion of the speedy coming of Christ would tend to indulge the idle and disorderly persons among them in their sloth and negligence: and now for these, and for the weighty reasons he gives in the next verse, he dissuades them from imbibing such a tenet; for though the coming of Christ is sometimes said to be drawing nigh, and to be quickly, yet so it might be, and not at that instant; besides, such expressions are used with respect to God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years; and because the Gospel times, or times of the Messiah, are the last days, there will be no other dispensation of things until the second coming of Christ; and chiefly they are used to keep up the faith, and awaken the hope and expectation of the saints with respect to it. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “the day of the Lord”; and so the Vulgate Latin version; and accordingly the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, “the day of our Lord”.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

Ver. 3. **Let no man deceive you by any means,**

... By any of the above means; by pretending to a revelation from the Spirit; or to have had it from the mouth of anyone of the apostles; or to have a letter as from them, declaring the day of Christ to be instant; or by any other means whatever; do not be imposed upon by them for the following reasons, for there were things to be done before the coming of Christ, which were not then done, and which required time: for that day shall not come,

except there come a falling away first;

either in a political sense, of the nations from the Roman empire, which was divided into the eastern and western empire; for which, way was made by translating the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, or Constantinople; the former of these empires was seized

by Mahomet, and still possessed by the Turks; and the latter was overrun by the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, and torn to pieces; Italy particularly was ravaged by them, and Rome itself was sacked and taken: or rather in a religious sense, of the falling of men from the faith of the Gospel, from the purity of Gospel doctrines, discipline, worship, and ordinances; and this not of some Jews who professed faith in Christ, and departed from it, or of some Christians who went off to the Gnostics; but is to be understood of a more general defection in the times of the Papacy; when not only the eastern churches were perverted and corrupted by Mahomet, and drawn off to his religion, but the western churches were most sadly depraved by the man of sin, by bringing in errors of all sorts in doctrine, making innovations in every ordinance, and appointing new ones, and introducing both Judaism and Paganism into the churches; which general defection continued until the times of the reformation, and is what the apostle has respect to in 1Ti 4:1 where he manifestly points out some of the Popish tenets, as forbidding marriage to priests, and ordering abstinence from meats on certain days, and at certain times of the year: this was one thing that was to precede the coming of Christ, another follows, which should take place at the same time;

and that man of sin be revealed;

who was now hid, though secretly working; by whom is meant not only any particular person or individual; not the devil, for though he is the wicked one, a damned spirit, an opposer, an adversary of God and Christ, and his people, and who has affected deity, and sought to be worshipped, and even by Christ himself; yet the man of sin is here distinguished from Satan, 2Ti 2:9 nor is any particular emperor of Rome intended, as Caius Caligula, or Nero, for though these were monsters of iniquity, and set up themselves as gods, yet they sat not in the temple of God; nor is Simon Magus designed, who was a very wicked man, a sorcerer, and who gave out himself to be some great one, and was called the great power of God, before big profession of faith in Christ; and afterwards affirmed that he was God, the Father in Samaria, the Son in Judea, and the Spirit in the rest of the nations of the world; and, because of his signs and lying wonders, had a statue erected by the Roman emperor with this inscription, “to Simon the holy god”; but then this wicked man was now already revealed: nor is this to be understood of a certain Jew, that is to be begotten by the devil on a virgin of the tribe of Dan, and who is to reign three years and a half, and then to be destroyed by Christ, which is a fable of the Papists; but a succession of men is

here meant, as a king is used sometimes for an order and succession of kings, De 17:18 and an high priest for that whole order, from Aaron's time to the dissolution of it, Heb 9:7 so here it intends the whole hierarchy of Rome, monks, friars, priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and especially popes, who may well be called “the man of sin”, because notoriously sinful; not only sinners, but sin itself, a sink of sin, monsters of iniquity, spiritual wickednesses in high places: it is not easy to reckon up their impieties, their adulteries, incest, sodomy, rapine, murder, avarice, simony, perjury, lying, necromancy, familiarity with the devil, idolatry, witchcraft, and what not? and not only have they been guilty of the most notorious crimes themselves, but have been the patrons and encouragers of others in sin; by dispensing with the laws of God and man, by making sins to be venial, by granting indulgences and pardon for the worst of crimes, by licensing brothel houses, and countenancing all manner of wickedness; and therefore it is no wonder to hear of the following epithet,

the son of perdition;

since these are not only the Apollyon, the king of the bottomless pit, the destroyer, the cause of the perdition of thousands of souls, for the souls of men are their wares; but because they are by the righteous judgment of God appointed and consigned to everlasting destruction; the devil, the beast, and the false prophet, will have their portion together in the lake that burns with fire, Re 20:10 the same character as here is given of Judas, the betrayer of Christ, Joh 17:12.

2 Thessalonians 2:4

Ver. 4. **Who opposeth,**

... Or is an opposer, an adversary of Christ, the antichrist; who opposes him in his kingly office, styling himself the head and spouse of the church, assuming to himself all power in heaven and in earth, taking upon him to dispense with the laws of Christ, and to make new ones; who opposes him in his priestly office, by pretending to offer him up again in the sacrifice of the mass, and by making angels and saints departed, intercessors and advocates; and also in his prophetic office, by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and setting up unwritten traditions before the word of God, requiring the worshipping of images, angels, and saints, when Christ requires that the Lord God only should be worshipped and served; and by introducing the doctrine of works and of merit instead of grace, and with a multitude of other things, in which he most manifestly appears to be diametrically opposite

and contrary to Christ:

and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.

The Syriac version renders the last clause, **ורחל**, “and religion”; and the Greek word does signify religion, worship, or devotion, as it is translated, in Ac 17:23 but here the act of worship is put for the object, and is rightly rendered, “or that which is worshipped”; as it is in the Vulgate Latin version, and in the Arabic version, “or that which is to be worshipped”; and it was usual with the Jews to call God the object of worship, by the name of worship itself, and by which they used to swear: it is said⁴⁸ of R. Benjamin the just, that he was appointed over the alms chest; one time a woman came to him and said, Rabbi, relieve me; he replied to her, **הַבִּירָה** “by the worship” (that is, by God who is worshipped) there is nothing in the alms chest: and elsewhere⁴⁹ it is said by one, concerning two that were fatherless, for whom the collectors of alms gathered, **הַבִּירָה**, “by the worship”, they go before my daughter: and a little after, **הַבִּירָה**, “by the worship”, these things are holy to thee; where the gloss says, it is an oath: and so here the word is to be understood of Deity itself; and the meaning is, that antichrist would exalt himself above all the gods of the Gentiles, who are only nominally, and not by nature, gods; to these were ascribed, some one thing, to some another; one had the government of heaven, another of hell, another of the seas, and an other of the winds, &c. but this haughty creature antichrist assumes to himself all power, both in heaven, earth, and hell. Angels are sometimes called gods, Ps 8:4 because they are sent of God, and sometimes represent him; the popes of Rome have exalted themselves above these; Pope Clement VI. proclaimed a jubilee, and promised forgiveness of sins to all that should come to Rome; and in his bull for it says, that

“if any that was confessed should die by the way, he should be free from all his sins; “and we do command the angels”, that they take such a soul out of purgatory entirely absolved, and introduce it into the glory of paradise:”

and in a manuscript in the library at Helmsted are these words,

“we command the angels that they carry such a soul into Abraham’s bosom, as soon as it has left

48 T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 11. 1.

49 T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 24. 1.

the body:”

kings and civil magistrates are called gods, Ps 82:6 and this monster of iniquity and firstborn of Satan, the popes of Rome, have exalted themselves above these; they have not only took upon them to excommunicate emperors and kings, but to depose them, and take away their crowns from them, and give their kingdoms to others, and absolve their subjects from allegiance and fidelity to them; an emperor has held a pope’s stirrup while he alighted from his horse, and was severely reprimanded for holding the left instead of the right stirrup; and the same emperor held another pope’s stirrup while he got on his horse, and who set his foot upon his neck when he absolved him, being before excommunicated by him, using these words in Ps 91:13 “thou shalt tread upon the lion”, &c. An emperor and an empress waited at a pope’s gates three days barefoot; another emperor and empress were crowned by the Pope with his feet; he took the crown with his feet, and, they bowing down, put it upon their heads, and then kicked it off; and one of our own kings resigned his crown and the ensigns of his royalty to the Pope’s legate, who kept them five days; and when he offered a sum of money to the legate as an earnest of his subjection, to show his master’s grandeur, he spurned at it; a king was thrown under a pope’s table to lick the bones like a dog, while he was eating: so truly has this passage had its accomplishment in that impious and insolent set of men. Rome is by the Jewish⁵⁰ writers called “Magdiel”, which signifies “magnifying itself”; the reason is, **שִׁיתִּגְדֵּל**, “because it magnifies itself” above all these⁵¹; that is, above all kingdoms and states: but what is worse, and most dreadfully blasphemous, follows,

so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God; not in the temple of Jerusalem, which was to be destroyed and never to be rebuilt more, and was destroyed before this man of sin was revealed; but in the church of God, so called, 1Co 3:16 the Ethiopic version renders it, “in the house of God”; for antichrist rose up out of, and in the midst of the church; and it was a true church in which he first appeared, and over which he usurped power and authority; though it has been so corrupted by him, as now to be only nominally so; here he sits, and has homage done him by his creatures, as if he was a god, and is not only styled Christ’s vicar, but a god on earth, and our Lord God the Pope; so in the triumphal arch at the entry of Pope Sixtus IV, these lines were put,

50 Jarchi in Gen. xxxvi. 43

51 Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 42. 3.

“*oraculo vocis, mundi moderaris habenas, et merito in terris crederis esse Dens*”; the sense is, that he governed the world by his word, and was deservedly believed to be God on earth; and their canon law⁵² says,

“it is clearly enough shown, that the Pope cannot be loosed or bound by any secular power; since it is evident that he is called God by that pious prince, Constantine, and it is manifest that God cannot be judged by men:”

and Pope John XXII is expressly called {h} “our Lord God the Pope”: the Ethiopic version reads, “he shall say to all, I am the Lord God”; see Eze 28:2, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, leave out the phrase, “as God”, but the Syriac retains it: however, the same blasphemy is expressed in the next clause,

shewing himself that he is God;

by usurping a power over the consciences and souls of men; by dispensing with the laws of God and man; by assuming to himself all power in heaven and in earth; by taking upon him to open and shut the gates of heaven at pleasure; and by pardoning sin, which none but God can do; this is the mouth speaking blasphemies, Re 13:5.

2 Thessalonians 2:5

Ver. 5. **Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you,**

.... At Thessalonica, for the apostle had been there in person, and had preached there with great boldness and success; he had declared the whole counsel of God, and the Gospel came in power and worked effectually in them, and yet there was too great a forgetfulness of it; with which the apostle tacitly charges them, and rebukes them gently for it; and as a faithful monitor, stirs up their pure minds by way of remembrance, and reminds them of former truths delivered to them:

I told you these things:

or “words” as the Arabic version; concerning the coming of Christ as that it would not be yet, that there, must be a defection from the faith, and antichrist must be revealed; which shows that these were things of moment and importance, and were useful and profitable to be insisted on; and therefore the apostle had told them of them, and spoke freely and largely about them, at his first preaching among them, and were what he inculcated everywhere; and also that his doctrine was all of a piece at one time as another; it was not yea and

52 Gratian. Decret. dist. 96. can. “satis”.

no, or contradictory; what he now said was no other than what he had said before; and therefore it was the more inexcusable in them, to be shaken or troubled by any means with another doctrine.

2 Thessalonians 2:6

Ver. 6. **And now ye know what withholdeth,**

.... Or hinders the revelation of the man of sin, or antichrist; by which is meant not the Apostle Paul, though he by his ministry was a very great hinderance of the growth of error, and the spread of evil practices in the churches, and so of the more open appearance of the man of sin in his forerunners; and after his departure from Ephesus, and imprisonment at Rome, and suffering death, there was a great falling off in the churches, and among professors of religion, which made way for the manifestation of antichrist in due time: nor the preaching of the Gospel, in its power and purity, in the several parts of the world; though so long as this obtained, got ground, and gained success, the man of sin could not show his head; and therefore it must, as it did, decline, and was gradually taken away that he might appear: nor the Spirit of God, as the spirit of truth and holiness, though as long as he continued in his gifts and operations of grace in the churches, they were preserved from antichristian doctrine and worship; but when he removed from them, this enemy and adversary of Christ and his Gospel came in like a flood: nor the general defection in 2Th 2:3 though that was to be previous to the revelation of antichrist, and was to be what would usher him in; nor could he appear until the wickedness of men was come to a pitch, that they would be ready to receive him, and pay homage and worship to him: nor is the decree of God meant, though till the time came fixed by God for his appearance, the decree must be a bar in his way; since as there is a time for every purpose, nothing can come to pass till that time comes: but by that which withheld, let or hindered the open appearance of antichrist, were the Roman empire and emperors; these stood in his way, and while this empire lasted, and the emperors wore the imperial crown, and sat on the throne, and held the government in their hands, the popes could not come at the height of their ambition, dignity, and authority, nor shine in their glory; nor could the whore of Babylon take her seat, and sit upon the seven hills of Rome until the Roman emperor was taken out of the way: this therefore hindered,

that he might be revealed in his time.

The Ethiopic version renders it, “until his time

appointed came”: wherefore till the time that God had fixed for the appearance of this monster of iniquity, this son of perdition, the Roman empire must continue, and Roman emperors must keep their place and dignity to prevent his appearance sooner: the reason why the apostle expresses this not in plain words, but in an obscure manner, and with so much caution, was, that he might not offend the Roman emperors, and provoke them to a severe persecution of them as seditious persons, that sought the destruction of the empire: the word here used, which is rendered “withholdeth”, or “letteth”, as in the next verse, signifies a ruler or governor, and answers to the Hebrew word *rue*, “to keep back, or restrain”; and which is used of kings, who by their laws and government restrain and withhold people from doing what they would; see 1Sa 9:17 to which the apostle, who well understood the Hebrew language, doubtless had reference; so *וַיִּרְשֵׁתוּ* is rendered, “a magistrate”, in Jud 18:7.

2 Thessalonians 2:7

Ver. 7. **For the mystery of iniquity doth already work,**

.... Or “the mystery of that wicked one”, as the Syriac; meaning either antichrist himself, and the spirit of antichrist, which were already in the world, 1Jo 2:18, “mystery” being one of the names of antichrist, Re 17:5 and anciently this word was engraven on the mitres of the popes of Rome: or the evil doctrines and practices of antichrist may be intended; for as the doctrine of the Gospel is called a mystery, and the mystery of godliness; so the doctrines and practices of antichrist may be called the mystery of iniquity, especially as they were now secretly spread, imbibed, and practised: the foundations of it were now laying in the church by false teachers; for errors and heresies of every sort, respecting the person and offices of Christ, and in opposition to them, were now broached; idolatry, and holding communion with idolaters, now obtained; worshipping of angels was used by some; and superstition and will worship, worship after the commandments of men, were practised; days, and months, and years, distinguished by Jews and Pagans, and difference of meats, were observed; celibacy and virginity began to be admired and commended; dominion and magistracy were despised, and church authority contemned, and many, as Diotrophes, loved to have the pre-eminence; and the doctrine of justification by the works of the law was industriously spread, and zealously preached and received; all which laid the foundation, and are the life and soul of popery:

only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way;

that is, the Roman empire and Roman emperors, and which were by degrees entirely removed, and so made way for the revelation of this wicked one: and which was done partly by Constantine the emperor receiving the Christian faith, whereby the Roman empire as Pagan ceased; and by increasing the riches of the church, and feeding the pride, ambition, and covetousness of the bishops, especially the bishop of Rome; and next by removing the seat of the empire from Rome to Byzantium, which he called Constantinople: here the Greek emperors continued in succession, and neither they themselves, nor even their exarchs, resided at Rome, but at Ravenna; so that way was made for antichrist to come to his seat, and there was nothing to rival and eclipse the grandeur, power, and glory of the Roman popes: and that which let was also taken out of the way, by the division of the empire, by Theodosius, giving to his elder son Arcadius, the eastern, and to the younger, Honorius, the western parts of it: the eastern empire was in process of time seized upon and possessed by Mahomet and the Saracens; and the western empire was overrun by the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, and became extinct about the year 476, in Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, who was obliged to abdicate the government by Odoacer king of the Heruli; when the kingdom of the Lombards took place in Italy, and afterwards that was translated to Charles the great, king of the French; so that there was nothing more of the Roman empire remaining than the bare name, as at this day; and by this means the popes of Rome got to the height of their power and glory, which is meant by the revelation of the man of sin.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Ver. 8. **And then shall that wicked be revealed,**

.... That lawless one, who sets himself above the laws of God and man, and dispenses with them at pleasure, who judges all men, but is judged by no man; as he was in his ecclesiastical power, when Phocas, who murdered the Emperor Mauritius, granted to Boniface III. to be called universal bishop; and in his civil power in succeeding popes, who took upon them the power over kings and emperors, to crown, depose, and excommunicate at pleasure:

whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth:

that is, the “Lord Jesus”, as the Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version read; and the Syriac version,

“our Lord Jesus”: who is Lord of lords, and God over all; and so able to do what he is here said he shall do: and which he will do

with the Spirit of his mouth;

meaning either the Holy Spirit, the third person which proceeds from him, as in Ps 33:6, and so the Ethiopic version, “whom the Spirit of our Lord Jesus shall cast out”; Christ will by his Spirit blow a blast upon antichrist and his kingdom, which he shall never recover again, but ever after consume and waste away: or else by his spirit is meant his Gospel; the Scriptures in general are the breath of God, being divinely inspired by him, and are the sword of the Spirit, the twoedged sword of law and Gospel, which proceeds out of Christ’s mouth; the Gospel contains the words of Christ, which are spirit and life; these come out of his mouth, and are sharper than any twoedged sword; and as hereby sinners are cut to the heart, hewn and slain, convicted and converted, so by this likewise antichrist will be consumed, and is consuming; for this phrase denotes the beginning of his destruction, which took place at the time of the reformation by the preaching of the Gospel by Luther and others; by which this man of sin received his deadly wound, and has been in a consumption ever since, and is sensibly wasting in his power and glory every day, and will ere long come to utter destruction:

and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming;

either in a spiritual way, when he shall come in his spiritual kingdom and glory, by the light of his Gospel and the illuminations of his Spirit; when at eventide it shall be light; when he the sun of righteousness shall arise; when latter day light and glory shall appear, and latter day darkness, the gross darkness of Popery, Paganism, and Judaism, which cover the people, shall be removed, and antichrist in every form shall disappear: or in a personal manner, when he shall come to judge the quick and dead, which will be in flaming fire and great glory; and then will antichrist and his followers, the beast and those that have worshipped him, be cast with the devil and the false prophet into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and this will be the last and utter end of him. In this passage there is a manifest reference to Isa 11:4, “with the breath of his mouth shall he slay the wicked”: which the Targumist paraphrases,

“with the words of his lips he shall slay aeyvr ארמילו, “Armillus the wicked”.”

and which the Jews say will be done by the Messiah

at his coming;

“for so ⁵³ (say they) that phrase in De 22:8 “if a man fall from thence”, has respect to Armillus the wicked, who at the coming of our Messiah will be slain, as it is said in Isa 11:4’

This Armillus, the Jews say ⁵⁴, is the head of all idolatry, the tenth king who shall reign at Rome, the city of Satan; that he shall rise up after Gog and Magog, and shall go up to Jerusalem, and slay Messiah ben Joseph, and shall himself be slain by Messiah the son of David; yea, they say expressly ⁵⁵, it is the same whom the Gentiles call antichrist: it is the same with Romulus the first king of the Romans, and designs a Roman, the Roman antichrist; and it may be observed, that the Targumist interprets “the breath of his mouth”, by his word; and so says another of their writers ⁵⁶,

“the meaning is by the word of his lips, for the word goes out of the mouth with the vapour and breath:”

such an expression as this is said ⁵⁷ to be used by Moses, when he was bid by God to answer the angels who objected to his having the law given him;

“I am afraid (says he) they will slay (or burn me), בהבל שבפיהם, “with the breath of their mouth”.”

much more may this be feared from the breath of Christ’s mouth.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

Ver. 9. **Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan,**

.... That is, as a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer; for such was the working of Satan with our first parents; he seduced Eve, not only by subtlety, but by lying; he abode not in the truth, is the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning; and such is the working of antichrist his firstborn; he comes in a deceitful way, under a profession of Christ, and a pretension of faith in him, and love to him; but speaks lies in hypocrisy, for such are his doctrines and tenets; and is not only a murderer of the bodies of the saints, but of the souls of

⁵³ Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 2.

⁵⁴ Apud Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 221, 222, 223.

⁵⁵ 2 Abkath Rochel, par. 1. sign. 7. p. 52.

⁵⁶ In Ohel Moed. fol. 19. 1.

⁵⁷ T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.

men; which are the wares the whore of Babylon deals in:

with all power;

not omnipotence, for that is peculiar to God, and is not in Satan nor in antichrist, though the latter assumes to himself all power in heaven and in earth, and claims a jurisdiction both temporal and spiritual over men; but rather this means great power, or all kind of power of doing miracles, as follows:

and signs, and lying wonders;

that is, such signs and miracles as are not real, but reigned, only in appearance, not in truth, like those that were done by the magicians of Egypt; and these were done to countenance lies, and to induce persons to believe them; and how many miracles and lying wonders the church of Rome pretends to, everybody knows.

2 Thessalonians 2:10

Ver. 10. **And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness,**

.... Not that he deceives, or goes about to deceive, or thinks to deceive by open unrighteousness; but by unrighteousness, under a pretence of righteousness and holiness; as with the doctrines of justification and salvation by a man's own righteousness, with the doctrines of merit and of works of supererogation, which are taking to men, and by which they are deceived, and are no other than unrighteousness with God, and betray ignorance of his righteousness, and a non-submission to it; as also with practices which carry a show of holiness, religion, and devotion, when they are no other than acts of impiety, superstition, and will worship; as their litanies and prayers, their worship of images, angels, and saints departed, their frequent fasts and festivals, their pilgrimages, penance, and various acts of mortification and the like: but then these deceptions only have place

in them that perish;

whom the god of this world has blinded, from whom the Gospel is hid, and to whom it is foolishness: all men indeed are in a lost perishing condition, through original and actual sin; but all shall not perish, there are some that God will not have perish, whom Christ is given for that they should not perish, and whom he has redeemed by his blood, and to whom he gives eternal life; but there are others that are vessels of wrath afore ordained to condemnation, reprobate men left to themselves, and given up to their hearts' lusts; and these, and only these, are finally and totally deceived, by the signs and lying wonders, and false appearances of antichrist; see Mt 24:24

because they received not the love of the truth,

that they might be saved;

by the "truth" is meant either Christ the truth of types, the sum of promises, in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are, and by whom grace and truth came; or the Gospel, often called truth, and the word of truth, it coming from the God of truth, has for its subject Christ the truth, is dictated and directed into by the spirit of truth, and contains nothing but truth: and by "the love" of it is meant, either the loveliness of it, for truth is an amiable, lovely thing, in its nature and use; or an affection for it, which there is, where true faith in it is, for faith works by love: there may be a flashy affection for the truths of the Gospel, where there is no true faith in Christ, or the root of the matter is not, as in the stony ground hearers; and there may be an historical faith in the doctrines of the Gospel, where the power of them is denied, and there is no true hearty love for them; and in these persons there is neither faith nor love; the truths of the Gospel are neither believed by them, nor are they affected with them, that so, they might be saved; for where there is true faith in the Gospel of Christ, and in Christ the substance of it, there is salvation; the reason therefore of these men's perishing is not the decree of God, nor even want of the means of grace, the revelation of the Gospel, but their rejection and contempt of it.

2 Thessalonians 2:11

Ver. 11. **And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,**

.... Or "efficacy of error", which God may be said to send; and the Alexandrian copy reads, "does send"; because it is not a bare permission but a voluntary one; or it is his will that error should be that truth may be tried, and be illustrated by its contrary, and shine the more through the force of opposition to it; and that those which are on the side of it might be made manifest, as well as that the rejecters of the Gospel might be punished; for the efficacy of error is not to be considered as a sin, of which God cannot be the author, but as a punishment for sin, and to which men are given up, and fall under the power of, because they receive not the love of the truth, which is the reason here given: and this comes to pass partly through God's denying his grace, or withholding that light and knowledge, by which error may be discovered and detected; and by taking from men the knowledge and conscience of things they had, see Ro 1:28. So that they call evil good, and good evil, and do not appear to have the common sense and reason of mankind, at least do not act according to it; and by giving them up to judicial blindness and

hardness of heart, and to the god of this world, to blind their minds; and without this it is not to be accounted for, that the followers of antichrist should give into such senseless notions as those of transubstantiation, works of supererogation, &c., or into such stupid practices as worshipping of images, praying to saints departed, and paying such a respect to the pretended relics of saints, &c., as they do; but a spirit of slumber is given them, and eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, because of their rejection of the Gospel: and

that they should believe a lie;

that the pope is Christ's vicar on earth, and has power to forgive sins; that the bread and wine in the Lord's supper are transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ; with other lying tenets spoken in hypocrisy concerning good works, merit, pardon, penance; &c. with a multitude of lying wonders and false miracles, of which their legends are full; and this is the first and more near end of strong delusion or efficacious error being sent them; the more remote and ultimate one follows.

2 Thessalonians 2:12

Ver. 12. **That they all might be damned,**

.... Or judged, discerned and distinguished from true Christians and real believers, or rather that they might be condemned and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and have their portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; where the devil, the false prophet, and the beast, whose followers they are, will be cast; and it is but a righteous thing with God to give them up to such delusion,

that they may be damned, since they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved;

and the following character of them justifies the divine procedure:

who believed not the truth;

neither the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, nor Christ, who is truth itself; and therefore were righteously given up to believe a lie; and whose damnation is just, according to the declaration of Christ, he that believeth not shall be damned:

but had pleasure in unrighteousness;

in sin, as all unrighteousness is; in sinful ways and works, and in unrighteous doctrines; as the doctrines of merit, of works of supererogation, and of justification by works, being derogatory to the justice of God, and to the righteousness of Christ; and in the unrighteous persecution and bloodshed of the saints, the martyrs of

Jesus; in which the followers of antichrist take as much delight and pleasure, as an intemperate man does in drinking wine or strong drink to excess; and therefore the whore of Babylon is said to be drunk with the blood of the saints; and it is but just she should have blood to drink, or be punished both with temporal and eternal destruction.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

Ver. 13. **But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you,**

.... Lest the saints should be discouraged by the above account of antichrist, and his followers, and fear they should be left to the same deceptions, and damnation be their portion; the apostle being persuaded better things of them, gives their character, and represents their case in a quite different light; and signifies, that he and his fellow ministers were under obligation to be continually thankful to God for what he had done for them; for as God is the Father of mercies, whether spiritual or temporal, thanks are to be given to him; and saints are not only to bless his name for what they themselves receive from him, but for what others enjoy also, and that continually; because spiritual blessings, especially such as are afterwards instanced in, are permanent and durable, yea, everlasting: the characters which show them to be different from the followers of antichrist, are

brethren, beloved of the Lord

or "of God", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read: they were the brethren of Christ, being the dear children of God, born of him, and belonging to his family, and of the apostles, and of one another, being of the household of faith; and they were beloved by God the Father, as the instances of their election to salvation by him, and their calling to eternal glory, show; and by the Lord Jesus Christ, who had wrought out for them the salvation they were chosen to; and by the Lord the Spirit, by whom they were regenerated, called, sanctified, and brought to the belief of the truth; and since they had interest in the everlasting love of the three divine Persons, there was no danger of their falling away and perishing. The reason of the apostle's thanksgiving for the persons thus described is,

because God hath from, the beginning chosen you to salvation;

which is to be understood, not of an election of them, as a nation, for they were not a nation, only a part of one; nor of them as a church, for they were not so from the beginning; nor to the outward means of grace, the ministry of the word and ordinances, for the choice

is unto salvation; nor to any office, for they were not all officers in the church, only some; nor does it intend the effectual calling, for that is distinguished from it in the following verse; but an eternal appointment of persons to grace and glory: and this is an act of God the Father, in Christ, from eternity; and which arises from his sovereign good will and pleasure, and is an instance of his free grace and favour, for the glorifying of himself; and is irrespective of the faith, holiness, and good works of men; all which are the fruits and effects, and not the motives, conditions, or causes of electing grace. This act is the leading one to all other blessings of grace, as justification, adoption, calling, and glorification, and is certain and immutable in itself, and in its effects. The date of it is “from the beginning”: not from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel to them, and the sense be, that, as soon as the Gospel was preached, they believed, and God chose them; for what was there remarkable in them, that this should be peculiarly observed of them? The Bereans are said to be more noble than they were: nor from the beginning of their calling, for predestination or election precedes calling; see Ro 8:30 nor from the beginning of time, or of the creation of the world, but before the world began, even from eternity; and in such sense the phrase is used in Pr 8:23 and that it is the sense of it here, is manifest from Eph 1:4 where this choice is said to be before the foundation of the world. The end to which men, by this act, are chosen, is “salvation”: not temporal, though the elect of God are appointed to many temporal salvations and deliverances, and which they enjoy both before and after conversion; yet salvation here designs the salvation of the soul, though not exclusive of the body, a spiritual and an eternal salvation, salvation by Jesus Christ, as is expressed in 1Th 5:9 and the same decree that appoints men to salvation, appoints Christ to be the Saviour of them; and there is salvation in and by no other. The means through which this choice is made, are

through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth

by sanctification is meant, not anything external, as reformation of life, obedience to the law, or outward submission to Gospel ordinances; but internal holiness, which lies in a principle of spiritual life in the soul, and in a principle of spiritual light on the understanding; in a flexion of the will to the will of God, and the way of salvation by Christ; in a settlement of the affections on divine and spiritual things, and in an implantation of all grace in the heart; and is called the sanctification of “the spirit”, partly from the spirit or soul of man being the

principal seat of it, and chiefly from the Spirit of God being the author of it; and this being a means fixed in the decree of election to salvation, shows that holiness is not the cause of election, yet is certain by it, and is necessary to salvation; and that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine, since it provides for and secures true and real holiness. “Truth” designs either the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truth of types and promises, and the substance of the truth of the Gospel, in whom it lies, and by whom it comes; or the Gospel itself, which comes from the God of truth, lies in the Scriptures of truth, is dictated and directed into by the spirit of truth; the sum of it is Christ the truth, and has nothing in it but truth. The “belief” or “faith” of this intends, not an historical faith, or a mere assent to truth; but a cordial embracing of it, a receiving of the love of the truth, a feeling of the power of it unto salvation, and a believing in Christ, the substance of it; which is a seeing of him spiritually, and a going out of the soul to him in acts of hope; reliance, trust, and dependence; and this being also a means settled in the choice of men to salvation, makes it appear, that faith is no cause of election, but the effect of it; that it is necessary to salvation, and therefore appointed as a means; that it is certain to the elect by it, and that they therefore cannot be finally and totally deceived, or be carried away with the error of the wicked, or with the deceivableness of unrighteousness with which antichrist works.

2 Thessalonians 2:14

Ver. 14. **Whereunto he called you by our Gospel,**

.... Salvation being appointed as the end in the decree of election, and sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as means; the elect in the effectual calling are called to the participation of each of these; first to the one, and then to the other; to grace here, and glory hereafter: and the means by which they are called is the Gospel, which the apostle calls “our Gospel”, not because they were the authors, or the subject of it; for with regard to these it is styled the Gospel of God, and the Gospel of Christ; but because they were intrusted with it, and faithfully preached it, and in opposition to another Gospel published by false teachers. And by this they were called

to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;

not his essential glory, though he will be seen and known in the glory of his person as he is, so far as creatures in a state of perfection will be capable of; nor his mediatorial glory, though it will be one part of the

saints’ happiness in heaven to behold this glory of Christ; but rather the glory which shall be personally put upon the saints, both in soul and body, in the resurrection morn, is here intended: and which is called the glory of Christ, because it is in his hands for them; and is what he is preparing for them, and for which he gives them both a right and a meetness; and which he at last will introduce them into; and it will lie greatly in conformity to him, and in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him: and now God’s elect are called by the ministry of the word to “the obtaining” of this, not by any merit of theirs, or by any works of righteousness done by them, but to the “possession” of it, as the word used properly signifies. The Syriac version renders it, “that ye may be a glory to our Lord Jesus Christ”: as the saints will be at the last day, and to all eternity, when they shall be raised again, and have the glory of God upon them, and be forever with the Lord. 2 Thessalonians 2:15 Ver. 15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast,... In the doctrine of the Gospel in general, and in the article of Christ’s second coming in particular, and not in the least waver about the thing itself, nor be shaken in mind, and troubled as if it was just at hand; and the rather it became them to be concerned that they stood fast in the truth, and persevered unto the end, since there was to be a falling away, and the mystery of iniquity was already working, and antichrist would shortly appear, whose coming would be with all deceivableness, of unrighteousness; and they had the greater encouragement to continue firm and unmoved, seeing they were chosen from eternity unto salvation through sanctification and belief of the truth, and were called in time by the Gospel to the enjoyment of the glory of Christ in another world. And hold the traditions which ye have been taught: meaning the truths of the Gospel, which may be called traditions, because they are delivered from one to another; the Gospel was first delivered by God the Father to Jesus Christ, as Mediator, and by him to his apostles, and by them to the churches of Christ; whence it is called the form of doctrine delivered to them, and the faith once delivered to the saints: and also the ordinances of the Gospel which the apostles received from Christ, and as they received them faithfully delivered them, such as baptism and the Lord’s supper; as well as rules of conduct and behaviour, both in the church, and in the world, even all the commandments of Christ, which he ordered his apostles to teach, and which they gave by him; see 2Th 3:6. And so the Syriac version here renders it, “the commandments”: and these were such as these saints had been taught by the apostles, under

the direction of Christ, and through the guidance of his Spirit; and were not the traditions of men or the rudiments of the world, but what they had received from Christ, through the hands of the apostles: whether by word, or our epistle, that is, by “our” word, as well as by our epistle, and so the Arabic version reads; these doctrines, ordinances, and rules of discipline were communicated to them, both by word of mouth, when the apostles were in person among them, and by writing afterwards to them; for what the apostles delivered in the ministry of the word to the churches, they sent them in writing, that they might be a standing rule of faith and practice; so that this does not in the least countenance the unwritten traditions of the Papists; and since these were what were taught them, “viva voce”, and they received them from the mouth of the apostles, or by letters from them, or both, it became them to hold and retain them fast, and not let them go, either with respect to doctrine or practice.

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Ver. 16. **Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself,**

.... The apostle having exhorted the saints to perseverance, closes this second part of his epistle, relating to the coming of Christ, with a prayer for the saints, that they might be comforted and established. The objects addressed are Christ and the Father. And in each of their characters are reasons contained, encouraging to believe the petitions will be regarded; for it is “our Lord Jesus Christ himself” who is prayed unto; who is our Lord, not by creation only, in which sense he is Lord of all, but by redemption, and through a marriage relation; and he is our Jesus, our Saviour, and Redeemer; and our Christ, the anointed prophet, priest, and King; even he himself, who stands in these relations and offices; and what may not be expected from him?

and God, even our Father;

not by creation, but by adoption; and as it is in his power, he has a heart to give, and will give good things unto his children: and inasmuch as Christ is equally addressed as the object of prayer as the Father, and is indeed here set before him, or first mentioned, it may be concluded that there is an entire equality between them, and that Christ is truly and properly God; otherwise religious worship, of which prayer is a considerable branch, would not be given him, nor would he be set upon an equal foot with the other, and much less before him. The Arabic version reads, “our Lord Jesus Christ, our Father”; and the Ethiopic version also, “our Lord Jesus Christ, God our Father”; as if the whole of this,

or all these epithets and characters, belong to Christ, and he was the only person addressed; but the common reading is best: which hath loved us; this refers both to the Father and to Christ. The Father had loved them with an everlasting and unchangeable love, as appeared by his choosing them unto salvation by Christ, securing them in his hands, and making an everlasting covenant with him, on their account; by sending his Son to be the Saviour of them; by regenerating, quickening, and calling them by his grace, adopting them into his family, pardoning all their sins, justifying their persons, and giving them both a meetness for, and a right unto eternal glory. And Christ, he had loved them with the same love; and which he showed by undertaking their cause in the council of peace; by espousing their persons in the covenant of grace; by assuming their nature in the fulness of time; by dying in their room and stead; and by his continued intercession and mediation for them, and by many other instances. And since they had such a share in the affection both of the Father and the Son, it need not to have been doubted but that what was prayed for would be granted: to which is added,

and hath given us everlasting consolation:

all true solid consolation is from God and Christ: God is called the God of all comfort; and if there be any real consolation, it is in, by, and from Christ; and it is the gift of God, an instance of his grace and favour, and not a point of merit; the least degree of consolation is not deserved, and ought not to be reckoned small: and it is everlasting; it does not indeed always continue, as to the sensible enjoyment of it, in this life, being often interrupted by indwelling sin, the hidings of God's and the temptations of Satan, yet the ground and foundation of it is everlasting; such as the everlasting love of God, the everlasting covenant of grace, the everlasting righteousness of Christ, and everlasting salvation by him, and he himself, who is the consolation of Israel, as well as the blessed Spirit, the Comforter, who ever abides as the earnest and pledge of future happiness. And the present spiritual joy of the saints is what no man can take away from them, and what will eventually issue in everlasting consolation, without any interruption in the world to come, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and all tears be wiped from their eyes:

and good hope through grace.

The Syriac version reads, "in his grace"; and the Ethiopic version, "a good hope; and his grace", hope, as well as faith, is the gift of God, a free grace gift of his: and it may be called a good one, because God is the author of it; and it is built on a good foundation,

the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is of good things to come, and therefore called the blessed hope; and is what is sure and certain, and will never deceive, nor make ashamed; and since consolation is given here, and hope of happiness hereafter, it may be concluded the following requests will be regarded.

2 Thessalonians 2:17

Ver. 17. **Comfort your hearts,**

.... That is, apply the comfort given, and cause it to be received, which unbelief is apt to refuse; and increase it, by shedding abroad the love of Christ, and of the Father; by the discoveries of pardoning grace; by the application of Gospel promises; by the word and ordinances, which are breasts of consolation; and by indulging with the gracious presence, and comfortable communion of Father, Son, and Spirit. The Arabic version reads, "comfort your hearts by his grace", joining the last clause of the preceding verse to this. This petition stands opposed to a being troubled and distressed about the sudden coming of Christ, as the following one does to a being shaken in mind on that account, 2Th 2:2.

And stablish you in every good word and work;

that is, in every good word of God, or truth of the Gospel, which contains good tidings of good things, so as not to waver about them, or stagger in them, or to depart from them; in practice of every duty, so as to be steadfast, and immoveable, and always abounding therein; good words and good works, principles and practices, should go together, and the saints stand in need of stability in both. For though, as to their state and condition, they are established in the love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the arms of Christ, and in him the foundation, so as they can never be removed; yet they are often very unstable, not only in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, but in their attachment and adherence to the Gospel and interest of Christ, and in the discharge of duty.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle requests of the Thessalonians, that they would pray for him, and other Gospel ministers; and he puts up prayers for them, gives them rules about dealing with disorderly persons, and concludes the epistle with his usual salutation. The request to pray for ministers is in 2Th 3:1 the petitions to be made for them are, that their ministry might be succeeded, and their persons preserved and delivered from evil minded men, destitute of faith in Christ, 2Th 3:1 and, for the consolation of the saints, observes the

faithfulness of God engaged in their behalf to establish them in the faith they had, and to preserve them from everything and person that is evil, 2Th 3:3 and expresses his confidence in them with respect to their walk and conversation, 2Th 3:4 and then prays for them that their hearts might be directed into the love of God, and patience of Christ, 2Th 3:5. And next follows an order to withdraw from every disorderly walker, particularly idle and slothful persons, 2Th 3:6 and from such a lazy idle life the apostle dissuades by his own example, who behaved not disorderly, nor ate the bread of others, but wrought with his own hands, though he had a right to a maintenance without it, but did this to set an example to them, 2Th 3:7. He puts them in mind of a precept of his when among them, that such who would not work should not eat, 2Th 3:10 and the order he now gave, and the precept he reminds them of, were not without reason; seeing there were disorderly idle persons, and busy bodies, among them, whom the apostle exhorts and beseeches, in the name of Christ, to be industrious, and eat their own bread, as the fruit of their labours, 2Th 3:11 and as for the other members of the church, he exhorts them to diligence and constancy in well doing, and to mark those that were incorrigible, and have no conversation with them, yet dealing with them not as enemies, but admonishing them as brethren, 2Th 3:13. And closes all with prayers, that the Lord would give them peace, and grant his presence to them, and with his usual salutation, written with his own hand, as a token of this being a genuine epistle of his, and by which every epistle of his might be known, 2Th 3:16.

2 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER 3 (verse 1-18)

[1] Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

[2] And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

[3] But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

[4] And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

[5] And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

[6] Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

[7] For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us:

for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

[8] Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

[9] Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

[10] For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

[11] For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

[12] Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

[13] But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

[14] And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

[15] Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

[16] Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

[17] The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

[18] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

JOHN GILL'S COMMENTARY CHAPTER 3

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Ver. 1. **Finally, brethren, pray for us,**

.... The apostle now proceeds to the last and closing part of the epistle, which respects church discipline, and the removing of disorderly persons from their communion; and introduces it with a request to pray for him, and the rest of his fellow ministers, particularly Silvanus and Timothy, who joined with him in this epistle: he signifies that nothing more remained; this was the last he had to say, that they, "the brethren", not the preachers of the word only, but the members of the church, would be solicitous for them at the throne of grace; as it becomes all the churches, and the several members of them, to pray for their ministers: with respect to their private studies, that they might be directed to suitable subjects; that their understandings might be opened to understand the Scriptures; that their gifts might be increased, and they be more and more fitted for public service: and with respect to their public ministrations, that they be brought forth in the

fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; that they have a door of utterance given them to preach the Gospel freely and boldly, as it ought to be spoken; and that their ministry be blessed to saints and sinners: and with respect to the world, and their conduct in it, that they be kept from the evil of it, and so behave as to give none offence, that the ministry be not blamed; and that they be not allured by the flatteries, nor intimidated by the frowns of the world, but endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ: and with respect to their persons and state, that their souls may prosper, and that they may have much of the presence of God, and much spiritual joy, peace, comfort, and strength of faith; and that they may enjoy bodily health, and their lives be spared for further usefulness. This request is frequently urged by the apostle; which shows his sense of the importance of the work of the ministry, the insufficiency of men for it, the necessity of fresh supplies of grace, and the great usefulness of prayer. The particular petitions he would have put up follow,

that the word of the Lord may have free course.

By “the word of the Lord”, or “of God”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, is meant the Gospel; which is of God, and not of man, comes by the Lord Jesus Christ, and is concerning him, his person and offices, and concerning peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation by him, as the subject matter of it: and the request is, that this might “have free course”: or “might run”: be propagated and spread far and near: the ministry of the word is a course or race, and ministers are runners in it, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; which is the message they are sent with, and the errand they run upon: which comes from heaven, and is to be carried into all the world, and spread: Satan and his emissaries do all they can to hinder the progress of it; God only can remove all obstructions and impediments; when he works none can let; all mountains become a plain before Zerubbabel. Wherefore the apostle directs to pray to him for it, with what follows,

and be glorified, even as it is with you;

the Gospel is glorified when it is attended upon by large numbers, and is heard with a becoming reverence; when it is received in the love of it, is greatly prized and highly esteemed; when it is cordially embraced, and cheerfully obeyed. It is glorified when sinners are converted by it, and the lives of the professors of it are agreeably to it; and thus it was glorified in these several instances at Thessalonica; and therefore the apostle puts them upon praying, that it might be so elsewhere, as

there; even “everywhere”, as the Syriac version adds.

2 Thessalonians 3:2

Ver. 2. **And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men,**

.... Either from the unbelieving Jews, see Ro 15:30 who were the avowed enemies of the Gospel, and did all they could to hinder the spread of it; and who were the implacable and constant adversaries of the apostle; who often lay in wait for him, and opposed him, and gave him trouble in all places, stirring up the people against him: or from the false teachers, and those of their party, who are the false brethren by whom he often was in perils; who were enemies of the cross of Christ, and great hindrances to the spread of the Gospel; being men of absurd principles, and of wicked lives and conversations, whereby they perverted the Gospel of Christ, brought a reproach upon it, stumbled some, and overthrew the faith of others; and from these the apostle desires to be delivered:

for all men have not faith:

no man has faith of himself, it is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; and it is only given to the elect of God, who are ordained unto eternal life, and therefore it is called the faith of God's elect; all mankind have it not, none but Christ's sheep; and the reason why others have it not is, because they are not of his sheep. This is a truth; but rather the true sense of the words is, that all that are professors of religion, and members of churches, and even all that are preachers of the word, have not faith. They may have an historical and temporary faith and the faith of miracles, and even all faith but the true faith; they may profess to believe, and yet not believe, as Simon Magus, and his followers seem to be intended here; for this is given as a reason why the apostle desired to be delivered from the above men. The Jews say ⁵⁸, that

“he that studies not in the law, atwnmyhm hyb wal, “there is no faith in him”--and it is forbidden to come near him, or to trade with him, or to walk with him, “because there is no faith in him”.

The apostle seems to allude to this custom.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

Ver. 3. **But the Lord is faithful,**

.... Or “God” as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic

⁵⁸ Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 2.

versions read, as do also the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies. This is said for the comfort of the saints, lest they should be discouraged upon hearing that all professors of faith in Christ had it not, who might be ready to take it to themselves, and fear, that either they had it not, or if they had, that they might lose it, and fall from it. Wherefore the apostle observes to them the comfortable attribute of God's faithfulness, which he will not suffer to fail. He has promised many things, and he is faithful that has promised, who also will do them, nor will any good thing he has promised ever fail.

Who shall stablish you:

in the doctrines of the Gospel, so as not to be moved away from them, or be finally and totally seduced by those unreasonable and wicked men; and also in the grace of faith, which though it may be weakened, and there may be a falling from a degree of the steadfastness of it, as to its act and exercise, yet it shall never finally and totally fail, he who is the author will be the finisher of it; and likewise in the profession both of the doctrine and grace of faith, which true believers shall hold fast unto the end; for God will not suffer the righteous to be moved, or to depart from him; he has promised them perseverance, and he is faithful to give it to them.

And keep you from evil:

from the evil of sin; not from the being and commission of it entirely, which is not to be expected in this life; but from the dominion of it, at least from its reigning unto death, and from the damning power of it: and also from that evil one Satan; from his snares and temptations, so as to be entangled and overcome by them; for God is faithful, who will not suffer his to be tempted beyond their strength, but will enable them to bear it, and make way for their escape, and deliver out of it; and likewise from evil men, unreasonable and wicked men, so as not to be drawn aside by them, by their principles and practices, by their frowns or flatteries.

2 Thessalonians 3:4

Ver. 4. **And we have confidence in the Lord touching you,**

.... The ground of confidence concerning them was not in themselves, in their grace, and strength, and wisdom, and conduct, and good behaviour; but in the Lord, in his grace and strength, and in the power of his might, without whom they could do nothing, but through him strengthening them, could do all things.

That ye both do, and will do the things which we command you;

referring both to the commandments, which they had already given them by Christ, and they had showed, and continued to show a proper regard unto, see 1Th 4:1 and also to what would be observed to them, as in 2Th 3:6.

2 Thessalonians 3:5

Ver. 5. **And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God,**

.... By which may be meant either the love with which God is loved. This is the sum and substance of the first and chief commandment in the law, and is what every man in a state of nature is destitute of; it is implanted in the heart in regeneration, and is a fruit of the Spirit of God; and where it is it oftentimes grows cold, and needs to be stirred up and rekindled, by the Spirit of God, which may be intended, by a directing of the heart into it, that is, to a lively exercise of it: or else the love with which God loves his people is designed, which is free, sovereign, unchangeable, and from everlasting to everlasting; and to have the heart directed into this, is to be led into it directly; or by a straight line, as the word signifies, and not in a round about way, by works and duties, as the causes or conditions of it; and to be led further into it, so as to wade into these waters of the sanctuary, from the ankles to the knees, and from thence to the loins, and from thence till they become a broad river to swim in; or so as to comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of this love, and to be rooted and grounded in it, and firmly persuaded of interest in it; and that nothing shall separate from it; and so as to have the heart sensibly affected with it. The phrase of directing the heart to God, and to seek him, is used in the Septuagint, in 2Ch 19:3. And this is not to be done by a believer himself, nor by the ministers of the Gospel: the apostle could not do it, and therefore he prays “the Lord” to do it; by whom is meant the Spirit of God, since he is distinguished from God the Father, into whose love the heart is to be directed, and from Christ, a patient waiting for whom it is also desired the heart may be directed into; and since it is his work to shed abroad the love of God in the heart, and to lead unto it, and make application of it; and which is a proof of his deity, for none has the direction, management, and government of the heart, but God, Pr 21:1, and in this passage of Scripture appear all the three Persons; for here is the love of the Father, patient waiting for Christ, the Spirit and the Lord. For it follows, as another branch of the petition,

and into the patient waiting for Christ;

or "patience of Christ", as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; and may intend either that patience, of which Christ was the subject; and which appeared in his quiet submission to all that outward meanness he did in his state of humiliation; in bearing the insults and reproaches of men, and the frowardness of his own disciples, in suffering himself to be tempted by Satan; and in bearing the sins of his people, the wrath of God, and strokes of justice in the manner he did: and for the saints to have their hearts directed into this patience of Christ, is of great use unto them, to endear Christ unto, them; to lead them into the greatness of his love, and also of his person; and to make them more patient under the cross, when they consider him, and have him for an example. Or else it may respect the grace of patience, which he is the author of, for all grace comes from him; and he from hence may be called the God of patience, as his word, which is the means of it, is the word of his patience; and it is by his strength that saints are strengthened unto all patience, and longsuffering: and to be directed into this, or to the exercise of it, is of great use under afflictions from the hand of God, and under the reproaches and persecutions of men, and under divine desertions, and want of an answer of prayer, and under the temptations of Satan, and in an expectation of the heavenly glory. And the heart is never more in the exercise of this, than when it is directed into the love of God; see Ro 5:2. Or this may refer to that patience of which Christ is the object, and be understood, either of a patient bearing the cross for his sake; for every believer has a cross to take up and bear for Christ, and which is to be borne constantly, cheerfully, and patiently; and nothing more strongly animates to such a patient bearing of it, than a sense of the love of God; so that a being directed into that, leads also to this: or as our version points out the sense, it may be understood of a patient waiting for the second coming of Christ. Christ will certainly come a second time, though when he will come is uncertain; and his coming will be very glorious in itself, and of great advantage to the saints: hence it becomes them, not only to believe it, hope for it, love it, and look for it, but to wait patiently for it; which being directed to by the Spirit of God, is of great use unto them in the present state of things.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

Ver. 6. **Now we command you, brethren,**

.... The apostle is now come to the main thing itself he has in view in this part of the epistle, which is to

encourage a regard to the discipline of God's house; and to exhort this church to excommunicate, or remove from communion, all disorderly persons; and those who are to do this he points out, and calls upon, and even commands; and these are the fraternity, the "brethren", the society of believers, all the members of the church; for to them to whom belongs the power of receiving members, to them only belongs the power of excluding offenders: the executive power lies in the hands of the elders or pastors of churches; they are the persons by whom the church receives or casts out members; but the power of judgment, or of determining who shall be received into, or who shall be removed from communion, lies in the church, and not in the pastors and elders only; whoever therefore take upon them to receive, or refuse, or cast out members of themselves, and at their own pleasure, act the part of Diotrephes, 3Jo 1:9. The authority for removing disorderly persons from communion is an apostolical command, "we command you"; who are the apostles of Christ, immediately sent by him, who had their mission and commission from him, and which were confirmed by miracles; these had a greater power and authority than the ordinary ministers of the word; they were the ambassadors of Christ, stood in his stead, represented him, and acted in his name; what they said, he spake by them; and it was all one as if he had spoke it himself: and that this might appear not to be of them, but of him, it is added,

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

that is, by his power and authority, if they had any regard to that, or to his honour and glory:

that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly;

by a brother is meant, not one in a natural or civil sense, who is so by blood, or by neighbourhood, by being of the same country, or of the same human species, since all are of one blood; but one in an ecclesiastical sense, a church member, who is called a brother, though he may not be really a child of God, one of the brethren of Christ, or born of the Spirit; yet being a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God externally, he bears this character; and such an one only is cognizable by a church, who have nothing to do to judge them that are without, only them that are within: and "every brother" in this sense falls under their notice; everyone that is a member, whether male or female, for this word includes both; and as the sisters, as well as the brethren, stand in the same relation, are in the same church state, partake of the same ordinances, and enjoy the same privileges, they are obliged to regard the same rules of the Gospel,

and duties of religion, and, in case of disorder, to be withdrawn from: and this also regards every brother, of whatsoever state or condition, bond or free, high or low, rich or poor; no partiality is to be used, no preference to be given to one above the other; a poor member in a disorder is not to be bore hard upon, while a rich one is winked and connived at: and it also respects the brethren, whether private members, or officers of the church; for not only the former, but also the latter, when they walk disorderly, whether in the discharge of their office, or in any other part of their conduct, are liable to the notice and censure of the church: and which is only to be done when any of them "walk disorderly"; not for every disorder they are guilty of; there is no man lives without sin; and church members have their infirmities, and will have, as long as they are in the flesh, or in the body; and they are not to be made offenders for a word, or for a single disorder, or for the common infirmities of life; nor are the just to be set aside for a thing of nought, or a small offence, and that not continued in: it is one thing to be guilty of a disorder, and another thing to walk disorderly; which denotes a way, a course, a series of disorder, and proceeding on in it, a going from evil to evil, an increasing to more ungodliness; for walking is a progressive action, and disorderly persons do not stop, but grow worse and worse; for they take pleasure in their disorders; they choose their own ways, and delight in their abominations; the paths of sin are pleasant paths to them: and they are disorderly walkers, who pertinaciously and stubbornly continue in their disorders, notwithstanding the admonitions of private persons, and of the whole church; and of this sort there are such that walk disorderly in the world, in the commission of notorious and scandalous sins, such as uncleanness, intemperance, covetousness, &c. and that walk disorderly in families; as husbands that are not affectionate to their wives, and provide not for their household; and wives that are not in subjection to their husbands; parents that provoke their children to wrath; and children that are disobedient to their parents; masters who give not that which is fit and equal to their servants; and servants that despise their masters because they are brethren, when they should serve them the more cheerfully, because faithful and beloved: and also that walk disorderly in churches, that fill not up their places, but neglect attendance with the church, on the word and ordinances; and who are contentious and quarrelsome, and will not submit to the sentiments of those who are superior to them in number and sense; and likewise such who entertain bad

notions and principles, derogatory to the grace of God, the person and offices of Christ, and the operations of the Spirit; who walk, not in the truth, nor according to the standard of the word of God; and especially such are designed here, who are busy bodies, and idle persons, who work not at all, but live at the tables, and upon the substance of others, as appears from 2Th 3:11. These act contrary to the order and decorum of nations, towns, and families, and to that which God has fixed among mankind; and to the example of God, and Christ as God, who work hither to and jointly together in Providence, and in the government of the world; and to the example which Christ, as man, has set, and to the example of the apostles, and to their commands: wherefore it follows,

and not after the tradition which he received of us;

meaning either the Gospel of Christ, which being preached was received, but the walk and conversation of some was not agreeably to it; or the ordinances of the Gospel, and the precepts of religion which the apostles delivered, and were received, and yet due attendance to them was not given; See Gill on "2Th 2:15", or rather that particular injunction concerning quietness, and doing their own business, and working with their own hands, 1Th 4:11. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "which they received of us": the sense is the same; and the Ethiopic version, "and not according to the constitution we appointed them". Now what is commanded to be done to such disorderly persons, by the church, even the whole fraternity, is to "withdraw" themselves from them; by which is meant, not only to distinguish themselves from them by an orderly and regular conversation, and a strict observance of Gospel discipline, which to do is very right; nor barely to curb and restrain the affections towards such persons, lest by carrying it as heretofore, in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, they should take encouragement from hence to continue in their disorders, as tender parents keep in their affections, and from showing them to their children, when in disorder, and under their corrections, that they might not seem to countenance them in that which is evil, though this is also very proper; nor also merely to contract or shut up the hand to such persons, and refuse to distribute to them, living such an idle life, and in such a disorderly way, though this is what ought to be done; nor does this phrase only intend a forbidding such persons their houses and their tables, not suffering them to sit at the one, nor even to come into the other, not allowing any company and conversation with them, that they may have no opportunity of indulging their laziness and

tale bearing, though so to serve them is highly just and reasonable; nor does it design only a suspension, or a debarring of them from the Lord's table, which ought not to be done to any persons, while they continue in relation to the church, and members of it; but a removal of them from church communion, or an excommunication of them; which is sometimes expressed by rejecting persons, casting them out of the church, and putting them away, and here by withdrawing from them; which are all synonymous phrases, and intend exclusion from the communion of the church. And so the Ethiopic version here renders it, "that ye remove every brother", &c. From this passage we learn who they are that are to be excommunicated or removed from the communion of churches, all disorderly walkers; what the act of excommunication is, it is a withdrawing from them, a separating them from the church, and its communion; and who they are that have the power to do it, the whole fraternity or body of the church; and also the authority for it, an apostolical command, in the name of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 3:7

Ver. 7. **For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us,**

.... The apostle goes on to dissuade from that which denominates persons disorderly walkers, and exposes them to the censure of the church, and that partly by the example of the apostles, and partly by their command. He appeals to them, to their knowledge and judgment, it being a thing well known to them, that they ought to walk as they had the apostles for ensamples; for who should they follow but their spiritual fathers, shepherds, and guides? and especially so far as they were followers of Christ, as they were, in the case referred unto, working with their own hands:

for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

they could appeal to them as witnesses, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblamably they walked among them; see 1Th 2:10 and particularly, that they did not live an idle and inactive life among them.

2 Thessalonians 3:8

Ver. 8. **Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought**

.... Or freely, at free cost, without paying for it; he signifies, that what they ate, they bought with their own money, and lived on no man, without giving him a valuable consideration for what they had; though if they had not paid in money for their food, they would not

have ate it for nought, since they laboured among them in preaching the Gospel to them; and such labourers are worthy of their maintenance, Lu 10:7 though the former sense is the apostle's here:

but wrought with labour and travail night and day:

not only laboriously preaching the Gospel to them, as often as they could have opportunity, but working very hard and incessantly with their hands, at the occupations and trades they had been brought up to; and that of the Apostle Paul's was a tentmaker, at which he sometimes wrought, thereby ministering to his own, and the necessities of others, Ac 18:3, nor was this inconsistent with his learning and liberal education. It was usual with the Jewish doctors to learn a trade, or follow some business and calling of life; See Gill on "Mr 6:3". The apostle's end in this was,

that we might not be chargeable to any of you;

or burdensome to them, they being for the most part poor; and the apostles being able partly by their own hand labour, and partly by what they received from Philippi, Php 4:16 to support themselves, chose to that they might not lie heavy upon them, and any ways hinder the spread of the Gospel among them, at its first coming to them. And so Maimonides says the ancient Jewish doctors behaved, and with a like view: wherefore, says he ⁵⁹,

"if a man is a wise man, and an honourable man, and poor, let him employ himself in some handicraft business, even though a mean one, and not distress men (or be burdensome to them); it is better to strip the skins of beasts that have been torn, than to say to the people, I am a considerable wise (or learned) man, I am a priest, take care of me, and maintain me; and so the wise men have ordered: and some of the greatest doctors have been hewers of wood, and carriers of timber, and drawers of water for the gardens, and have wrought in iron and coals, and have not required anything of the congregation; nor would they take anything of them, when they would have given to them."

2 Thessalonians 3:9

Ver. 9. **Not because we have not power,**

.... To forbear working, or require a maintenance from the churches to whom we minister, since Christ has ordained, that they that preach the Gospel should

⁵⁹ Hilchot Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 18.

live of the Gospel; see 1Co 9:4. This the apostle says to preserve their right of claim, when and where they should think fit to make use of it; and lest other ministers of the word, who could not support themselves as they did, should be hurt by such an example; and lest covetous men should make use of it to indulge their sin, and improve it against the maintenance of Gospel ministers: wherefore the apostle observes to them, that they did not do this, as conscious that they had no right to demand a supply from them,

but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us;

for it seems there were many idle lazy persons among them, who either had no callings or trades, or did not attend to them; wherefore the apostles wrought with their own hands, to set an example, who could not for shame but work, when they saw persons in so high an office, and of such a character, working with labour and travail, night and day, among them.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

Ver. 10. **For even when we were with you,**

.... At Thessalonica in person, and first preached the Gospel to them,

we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat;

the Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, "when I was with you, I commanded you"; using the above words, which were a sort of a proverb with the Jews, and is frequently used by them, ראי לא אכיל, or נני לא לא, "that if a man would not work, he should not eat" ⁶⁰. And again ⁶¹,

"he that labours on the evening of the sabbath (or on weekdays), he shall eat on the sabbath day; and he who does not labour on the evening of the sabbath, from whence shall he eat (or what right and authority has he to eat) on the sabbath day?"

Not he that could not work through weakness, bodily diseases, or old age, the necessities of such are to be distributed to, and they are to be taken care of, and provided with the necessaries of life by the officers of the church; but those that can work, and will not, ought to starve, for any assistance that should be given them by the members of the church, or the officers of it.

⁶⁰ Bereshit Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 13. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 4. & Midrash Koholet, fol. 65. 4.

⁶¹ T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

2 Thessalonians 3:11

Ver. 11. **For we hear that there are some,**

.... This is the reason of the order or command given in 2Th 3:6 for withdrawing from disorderly persons. When the apostle was with them, he observed that there were idle persons among them, and therefore gave orders then, that if they would not work, they should not eat; and in his former epistle, having intelligence that there were still such persons among them, he exhorts them to their duty, and puts the church upon admonishing them; and still information is given him, that there were some such persons yet among them; for as the apostle had the care of all the churches upon him, so he kept a correspondence with them, and by one means or another, by sending messengers to them, or by receiving letters from those he corresponded with, he learned the state of them; and his information was generally good, and what might be depended upon; see 1Co 1:11 as it was in this case relating to some persons: which walk among you disorderly; and who they were, and which also explains 2Th 3:6, are immediately observed: working not at all; at their callings, trades, and businesses in which they were brought up, but lived an idle and lazy life: and this was walking disorderly indeed, even contrary to the order of things before the fall, when man was in a state of innocence; for before sin entered into the world, Adam was put into the garden of Eden to keep and dress it; man was created an active creature, and made for work and business; and to live without, is contrary to the order of creation, as well as to the order of civil societies, and of religious ones, or churches, and even what irrational creatures do not.

But are busy bodies;

though they work not at all at their own business, yet are very busy in other men's matters, and have the affairs of kingdoms, and cities, and towns, and neighbourhoods, and churches, and families, upon their hands; which they thrust themselves into, and intermeddle with, though they have no business at all with them: these wander from house to house, and curiously inquire into personal and family affairs, are tattlers, full of prate and talk, and, like the Athenians, spend all their time in telling or hearing new things; and they also speak things which they should not; they carry tales from one to another, and privately whisper things to the disadvantage of their fellow creatures and Christians, and backbite and slander them. These are the pests of nations and neighbourhoods, the plagues of churches, and the scandal of human nature; see 1Ti

5:13.

2 Thessalonians 3:12

Ver. 12. **Now them that are such,**

.... For this was not the case and character of them all. Did such practices generally obtain, no community, civil or religious, could subsist. And the apostle wisely distinguishes them from others, that the innocent might not be involved in the charge.

We command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ;

using both authority and entreaty; taking every way to reclaim them, commanding in the name of Christ and beseeching for the sake of Christ

that with quietness they work:

with their own hands, at their proper callings, and so support themselves, provide for their families, and have something to give to them that are in need; by which means they will live peaceable and quiet lives, in godliness and honesty, and not disturb the peace of neighbourhoods, churches, and families:

and eat their own bread;

got by their own labour, and bought with their money, and not the bread of others, or that of idleness.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

Ver. 13. **But ye, brethren,**

.... The rest of the members of the church, who were diligent and industrious in their callings, minded their own business, and did not trouble themselves with other men's matters, took care of themselves, and their families, and were beneficent to others:

be not weary in well doing;

which may be understood generally of all well doing, or of doing of every good work; which is well done when done according to the will of God, in faith, and from a principle of love, and in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God: or particularly of acts of beneficence to the poor; for though the idle and lazy should not be relieved, yet the helpless poor should not be neglected. This the apostle observes, lest covetous persons should make an handle of this, and withhold their hands from distributing to any, under a notion of their being idle and disorderly; or lest the saints should be tired, and become weary of doing acts of charity through the ingratitude, moroseness, and ill manners of poor people; see Ga 6:9.

2 Thessalonians 3:14

Ver. 14. **And if any man obey not our word,**

.... Of command, to work quietly, and eat his own

bread, now signified "by this epistle", particularly in 2Th 3:12,

note that man;

some read this clause in connection with the preceding phrase, "by this epistle", or by an epistle; and so the Ethiopic version, "show", or "signify him by an epistle"; that is, give us notice of it by an epistle, that we may take him under our cognizance, and severely chastise him, according to the power and authority given us by Christ; but that phrase rather belongs to the preceding words: and the clause here respects the notice the church should take of such a person; not in a private way, or merely by way of admonition and reproof, such as is given before rejection from communion; but by the black mark of excommunication; lay him under censure, exclude him from your communion, put a brand upon him as a scabbed sheep, and separate him from the flock; and so the Syriac version renders it, vrpty, "let him be separated from you" and this sense is confirmed by what follows,

and have no company with him;

as little as can be in common and civil conversation, lest he should take encouragement from thence to continue in his sin, and lest others should think it is connived at; and much less at the Lord's table, or in a sacred and religious conversation, or in a way of church fellowship and communion:

that he may be ashamed;

that he may have his eyes turned in him, as the word signifies, and he may be brought to a sight and sense of his sin, and be filled with shame for it, and loath it, and himself on the account of it, and truly repent of it, and forsake it; and this is the end of excommunication, at least one end, and a principal end of it, to recover persons out of the snare of the devil, and return them from the error of their ways: so the Jews say ⁶²,

"in matters of heaven (of God or religion), if a man does not return privately, Nymylkm, they "put him to shame" publicly; and publish his sin, and reproach him to his face, and despise and set him at nought until he returns to do well."

2 Thessalonians 3:15

Ver. 15. **Yet count him not as an enemy,**

.... As an enemy of Christ, and the Christian religion, as the Jews and Pagans were; or as an enemy of all righteousness, as Elymas the sorcerer was; as one that has an implacable hatred to good men, and a persecutor

⁶² Maimon, Hilch. Deyot, c. 6. sect. 8.

of them, and has an utter aversion to them and their principles; nor deal with him in an hostile, fierce, furious, and passionate manner, as if you were seeking his destruction, and not his restoration. This seems to be levelled against the Jews, who allowed of hatred to incorrigible persons: they say {t},

"an hater that is spoken of in the law, is not of the nations of the world, but of Israel; but how shall an Israelite hate an Israelite? does not the Scripture say, "thou shall not hate thy brother in thine heart?" the wise men say, when a man sees him alone, who has committed a transgression, and he admonishes him, and he does not return, lo, it is wanwvl hwum, "a commandment to hate him" until he repents and turns from his wickedness."

But admonish,
or "reprove" him
as a brother;

as one that has been called a brother, and a member of the church, and who, though criminal, has no bitterness in him against the church, or against the name of Christ, and the doctrines of Christ; and therefore should not be treated in a virulent manner, but with a brotherly affection, meekness, compassion, and tenderness; and who indeed is to be reckoned as a brother, while the censure is passing, and the sentence of excommunication is executing on him; for till it is finished he stands in such a relation: though this also may have respect, as to the manner of excommunicating persons, so to the conduct of the church to such afterwards; who are not to neglect them, and much less to treat them as enemies, in a cruel and uncompassionate manner; but should inquire, and diligently observe, what effect the ordinance of excommunication has upon them, and renew their admonitions and friendly reproofs, if possible, to recover them.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Ver. 16. **Now the Lord of peace himself,**

.... The Prince of peace, who is peaceable himself, and the author of peace in all his churches, and who requires peace, calls for it, and encourages it:

give you peace always by all means;

both a conscience peace, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and faith in them, which passes all understanding, and which, when he gives, none can take away; and a church peace,

being freed from all such disorderly persons and their abettors, the disturbers of it: and indeed, the way to have true peace and prosperity in churches is to keep up the discipline of God's house. The apostle prays for it in faith, upon an observance of the rules he had given; he prays for constant and perpetual peace, which is greatly to be desired; and that it might be had by all means, and in every way through praying, preaching, administering the ordinances, laying on censures, when necessary, and Christian conversation. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin version, read "in every place"; as well as at Thessalonica.

The Lord be with you all;

by his presence, to comfort and refresh; by his power, to keep and preserve; by his grace, to assist; and by his Spirit, to counsel, advise, and direct.

2 Thessalonians 3:17

Ver. 17. **The salutation of Paul with mine own hand,**

.... In writing his epistles, the body and substance of them he used an amanuensis, but the salutation he wrote with his own hand:

which is the token in every epistle;

by which they might be known to be true and genuine, and be distinguished from counterfeit ones: and the rather he mentions this, that they might be troubled neither by word, nor by spirit, nor by epistle, as from them, as they had been, 2Th 2:2 for it seems that this wicked practice of counterfeiting the epistles of the apostles, or carrying about spurious ones, under their name, began so early; to prevent which, the apostle took this method,

so I write,
as follows:

2 Thessalonians 3:18

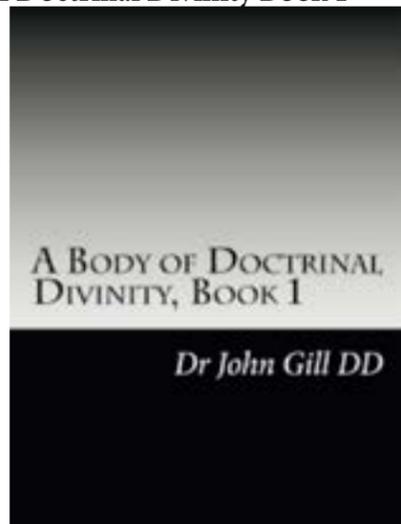
Ver. 18. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

This was the sign or token; See Gill on "Ro 16:20" The subscription to this epistle is, "The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens"; though it seems rather to be written from Corinth. In the Syriac version it is said,

"the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, which is written from Laodicea of Pisidia, and sent by the hands of Tychicus."

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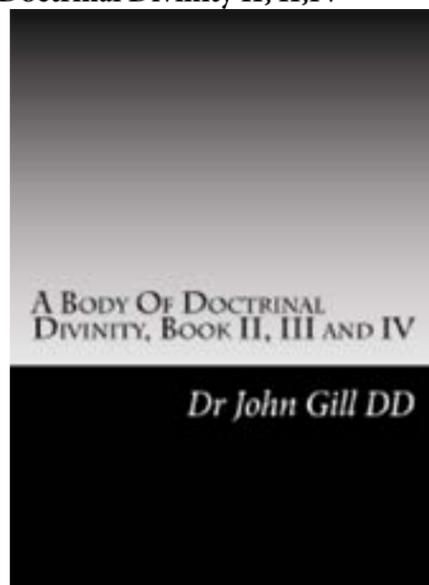
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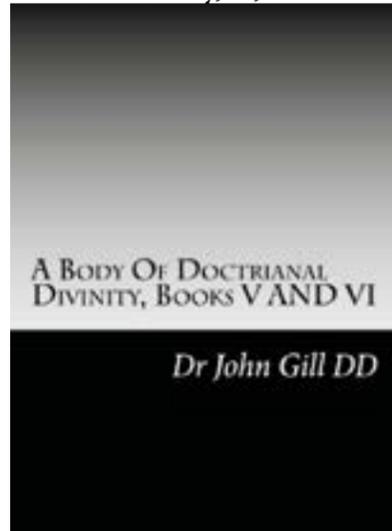
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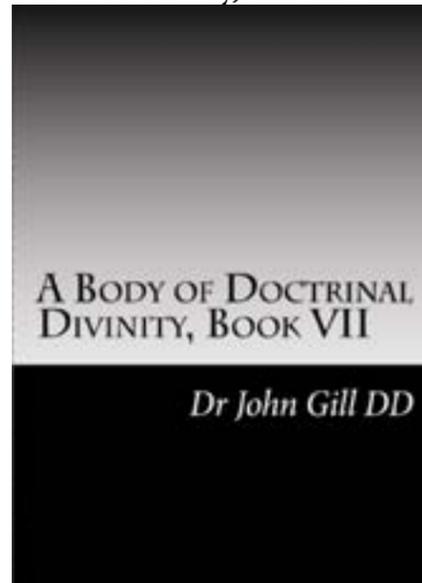
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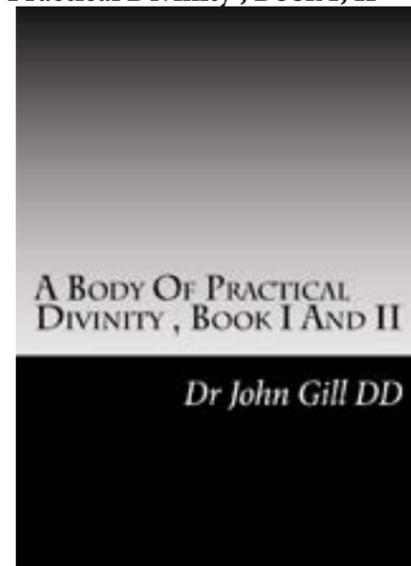
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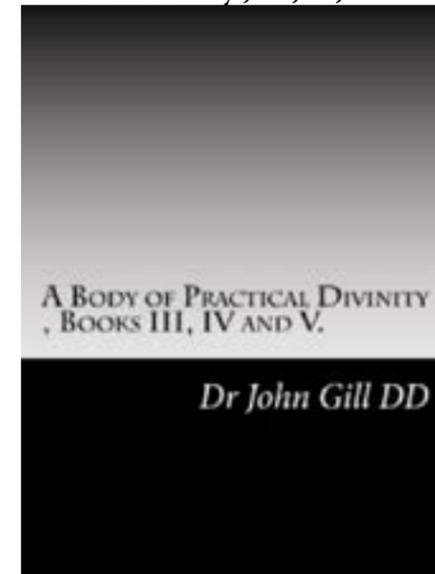
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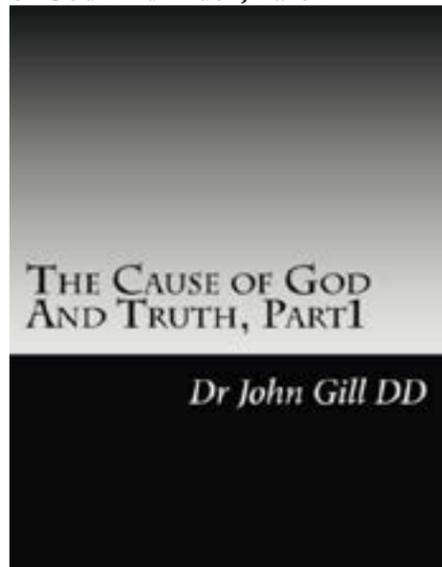
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In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

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 Deuteronomy 8:2.
 Deuteronomy 30:19.
 Deuteronomy 32:29.
 Psalm 81:13, 14.
 Psalm 125:3.
 Psalm 145:9.
 Proverbs 1:22-30.
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 Isaiah 30:15.
 Isaiah 55:1.
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 1 Timothy 2:4.
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 The Epistle to the Hebrews.
 Hebrews 2:9.
 Hebrews 6:4-6.
 Hebrews 10:26-29.

Hebrews 10:38.

2 Peter 1:10.

2 Peter 2:1.

2 Peter 2:20-22.

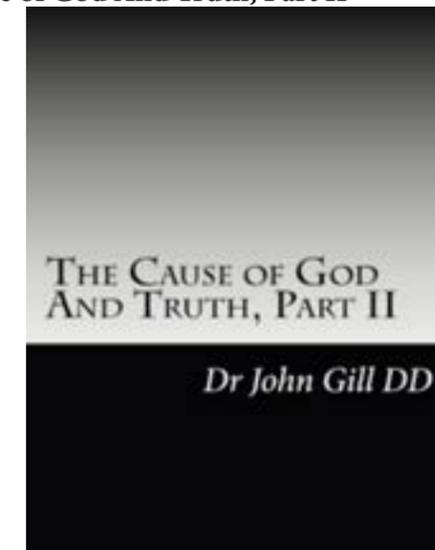
2 Peter 3:9.

1 John 2:2.

Jude 1:21.

Revelation 2 and Revelation 3.

Revelation 3:20.

The Cause of God And Truth, Part II

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke CertEd

List Price: \$7.48

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

108 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1544648729 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1544648723

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

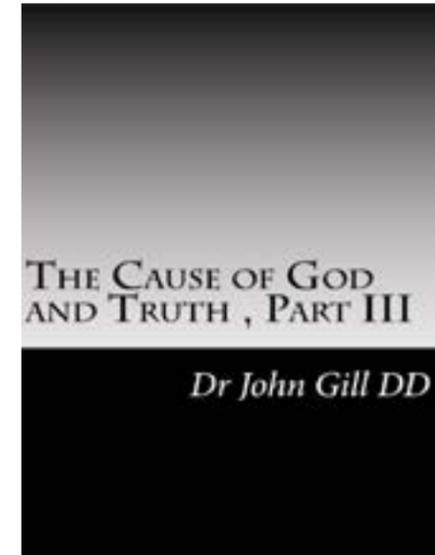
This is volume 2 of this 4 part series and it should be known that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work. In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and

objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture. The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

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 Isaiah 59:21.
 Hosea 2:19, 20.
 Jeremiah 32:40.
 John 14:16.
 John 10:28.
 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9.

The Cause of God and Truth Part III:



The Doctrines of Grace
 Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Authored by David
 Clarke CetEd
 List Price: \$9.99
 8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)
 Black & White on White paper
 108 pages
 ISBN-13: 978-1544810591 (CreateSpace-Assigned)
 ISBN-10: 1544810598
 BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic
 This book contains John Gill's answers to Dr
 Whitby objections to The Doctrines of Grace under
 the following heads.

- Chapter
- 1 Of Reprobation.
 - 2 Of Election and Reprobation.
 - 3 Of Redemption.
 - 4 Of Efficacious grace.
 - 5 Of The Freedom of the Will of Man.
 - 6 Of The Perseverance of the Saints
 - 7 Of The Prescience and Providence of God.
 - 8 Of The State and Case of the Heathens.

The following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a

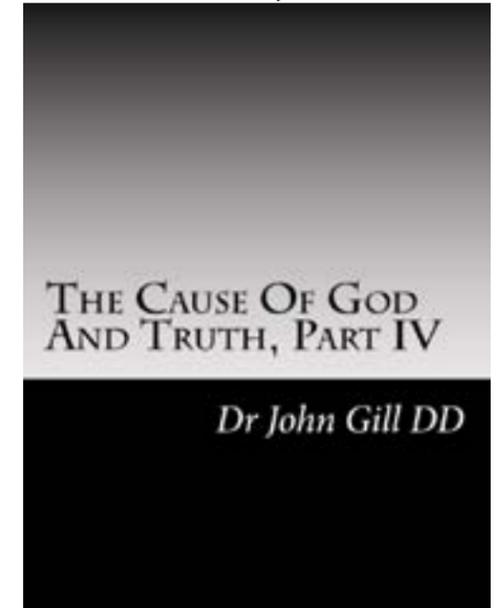
work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminians, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737.

The Cause Of God And Truth, Part IV



Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David
 Clarke CertEd
 List Price: \$8.99
 8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)
 Black & White on White paper
 126 pages
 ISBN-13: 978-1544848709 (CreateSpace-Assigned)
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 BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic
 It should be known by the reader, that the following
 work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733
 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the
 Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece
 on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an

unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and reasonable time to engage in such a work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistic Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines ; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation ; to the latter of which the greatest deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.

In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed ; to which is added, a Defence of the Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the importance and consequence of which is shown, and that the Arminians have very little reason to triumph on that account.

This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it ; but the author of

this work was of opinion, that the increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery together in their religious grievances they were desirous of having redressed ; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very life and soul of Popery.

This is Part 4 of 4 parts, and a new edition, with some alterations and improvements, is now published by request.

This work contains:

Chapter

1 Of Predestination

2 Of Redemption

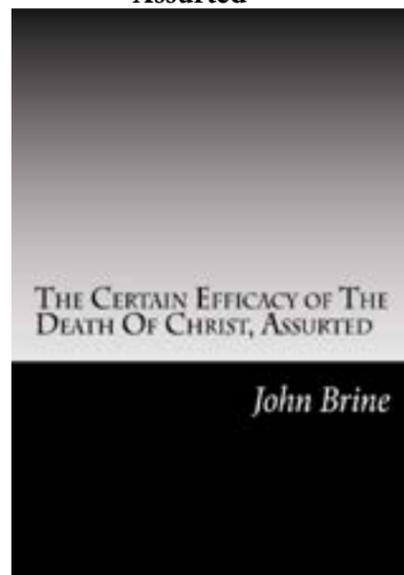
3 Or Original Sin

4 Of Efficacious Grace

5 Of Perseverance

6 Of The Heathens A Vindication of The Cause of God and Truth

The Certain Efficacy of The Death Of Christ, Assured



Authored by John Brine

Created by David Clarke

List Price: \$7.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

114 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1973922254 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1973922258

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

This work declares the Glory of God in all his Perfections, the Honour of Christ, and the eternal Happiness of his People, all of which are intimately concerned in them. This is treated in four parts: In the First John Brine endeavours to prove the limited Extent of the Death of CHRIST, and the certain Salvation of all those for whom he died.

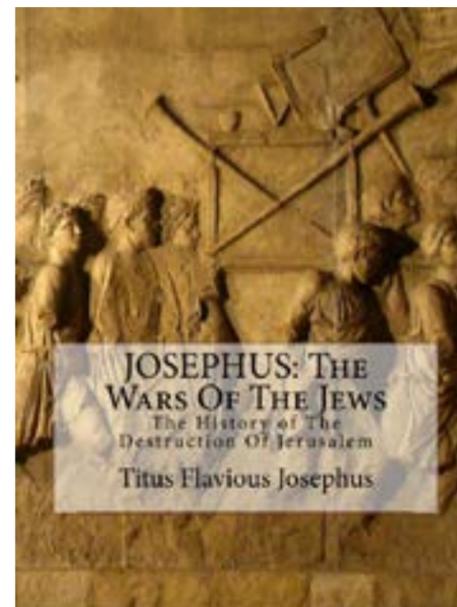
In the Second, the Objections which are usually urged by the Arminians, and others, will be answered.

In the Third shall attempt to prove the Impossibility of the Salvation of the Non-Elect, upon the Supposition of no other than a conditional Provision of Salvation being made for them.

In the Fourth Part shall attend to what he delivers on the Subjects of the Imputation of original Sin to Men, the Charge of Sin on CHRIST, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People.

This has been republished by Bierton Particular Baptists to further the cause of God and truth, it opposes Arminianism, Islam, and duty faith.

Josephus: The Wars Of The Jews



The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem

Authored by Titus Flavius Josephus, Designed by William Winston

ISBN-13: 978-1985029132 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1985029138

BISAC: Religion / Christianity / History / General

Josephus was an eye witness to those events that he records in this book, 'The Wars of The Jews', or 'The

History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem'.

He records historic events that took place during and after the times of the New Testament scriptures.

The book of Revelation was a prophecy, given to Jesus Christ, and published by the Apostle John, about those things that were shortly to come to pass in his day.

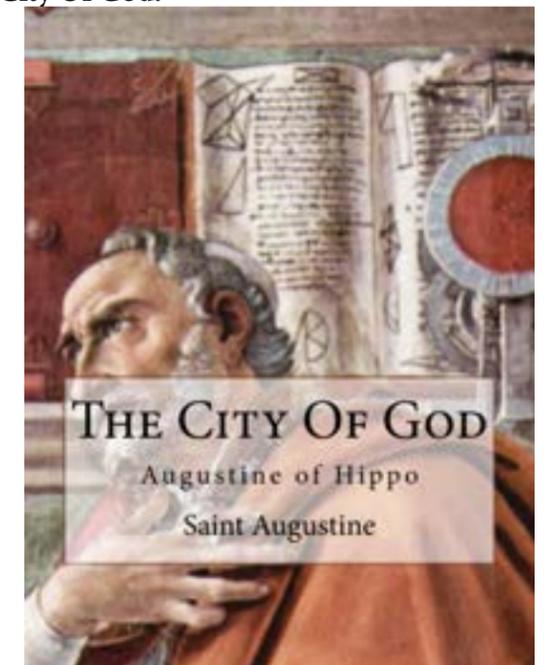
From the internal evidence of the book Revelation was written before the Neuronic persecution, of 66 A.D. and before the fall off Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, in 70. A.D. This is because the book records that the temple in Jerusalem was still standing at the time the book was written and not around 95 A.D. as Eusebius mistakenly says.

The historic events that Josephus records are remarkable as they give evidence to the fulfillment of Prophecy given by the Lord Jesus in his Olivet prophecy. In fact the book of Revelation was a prophecy of those events that were shortly to come to pass when Jesus spoke to John who wrote the Revelation. Jesus had informed his Apostles about future events and they lived in expectation of there fulfillment in their day.

Josephus gives the historic evidence of the fulfillment of those prophecies and that confirms scripture fulfillment.

We recommend the James Stuart Russell's book, 'The Parousia' as a very good introduction to this subject and advertised at the back of this book in our Further Publications.

The City Of God:



Augustine of Hippo

Authored by Saint Augustine, Authored by David Clarke

List Price: \$10.28

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

272 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1547278985 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1547278986

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

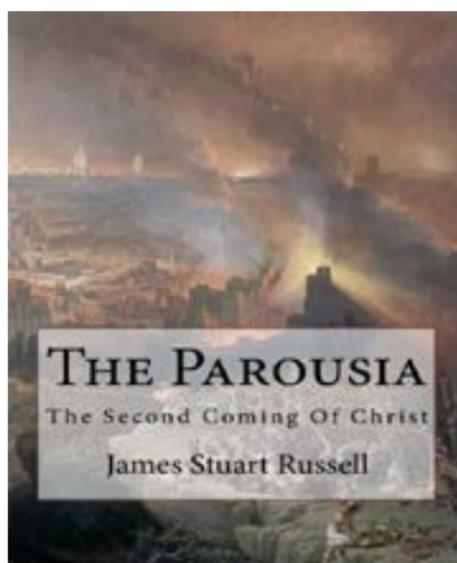
The City of God, is a book of Christian philosophy written in Latin by Augustine of Hippo in the early 5th century AD. The book was in response to allegations that Christianity brought about the decline of Rome and is considered one of Augustine's most important works.

The City of God is a cornerstone of Western thought, expounding on many profound questions of theology, such as the suffering of the righteous, the existence of evil, the conflict between free will and divine omniscience, and the doctrine of original sin.

Augustine is recognized as a saint in the Catholic Church, the Eastern Christian Church, and the Anglican Communion and as a preeminent Doctor of the Church.

Many Protestants, especially Calvinists and Lutherans, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of the Protestant Reformation due to his teachings on salvation and divine grace. Lutherans, and Martin Luther in particular, have held Augustine in preeminence (after the Bible and St. Paul). Luther himself was a member of the Order of the Augustinian Eremites (1505–1521).

The Parousia 2nd Edition



The Second Coming Of Christ

Authored by James Stuart Russell, Preface by Mr David Clarke, Preface by Dr Don K Preston DD

List Price: \$17.85

7" x 10" (17.78 x 25.4 cm)

Black & White on White paper

404 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1519610942 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1519610947

BISAC: Religion / Theology

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the “final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ's coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell's work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these “skeptical” authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

This is where Russell's work is of such importance.

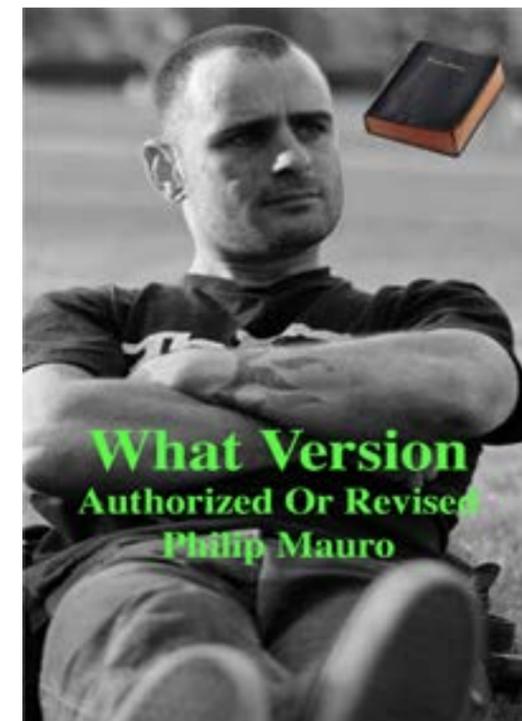
What Version Authorised Or Revised

While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of “the end,” he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that “the end” that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

Russell's work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell's main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.



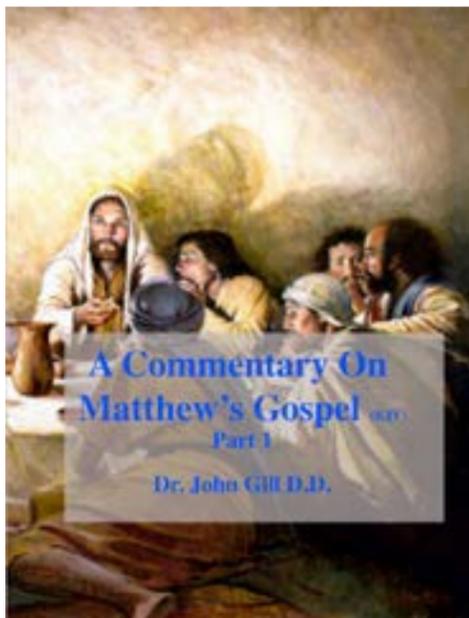
Philp Mauro

The book discusses the issues relating to the reliability of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the failings of the so-called Revised Versions. It reminds the reader the greek printed text, produced by Erasmus in 1516, was derived from a broad set of 8 extant Greek manuscripts available to him in his day and in constant use by Christians to that day and not Latin bibles. Since 1861 there has arisen those who claim the Authorised Version is not accurate and Westcott and Hort produced a new compiled Greek Printed text manuscript, derived from, and base upon, two 4th C handwritten extant manuscripts. Codex Sinaiticus, written in Greek and Codex's Vaticanus, written in Latin. They claimed that since these manuscripts were the oldest extant manuscripts in the world (400 years after the original writing of the new testament scriptures) they were far superior and more reliable than the text underlying the Authorised version of the bible. And since 1945 all Bible translations are based upon the New Greek manuscript text of Westcott and Hort published in 1861. This is an eclectic text and not the Received Text used by the translator of the Authorized Version of the Bible and know by Christians, throughout the Christian age, as the Word of God. It has been republished by Berton Particular Baptist to educate serious minded people about the subject of Bible translations and support the

Authorised version of the Bible. Philip Mauro was a lawyer in America, who practiced before the Supreme Court. He prepared briefs NOTES for the Scopes Trial WHICH was an American legal case in July 1925 THAT had made it unlawful to teach human evolution in any state-funded school.[1] The trial publicized the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which set Modernists, who said evolution was not inconsistent with religion,[4] against Fundamentalists, who said the word of God as revealed in the Bible took priority over all human knowledge. The case was thus seen as both a theological contest and a trial on whether “modern science” should be taught in schools. Mauro was ALSO passenger on the British ocean liner RMS Carpathia when it rescued the passengers of the Titanic in April 1912. It is hoped that this book will rescue any that are sinking in the sea of the natural Modern man’s opinion as to the reliability of the Authorized Version the bible.

[Available from Amazon \(Click to view\)](#)

A Commentary On The Gospel Of Matthew



By John Gill

The Gospel According to Matthew was the first written gospel and published sometime between (AD 31-38). It was written before Mark’s (AD 38-44) and Luke’s Gospel (AD-61).

Matthew was a Jew and one of the 12 Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ and named Levi. He was a tax collector for the Romans. There are two strong traditions that Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, a companion of the Apostle Paul.

Matthew tells of the birth and lineage of Jesus. The life death, resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven.

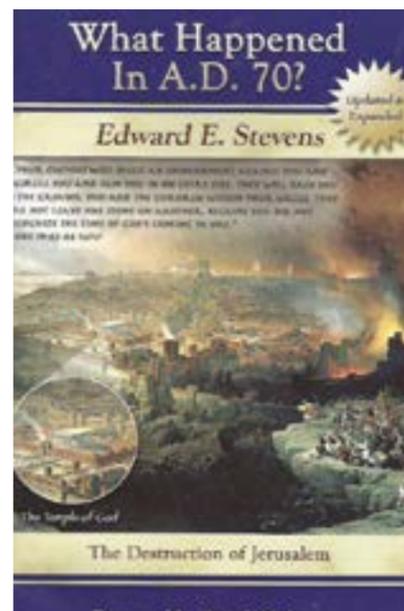
This publication is presented knowing that Matthew penned his gospel that contains all those things the Lord Jesus wanted him to publish.

Matthew records the Olivet prophesy of Jesus concerning those fearful things that were to come to pass within the period of that generation and after his ascension.

It is the intention of the publisher that this will assist in making the gospel known to all people and is published in two parts PART 1 chapter 1 to 16.

And PART 2 chapter 17 to 28.

What Happened In A.D. 70



This book introduces a view of Bible prophecy which many have found extremely helpful in their Bible study. It explains the end time riddles which have always bothered students of Bible prophecy. It is a *consistent view* which makes the book of Revelation much easier to understand. It establishes when the New Testament canon of scripture was completed, demolishes the liberal attack on the inspiration of the New Testament, and is more *conservative* on most other issues than traditional views. And there is *no compromise* of any essential Biblical doctrine of the Christian faith.

The key to understand any passage of scripture has always been a good grasp of the historical setting in which it was originally written {*audience relevance*}. Two thousand years from now our history, culture, politics and language will have changed dramatically. Imagine

someone then having to learn the ancient language of “American English” to read our USA newspapers! If they saw one of our political cartoons with a donkey and elephant, what would they think? How would they go about understanding it? Not only would they have to study the language, but also our culture, history, politics and economics. The same applies to Bible study. If we are really going to understand what all the “donkeys and elephants” (beasts, harlots, dragons, etc.) Symbolize in the book of Revelation, we will have to seriously and carefully study the language, history, culture and politics of the First Century. Of course, the truths essential for salvation are couched in simple language that everyone can grasp. But there are numerous scriptures in the Bible which are “hard to understand” (cf. 2 Pet 3:16), and Bible prophecy is one of those things which must be approached with much more focus on the original historical art cultural context (audience relevance)

One of the main purposes of this book is to provide a closer look at the historical framework behind the New Testament. Many have found it helpful to lay aside (at least temporarily) the legion of speculative opinions about the book of Revelation, and look at a more historical alternative, which is that *the book of Revelation was written to the first century church and had primary relevance to them*. It warned of events that were about to happen in their lifetime, and prepared them for the tribulation and other events associated with the End of the Jewish Age.

Atheists, skeptics, Jew, Muslims, and liberal critics of the bible use the supposed failure of those end times events to occur in the First Century to undermine the integrity of Christs and the inspired NT writings.

Non-Christian Jews laugh at this supposed non-occurrence, and use it as evidence that Jesus is not the Messiah. Their forefathers in the flesh rejected Jesus in His first coming because He did not fulfill the Old Testament prophecies in the materialistic and nationalistic way that they were expecting, even though Jesus told them that His Kingdom was not of this world, and that it would be within them instead. Yet it seems that many futurists today are expecting that same kind of materialistic and nationalistic kingdom to arrive at a future return of Christ Are they making the same mistake about the Second Coming that the Jews made about His first coming? Jesus repeatedly said His Kingdom is “not of this world” and that it would “not come with observation.” It is a spiritual entity, and it has arrived We live in it. Both futurist Christians and non-Christian Jews need to realize this.

Christians are finally beginning to seek alternatives to the fatally flawed *futurist* interpretation. This book introduces the Preterist view.

“Preterist” simply means past in fulfillment It means that Christ has already fulfilled His promise to return and consummate redemption in Himself and His ongoing spiritual kingdom (the church). We should be like the noble-minded Bereans and “search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are true” You might want to have your Bible open alongside as you read.

Edward E. Stevens

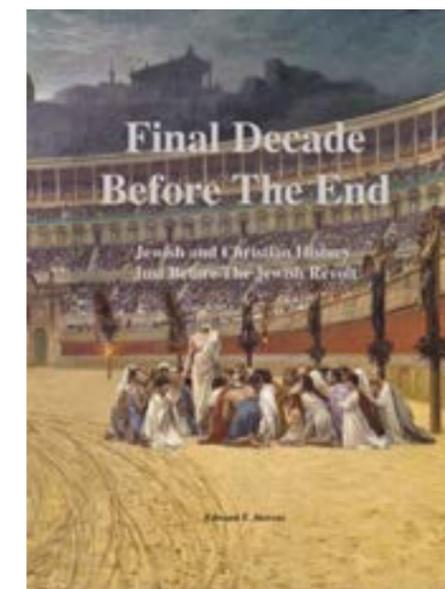
INTERNATIONAL PRETERIST ASSOCIATION

<https://www.preterist.org/>

Bradford, Pennsylvania

April 17,2010

Final Decade Before The End



INTRODUCTION

Ever since the booklet, **What Happened In AD 70?** was published in 1980, there have been constant requests for more detailed information about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish, Roman, and Christian history associated with it. Over the years since then I have studied Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Eusebius, the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Pseudepigrapha, Church Fathers, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish/Christian writings, trying to determine exactly what happened, when it happened, and the effect it had upon the Church.

Then in 2002, after I began to promote J. S. Russell’s view of a literal rapture, the demand for historical documentation of the fulfillment of all eschatological events dramatically increased. That forced me to dig much deeper. So in 2007 I put together a 21-page

chronology of first century events. Two years later in 2009, we published a more substantial 73-page manuscript entitled, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. That helped fill the void, but it did not go far enough. It only increased the appetite for a more detailed and documented historical reconstruction of first century events.

The book of Acts does not give a lot of details about the other Roman and Jewish events that were happening while Paul was on his various missionary journeys. For those events, we have to go to the other contemporary Jewish and Roman historians such as Josephus and Tacitus. The closer we get to AD 70, the more important all of those Jewish and Roman events become. They form an important backdrop behind the Christian events, and show how all the predictions made by Jesus were literally fulfilled. Every High Priest and Zealot leader that we encounter from AD 52 onwards are directly connected with the events of the Last Days. Things are heating up, not only for the Christians, but also for the Jews and the Romans.

Paul on his missionary journeys was clearly following a plan which was providentially arranged for him by Christ: (1) to plant new churches among all nations and not just Jews, (2) appoint elders and deacons in every church (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 4:17), (3) write inspired epistles to guide them, (4) instruct his fellow workers to “teach these things to faithful men who would be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2), and (5) establish the Gentiles in the Church and make them one united body with the Jews (Eph 4). Everywhere Paul went, he followed this pattern. We see this clearly as we study the historical narrative in Acts and Paul’s other epistles that were written during this time. These are essential patterns that the apostles evidently bound upon both Gentile and Jewish Christians, and which were intended to be the pattern for all future generations of the eternal Church (Eph 3:21; 2 Tim 2:2).

We begin our study by looking at the most likely dates for Matthew (AD 31-38) and Mark (AD 38- 44), and then proceed to the first three epistles of Paul (Galatians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians), which were written on his second missionary journey (AD 51-53). Including these five books in our study allows us to date all twenty-seven books of our New Testament, and show how the NT canon was formed and completed before the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66. The study of New Testament canonization in itself is a good reason for reading this work, without even looking at the historical fulfillment of all of the end time prophecies

that we document here.

After looking at the dates for those first five books, we then move on into the third missionary journey of Apostle Paul which began in AD 54. It was during this final dozen years (from AD 54 until AD 66) when the birth pangs and signs of the end started increasing in both intensity and frequency, along with a quickening pace of NT books being written. We show how 19 of our 27 NT books (70 percent) were written during those last five years just before the Neronian persecution (AD 60-64). The Great Commission was finished, and the rest of the end time events predicted in the Olivet Discourse were fulfilled during that time of “tribulation” upon the church and the “days of vengeance” upon the unbelieving Jews (Luke 21:22).

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