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**COMMENTARY**

**COMMENTARY  
ON THE SECOND EPISTLE  
TO THE THESSALONIANS**

*by John Calvin*

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# COMMENTARY

ON

## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE AUTHOR'S DEDICATORY EPISTLE.

TO THAT DISTINGUISHED MAN

BENEDICT TEXTOR, PHYSICIAN.

WHILE you are reckoned to excel in the knowledge of your profession by those who are competent judges in that matter, I, for my part, have always regarded as a very high excellence that strict fidelity and diligence which you are accustomed to exercise, both in attending upon the sick, and in giving advice. But more especially in either restoring or establishing my own health, I have observed you to be so carefully intent, that it was easy to perceive that you were influenced not so much by regard to a particular individual, as by anxiety and concern for the common welfare of the Church. Another, perhaps, might think, that the kindness was smaller from its not having been shewn simply to himself as an individual; but as for me, I think myself on the contrary to be under a double obligation to you, on the ground, that while you omitted nothing whatever in discharging the office of a friend, you were at the same time equally concerned as to my ministry, too, which ought to be dearer to me than my life. The remembrance, besides, of my departed wife reminds me daily how much I owe you, not only because she was frequently through your assistance raised up, and was in one instance restored from a serious and dangerous distemper, but that even in that last disease, which took her away from us, you left nothing undone in the way of industry, labor, and effort, with a

view to her assistance. Farther, as you do not allow me to give you any other remuneration, I have thought of inscribing your name upon this Commentary, in order that there may be some token of my good wishes towards you in return.

*GENEVA, 1st July 1550.*

# THE ARGUMENT

ON

## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

It does not appear to me probable that this Epistle was sent from ROME, as the Greek manuscripts commonly bear; for he would have made some mention of his bonds, as he is accustomed to do in other Epistles. Besides, about the end of the third Chapter, he intimates that he is in danger from unreasonable<sup>fi</sup> men. From this it may be gathered, that when he was going to Jerusalem, he wrote this Epistle in the course of the journey. It was also from an ancient date a very generally received opinion among the Latins, that it was written at ATHENS. The occasion, however, of his writing was this—that the THESSALONIANS might not reckon themselves overlooked, because Paul had not visited them, when hastening to another quarter. In the *first Chapter*, he exhorts them to patience. In the *second*, a vain and groundless fancy, which had got into circulation as to the coming of Christ being at hand, is set aside by him by means of this argument—that there must previously to that be a revolt in the Church, and a great part of the world must treacherously draw back from God, nay more, that Antichrist must reign in the temple of God. In the *third Chapter*, after having commended himself to their prayers, and having in a few words encouraged them to perseverance, he commands that those be severely chastised who live in idleness at the expense of others. If they do not obey admonitions, he teaches that they should be excommunicated.

# CHAPTER 1

## <530101> 2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-7

1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ:	1. Paulus et Silvanus et Timotheus Ecclesiae Thessalonicensium in Deo Patre nostro et Domino Iesu Christo,
2. Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.	2. Gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre nostro et Domino Iesu Christo.
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:	3. Gratias agere debemus Deo semper de vobis, fratres, quemadmodum dignum est, quia vehementer augescit fides vestra, et exuberat caritas mutua uniuscuiusque omnium vestrum;
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;	4. Ut nos ipsi de vobis gloriemur in Ecclesia Dei, de tolerantia vestra et fide in omnibus persecutionibus vestris et afflictionibus quas sustinetis,
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:	5. Ostensionem iusti iudicii Dei: ut digni habeamini regno Dei, pro quo et patimini.
6. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;	6. Siquidem iustum est apud Deum reddere iis, qui vos affligunt, afflictionem:
7. And to you who are troubled rest with us.	7. Et vobis, qui affligimini, relaxationem nobiscum.

1. *To the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God.* As to the form of salutation, it were superfluous to speak. This only it is necessary to notice—that by a *Church in God and Christ* is meant one that has not merely been gathered together under the banner of faith, for the purpose of

worshipping one God the Father, and confiding in Christ, but is the work and building as well of the Father as of Christ, because while God adopts us to himself, and regenerates us, we from him begin to be in Christ. (<460130> 1 Corinthians 1:30)

3. *To give thanks*. He begins with commendation, that he may have occasion to pass on to exhortation, for in this way we have more success among those who have already entered upon the course, when without passing over in silence their former progress, we remind them how far distant they are as yet from the goal, and stir them up to make progress. As, however, he had in the former Epistle commended their faith and love, he now declares the increase of both. And, unquestionably, this course ought to be pursued by all the pious—to examine themselves daily, and see how far they have advanced. This, therefore, is the true commendation of believers—their *growing* daily in *faith* and *love*. When he says *always*, he means that he is constantly supplied with new occasion. He had previously given thanks to God on their account. He says that he has now occasion to do so again, on the ground of daily progress. When, however, he gives thanks to God on this account, he declares that the enlargements, no less than the beginnings, of faith and love are from him, for if they proceeded from the power of men, thanksgiving would be pretended, or at least worthless. Farther, he shews that their proficiency was not trivial, or even ordinary, but most abundant. So much the more disgraceful is our slowness, inasmuch as we scarcely advance one foot during a long space of time.

*As is meet*. In these words Paul shews that we are bound to give thanks to God, not only when he does us good, but also when we take into view the favors bestowed by him upon our brethren. For wherever the goodness of God shines forth, it becomes us to extol it. Farther, the welfare of our brethren ought to be so dear to us, that we ought to reckon among our own benefits everything that has been conferred upon them. Nay more, if we consider the nature and sacredness of the unity of Christ's body, such a mutual fellowship will have place among us, that we shall reckon the benefits conferred upon an individual member as gain to the whole Church. Hence, in extolling God's benefits, we must always have an eye to the whole body of the Church.

4. *So that we ourselves glory in you.* He could not have bestowed higher commendation upon them, than by saying that he sets them forward before other Churches as a pattern, for such is the meaning of those words:—*We glory in you in the presence of other Churches.* For Paul did not boast of the faith of the Thessalonians from a spirit of ambition, but inasmuch as his commendation of them might be an incitement to make it their endeavor to imitate them. He does not say, however, that he glories in their faith and love, but in their *patience* and *faith*. Hence it follows, that *patience* is the fruit and evidence of *faith*. These words ought, therefore, to be explained in this manner:—“We glory in the patience which springs from faith, and we bear witness that it eminently shines forth in you;” otherwise the context would not correspond. And, undoubtedly, there is nothing that sustains us in tribulations as faith does; which is sufficiently manifest from this, that we altogether sink down so soon as the promises of God leave us. Hence, the more proficiency any one makes in faith, he will be so much the more endued with patience for enduring all things with fortitude, as on the other hand, softness and impatience under adversity betoken unbelief on our part; but more especially when persecutions are to be endured for the gospel, the influence of faith in that case discovers itself.

5. *A demonstration of the righteous judgment of God.* Without mentioning the exposition given by others, I am of opinion that the true meaning is this—that the injuries and persecutions which innocent and pious persons endure from the wicked and abandoned, shew clearly, as in a mirror, that God will one day be the judge of the world. And this statement is quite at antipodes with that profane notion, which we are accustomed to entertain, whenever it goes well with the good and ill with the wicked. For we think that the world is under the regulation of mere chance, and we leave God no control. Hence it is that impiety and contempt take possession of men’s hearts, as Solomon speaks, (<<sup>210903</sup>> Ecclesiastes 9:3) for those that suffer anything undeservedly either throw the blame upon God, or do not think that he concerns himself as to the affairs of men. We hear what Ovid says,—“I am tempted to think that there are no gods.”<sup>f2</sup> Nay more, David confesses (<<sup>197301</sup>> Psalm 73:1-12) that, because he saw things in so confused a state in the world, he had well—nigh lost his footing, as in a slippery place. On the other hand, the wicked become more insolent through occasion of prosperity, as if no punishment of their crimes

awaited them; just as Dionysius, when making a prosperous voyage,<sup>f3</sup> boasted that the gods favored the sacrilegious.<sup>f4</sup> In fine, when we see that the cruelty of the wicked against the innocent walks abroad with impunity, carnal sense concludes that there is no judgment of God, that there are no punishments of the wicked, that there is no reward of righteousness.

Paul, however, declares on the other hand, that as God thus spares the wicked for a time, and winks at the injuries inflicted upon his people, His judgment to come is shewn us as in a mirror. For he takes for granted that it cannot but be that God, inasmuch as he is a just Judge, will one day restore peace to the miserable, who are now unjustly harassed, and will pay to the oppressors of the pious the reward that they have merited. Hence, if we hold this principle of faith, that God is the just Judge of the world, and that it is his office to render to every one a recompense according to his works, this second principle will follow incontrovertibly — that the present *disorderly state of matters* (ἀταξίαν) is a *demonstration* of the judgment, which does not yet appear. For if God is the righteous Judge of the world, those things that are now confused must, of necessity, be restored to order. Now, nothing is more disorderly than that the wicked, with impunity, give molestation to the good, and walk abroad with unbridled violence, while the good are cruelly harassed without any fault on their part. From this it may be readily inferred, that God will one day ascend the judgment-seat, that he may remedy the state of matters in the world, so as to bring them into a better condition.

Hence the statement which he subjoins—that it is *righteous with God to appoint affliction*, etc., is the groundwork of this doctrine—that God furnishes tokens of a judgment to come when he refrains, for the present, from exercising the office of judge. And unquestionably, if matters were now arranged in a tolerable way, so that the judgment of God might be recognized as having been fully exercised, an adjustment of this nature would detain us upon earth. Hence God, in order that he may stir us up to the hope of a judgment to come, does, for the present, only to some extent judge the world. He furnishes, it is true, many tokens of his judgment, but it is in such a manner as to constrain us to extend our hope farther. A remarkable passage truly, as teaching us in what manner our minds ought to be raised up above all the impediments of the world, whenever we suffer any adversity—that the righteous judgment of God may present

itself to our mind, which will raise us above this world. Thus death will be an image of life.

*May be accounted worthy.* There are no persecutions that are to be reckoned of such value as to make us *worthy of the kingdom of God*, nor does Paul dispute here as to the ground of worthiness, but simply takes the common doctrine of Scripture—that God destroys in us those things that are of the world, that he may restore in us a better life; and farther, that by means of afflictions he shews us the value of eternal life. In short, he simply points out the manner in which believers are prepared and, as it were, polished under God’s anvil, inasmuch as, by afflictions, they are taught to renounce the world and to aim at God’s heavenly kingdom. Farther, they are confirmed in the hope of eternal life while they fight for it. For this is the entrance of which Christ discoursed to his disciples. (<400713> Matthew 7:13; <421324> Luke 13:24)

**6. To appoint affliction.** We have already stated why it is that he makes mention of the vengeance of God against the wicked—that we may learn to rest in the expectation of a judgment to come, because God does not as yet avenge the wicked, while it is, nevertheless, necessary that they should suffer the punishment of their crimes. Believers, however, at the same time, understand by this that there is no reason why they should envy the momentary and evanescent felicity of the wicked, which will ere long be exchanged for a dreadful destruction. What he adds as to the *rest* of the pious, accords with the statement of Paul, (<440320> Acts 3:20,) where he calls the day of the last judgment the *day of refreshing*.

In this declaration, however, as to the good and the bad, he designed to shew more clearly how unjust and confused the government of the world would be, if God did not defer punishments and rewards till another judgment, for in this way the name of God were a thing that was dead.<sup>f5</sup> Hence he is deprived of his office and power by all that are not intent on that righteousness of which Paul speaks.

He adds *with us*, that he may gain credit to his doctrine from his experience of belief in his own mind; for he shews that he does not philosophize as to things unknown, by putting himself into the same condition, and into the same rank with them. We know, however, how much more authority is due to those who have, by long practice, been exercised in those things which they teach, and do not require from others anything but what they

are themselves prepared to do. Paul, therefore, does not, while himself in the shade, give instructions to the Thessalonians as to how they should fight in the heat of the sun, but, fighting vigorously, exhorts them to the same warfare.<sup>f6</sup>

<530107>2 THESSALONIANS 1:7-10	
7. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,	7. Quum manifestabitur Dominus Iesus e coelo cum angelis potentiae suae,
8. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:	8. In igne flammanti, qui ultionem infliget iis, qui non noverunt Deum, et non obediunt evangelio Domini nostri Iesu Christi:
9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;	9. Qui poenam dabunt interitum aeternum a facie Domini, et a gloria potentiae ipsius,
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.	10. Quum venerit ut sanctificetur in sanctis suis, et admirabilis reddatur in omnibus, qui credunt (quia fides habita sit testimonio nostro erga vos) in illa die.

7. *When the Lord shall be manifested.* Here we have a confirmation of the foregoing statement. For as it is one of the articles of our faith, that Christ will come from heaven, and will not come in vain, faith ought to seek the end of his coming. Now this is—that he may come as a Redeemer to his own people; nay more, that he may judge the whole world. The description which follows has a view to this—that the pious may understand that God is so much the more concerned as to their afflictions in proportion to the dreadfulfulness of the judgment that awaits his enemies. For the chief occasion of grief and distress is this—that we think that God is but lightly affected with our calamities. We see into what complaints David from time to time breaks forth, while he is consumed by the pride and insolence of his enemies. Hence he has brought forward all this for the consolation of believers, while he represents the tribunal of Christ as full of horror,<sup>f7</sup> that they may not be disheartened by their present oppressed

condition, while they see themselves proudly and disdainfully trampled upon by the wicked.

What is to be the nature of that *fire*, and of what materials, I leave to the disputations of persons of foolish curiosity. I am contented with holding what Paul had it in view to teach—that Christ will be a most strict avenger of the injuries which the wicked inflict upon us. The metaphor, however, of *flame* and *fire*, is abundantly common in Scripture, when the anger of God is treated of.

By the *angels of his power*, he means those in whom he will exercise his power; for he will bring the angels with him for the purpose of displaying the glory of his kingdom. Hence, too, they are elsewhere called the *angels of his majesty*.

8. *Who will inflict vengeance.* That he may the better persuade believers that the persecutions which they endure will not go unpunished, he teaches that this also involves the interests of God himself, inasmuch as the same persons that persecute the pious are guilty of rebellion against God. Hence it is necessary that God should inflict vengeance upon them not merely with a view to our salvation, but also for the sake of his own glory. Farther, this expression, *who will inflict vengeance*, relates to Christ, for Paul intimates that this office is assigned to him by God the Father. It may be asked, however, whether it is lawful for us to desire vengeance, for Paul promises it, as though it could be lawfully desired. I answer, that it is not lawful to desire vengeance upon any one, inasmuch as we are commanded to wish well to all. Besides, although we may in a general way desire vengeance upon the wicked, yet, as we do not as yet discriminate them, we ought to desire the welfare of all. In the mean time, the ruin of the wicked may be lawfully looked forward to with desire, provided there reigns in our hearts a pure and duly regulated zeal for God, and there is no feeling of inordinate desire.

*Who know not.* He distinguishes unbelievers by these two marks—that they *know not God*, and *obey not the gospel of Christ*. For if obedience is not rendered to the gospel through faith, as he teaches in the *first* and in the *last* chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, unbelief is the occasion of resistance to it. He charges them at the same time with ignorance of God, for a lively acquaintance with God produces of itself reverence towards him. Hence unbelief is always blind, not as though unbelievers were

altogether devoid of light and intelligence, but because they have the understanding darkened in such a manner, that *seeing they do not see*. (<401313> Matthew 13:13.) It is not without good grounds that Christ declares that *this is life eternal, to know the true God*, etc. (<431703> John 17:3.) Accordingly, from the want of this salutary knowledge, there follows contempt of God, and in fine, death. On this point I have treated more fully in commenting on the first chapter of First Corinthians.<sup>f8</sup>

**9. *Everlasting destruction from the face.*** He shews, by apposition, what is the nature of the punishment of which he had made mention—destruction without end, and an undying death. The perpetuity of the death is proved from the circumstance, that it has the glory of Christ as its opposite. Now, this is eternal, and has no end. Accordingly, the influence of that death will never cease. From this also the dreadful severity of the punishment may be inferred, inasmuch as it will be great in proportion to the glory and majesty of Christ.

**10. *When he shall come to be sanctified.*** As he has hitherto discoursed as to the punishment of the wicked, he now returns to the pious, and says that Christ will come, that he may be *glorified* in them; that is, that he may irradiate them with his glory, and that they may be partakers of it. “Christ will not have this glory for himself individually; but it will be common to all the saints.” This is the crowning and choice consolation of the pious, that when the Son of God will be manifested in the glory of his kingdom, he will gather them into the same fellowship with himself.<sup>f9</sup> There is, however, an implied contrast between the present condition in which believers labor and groan, and that final restoration. For they are *now* exposed to the reproaches of the world, and are looked upon as vile and worthless; but *then* they will be precious, and full of dignity, when Christ will pour forth his glory upon them. The end of this is, that the pious may as it were, with closed eyes, pursue the brief journey of this earthly life, having their minds always intent upon the future manifestation of Christ’s kingdom. For to what purpose does he make mention of His coming in power, but in order that they may in hope leap forward to that blessed resurrection which is as yet hid?

It is also to be observed, that after having made use of the term *saints*, he adds, by way of explanation—*those that believe*, by which he intimates that there is no holiness in men without faith, but that all are profane. In

the close he again repeats the terms—*in that day, for* that expression is connected with this sentence. Now, he repeats it with this view, that he may repress the desires of believers, lest they should hasten forward beyond due bounds.

*Because credit was given.* What he had said in a general way as to saints, he now applies to the Thessalonians, that they may not doubt that they are of that number.

“Because,” says he, “my preaching has obtained credit among you, Christ has already enrolled you in the number of his own people, whom he will make partakers of his glory.”

He calls his doctrine a *testimony*, because the Apostles are Christ’s *witnesses*. (<440108> Acts 1:8.) Let us learn, therefore, that the promises of God are ratified in us, when they gain credit with us.

<530111>2 THESSALONIANS 1:11-12	
11. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;	11. In quam rem etiam oramus semper pro vobis: ut vos habeat dignos vocatione Deus noster, et impleat omne beneplacitum bonitatis, et opus fidei cum potentia f10
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.	12. Quo glorificetur nomen Domini nostri Iesu Christi in vobis, et vos in ipso, secundum gratiam Dei nostri, et Domini Iesu Christi.

11. *On which account we pray always.* That they may know that they need continual help from God, he declares that he prays in their behalf. When he says *on this account*, he means, in order that they may reach that final goal of their course, as appears from the succeeding context, *that he would fulfill all the good pleasure*, etc. It may seem, however, as if what he has mentioned first were unnecessary, for God had already *accounted them worthy of his calling*. He speaks, however, as to the end or completion, which depends on perseverance. For as we are liable to give way, our

*calling* would not fail, so far as we are concerned, to prove sooner or later vain, if God did not confirm it. Hence he is said to *account us worthy*, when he conducts us to the point at which we aimed.

*And fulfill.* Paul goes to an amazing height in extolling the grace of God, for not contenting himself with the term *good pleasure*, he says that it flows from his goodness, unless perhaps any one should prefer to consider the beneficence<sup>f11</sup> as arising from this *good pleasure*, which amounts to the same thing. When, however, we are instructed that the *gracious purpose* of God is the cause of our salvation, and that *that* has its foundation in the *goodness* of the same God, are we not worse than mad, if we venture to ascribe anything, however small, to our own merits? For the words are in no small degree emphatic. He might have said in one word, *that your faith may be fulfilled*, but he terms it *good pleasure*. Farther, he expresses the idea still more distinctly by saying, that God was prompted by nothing else than his own goodness, for he finds nothing in us but misery.

Nor does Paul ascribe to the grace of God merely the beginning of our salvation, but all departments of it. Thus that contrivance of the Sophists is set aside, that we are, indeed, anticipated by the grace of God, but that it is helped by subsequent merits. Paul, on the other hand, recognizes in the whole progress of our salvation nothing but the pure grace of God. As, however, the *good pleasure* of God has been already accomplished in him, referring in the term subsequently employed by him to the effect which appears in us, he explains his meaning. when he says—*and work of faith*. And he calls it a *work*, with regard to God, who works or produces faith in us, as though he had said—“that he may complete the building of faith which he has begun.”

It is, also, not without good reason, that he says *with power*, for he intimates that the perfecting of faith is an arduous matter, and one of the greatest difficulty. This, also, we know but too well from experience; and the reason, too, is not far to seek, if we consider how great our weakness is, how various are the hindrances that obstruct us on every side, and how severe are the assaults of Satan. Hence, unless the power of God afford us help in no ordinary degree, faith will never rise to its full height. For it is no easier task to bring faith to perfection in an individual, than to rear upon water a tower that may by its firmness withstand all storms and fury of tempests, and may surmount the clouds in height, for we are not less fluid

than water, and it is necessary that the height of faith reach as high as heaven.

**12.** *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified.* He calls us back to the chief end of our whole life—that we may promote the Lord’s glory. What he adds, however, is more especially worthy of notice, that those who have advanced the glory of Christ will also in their turn be glorified in him. For in this, first of all, the wonderful goodness of God shines forth—that he will have his glory be conspicuous in us who are covered over with ignominy. This, however, is a twofold miracle, that he afterwards irradiates us with his glory, as though he would do the same to us in return. On this account he adds, *according to the grace of God and Christ.* For there is nothing here that is ours either in the action itself, or in the effect or fruit, for it is solely by the guidance of the Holy Spirit that our life is made to contribute to the glory of God. And the circumstance that so much fruit arises from this ought to be ascribed to the great mercy of God. In the mean time, if we are not worse than stupid, we must aim with all our might at the advancement of the glory of Christ, which is connected with ours. I deem it unnecessary to explain at present in what sense he represents the glory as belonging to God and Christ in common, as I have explained this elsewhere.

# CHAPTER 2

<530201> 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-2	
1. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,	1. Rogo autem vos, fratres, per adventum (vel, de adventu) Domini nostri Iesu Christi, et nostri in ipsum aggregationem,
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.	2. Ne cito dimoveamini a mente, neque turbemini vel per spiritum, vel per sermonem, vel per epistolam, tanquam a nobis scriptam, quasi instet dies Christi.

1. *Now I beseech you, by the coming.* It may indeed be read, as I have noted on the margin, CONCERNING *the coming*, but it suits better to view it as an earnest entreaty, taken from the subject in hand, just as in <461531> 1 Corinthians 15:31, when discoursing as to the hope of a resurrection, he makes use of an oath by that *glory* which is to be hoped for by believers. And this has much more efficacy when he adjures believers by the coming of Christ, not to imagine rashly that his day is at hand, for he at the same time admonishes us not to think of it but with reverence and sobriety. For it is customary to adjure by those things which are regarded by us with reverence. The meaning therefore is, “As you set a high value on the coming of Christ, when he will gather us to himself, and will truly perfect that unity of the body which we cherish as yet only in part through means of faith, so I earnestly beseech you by his coming not to be too credulous, should any one affirm, on whatever pretext, that his day is at hand.”

As he had in his former Epistle adverted to some extent to the resurrection, it is possible that some fickle and fanatical persons took occasion from this to mark out a near and fixed day. For it is not likely that this error had taken its rise earlier among the Thessalonians. For Timothy, on returning thence, had informed Paul as to their entire condition, and as a prudent and experienced man had omitted nothing that was of importance. Now if Paul had received notice of it, he could not have been silent as to a matter of so

great consequence. Thus I am of opinion, that when Paul's Epistle had been read, which contained a lively view of the resurrection, some that were disposed to indulge curiosity philosophized unseasonably as to the time of it. This, however, was an utterly ruinous fancy,<sup>f12</sup> as were also other things of the same nature, which were afterwards disseminated, not without artifice on the part of Satan. For when any day is said to be *near*, if it does not quickly arrive, mankind being naturally impatient of longer delay, their spirits begin to languish, and that languishing is followed up shortly afterwards by despair.

This, therefore, was Satan's subtlety: as he could not openly overturn the hope of a resurrection with the view of secretly undermining it, as if by pits underground,<sup>f13</sup> he promised that the day of it would be near, and would soon arrive. Afterwards, too, he did not cease to contrive various things, with the view of effacing, by little and little, the belief of a resurrection from the minds of men, as he could not openly eradicate it. It is, indeed, a plausible thing to say that the day of our redemption is definitely fixed, and on this account it meets with applause on the part of the multitude, as we see that the dreams of Lactantius and the Chiliasts of old gave much delight, and yet they had no other tendency than that of overthrowing the hope of a resurrection. This was not the design of Lactantius, but Satan, in accordance with his subtlety, perverted his curiosity, and that of those like him, so as to leave nothing in religion definite or fixed, and even at the present day he does not cease to employ the same means. We now see how necessary Paul's admonition was, as but for this all religion would have been overturned among the Thessalonians under a specious pretext.

**2. *That ye be not soon shaken in judgment.*** He employs the term *judgment* to denote that settled faith which rests on sound doctrine. Now, by means of that fancy which he rejects, they would have been carried away as it were into ecstasy. He notices, also, three kinds of imposture, as to which they must be on their guard—*spirit*, *word*, and *spurious epistle*. By the term *spirit* he means pretended prophecies, and it appears that this mode of speaking was common among the pious, so that they applied the term *spirit* to prophesyings, with the view of putting honor upon them. For, in order that prophecies may have due authority, we must look to the Spirit of God rather than to men. But as the devil is wont to *transform himself into an angel of light*, (<sup><471114></sup> 2 Corinthians 11:14,) impostors stole this

title, in order that they might impose upon the simple. But although Paul could have striped them of this mask, he, nevertheless, preferred to speak in this manner, by way of concession, as though he had said, “However they may pretend to have the spirit of revelation, believe them not.” John, in like manner, says:

“Try the spirits, whether they are of God.” (<620401> 1 John 4:1.)

*Speech*, in my opinion, includes every kind of doctrine, while false teachers insist in the way of reasons or conjectures, or other pretexts. What he adds as to *epistle*, is an evidence that this impudence is ancient—that of feigning the names of others.<sup>f14</sup> So much the more wonderful is the mercy of God towards us, in that while Paul’s name was on false grounds made use of in spurious writings, his writings have, nevertheless, been preserved entire even to our times. This, unquestionably, could not have taken place accidentally, or as the effect of mere human industry, if God himself had not by his power restrained Satan and all his ministers.

*As if the day of Christ were at hand*. This may seem to be at variance with many passages of Scripture, in which the Spirit declares that that day is at hand. But the solution is easy, for it is *at hand* with regard to God, with whom *one day is as a thousand years*. (<610308> 2 Peter 3:8.) In the mean time, the Lord would have us be constantly waiting for him in such a way as not to limit him to a certain time.

Watch, says he, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.  
(<402432> Matthew 24:32.)

On the other hand, those false prophets whom Paul exposes, while they ought to have kept men’s minds in suspense, bid them feel assured of his speedy advent, that they might not be wearied out with the irksomeness of delay.

3. *Let no man deceive you*. That they may not groundlessly promise themselves the arrival in so short a time of the joyful day of redemption, he presents to them a melancholy prediction as to the future scattering of the Church. This discourse entirely corresponds with that which Christ held in the presence of his disciples, when they had asked him respecting the end of the world. For he exhorts them to prepare themselves for enduring hard conflicts,<sup>f15</sup> (<402406> Matthew 24:6,) and after he has discoursed of the most grievous and previously unheard of calamities, by

which the earth was to be reduced almost to a desert, he adds, that the *end is not yet*, but that *these things are the beginnings of sorrows*. In the same way, Paul declares that believers must exercise warfare for a long period, before gaining a triumph.

We have here, however, a remarkable passage, and one that is in the highest degree worthy of observation. This was a grievous and dangerous temptation, which might shake even the most confirmed, and make them loose their footing—to see the Church, which had by means of such labors been raised up gradually and with difficulty to some considerable standing, fall down suddenly, as if torn down by a tempest. Paul, accordingly, fortifies beforehand the minds, not merely of the Thessalonians, but of all the pious, that when the Church should come to be in a scattered condition, they might not be alarmed, as though it were a thing that was new and unlooked for.

As, however, interpreters have twisted this passage in various ways, we must first of all endeavor to ascertain Paul's true meaning. He says that the day of Christ will not come, until the world has fallen into apostasy, and the reign of Antichrist has obtained a footing in the Church; for as to the exposition that some have given of this passage, as referring to the downfall of the Roman empire, it is too silly to require a lengthened refutation. I am also surprised, that so many writers, in other respects learned and acute, have fallen into a blunder in a matter that is so easy, were it not that when one has committed a mistake, others follow in troops without consideration. Paul, therefore, employs the term *apostasy* to mean—a treacherous departure from God, and that not on the part of one or a few individuals, but such as would spread itself far and wide among a large multitude of persons. For when *apostasy* is made mention of without anything being added, it cannot be restricted to a few. Now, none can be termed *apostates*, but such as have previously made a profession of Christ and the gospel. Paul, therefore, predicts a certain general revolt of the visible Church. "The Church must be reduced to an unsightly and dreadful state of ruin, before its full restoration be effected."

From this we may readily gather, how useful this prediction of Paul is, for it might have seemed as though that could not be a building of God, that was suddenly overthrown, and lay so long in ruins, had not Paul long before intimated that it would be so. Nay more, many in the present day,

when they consider with themselves the long—continued dispersion of the Church, begin to waver, as if this had not been regulated by the purpose of God. The Romanists, also, with the view of justifying the tyranny of their idol, make use of this pretext—that it was not possible that Christ would forsake his spouse. The weak, however, have something here on which to rest, when they learn that the unseemly state of matters which they behold in the Church was long since foretold; while, on the other hand, the impudence of the Romanists is openly exposed, inasmuch as Paul declares that a revolt will come, when the world has been brought under Christ’s authority. Now, we shall see presently, why it is that the Lord has permitted the Church, or at least what appeared to be such, to fall off in so shameful a manner.

*Has been revealed.* It was no better than an old wife’s fable that was contrived respecting Nero, that he was carried up from the world, destined to return again to harass the Church<sup>f16</sup> by his tyranny; and yet the minds of the ancients were so bewitched, that they imagined that Nero would be Antichrist.<sup>f17</sup> Paul, however, does not speak of one individual, but of a kingdom, that was to be taken possession of by Satan, that he might set up a seat of abomination in the midst of God’s temple—which we see accomplished in Popery. The revolt, it is true, has spread more widely, for Mahomet, as he was an apostate, turned away the Turks, his followers, from Christ. All heretics have broken the unity of the Church by their sects, and thus there have been a corresponding number of revolts from Christ.

Paul, however, when he has given warning that there would be such a scattering, that the greater part would revolt from Christ, adds something more serious—that there would be such a confusion, that the vicar of Satan would hold supreme power in the Church, and would preside there in the place of God. Now he describes that reign of abomination under the name of a single person, because it is only one reign, though one succeeds another. My readers now understand, that all the sects by which the Church has been lessened from the beginning, have been so many streams of revolt which began to draw away the water from the right course, but that the sect of Mahomet was like a violent bursting forth of water, that took away about the half of the Church by its violence. It remained, also, that Antichrist should infect the remaining part with his poison. Thus, we

see with our own eyes, that this memorable prediction of Paul has been confirmed by the event.

In the exposition which I bring forward, there is nothing forced. Believers in that age dreamed that they would be transported to heaven, after having endured troubles during a short period. Paul, however, on the other hand, foretells that, after they have had foreign enemies for some time molesting them, they will have more evils to endure from enemies at home, inasmuch as many of those that have made a profession of attachment to Christ would be hurried away into base treachery, and inasmuch as the temple of God itself would be polluted by sacrilegious tyranny, so that Christ's greatest enemy would exercise dominion there. The term *revelation* is taken here to denote manifest possession of tyranny, as if Paul had said that the day of Christ would not come until this tyrant had openly manifested himself, and had, as it were, designedly overturned the whole order of the Church.

**4. *An adversary, and that exalteth himself.*** The two epithets—*man of sin*, and *son of perdition*—intimate, in the first place, how dreadful the confusion would be, that the unseemliness of it might not discourage weak minds; and farther, they tend to stir up the pious to a feeling of detestation, lest they should degenerate along with others. Paul, however, now draws, as if in a picture, a striking likeness of Antichrist; for it may be easily gathered from these words what is the nature of his kingdom, and in what things it consists. For, when he calls him an *adversary*, when he says that he will claim for himself those things which belong to God, so that he is worshipped in the temple as God, he places his kingdom in direct opposition to the kingdom of Christ. Hence, as the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, so this tyranny must be upon souls, that it may rival the kingdom of Christ. We shall also find him afterwards assigning to him the power of deceiving, by means of wicked doctrines and pretended miracles. If, accordingly, you would know Antichrist, you must view him as diametrically opposed to Christ. <sup>f18</sup>

Where I have rendered—*everything that is called God*, the reading more generally received among the Greeks is, *every one that is called*. It may, however, be conjectured, both from the old translation <sup>f19</sup> and from some Greek commentaries, that Paul's words have been corrupted. The mistake, too, of a single letter was readily fallen into, especially when the shape of

the letter was much similar; for, where there was written *πάν τὸ*, (*everything*,) some transcriber, or too daring reader, turned it into *πάντα*, (*every one*.) This difference, however, is not of so much importance as to the sense, for Paul undoubtedly means that Antichrist would take to himself those things that belonged to God alone, so that he would *exalt himself* above every divine claim, that all religion and all worship of God might lie under his feet. This expression then, *everything that is reckoned to be God*, is equivalent to *everything that is reckoned as Divinity*, and *σέβασμα*, that is, in which the veneration due to God consists.

Here, however, the subject treated of is not the name of God himself, but his majesty and worship, and, in general, everything that he claims for himself. “True religion is that by which the true God alone is worshipped; *that*, the *son of perdition* will transfer to himself.” Now, every one that has learned from Scripture what are the things that more especially belong to God, and will, on the other hand, observe what the Pope claims for himself—though he were but a boy of ten years of age—will have no great difficulty in recognizing Antichrist. Scripture declares that God is the *alone Lawgiver* (<<sup>590412</sup>> James 4:12) *who is able to save and to destroy* ; the alone King, whose office it is to govern souls by his word. It represents him as the author of all sacred rites; <sup>f20</sup> it teaches that righteousness and salvation are to be sought from Christ alone; and it assigns, at the same time, the manner and means. There is not one of these things that the Pope does not affirm to be under his authority. He boasts that it is his to bind consciences with such laws as seem good to him, and subject them to everlasting punishment. As to sacraments, he either institutes new ones, according to his own inclination, <sup>f21</sup> or he corrupts and deforms those which had been instituted by Christ—nay, sets them aside altogether, that he may substitute in their place the sacrileges <sup>f22</sup> which he has invented. He contrives means of attaining salvation that are altogether at variance with the doctrine of the Gospel; and, in fine, he does not hesitate to change the whole of religion at his own pleasure. What is it, I pray you, for one to lift up himself above everything that is reckoned God, if the Pope does not do so? When he thus robs God of his honor, he leaves him nothing remaining but an empty title of Deity, <sup>f23</sup> while he transfers to himself the whole of his power. And this is what Paul adds shortly afterwards, that *the son of perdition would shew himself as God*. For, as has been said, he does not insist upon the simple term *God*, but intimates,

that the pride <sup>f24</sup> of Antichrist would be such, that, raising himself above the number and rank of servants, and mounting the judgment—seat of God, <sup>f25</sup> would reign, not with a human, but with a divine authority. For we know that whatever is raised up into the place of God is an idol, though it should not bear the name of God.

*In the temple of God.* By this one term there is a sufficient refutation of the error, nay more, the stupidity of those who reckon the Pope to be Vicar of Christ, on the ground that he has his seat in the Church, in whatever manner he may conduct himself; for Paul places Antichrist nowhere else than in the very sanctuary of God. For this is not a foreign, but a domestic enemy, who opposes Christ under the very name of Christ. But it is asked, how the Church is represented as the den of so many superstitions, while it was destined to be the *pillar of the truth*? (<540315> 1 Timothy 3:15.) I answer, that it is thus represented, not on the ground of its retaining all the qualities of the Church, but because it has something of it remaining. I accordingly acknowledge, that that is the *temple of God* in which the Pope bears rule, but at the same time profaned by innumerable sacrileges.

<530205> 2 THESSALONIANS 2:5-8	
5. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?	5. Annon memoria tenetis, quod, quum adhuc essem apud vos, haec vobis dicebam?
6. And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.	6. Et nunc quid detineat, scitis, donec ille reveletur suo tempore.
7. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way:	7. Mystrium enim iam operatur iniquitatis, solum tenens modo donec e medio tollatur.
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.	8. Et tunc revelabitur iniquus ille, quem Dominus destruet spiritu oris sui, et abolebit illustratione adventus sui.

5. *Do ye not remember?* This added no small weight to the doctrine, that they had previously heard it from the mouth of Paul, that they might not think that it had been contrived by him at the instant. And as he had given them early warning as to the reign of Antichrist, and the devastation that was coming upon the Church, when no question had as yet been raised as to such things, he saw beyond all doubt that the doctrine was specially useful to be known. And, unquestionably, it is really so. Those whom he addressed were destined to see many things that would trouble them; and when posterity would see a large proportion of those who had made profession of the faith of Christ revolt from piety, maddened, as it were, by a gad-fly, or rather by a fury,<sup>f26</sup> what could they do but waver? This, however, was as a *brazen*<sup>f27</sup> *wall*<sup>f28</sup>—that matters were so appointed by God, because the ingratitude of men<sup>f29</sup> was worthy of such vengeance. Here we may see how forgetful men are in matters affecting their everlasting salvation. We must also observe Paul's mildness; for while he might have been vehemently incensed,<sup>f30</sup> he does but mildly reprove them; for it is a fatherly way of reproving them to say to them, that they had allowed forgetfulness of a matter so important and so useful to steal in upon their minds.

6. *And now what withholdeth.* Τὸ κατέχον means here properly an impediment or occasion of delay. Chrysostom, who thinks that this can only be understood as referring to the Spirit, or to the Roman Empire, prefers to lean to the latter opinion. He assigns a plausible reason—because Paul would not have spoken of the Spirit in enigmatical terms,<sup>f31</sup> but in speaking of the Roman Empire wished to avoid exciting unpleasant feeling. He states also the reason why the state of the Roman Empire retards the revelation of Antichrist—that, as the monarchy of Babylon was overthrown by the Persians and Medes, and the Macedonians, having conquered the Persians, again took possession of the monarchy, and the Macedonians were at last subdued by the Romans, so Antichrist seized hold for himself of the vacant supremacy of the Roman Empire. There is not one of these things that was not afterwards confirmed by actual occurrence. Chrysostom, therefore, speaks truly in so far as concerns history. I am of opinion, however, that Paul's intention was different from this—that the doctrine of the gospel would require to be spread hither and thither, until nearly the whole world were convicted of obstinacy and deliberate malice. For there can be no doubt that the Thessalonians had

heard from Paul's mouth as to this impediment, of whatever sort it was, for he recalls to their remembrance what he had previously taught in their presence.

Let my readers now consider which of the two is the more probable—either that Paul declared that the light of the gospel must be diffused through all parts of the earth before God would thus give loose reins to Satan, or that the power of the Roman Empire stood in the way of the rise of Antichrist, inasmuch as he could only break through into a vacant possession. I seem at least to hear Paul discoursing as to the universal call of the Gentiles—that the grace of God must be offered to all—that Christ must enlighten the whole world by his gospel, in order that the impiety of men might be the more fully attested and demonstrated. This, therefore, was the delay, until the career of the gospel should be completed, because a gracious invitation to salvation was first in order.<sup>f32</sup> Hence he adds, *in his time*, because vengeance was ripe after grace had been rejected.<sup>f33</sup>

**7. *The mystery of iniquity.*** This is opposed to *revelation* ; for as Satan had not yet gathered so much strength, as that Antichrist could openly oppress the Church, he says that he is carrying on secretly and clandestinely<sup>f34</sup> what he would do openly in his own time. He was therefore at that time secretly laying the foundations on which he would afterwards rear the edifice, as actually took place. And this tends to confirm more fully what I have already stated, that it is not one individual that is represented under the term Antichrist, but one kingdom, which extends itself through many ages. In the same sense, John says that Antichrist will come, but that there were already many in his time. (<620218> 1 John 2:18.) For he admonishes those who were then living to be on their guard against that deadly pestilence, which was at that time shooting up in various forms. For sects were rising up which were the seeds, as it were, of that unhappy weed which has well—nigh choked and destroyed God's entire tillage.<sup>f35</sup> But although Paul conveys the idea of a secret manner of working, yet he has made use of the term *mystery* rather than any other, alluding to the mystery of salvation, of which he speaks elsewhere, (<510126> Colossians 1:26,) for he carefully insists on the struggle of repugnancy between the Son of God and this *son of perdition*.

***Only now withholding.*** While he makes both statements in reference to one person—that he will hold supremacy for a time, and that he will shortly be

taken out of the way, I have no doubt that he refers to Antichrist; and the participle *withholding* must be explained in the future tense.<sup>f36</sup> For he has, in my opinion, added this for the consolation of believers—that the reign of Antichrist will be temporary, the limits of it having been assigned to it by God; for believers might object—“Of what avail is it that the gospel is preached, if Satan is now hatching a tyranny that he is to exercise for ever?” He accordingly exhorts to patience, because God afflicts his Church only for a time, that he may one day afford it deliverance; and, on the other hand, the perpetuity of Christ’s reign must be considered, in order that believers may repose in it.

8. *And then will be revealed*—that is, when that *impediment* (τὸ κατέχον) shall be removed; for he does not point out the time of revelation as being when he, who now holds the supremacy, *will be taken out of the way*, but he has an eye to what he had said before. For he had said that there was some hindrance in the way of Antichrist’s entering upon an open possession of the kingdom. He afterwards added, that he was already hatching a secret work of impiety. In the *third* place, he has interspersed consolation, on the ground that this tyranny would come to an end.<sup>f37</sup> He now again repeats, that he<sup>f38</sup> who was as yet hidden, would be *revealed in his time*; and the repetition is with this view—that believers, being furnished with spiritual armor, may, nevertheless, fight vigorously under Christ,<sup>f39</sup> and not allow themselves to be overwhelmed, although the deluge of impiety should thus overspread.<sup>f40</sup>

*Whom the Lord.* He had foretold the destruction of Antichrist’s reign; he now points out the manner of his destruction—that he will be reduced to nothing by the *word of the Lord*. It is uncertain, however, whether he speaks of the last appearance of Christ, when he will be manifested from heaven as the Judge. The words, indeed, seem to have this meaning, but Paul does not mean that Christ would accomplish this<sup>f41</sup> in one moment. Hence we must understand it in this sense—that Antichrist would be wholly and in every respect destroyed,<sup>f42</sup> when that final day of the restoration of all things shall arrive. Paul, however, intimates that Christ will in the mean time, by the rays which he will emit previously to his advent, put to flight the darkness in which Antichrist will reign, just as the sun, before he is seen by us, chases away the darkness of the night by the pouring forth of his rays.<sup>f43</sup>

This victory of the word, therefore, will shew itself in this world, for the *spirit of his mouth* simply means the word, as it also does in <sup><231104></sup>Isaiah 11:4, to which passage Paul seems to allude. For the Prophet there takes in the same sense the *scepter of his mouth*, and the *breath of his lips*, and he also furnishes Christ with these very arms, that he may rout his enemies. This is a signal commendation of true and sound doctrine—that it is represented as sufficient for putting an end to all impiety, and as destined to be invariably victorious, in opposition to all the machinations of Satan; as also when, a little afterwards, the proclamation of it is spoken of as *Christ's coming* to us.

When Paul adds, the *brightness of his coming*, he intimates that the light of Christ's presence will be such as will swallow up the darkness of Antichrist. In the mean time, he indirectly intimates, that Antichrist will be permitted to reign for a time, when Christ has, in a manner, withdrawn, as usually happens, whenever on his presenting himself we turn our back upon him. And, undoubtedly, that is a sad departure <sup>f44</sup> of Christ, when he has taken away his light from men, which has been improperly and unworthily received, <sup>f45</sup> in accordance with what follows. In the mean time Paul teaches, that by his presence alone all the elect of God will be abundantly safe, in opposition to all the subtleties of Satan.

<sup>&lt;530209&gt;</sup> 2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-12	
9. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,	9. Cuius adventus est secundum operationem (vel, efficaciam) Satanae, in omni potentia, et signis et prodigiis mendacibus,
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.	10. Et in omni deceptione iniustitiae, in iis qui pereunt: pro eo quod dilectionem veritatis non sunt amplexi, ut salvi fierent.
11. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie;	11. Propterea mittet illis Deus operationem (vel, efficaciam) imposturae, ut credant mendacio:
12. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.	12. Ut iudicentur omnes qui non crediderunt veritati, sed oblectati sunt iniustitia.

9. *Whose coming.* He confirms what he has said by an argument from contraries. For as Antichrist cannot stand otherwise than through the impostures of Satan, he must necessarily vanish as soon as Christ shines forth. In fine, as it is only in darkness that he reigns, the dawn of the day puts to flight and extinguishes the thick darkness of his reign. We are now in possession of Paul's design, for he meant to say, that Christ would have no difficulty in destroying the tyranny of Antichrist, which was supported by no resources but those of Satan. In the mean time, however, he points out the marks by which that *wicked one* may be distinguished. For after having spoken of the *working* or *efficacy* of Satan, he marks it out particularly when he says, *in signs and lying wonders, and in all deceivableness*. And assuredly, in order that this may be opposed to the kingdom of Christ, it must consist partly in false doctrine and errors, and partly in pretended miracles. For the kingdom of Christ consists of the doctrine of truth, and the power of the Spirit. Satan, accordingly, with the view of opposing Christ in the person of his Vicar, puts on Christ's mask, <sup>f46</sup> while he, nevertheless, at the same time chooses armor, with which he may directly oppose Christ. Christ, by the doctrine of his gospel, enlightens our minds in eternal life; Antichrist, trained up under Satan's tuition, by wicked doctrine, involves the wicked in ruin; <sup>f47</sup> Christ puts forth the power of his Spirit for salvation, and seals his gospel by miracles; the adversary, <sup>f48</sup> by the efficacy of Satan, alienates us from the Holy Spirit, and by his enchantments confirms miserable men <sup>f49</sup> in error.

He gives the name of *miracles of falsehood*, not merely to such as are falsely and deceptively contrived by cunning men with a view to impose upon the simple—a kind of deception with which all Papacy abounds, for they are a part of his power which he has previously touched upon; but takes falsehood as consisting in this, that Satan draws to a contrary end works which otherwise are truly works of God, and abuses miracles so as to obscure God's glory. <sup>f50</sup> In the mean time, however, there can be no doubt, that he deceives by means of enchantments—an example of which we have in Pharaoh's magicians. (<020711> Exodus 7:11.)

10. *In those that perish.* He limits the power of Satan, as not being able to injure the elect of God, just as Christ, also, exempts them from this danger. (<402424> Matthew 24:24.) From this it appears, that Antichrist has not so great power otherwise than by his permission. Now, this consolation was necessary. For all the pious, but for this, would of necessity be

overpowered with fear, if they saw a yawning gulf pervading the whole path, along which they must pass. Hence Paul, however he may wish them to be in a state of anxiety, that they may be on their guard, lest by excessive carelessness they should fall back, nay, even throw themselves into ruin, does, nevertheless, bid them cherish good hope, inasmuch as Satan's power is bridled, that he may not be able to involve any but the wicked in ruin.

*Because they received not the love.* Lest the wicked should complain that they perish innocently, <sup>f51</sup> and that they have been appointed to death rather from cruelty on the part of God, than from any fault on their part, Paul shews on what good grounds it is that so severe vengeance from God is to come upon them—because they have not received in the temper of mind with which they ought the truth which was presented to them, nay more, of their own accord refused salvation. And from this appears more clearly what I have already stated—that the gospel required to be preached to the world before God would give Satan so much permission, for he would never have allowed his temple to be so basely profaned, <sup>f52</sup> had he not been provoked by extreme ingratitude on the part of men. In short, Paul declares that Antichrist will be the minister of God's righteous vengeance against those who, being called to salvation, have rejected the gospel, and have preferred to apply their mind to impiety and errors. Hence there is no reason why Papists should now object, that it is at variance with the clemency of Christ to cast off his Church in this manner. For though the domination of Antichrist has been cruel, none have perished but those who were deserving of it, nay more, did of their own accord *choose death*. (<sup><200836></sup> Proverbs 8:36.) And unquestionably, while the voice of the Son of God has sounded forth everywhere, it finds the ears of men deaf, nay obstinate, <sup>f53</sup> and while a profession of Christianity is common, there are, nevertheless, few that have truly and heartily given themselves to Christ. Hence it is not to be wondered, if similar vengeance quickly follows such a criminal <sup>f54</sup> contempt.

It is asked whether the punishment of blindness does not fall on any but those who have on set purpose rebelled against the gospel. I answer, that this special judgment by which God has avenged open contumacy, <sup>f55</sup> does not stand in the way of his striking down with stupidity, <sup>f56</sup> as often as seems good to him, those that have never heard a single word respecting Christ, for Paul does not discourse in a general way as to the reasons why

God has from the beginning permitted Satan to go at large with his falsehoods, but as to what a horrible vengeance impends over gross despisers of new and previously unwonted grace. <sup>f57</sup>

He uses the expression—*receiving the love of the* truth, to mean—applying the mind to the love of it. Hence we learn that faith is always conjoined with a sweet and voluntary reverence for God, because we do not properly believe the word of God, unless it is lovely and pleasant to us.

**11. *The working of delusion.*** He means that errors will not merely have a place, but the wicked will be blinded, so that they will rush forward to ruin without consideration. For as God enlightens us inwardly by his Spirit, that his doctrine may be efficacious in us, and opens our eyes and hearts, that it may make its way thither, so by a righteous judgment he delivers over to a *reprobate mind* (<450128> Romans 1:28) those whom he has appointed to destruction, that with closed eyes and a senseless mind, they may, as if bewitched, deliver themselves over to Satan and his ministers to be deceived. And assuredly we have a notable specimen of this in the Papacy. No words can express how monstrous a sink of errors <sup>f58</sup> there is *there*, how gross and shameful an absurdity of superstitions there is, and what delusions at variance with common sense. None that have even a moderate taste of sound doctrine, can think of such monstrous things without the greatest horror. How, then, could the whole world be lost in astonishment at them, were it not that men have been struck with blindness by the Lord, and converted, as it were, into stumps?

**12. *That all may be condemned.*** That is, that they may receive the punishment due to their impiety. Thus, those that perish have no just ground to expostulate with God, inasmuch as they have obtained what they sought. For we must keep in view what is stated in <051303> Deuteronomy 13:3, that the hearts of men are subjected to trial, when false doctrines come abroad, inasmuch as they have no power except among those who do not love God with a sincere heart. Let those, then, who *take pleasure in unrighteousness*, reap the fruit of it. When he says *all*, he means that contempt of God finds no excuse in the great crowd and multitude of those who refuse to obey the gospel, for God is the Judge of the whole world, so that he will inflict punishment upon a hundred thousand, no less than upon one individual.

The participle εὐδοκήσαντες (*taking pleasure*) means (so to speak) a voluntary inclination to evil, for in this way every excuse is cut off from the ungrateful, when they take so much *pleasure in unrighteousness*, as to prefer it to the righteousness of God. For by what violence will they say that they have been impelled to alienate themselves by a mad revolt<sup>f59</sup> from God, towards whom they were led by the guidance of nature? It is at least manifest that they willingly and knowingly lent an ear to falsehoods.

<530213> 2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-14	
13. But we are bound to give thanks always 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:	13. Nos autem debemus gratias agere Deo semper de vobis, fratres dilecti a Domino, quia elegit vos Deus ab initio in salutem, in sanctificatione Spiritus, et fide veritatis:
14. Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.	14. Quo vocavit vos per evangelium nostrum, in possessionem gloriae (vel, gloriosam) Domini nostri Iesu Christi.

13. *But we are bound to give thanks.* He now separates more openly the Thessalonians from the reprobate, that their faith may not waver from fear of the revolt that was to take place. At the same time, he had it in view to consult, not *their* welfare only, but also that of posterity.<sup>f60</sup> And he does not merely confirm them that they may not fall over the same precipice with the world, but by this comparison he extols the more the grace of God towards them, in that, while they see almost the whole world hurried forward to death at the same time, as if by a violent tempest, they are, by the hand of God, maintained in a quiet and secure condition of life.<sup>f61</sup> Thus we must contemplate the Judgments of God upon the reprobate in such a way that they may be, as it were, mirrors to us for considering his mercy towards us. For we must draw this conclusion, that it is owing solely to the singular grace of God that we do not miserably perish with them.

He calls them *beloved of the Lord*, for this reason, that they may the better consider that the sole reason why they are exempted from the almost

universal overthrow of the world, was because God exercised towards them unmerited love. Thus Moses admonished the Jews—

“God did not elevate you so magnificently because ye were more powerful than others, or were numerous, but because he loved your fathers.” (<sup><050707></sup>Deuteronomy 7:7-8.)

For, when we hear the term *love*, that statement of John must immediately occur to our mind—*Not that we first loved him.* (<sup><620419></sup>1 John 4:19.) In short, Paul here does two things; for he confirms faith, lest the pious should give way from being overcome with fear, and he exhorts them to gratitude, that they may value so much the higher the mercy of God towards them.

*Hath chosen you.* He states the reason why all are not involved and swallowed up in the same ruin—because Satan has no power over any that God has chosen, so as to prevent them from being saved, though heaven and earth were to be confounded. This passage is read in various ways.

The old interpreter has rendered it *first—fruits*, <sup>f62</sup> as being in the Greek ἀπαρχήν; but as almost all the Greek manuscripts have ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, I have in preference followed this reading. Should any one prefer *first—fruits*, the meaning will be, that believers have been, as it were, set aside for a sacred offering, by a metaphor taken from the ancient custom of the law. Let us, however, hold by what is more generally received, that he says that the Thessalonians were *chosen from the beginning*.

Some understand the meaning to be, that they had been called among the first; but this is foreign to Paul's meaning, and does not accord with the connection of the passage. For he does not merely exempt from fear a few individuals, who had been led to Christ immediately on the commencement of the gospel, but this consolation belongs to all the elect of God, without exception. When, therefore, he says *from the beginning*, he means that there is no danger lest their salvation, which is founded on God's eternal election, should be overthrown, whatever tumultuous changes may occur. “However Satan may mix and confound all things in the world, your salvation, notwithstanding, has been placed on a footing of safety, prior to the creation of the world.” Here, therefore, is the true port of safety, that God, who elected us of old, <sup>f63</sup> will deliver us from all the evils that threaten us. For we are elected to salvation; we shall, therefore, be safe

from destruction. But as it is not for us to penetrate into God's secret counsel, to seek *there* assurance of our salvation, he specifies signs or tokens of election, which should suffice us for the assurance of it.

*In sanctification of the spirit*, says he, *and belief of the truth*. This may be explained in two ways, WITH *sanctification*, or BY sanctification. It is not of much importance which of the two you select, as it is certain <sup>f64</sup> that Paul meant simply to introduce, in connection with election, those nearer tokens which manifest to us what is in its own nature incomprehensible, and are conjoined with it by an indissoluble tie. Hence, in order that we may know that we are elected by God, there is no occasion to inquire as to what he decreed before the creation of the world, but we find in ourselves a satisfactory proof if he has sanctified us by his Spirit,—if he has enlightened us in the faith of his gospel. For the gospel is an evidence to us of our adoption, and the Spirit seals it, and those that are *led by the Spirit are the sons of God*, (<sup><450814></sup> Romans 8:14,) and he who by faith possesses Christ has everlasting life. (<sup><620512></sup> 1 John 5:12.) These things must be carefully observed, lest, overlooking the revelation of God's will, with which he bids us rest satisfied, we should plunge into a profound labyrinth from a desire to take it from his secret counsel, from the investigation of which he draws us aside. Hence it becomes us to rest satisfied with the faith of the gospel, and that grace of the Spirit by which we have been regenerated. And by this means is refuted the wickedness <sup>f65</sup> of those who make the election of God a pretext for every kind of iniquity, while Paul connects it with faith and regeneration in such a manner, that he would not have it judged of by us on any other grounds.

**14. *To which he called us.*** He repeats the same thing, though in somewhat different terms. For the sons of God are not called otherwise than to the belief of the truth. Paul, however, meant to shew here how competent a witness he is for confirming that thing of which he was a minister. He accordingly puts himself forward as a surety, that the Thessalonians may not doubt that the gospel, in which they had been instructed by him, is the safety—bringing voice of God, by which they are aroused from death, and are delivered from the tyranny of Satan. He calls it *his* gospel, not as though it had originated with him, <sup>f66</sup> but inasmuch as the preaching of it had been committed to him.

What he adds, *to the acquisition or possession of the glory of Christ*, may be taken either in an active or in a passive signification—either as meaning, that they are called in order that they may one day *possess* a glory in common with Christ, or that Christ *acquired* them with a view to his glory. And thus it will be a second means of confirmation that he will defend them, as being nothing less than his own inheritance, and, in maintaining their salvation, will stand forward in defense of his own glory; which latter meaning, in my opinion, suits better.

<530215> 2 THESSALONIANS 2:15-17	
15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.	15. Itaque fratres, state, et tenete institutiones, quas didicistis vel per sermonem, vel per epistolam nostram.
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,	16. Ipse vero Dominus noster Iesus Christus, et Deus, ac Pater noster, qui dilexit nos, et dedit consolationem aeternam, et spem bonam per gratiam,
17. Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.	17. Consoletur corda vestra, et stabiliat vos in omni opere et sermone bono.

He deduces this exhortation on good grounds from what goes before, inasmuch as our steadfastness and power of perseverance rest on nothing else than assurance of divine grace. When, however, God calls us to salvation, stretching forth, as it were, his hand to us; when Christ, by the doctrine of the gospel, presents himself to us to be enjoyed; when the Spirit is given us as a seal and earnest of eternal life, though the heaven should fall, we must, nevertheless, not become disheartened. Paul, accordingly, would have the Thessalonians stand, not merely when others continue to stand, but with a more settled stability; so that, on seeing almost all turning aside from the faith, and all things full of confusion, they will, nevertheless, retain their footing. And assuredly the calling of God ought to fortify us against all occasions of offense in such a manner, that not even the entire ruin of the world shall shake, much less overthrow, our stability.

**15. *Hold fast the institutions.*** Some restrict this to precepts of external polity; but this does not please me, for he points out the manner of standing firm. Now, to be furnished with invincible strength is a much higher thing than external discipline. Hence, in my opinion, he includes all doctrine under this term, as though he had said that they have ground on which they may stand firm, provided they persevere in sound doctrine, according as they had been instructed by him. I do not deny that the term **παραδόσεις** is fitly applied to the ordinances which are appointed by the Churches, with a view to the promoting of peace and the maintaining of order, and I admit that it is taken in this sense when human traditions are treated of, (<sup><401506></sup> Matthew 15:6.) Paul, however, will be found in the next chapter making use of the term *tradition*, as meaning the rule that he had laid down, and the very signification of the term is general. The context, however, as I have said, requires that it be taken here to mean the whole of that doctrine in which they had been instructed. For the matter treated of is the most important of all—that their faith may remain secure in the midst of a dreadful agitation of the Church.

Papists, however, act a foolish part in gathering from this that their traditions ought to be observed. They reason, indeed, in this manner—that if it was allowable for Paul to enjoin traditions, it was allowable also for other teachers; and that, if it was a pious thing <sup>f67</sup> to observe the former, the latter also ought not less to be observed. Granting them, however, that Paul speaks of precepts belonging to the external government of the Church, I say that they were, nevertheless, not contrived by him, but divinely communicated. For he declares elsewhere, (<sup><460735></sup> 1 Corinthians 7:35,) that it was not his intention to ensnare consciences, as it was not lawful, either for himself, or for all the Apostles together. They act a still more ridiculous part in making it their aim to pass off, under this, the abominable sink of their own superstitions, as though they were the traditions of Paul. But farewell to these trifles, when we are in possession of Paul's true meaning. And we may judge in part from this Epistle what traditions he here recommends, for he says—whether *by word*, that is, discourse, or *by epistle*. Now, what do these Epistles contain but pure doctrine, which overturns to the very foundation the whole of the Papacy, and every invention that is at variance with the simplicity of the Gospel?

**16. *Now the Lord himself.*** When he ascribes to Christ a work altogether Divine, and represents him, in common with the Father, as the Author of

the choicest blessings, as we have in this a clear proof of the divinity of Christ, so we are admonished, that we cannot obtain anything from God unless we seek it in Christ himself: and when he asks that God may give him those things which he had enjoined, he shews clearly enough how little influence exhortations have, unless God inwardly move and affect our hearts. Unquestionably there will be but an empty sound striking upon the ear, if doctrine does not receive efficacy from the Spirit.

What he afterwards adds, *who hath loved you, and hath given consolation*, etc., relates to confidence in asking; for he would have the Thessalonians feel persuaded that God will do what he prays for. And from what does he prove this? Because he once shewed that they were dear to him, while he has already conferred upon them distinguished favors, and in this manner has bound himself to them for the time to come. This is what he means by *everlasting consolation*. The term *hope*, also, has the same object in view—that they may confidently expect a never—failing continuance of gifts. But what does he ask? That God may sustain their hearts by his consolation; for this is his office, to keep them from giving way through anxiety or distrust; and farther, that he may give them perseverance, both in a pious and holy course of life, and in sound doctrine; for I am of opinion, that it is rather of this than of common discourse that he speaks, so that this agrees with what goes before.

# CHAPTER 3

<530301> **2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-5**

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;	1. Quod reliquum est, orate fratres pro nobis: ut sermo Domini currat et glorificetur, quemadmodum et apud vos;
2. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith.	2. Et ut liberemur ab importunis et malignis hominibus: non enim omnium est fides.
3. But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.	3. Fidelis autem Dominus, qui confirmabit vos, et custodiet a maligno.
4. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.	4. Confidimus autem in Domino de vobis, quod quae vobis praecipimus, et facitis, et facturi estis.
5. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.	5. Dominus autem dirigat corda vestra in dilectionem Dei, et exspectationem Christi.

1. *Pray for us.* Though the Lord powerfully aided him, and though he surpassed all others in earnestness of prayer, he nevertheless does not despise the prayers of believers, by which the Lord would have us aided. It becomes us, after his example, eagerly to desire this aid, and to stir up our brethren to pray for us.

When, however, he adds—*that the word of God may have its course*, he shows that he has not so much concern and regard for himself personally, as for the entire Church. For why does he desire to be recommended to the prayers of the Thessalonians? That the doctrine of the gospel may *have its course*. He does not desire, therefore, so much that regard should be had to himself individually, as to the glory of God and the common welfare of the Church. *Course* means here dissemination; <sup>f68</sup> *glory* means something farther,—that his preaching may have its power and efficacy for renewing

men after the image of God. Hence, holiness of life and uprightness on the part of Christians is the glory of the gospel; as, on the other hand, those defame the gospel who make profession of it with the mouth, while in the meantime they live in wickedness and baseness. He says—as *among you* ; for this should be a stimulus to the pious, to see all others like them. Hence those that have already entered into the kingdom of God are exhorted to pray daily that it may *come*. (<400610> Matthew 6:10.)

2. *That we may be delivered.* The old interpreter has rendered it, not unhappily, in my opinion—*unreasonable*.<sup>f69</sup> Now, by this term, as also by that which immediately follows, (τῶν πονηρῶν,) *evil*, Paul means wicked and treacherous men, who lurked in the Church, under the name of Christians, or at least Jews, who with a mad zeal for the law furiously persecuted the gospel. He knew, however, how much danger impended over them from both these classes. Chrysostom, however, thinks that those only are meant who maliciously oppose the gospel by base doctrines,<sup>f70</sup>—not by weapons of violence, as for example, Alexander, Hymeneus, and the like; but for my part, I extend it generally to all kinds of dangers and enemies. He was at that time proceeding towards Jerusalem, and wrote in the midst of his journeyings. Now, he had already been divinely forewarned that *imprisonments and persecutions awaited him there*. (<442023> Acts 20:23.) He means, however, *deliverance*, so that he may come off victorious, whether by life or by death.

*All have not faith.* This might be explained to mean, “Faith is not in all.” This expression, however, were both ambiguous and more obscure. Let us therefore retain Paul’s words, by which he intimates that faith is a gift of God that is too rare to be found in all. God, therefore, calls many who do not come to him by faith. Many pretend to come to him, who have their heart at the farthest distance from him. Farther, he does not speak of all indiscriminately, but merely animadvert upon those that belong to the Church: for the Thessalonians saw that very many held faith in abhorrence;<sup>f71</sup> nay, they saw how small was the number of believers. Hence it would have been unnecessary to say this as to strangers; but Paul simply says that all that make a profession of faith are not such in reality. Should you take in all Jews, they appeared to have nearness to Christ, for they ought to have recognized him by means of the law and the prophets. Paul, there can be no question specially marks out those with whom he would have to do. Now, it is probable that they were those who, while

they had the appearance and honorary title of piety, were nevertheless very far from the reality. From this came the conflict.

With the view of shewing, therefore, that it was not groundlessly, or without good reason, that he dreaded contests with wicked and perverse men, he says that faith is not common to all, because the wicked and reprobate are always mixed with the good, as *tares* are with the *good wheat*. (<401325> Matthew 13:25.) And this ought to be remembered by us whenever we have annoyance given us by wicked persons, who nevertheless desire to be reckoned as belonging to the society of Christians—that *all men have not faith*. Nay more, when we hear in some instances that the Church is disturbed by base factions, let this be a shield to us against offenses of this nature; for we shall not merely inflict injury upon pious teachers, if we have doubts as to their fidelity, whenever domestic enemies do them harm, but our faith will from time to time waver, unless we keep in mind that among those who boast of the name of Christians there are many that are treacherous.<sup>f72</sup>

**3. *But God is faithful.*** As it was possible that their minds, influenced by unfavorable reports, might come to entertain some doubts as to Paul's ministry, having taught them that faith is not always found in men, he now calls them back to God, and says that he is *faithful*, so as to confirm them against all contrivances of men, by which they will endeavor to shake them. "They, indeed, are treacherous, but there is in God a support that is abundantly secure, so as to keep you from giving way." He calls the Lord *faithful*, inasmuch as he adheres to his purpose to the end in maintaining the salvation of his people, seasonably aids them, and never forsakes them in dangers, as in <461013> 1 Corinthians 10:13,

God is faithful, who will not suffer  
you to be tried above that ye are able to bear.

These words, however, themselves shew that Paul was more anxious as to others than as to himself. Malicious men directed against him the stings of their malignity; the whole violence<sup>f73</sup> of it fell upon him. In the mean time, he directs all his anxieties towards the Thessalonians, lest this temptation should do them any injury.

The term *evil* may refer as well to the thing, that is, malice, as to the persons of the wicked. I prefer, however, to interpret it of Satan, the head

of all the wicked. For it were a small thing to be delivered from the cunning or violence of men, if the Lord did not protect us from all spiritual injury.

4. *We have confidence.* By this preface he prepares the way for proceeding to give the instruction, which we shall find him immediately afterwards subjoining. For the confidence which he says he has respecting them, made them much more ready to obey than if he had required obedience from them in a way of doubt or distrust. He says, however, that this hope, which he cherished in reference to them, was founded upon the Lord, inasmuch as it is his to bind their hearts to obedience, and to keep them in it; or by this expression, (as appears to me more probable,) he meant to testify, that it is not his intention to enjoin anything but by the commandment of the Lord. Here, accordingly, he marks out limits for himself as to enjoining, and for them as to obeying—that it should be only in the Lord.<sup>f74</sup> All, therefore, that do not observe this limitation, do to no purpose resort to Paul's example, with the view of binding the Church and subjecting it to their laws. Perhaps he had this also in view, that the respect which was due to his Apostleship might remain unimpaired among the Thessalonians, however the wicked might attempt to deprive him of the honor that belonged to him; for the prayer which he immediately subjoins tends towards this object. For provided men's hearts continue to be directed towards *love to God, and patient waiting for Christ*, other things will be in a desirable state, and Paul declares that he desires nothing else. From this it is manifest, how very far he is from seeking dominion for himself peculiarly. For he is satisfied provided they persevere in love to God, and in the hope of Christ's coming. In following up with prayer his expression of confidence,<sup>f75</sup> he admonishes us that we must not relax in eagerness of prayer on the ground that we cherish good hope.

As, however, he states here in a summary manner the things that he knew to be most necessary for Christians, let every one make it his endeavor to make proficiency in these two things, in so far as he desires to make progress towards perfection. And, unquestionably, the love of God cannot reign in us unless brotherly love is also exercised. *Waiting for Christ*, on the other hand, teaches us to exercise contempt of the world, mortification of the flesh, and endurance of the cross. At the same time the expression might be explained as meaning, the *patience of Christ*—that which Christ's doctrine begets in us; but I prefer to understand it as referring to the hope of ultimate redemption. For this is the only thing that sustains us in the

warfare of the present life, that we wait for the Redeemer; and farther, this waiting requires patient endurance amidst the continual exercises of the cross.

<b>&lt;530306&gt; 2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-10</b>	
<b>6.</b> 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.	<b>6.</b> Praecipimus autem vobis, fratres in nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi, ut vos subducatis ab omni fratre, qui inordinate ambulet, et non iuxta institutionem, quam accepit a nobis.
<b>7.</b> For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;	<b>7.</b> Ipsi enim scitis, quomodo oporteat nos imitari, quia non inordinate egimus inter vos:
<b>8.</b> Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:	<b>8.</b> Neque gratis panem comedimus a quoquam, sed cum labore et sudore nocte dieque facientes opus, ne cui vestrum graves essemus.
<b>9.</b> Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.	<b>9.</b> Non quod non habeamus potestatem, sed ut nos ipsos exemplar proponeremus vobis ad imitandum vos.
<b>10.</b> For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.	<b>10.</b> Etenim quum essemus apud vos, hoc vobis praecepimus, ut, qui laborare non vult, is neque comedat.

He now proceeds to the correcting of a particular fault. As there were some indolent, and at the same time curious and prattling persons, who, in order that they might scrape together a living at the expense of others, wandered about from house to house, he forbids that their indolence should be encouraged by indulgence,<sup>176</sup> and teaches that those live holily who procure for themselves the necessities of life by honorable and useful labor. And in the first place, he applies the appellation of *disorderly*

persons, not to those that are of a dissolute life, or to those whose characters are stained by flagrant crimes, but to indolent and worthless persons, who employ themselves in no honorable and useful occupation. For this truly is **ἄταξία**, (*disorder*, <sup>f77</sup>)—not considering for what purpose we were made, and regulating our life with a view to that end, while it is only when we live according to the rule prescribed to us by God that this life is duly regulated. Let this order be set aside, and there is nothing but confusion in human life. This, also, is worthy to be noticed, lest any one should take pleasure in exercising himself apart from a legitimate call from God: for God has distinguished in such a manner the life of men, in order that every one may lay himself out for the advantage of others. He, therefore, who lives to himself alone, so as to be profitable in no way to the human race, nay more, is a burden to others, giving help to no one, is on good grounds reckoned to be **ἄτακτος**, (*disorderly*.) Hence Paul declares that such persons must be put away from the society of believers, that they may not bring dishonor upon the Church.

**6. *Now we command you in the name.*** Erasmus renders it—“by the name,” as if it were an adjuration. While I do not altogether reject this rendering, I, at the same time, am rather of opinion that the particle *in* is redundant, as in very many other passages, and that in accordance with the Hebrew idiom. Thus the meaning will be, that this commandment ought to be received with reverence, not as from a mortal man, but as from Christ himself; and Chrysostom explains it in this manner. This *withdrawment*, <sup>f78</sup> however of which he speaks, relates—not to public excommunication but to private intercourse. For he simply forbids believers to have any familiar intercourse with drones of this sort, who have no honorable means of life, in which they may exercise themselves. He says, however, expressly—*from every brother*, because if they profess themselves to be Christians they are above all others intolerable, inasmuch as they are, in a manner, the pests and stains of religion.

***Not according to the injunction***—namely, that which we shall find him shortly afterwards adding—that food should not be given to the man that refuses to labor. Before coming to this, however, he states what example he has given them in his own person. For doctrine obtains much more of credit and authority, when we impose upon others no other burden than we take upon ourselves. Now he mentions that he himself was engaged in *working with his hands night and day*, that he might not burden any one

with expense. He had, also, touched somewhat on this point in the preceding Epistle—to which my readers must have recourse for a fuller explanation of this point.

As to his saying, that he *had not eaten any one's bread for naught*, he assuredly would not have done this, though he had not *labored with his hands*. For that which is due in the way of right, is not a thing that is gratuitous, and the price of the labor which teachers<sup>f79</sup> lay out in behalf of the Church, is much greater than the food which they receive from it. But Paul had here in his eye inconsiderate persons, for all have not so much equity and judgment as to consider what remuneration is due to the ministers of the word. Nay more, such is the niggardliness of some, that, though they contribute nothing of their own, they, envy them their living, as if they were idle men.<sup>f80</sup> He, also, immediately afterwards declares that he waived his right, when he refrained from taking any remuneration, by which he intimates, that it is much less to be endured, that those, who do nothing, shall live on what belongs to others.<sup>f81</sup> When he says, that they *know how they ought to imitate*, he does not simply mean that his example should be regarded by them as a law, but the meaning is, that they knew what they had seen in him that was worthy of imitation, nay more, that the very thing of which he is at present speaking, has been set before them for imitation.

**9. *Not because we have not.*** As Paul wished by his laboring to set an example, that idle persons might not like drones<sup>f82</sup> eat the bread of others, so he was not willing that this very thing<sup>f83</sup> should do injury to the ministers of the word, so that the Churches should defraud them of their proper livelihood. In this we may see his singular moderation and humanity, and how far removed he was from the ambition of those who abuse their powers, so as to infringe upon the rights of their brethren. There was a danger, lest the Thessalonians, having had from the beginning the preaching of the gospel from Paul's mouth gratuitously,<sup>f84</sup> should lay it down as a law for the future as to other ministers; the disposition of mankind being so niggardly. Paul, accordingly, anticipates this danger, and teaches that he had a right to more than he had made use of, that others may retain their liberty unimpaired. He designed by this means to inflict the greater disgrace, as I have already noticed above, on those that do nothing, for it is an argument from, the greater to the less.

10. *He that will not labor.* From its being written in <sup><19C802></sup>Psalm 128:2—

Thou art blessed, eating of the labor of thy hands,

also in <sup><201004></sup>Proverbs 10:4,

The blessing of the Lord is upon the hands of him that laboreth,

it is certain that indolence and idleness are accursed of God. Besides, we know that man was created with this view, that he might do something. Not only does Scripture testify this to us, but nature itself taught it to the heathen. Hence it is reasonable, that those, who wish to exempt themselves from the common law, <sup>f85</sup> should also be deprived of food, the reward of labor. When, however, the Apostle commanded that such persons should not eat, he does not mean that he gave commandment to those persons, but forbade that the Thessalonians should encourage their indolence by supplying them with food.

It is also to be observed, that there are different ways of laboring. For whoever aids <sup>f86</sup> the society of men by his industry, either by ruling his family, or by administering public or private affairs, or by counseling, or by teaching, <sup>f87</sup> or in any other way, is not to be reckoned among the idle. For Paul censures those lazy drones who lived by the sweat of others, while they contribute no service in common for aiding the human race. Of this sort are our monks and priests who are largely pampered by doing nothing, excepting that they chant in the temples, for the sake of preventing weariness. This truly is, (as Plautus speaks,) <sup>f88</sup> to “live musically.” <sup>f89</sup>

**<530311> 2 THESSALONIANS 3:11-13**

<b>11.</b> For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.	<b>11.</b> Audimus enim quosdam versantes inter vos inordinate nihil operis agentes, sed curiose satagentes.
<b>12.</b> Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.	<b>12.</b> Talibus autem praecipimus, et obsecramus <sup>90</sup> per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, ut cum quiete operantes suum ipsorum panem edant.
<b>13.</b> But ye, brethren, be not weary in well—doing.	<b>13.</b> Vos autem fratres, ne defatigemini benefaciendo.

**11.** *We hear that there are some among you.* It is probable that this kind of drones were, as it were, the seed of idle monkhood. For, from the very beginning, there were some who, under pretext of religion, either made free with the tables of others, or craftily drew to themselves the substance of the simple. They had also, even in the time of Augustine, come to prevail so much, that he was constrained to write a book expressly against idle monks, where he complains with good reason of their pride, because, despising the admonition of the Apostle, they not only excuse themselves on the ground of infirmity, but they wish to appear holier than all others, on the ground that they are exempt from labors. He inveighs, with good reason, against this unseemliness, that, while the senators are laborious, the workman, or person in humble life, does not merely live in idleness,<sup>f91</sup> but would fain have his indolence pass for sanctity. Such are his views.<sup>f92</sup> In the mean time, however, the evil has increased to such an extent, that idle bellies occupy nearly the tenth part of the world, whose only religion is to be well stuffed, and to have exemption from all annoyance<sup>f93</sup> of labor. And this manner of life they dignify, sometimes with the name of the Order, sometimes with that of the Rule, of this or that personage.<sup>f94</sup>

But what does the Spirit say, on the other hand, by the mouth of Paul? He pronounces them all to be irregular and *disorderly*, by whatever name of distinction they may be dignified. It is not necessary to relate here how much the idle life of monks has invariably displeased persons of sounder judgment. That is a memorable saying of an old monk, which is recorded

by Socrates in the Eighth Book of the Tripartite History—that he who does not labor with his hands is like a plunderer.<sup>f95</sup> I do not mention other instances, nor is it necessary. Let this statement of the Apostle suffice us, in which he declares that they are dissolute, and in a manner lawless.

*Doing nothing.* In the Greek participles there is, an elegant (*προσωνομασία*) *play upon words*, which I have attempted in some manner to imitate, by rendering it as meaning that they *do* nothing, but have *enough to do* in the way of curiosity.<sup>f96</sup> He censures, however, a fault with which idle persons are, for the most part, chargeable, that, by unseasonably bustling about, they give trouble to themselves and to others. For we see, that those who have nothing to do are much more fatigued by doing nothing, than if they were employing themselves in some very important work; they run hither and thither; wherever they go, they have the appearance of great fatigue; they gather all sorts of reports, and they put them in a confused way into circulation. You would say that they bore the weight of a kingdom upon their shoulders. Could there be a more remarkable exemplification of this than there is in the monks? For what class of men have less repose? Where does curiosity reign more extensively? Now, as this disease has a ruinous effect upon the public, Paul admonishes that it ought not to be encouraged by idleness.

**12. *Now we command such.*** He corrects both of the faults of which he had made mention—a blustering restlessness, and retirement from useful employment. He accordingly exhorts them, in the first place, to cultivate repose—that is, to keep themselves *quietly* within the limits of their calling, or, as we commonly say, “*sans faire bruit*,” (*without making a noise*.) For the truth is this: those are the most peaceable of all, that exercise themselves in lawful employments;<sup>f97</sup> while those that have nothing to do give trouble both to themselves and to others. Further, he subjoins another precept—that they should *labor*, that is, that they should be intent upon their calling, and devote themselves to lawful and honorable employments, without which the life of man is of a wandering nature. Hence, also, there follows this third injunction—that they should *eat their own bread*; by which he means, that they should be satisfied with what belongs to them, that they may not be oppressive or unreasonable to others.

Drink water, *says Solomon*, from thine own fountains, and let the streams flow down to neighbors. (<200515> Proverbs 5:15.)

This is the *first* law of equity, that no one make use of what belongs to another, but only use what he can properly call his own. The *second* is, that no one swallow up, like some abyss, what belongs to him, but that he be beneficent to neighbors, and that he may relieve their indigence by his abundance.<sup>f98</sup> In the same manner, the Apostle exhorts those who had been formerly idle to *labor*, not merely that they may gain for themselves a livelihood, but that they may also be helpful to the necessities of their brethren, as he also teaches elsewhere. (<490428> Ephesians 4:28.)

**13. *And you, brethren.*** Ambrose is of opinion that this is added lest the rich should, in a niggardly spirit, refuse to lend their aid to the poor, because he had exhorted them to *eat every one his own bread*. And, unquestionably, we see how many are unbefittingly ingenious in catching at a pretext for inhumanity.<sup>f99</sup> Chrysostom explains it thus—that indolent persons, however justly they may be condemned, must nevertheless be assisted when in want. I am simply of opinion, that Paul had it in view to provide against an occasion of offense, which might arise from the indolence of a few. For it usually happens, that those that are otherwise particularly ready and on the alert for beneficence, become cool on seeing that they have thrown away their favors by misdirecting them. Hence Paul admonishes us, that, although there are many that are undeserving,<sup>f100</sup> while others abuse our liberality, we must not on this account leave off helping those that need our aid. Here we have a statement worthy of being observed—that however ingratitude, moroseness, pride, arrogance, and other unseemly dispositions on the part of the poor, may have a tendency to annoy us, or to dispirit us, from a feeling of weariness, we must strive, nevertheless, never to leave off aiming at doing good.

**<530314> 2 THESSALONIANS 3:14-18**

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.	14. Si quis autem non obedit sermoni nostro per epistolam, hunc notate: et ne commisceamini illi, <sup>f101</sup> ut pudeat:
15. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.	15. Et ne tanquam inimicum sentiat, sed admonete tanquam fratrem.
16. Now the Lord of peace himself give You peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.	16. Ipse autem Deus pacis det vobis pacem semper omnibus modis. Dominus sit cum omnibus vobis.
17. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.	17. Salutatio, mea manu Pauli: quod est signum in omni epistola.
18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.	18. Gratia Domini nostri Iesu Christi cum omnibus vobis. Amen.
The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.	Ad Thessalonicenses secunda missa fuit ex Athenis.

**14. *If any one obeys not.*** He has already declared previously, that he commands nothing but *from the Lord*. Hence the man, that would not obey, would not be contumacious against a mere man, but would be rebellious against God himself; <sup>f102</sup> and accordingly he teaches that such persons ought to be severely chastised. And, in the *first* place, he desires that they be reported to him, that he may repress them by his authority; and, *secondly*, he orders them to be excommunicated, that, being touched with shame, they may repent. From this we infer, that we must not spare the reputation of those who cannot be arrested otherwise than by their faults being exposed; but we must take care to make known their distempers to the physician, that he may make it his endeavor to cure them.

***Keep no company.*** I have no doubt that he refers to excommunication; for, besides that the (*ἁταξία*) disorder to which he had adverted deserved a severe chastisement, contumacy is an intolerable vice. He had said before, *Withdraw yourselves from them*, for they live in a *disorderly* manner,

(<530306> 2 Thessalonians 3:6.) And now he says, *Keep no company*, for they reject my admonition. He expresses, therefore, something more by this second manner of expression than by the former; for it is one thing to withdraw from intimate acquaintance with an individual, and quite another to keep altogether aloof from his society. In short, those that do not obey after being admonished, he excludes from the common society of believers. By this we are taught that we must employ the discipline of excommunication against all the obstinate <sup>f103</sup> persons who will not otherwise allow themselves to be brought under subjection, and must be branded with disgrace, until, having been brought under and subdued, they learn to obey.

*That he may be ashamed.* There are, it is true, other ends to be served by excommunication—that contagion may spread no farther, that the personal wickedness of one individual may not tend to the common disgrace of the Church, and that the example of severity may induce others to *fear*, (<540520> 1 Timothy 5:20;) but Paul touches upon this one merely—that those who have sinned may by shame be constrained to repentance. For those that please themselves in their vices become more and more obstinate: thus sin is nourished by indulgence and dissimulation. This, therefore, is the best remedy—when a feeling of shame is awakened in the mind of the offender, so that he begins to be displeased with himself. It would, indeed, be a small point gained to have individuals made ashamed; but Paul had an eye to farther progress—when the offender, confounded by a discovery of his own baseness, is led in this way to a full amendment: for shame, like sorrow, is a useful preparation for hatred of sin. Hence all that become wanton <sup>f104</sup> must, as I have said, be restrained by this bridle, lest their audacity should be increased in consequence of impunity.

**15. *Regard him not as an enemy.*** He immediately adds a softening of his rigor; for, as he elsewhere commands, we must take care that the offender be not *swallowed up with sorrow*, (<470207> 2 Corinthians 2:7,) which would take place if severity were excessive. Hence we see that the use of discipline ought to be in such a way as to consult the welfare of those on whom the Church inflicts punishment. Now, it cannot but be that severity will fret, <sup>f105</sup> when it goes beyond due bounds. Hence, if we wish to do good, gentleness and mildness are necessary, that those that are reprov'd may know that they are nevertheless loved. In short, excommunication

does not tend to drive men from the Lord's flock, but rather to bring them back when wandering and going astray.

We must observe, however, by what sign he would have brotherly love shewn—not by allurements or flattery, but by *admonitions*; for in this way it will be, that all that will not be incurable will feel that concern is felt for their welfare. In the mean time, excommunication is distinguished from anathema: for as to those that the Church marks out by the severity of its censure, Paul admonishes that they should not be utterly cast away, as if they were cut off from all hope of salvation; but endeavors must be used, that they may be brought back to a sound mind.

**16. *Now the Lord of peace.*** This prayer seems to be connected with the preceding sentence, with the view of recommending endeavors after concord and mildness. He had forbidden them to treat even the contumacious<sup>f106</sup> as *enemies*, but rather with a view to their being brought back to a sound mind<sup>f107</sup> by brotherly admonitions. He could appropriately, after this, subjoin an injunction as to the cultivation of peace; but as this is a work that is truly Divine, he betakes himself to prayer, which, nevertheless, has also the force of a precept. At the same time, he may also have another thing in view—that God may restrain unruly persons,<sup>f108</sup> that they may not disturb the peace of the Church.

**17. *The salutation, with my own hand.*** Here again he provides against the danger, of which he had previously made mention—lest epistles falsely ascribed to him should find their way into the Churches. For this was an old artifice of Satan—to put forward spurious writings, that he might detract from the credit of those that are genuine; and farther, under pretended designations of the Apostles, to disseminate wicked errors with the view of corrupting sound doctrine. By a singular kindness on the part of God, it has been brought about that, his frauds being defeated, the doctrine of Christ has come down to us sound and entire through the ministry of Paul and others. The concluding prayer explains in what manner God aids his believing people—by the presence of Christ's grace.

# FOOTNOTES

<sup>ft1</sup> “Importuns et malins;”—“Unreasonable and wicked.”

<sup>ft2</sup> “Solicitor nullos esse putare deos.”—*Ovid* in. Am. 9:36. In order to see the appropriateness of the quotation, it is necessary to notice the connection of the words “Cum rapiant mala fata bonos.... Solicitor,” etc.;—“When misfortunes overtake the good, I am tempted,” etc.—*Ed.*

<sup>ft3</sup> “Comme Denys le tyran, apres auoir pillé vn temple, s’estant mis sur le mer, et voyant qu’il auoit bon vent;”—“As Dionysius the tyrant, after he had plundered a temple, having embarked upon the sea, and observing that he had a favorable wind.”

<sup>ft4</sup> Our author alludes to a saying of Dionysius the younger, tyrant of Sicily, on occasion of his plundering the temple of Proserpine. See CALVIN on the Psalms, vol. 1, vol.3, and vol. 5.—*Ed.*

<sup>ft5</sup> “Morte et sans vertu;”—“Dead and powerless.”

<sup>ft6</sup> “S. Paul, donc, enseignant les Thessaloniens comment ils doyent combattre au milieu des afflictions, ne parle point comme vn gendarme qui estant en l’ombre et a son aise, accourageroit les autres a faire leur deuoir a la campagne au milieu de la poussiere et a la chaleur du soleil: mais combattant luy—mesme vaillamment, il les exhorte a combattre de mesme;”—“St Paul, therefore, instructing the Thessalonians how they ought to fight in the midst of afflictions, does not speak like a soldier who, while in the shade and at his ease, would encourage others to do their duty in the campaign in the midst of dust, and in the heat of the sun; but, while fighting himself valiantly, he exhorts them to contend in like manner.”

<sup>ft7</sup> “Plein d’horreur et d’espouvantement;”—“Full of horror and terror.”

<sup>ft8</sup> See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1.

<sup>ft9</sup> “Il les recueillera en plene conionction, et les fera ses consors;”—“He will gather them in full union, and will make them his partners.”

<sup>ft10</sup> “Auec puissance, ou puissamment;”—“With power, or powerfully.”

<sup>ft11</sup> “Ceste bonté et beneficence;”—“This *goodness* and beneficence.”

- ft12 “Vne fantasie merueilleusement pernicieuse, et pour ruiner tout;”—“A fancy that was singularly destructive, and utterly ruinous.”
- ft13 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1.
- ft14 “Des grands personnages;”—“Of great personages.”
- ft15 “Merveilleux et durs combats;”—“Singular and hard conflicts.”
- ft16 “Pour tourmenter griefuement l’Eglise;”—“To torment the Church grievously.”
- ft17 The strange notion here referred to by CALVIN as to NERO, is accounted for by Cornelius à Lapide in his Commentary on the Revelation, from the circumstance that Alcazar having explained the expression which occurs in <sup><661303></sup> Revelation 13:3, “I saw one of the heads as it were killed to death,” as referring to Nero killed, and soon afterwards raised up, *as it were*, and reviving in the person of DOMITIAN his successor, some of the ancients, understanding literally what was meant by him *figuratively*, conceived the idea that Nero would be Antichrist, and would be raised up, and appear again in the end of the world.—*Ed.*
- ft18 “The name of the Man of Sin is not *Antitheos*, but ἀντίχριστος—not one that directly invadeth the properties of the supreme God, but of God incarnate, or Christ as Mediator. ... he usurpeth the authority due to Christ.”—*Dr. Manton’s Sermons on 2 Thessalonians.*—*Ed.*
- ft19 The rendering of the Vulgate is as follows,—“Supra omne quod dicitur Deus aut quod colitur;”—“Above everything that is called God, or that is worshipped.” *Wyclif* (1380) renders thus: “Ouer alle thing that is seid God, or that is worschipid.”—*Ed.*
- ft20 “Que c’est a luy seul d’establir seruice diuin, et ceremonies qui en dependent;”—“That it belongs to him alone to establish divine worship, and the rites that are connected with it.”
- ft21 “Selon son plaisir et fantasie;”—“According to his own pleasure and fancy.”
- ft22 “Sacrileges abominables;”—“Abominable sacrileges.”
- ft23 “Le titre de Dieu par imagination;”—“The title of God by imagination.”
- ft24 “L’orgueil et arrogance;”—“The pride and arrogance.”
- ft25 “Auec vne fierete intolerable;”—“With an intolerable presumption.”

- ft26 “Se reuolter de la vraye religion, et se precipiter en ruine comme gens forcenez, ou plustost endiablez;”—“Revolt from the true religion, and plunge themselves in ruin like persons enraged, or rather possessed.”
- ft27 *Murus aheneus*. See Hor. Ep. 1:1, 60.
- ft28 “Mais voici en cest endroit qui leur deuoit seruir d’vne forteresse inuincible;”—“But behold in this matter what would furnish them with an invincible fortress.”
- ft29 “L’ingratitude execrable et vileine des hommes;”—“The execrable and base ingratitude of men.”
- ft30 “Contre les Thessaloniens;”—“Against the Thessalonians.”
- ft31 “En termes couuerts ou obscurs;”—“In hidden or obscure terms.”
- ft32 “D’autant que l’ordre que Dieu vouloit tenir, requeroit que le monde premierement fust d’vne liberalite gratuite conuié a salut;”—“Inasmuch as the order that God designed to maintain, required that the world should first of all be invited to salvation by a gracious liberality.”
- ft33 “La droite saison de la vengeance estoit apres la grace reiette;”—“The right season of vengeance was after grace had been rejected.”
- ft34 “Et comme par dessous terre;”—“And as it were under ground.”
- ft35 “Le bon blé que Dieu auoit seme en son champ;”—“The good wheat that God had sown in his field.”
- ft36 “Faut resoudre ce participe *Tenant* en vn temps futur *Tiendra*;”—“We must explain this participle, withholding, in the future tense—*He will withhold*.”
- ft37 “Que sa tyrannie deuoit prendre fin quelque fois;”—“That his tyranny must at some time have an end.”
- ft38 “Ce fils de perdition;”—“This son of perdition.”
- ft39 “Sous l’enseigne de Christ;”—“Under Christ’s banner.”
- ft40 “Si outrageusement;”—“So outrageously.”
- ft41 “Cela tout;”—“All this.”
- ft42 “Descomfit;”—“Defeated.”
- ft43 “Estendant la vertu de ses rayons tout a l’enuiron;”—“Diffusing the virtue of his rays all around.”

- ft44 “Vn triste et pitoyable department;”—“A sad and lamentable departure.”
- ft45 “Laquelle ils auoyent reiettee ou receué irreueremment, et autrement qu’il n’appartenoit;”—“Which they had rejected or received irreverently, and otherwise than was befitting.”
- ft46 “Et s’en desguise;”—“And disguises himself with it.”
- ft47 “En ruine et perdition eternelle;”—“In eternal ruin and perdition.”
- ft48 Our author evidently means Antichrist, alluding to the term applied to him by Paul in the 4th verse.—*Ed.*
- ft49 “Les pources aveugles;”—“The poor blind.”
- ft50 It is observed by Dr. Manton, in his Sermons on 2d Thess. that “there are seven points in Popery that are sought to be confirmed by Miracles.—1. Pilgrimages. 2. Prayers for the Dead. 3. Purgatory. 4. The Invocation of Saints. 5. The Adoration of Images. 6. The Adoration of the Host. 7. The Primacy of the Pope.”—*Ed.*
- ft51 “Sans cause et estans innocens;”—“Without cause, and being innocent.”
- ft52 “Vileinement et horriblement;”—“Basely and horribly.”
- ft53 “Eudurcies et obstinees;”—“Hardened and obstinate.”
- ft54 “Si execrable;”—“So execrable.”
- ft55 “Le mespris orgueilleux de sa Parolle;”—“Proud contempt of his Word.”
- ft56 “Estourdissement et stupidite;”—“Giddiness and stupidity.”
- ft57 “C’est ascauoir de l’Euangile;”—“That is, of the Gospel.”
- ft58 “Quel monstrueux et horrible retrait d’erreurs;”—“What a monstrous and horrible nest of errors.”
- ft59 “En se reuoltant malicieusement;”—“By revolting maliciously.”
- ft60 “Mais aussi pour les autres fideles, qui viendroyent apres;”—“But also for other believers, who should come after.”
- ft61 “En vn estat ferme et paisible, qui mene a la vie;”—“In a secure and peaceable condition, which leads to life.”
- ft62 *Primitias*. Wiclif (1380) following, as he is wont, the reading of the Vulgate, renders it “the first fruytis.”

- ft63 “Des le commencement;”—“From the beginning.”
- ft64 “S. Paul ne vent autre chose, sinon apres auoir parlé de l’election de Dieu, adioster maintenant des signes plus prochains qui nous la manifestent;”—“St. Paul means simply, after having spoken of the election of God, to add now those nearer tokens which manifest it to us.”
- ft65 “La meschancete horrible;”—“The horrible wickedness.”
- ft66 “Non pas qu’il soit creu en son cerueau;”—“Not as though it had been contrived in his brain.”
- ft67 “Une bonne chose et sainte;”—“A good thing and holy.”
- ft68 “Estendue et auancement;”—“Extension and advancement.”
- ft69 *Importunos*. Wiclif (1380) renders it *noyous*.—*Ed*.
- ft70 “Fausses et peruerses doctrines;”—“False and perverse doctrines.”
- ft71 “En horreur et disdain;”—“In horror and disdain.”
- ft72 “Qu’il y a beaucoup d’infideles, desloyaux, et traistres;”—“That there are many that are unbelieving, disloyal, and traitorous.”
- ft73 “Toute la violence et impetuosite;”—“The whole violence and impetuosity.”
- ft74 “Voyci donc les bournes qu’il limite, et pour soy et pour eux: pour soy, de ne commander rien que par le Seigneur: a eux, de ne rendre obeissance sinon au Seigneur;”—“Mark then the limits which he prescribes both for himself and for them: for himself, not to command anything but by the Lord: for them, not to render obedience except to the Lord.”
- ft75 “Quand apres auoir protesté de sa confiance, il ne laisse pas d’adioster encore la priere avec la confiance;”—“When after having declared his confidence, he omits not to add besides, prayer along with confidence.”
- ft76 “Il defend aux Thessaloniens d’entretenir par leur liberalite ou dissimulation l’oisuete de telles gens;”—“He prohibits the Thessalonians from encouraging by their liberality or dissimulation the indolence of such persons.”
- ft77 “Desordre et grande confusion;”—“Disorder and great confusion.”
- ft78 “Ceste separation ou retirement;”—“This separation or withdrawalment.”

ft79 “Les Docteurs et Ministres;”—“Teachers and ministers.”

ft80 “Comme s’ils viuoyent inutiles et oiseux;”—“As if they lived uselessly and idly.”

ft81 “Viuient du labeur et bien d’autrui;”—“Should live on the labor and substance of others.”

ft82 “Ainsi que les bourdons entre abeilles ne font point de miel, et neantmoins viuient de celuy des autres;”—“As drones among bees do not make any honey, and yet live on that of others.”

ft83 “Son exemple;”—“His example.”

ft84 “Gratuitement et sans luy bailler aucuns gages;”—“Gratuitously, and without giving him any remuneration.”

ft85 “De la loy et regle commune;”—“From the common law and rule.”

ft86 “Aide et porte proufit;”—“Aids and brings advantage.”

ft87 “En enseignant les autres;”—“By instructing others.”

ft88 The passage alluded to is as follows: “Musice, Hercle, agitis aetatem”—(“By Hercules, you pass life musically”) *Plaut. Mostellariae*, Act in. *Sc.* 2, 40.—*Ed.*

ft89 “Plaute poete Latin ancien, quand il vent parler de gens qui viuient a leur aise, il dit qu’ils viuient musicalement, c’est a dire, en chantres. Mais a la verite on pent bien dire de ceux—ci, en tout sens qu’on le voudra prendre, qu’ils viuient musicalement;”—“Plautus, the ancient Latin poet, when he has it in view to speak of persons who live at their ease, says that they live musically, that is to say, like singers. But truly it may be well said of those persons, in every sense in which one might choose to take it, that they live musically.”

ft90 “Prions, *ou*, exhortons;”—“We pray, *or*, we exhort.”

ft91 “Les senateurs et les nobles ayent la main a la besogne, et cependant les manouuriers et mechaniques, non seulement viuront en oisiete;”—“The senators and the nobles have their hand in the work, and in the mean time the workmen and mechanics will not only live in idleness.”

ft92 “Voyla que dit S. Augustin;”—“There you have what St. Augustine says.”

ft93 “Et sollicitude;”—“And anxiety.”

ft94 “D’vn tel saint, ou d’vn tel;”—“Of this saint, or that.”

- ft95 “Vn vagabond qui va pillant;”—“A vagabond that goes a—plundering.”
- ft96 “Nihil eos *agere operis*, sed curiose *satagere*.”
- ft97 “Ceux qui s’exercent a bon escient en quelque labeur licite;”—“Those that exercise themselves in good earnest in any lawful employment.”
- ft98 See CALVIN on the Corinthians; vol. 2.
- ft99 “Enuers les poures;”—“Towards the poor.”
- ft100 “Ne meritent point qu’on leur face du bien;”—“Do not deserve that any should do them good.”
- ft101 “N’obeit a nostre parolle, marquez—le par lettres, et ne conuersez point, *or*, ni obeit a nostre parolle par *ces* lettres, marquez—le, et ne conversez;”—“Does not obey our word, mark him by letters, and keep no company with him; *or*, does not obey our word by *these* letters, mark him and keep no company.”
- ft102 “Ce n’eust point contre vn homme mortel qu’il eust adresse son opiniastre et rebellion;”—“It would not have been against a mortal man that he had directed his stubbornness and rebellion.”
- ft103 “Et endurcis;”—“And hardened.”
- ft104 “Tous ceux qui se desbordent et follastrent;”—“All those that break out and become wanton.”
- ft105 “Face entameure et trop grande blessure;”—“Make an incision, and too great a wound.”
- ft106 “Mesme les rebelles et obstinez;”—“Even the rebellious and obstinate.”
- ft107 “A repentance et amendment;”—“To repentance and amendment.”
- ft108 “Ceux qui sont desobeissans;”—“Those that are disobedient.”