

came a fellow-laborer with Paul (Philemon 24), and because of his zeal in the work he was finally taken captive by the authorities and made his fellow-prisoner as our verse states. *Marcus* is another form for Mark, who was in Rome, having been restored to the confidence of the apostle (2 Timothy 4: 11). *Sister's son* is from *ANEPSIOS*, which Thayer defines, "a cousin." The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders the phrase, "Mark, the cousin of Barnabas." *Ye received commandments*. We are not told what those orders were, but the necessary inference is that they pertained to the attitude that was to be shown toward Mark. That accounts for the instruction to *receive him* if he came to Colosse.

Verse 11. This *Jesus* is distinguished from others of the same name by giving us his surname; *called* [surnamed] *Justus*. *Of the circumcision* means they were Jews converted to the Gospel. *These only* refers to the Jewish Christians mentioned in this and the preceding verse. They were the only ones of that nationality who were *fellow-workers* with Paul, and who thus had been a comfort to him. Certain Gentile converts also co-operated with him, some of whom have been already mentioned, and others will be named later in this chapter.

Verse 12. *Epaphras* had been associated with the church at Colosse, but when this epistle was written, he was in Rome and a prisoner on behalf of the Gospel. This is indicated in Philemon 23, where Paul calls him his "fellow-prisoner." He joined in sending salutations to the Colossian brethren. *Laboring . . . in prayers* for the "home congregation" was a natural thing because of his personal interest in those brethren. *Perfect* and *complete* mean about the same if used separately in various places. In the present use of the words, the former means to be fully developed, and the latter shows why; that it is because they would be fully supplied with necessary spiritual principles.

Verse 13. Laodicea and Hierapolis were cities not far from Colosse, and Epaphras had expressed a fervent interest in the disciples at those places.

Verse 14. Luke was a physician by profession, but became a devoted companion of Paul, both in his travels and also in his tribulations at Rome. He

is also the writer of the Gospel record bearing his name in the heading, and of the book of Acts (Luke 1: 3; Acts 1: 1). Demas was yet in Rome and devoted to the apostle also at the time this letter was written; he deserted him afterward (2 Timothy 4: 10).

Verse 15. The salutations of this verse are general as a whole, but Paul makes some specifications. Laodicea is mentioned in verse 13, and Nymphas was a disciple in that city. The original for *house* sometimes means "the inmates of a house, the family." This disciple had a group of others in his house who composed the church in that city, and Paul sends greetings to it through the Colossian brethren.

Verse 16. Laodicea was not far from Colosse, and Paul directed the brethren to read this epistle among themselves first, then pass it on to the brethren at Laodicea to be read by them. There is some uncertainty as to what epistle is meant that was to come from Laodicea, but whatever it was, the brethren at Colosse were instructed to read it. The common conditions in these two churches were such as to make the two epistles appropriate for both.

Verse 17. *Archippus* is described by Thayer as, "a certain Christian at Colosse." He was a teacher in the church there, and Paul sends this exhortation to him to be expressed by the brethren on behalf of the apostle. *The ministry* means the service of teaching that the Lord had delivered to him.

Verse 18. Paul occasionally did the writing of his epistles (Galatians 6: 11), but as a rule he dictated them to someone else, then signed his name to them which made them authentic. *Remember my bonds*. This was not written to obtain sympathy, for the apostle was not the kind of disciple to complain. The reference was for the benefit of the brethren, to stimulate their zeal on behalf of the Gospel.

## 1 Thessalonians 1

Verse 1. The planting of the church in Thessalonica is recorded in Acts 17th chapter, and soon afterward Paul wrote this epistle to it. According to Thayer, Silvanus is another form of the name for Silas, who was chosen to travel with Paul in his second journey (Acts 15: 40). When they reached

Lystra they met a disciple by the name of Timotheus (same as Timothy), and Paul took him along on this journey. These brethren were with Paul and joined their salutations to his as he composed this epistle to the church of the Thessalonians. God and Christ are not the same person, but they are one in spirit and purpose, and no relation can be had with either that ignores the other; hence the church is said to be *in* them both. In their specific relations to the church, God is the Father and Christ is the ruler, that being the meaning of *Lord*; this is in agreement with Matthew 28: 18 and 1 Corinthians 15: 24, 25.

Verse 2. *Making mention of you in our prayers*. Here is a specific example of direct or personal mention of those for whom we wish to pray to God, and not the unnecessary and indefinite request for Him to "bless all for whom we should pray."

Verse 3. This verse states the reason for thanksgiving as mentioned in the preceding verse. It contains three distinct items in the conduct of the Thessalonians which Paul remembered with thanksgiving. *Work of faith*. Romans 10: 17 tells us that faith comes by hearing the work of God. Hence no work can be done by faith unless the word of God authorizes it. But there is another item in this phrase that is often overlooked, namely, it must not only be according to the word of God, but it must be put to *work* in order to please the Lord. *Labor of love*. Christians should not only do those things that are authorized by the word of God, but they must love to do them, else their labor will not be acceptable. (See Galatians 5: 6.) *Patience of hope*. The two parts of this phrase cannot exist separately in the life of a Christian. If he does not have any hope for the reward, he will not have the patience to labor for it (Romans 8: 24, 25). Likewise, if a man does not have the patience to continue in a faithful life, he will not have a right to hope for the reward promised to the faithful.

Verse 4. *Election* is from EKLOGE, and Robinson defines it with the words, "choice, election, selection." The term refers to those who are selected by the Lord to be the ones upon whom He will bestow the divine blessings. The selection, however, is not made independent of the conduct of man. It is from the same word used

in 2 Peter 1: 10 where the apostle exhorts the disciples to "make their calling and election sure," which shows that the selection is determined by their conduct.

Verse 5. *Not in word only* denotes that it was not the word of Paul as a man only. It was in *power* (Greek DUNAMIS) because the source was the Holy Ghost (or Spirit). With such a foundation for his teaching, Paul could come to the Thessalonians *in much assurance*. The *manner of men* refers to the teaching and conduct that was manifested among them by Paul and his companions. One motive they had for such conduct is revealed by the words *for your sake*, and it had the desired effect as the next verse shows.

Verse 6. The original Greek for *followers* is defined "an imitator" by Thayer, and it is connected with the thoughts in the close of the preceding verse, regarding the conduct of Paul and his companions while in Thessalonica. It is noteworthy that the apostle says they imitated *us and the Lord*, which is according to his instruction in 1 Corinthians 11: 1, to follow him as he followed Christ. *Received the word in much affliction*; this experience is recorded in Acts 17: 5-9. *With joy of the Holy Ghost*. The Gospel which these disciples received was given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost (or Spirit), and the joy was due to their assurance that they were suffering for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. (See Acts 5: 41.)

Verse 7. The example of righteous living set by Paul did not stop with the people in Thessalonica, for it was taken note of by disciples in other places. *Macedonia* was the province in which Thessalonica was located, and *Achaia* was a name given to Greece by the Romans after they got possession of the country.

Verse 8. *From you sounded out the word*. The effect of a good example is still the subject uppermost in the mind of the apostle. These brethren did not actually preach the word by mouth in all these areas, but their good lives spread a report for the good cause. That is why Paul says their *faith is spread abroad*, to such an extent that he did not feel the need of publishing it in those parts.

Verse 9. *Manner of entering in* is the same as "manner of men" in verse 5, and the meaning is that the teaching and conduct of Paul's group was

reflected by the brethren in different places. This reflection did not consist in indefinite compliments only, but they specified some of the good things that resulted from their example. Among them was their conversion from idolatry (the Macedonians being Gentiles and worshipers of idols) to the worship of the true God. He was *living* and not made of wood or stone.

Verse 10. *Wait for* is from ANAMENO which Thayer defines, "to wait for one," then explains it to mean, "to await one whose coming is known or foreseen." It is true that all people must wait for the coming of Christ in the sense that nothing can be done by them to hasten His coming. The idea is that Christians are waiting with confidence that He will come again. The interest in Christ's second coming is in the truth that he overcame death when in this world and thereby provided deliverance from the wrath of God that is to come upon the disobedient. His coming will be the time when those who have accepted this deliverance will be gathered to Him.

## 1 Thessalonians 2

Verse 1. The coming of Paul and his companions to Thessalonica resulted in the conversion of some of its citizens, which proved that it was not in vain.

Verse 2. The shameful treatment mentioned is recorded in Acts 16: 19-24, after which they came to Thessalonica. But the persecution did not keep them from continuing their good work of preaching the Gospel. Instead, it made them *bold* ("confident"—Thayer) in speaking it to them. *Contention* means earnestness and anxiety, which describes the attitude of Paul on account of the opposition that had been waged against him. In other words, Paul regarded the issues as being a contest between truth and error, and he was determined to perform his part of the struggle with the same zeal that men showed when they entered the arena of the athletic games.

Verse 3. Paul could not have had any wrong motive when he was exhorting the Thessalonians, for his conduct under persecutions while at Philippi showed that he had nothing to gain by practicing *deceit* or *guile* which means trickery. His conduct and teaching also had nothing unclean either physically or spiritually as he labored among them.

Verse 4. *Put in trust* is rendered "be entrusted" by The Englishman's Greek New Testament, which expresses the idea better. It denotes that even an apostle was to handle the word of God as a faithful agent, and not as if he were managing his own business. As long as he or any other disciple holds the law of the Lord in that light, he will not violate Revelation 22: 18, 19. That is why Paul says he was speaking *not as pleasing men, but God. Trieth our hearts*. The first word is defined to mean "to examine" or "scrutinize." If Paul should handle the Gospel with a view to pleasing men, that motive would be seen by the Lord when He examined his heart (or mind).

Verse 5. *Flattering words . . . nor a choke of covetousness*. Paul did not use flattery to hide a motive of covetousness, for he was not covetous, but was interested in their spiritual welfare and not their wealth.

Verse 6. Paul did not seek the praise of men when he was preaching the Gospel among them. This was true, whether he was with the Thessalonians or with others. *When we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ*. Paul could have used his authority as an apostle, but he did not burden them for his own advantage.

Verse 7. Instead of using the stern attitude of authority, Paul manifested that of an affectionate nurse toward the children under her care.

Verse 8. The word *souls* is from PSUCHE which has a wide range of meanings. Sometimes it refers to the inner man as distinguished from the body, and at others it means the part that makes one a living creature and not a dead one. It is used in the latter sense in our verse, and Paul means he and his companions would have been willing to die for the brethren at Thessalonica, had it been necessary for their welfare. He explains that the cause of it was their affectionate desire on behalf of these disciples, who had shown such courage after hearing the Gospel.

Verse 9. *Labor* and *travail* mean very much the same, and are used for the purpose of emphasis. When taken together, the idea is to show hard bodily toil, performed in connection with an intense concern for the comfort of the brethren. The apostle worked at his trade of tentmaking (Acts 18: 1-3), in order to relieve the

Thessalonian brethren from the burden of supporting him. Being inspired, he did not have to spend time in reading and meditating as did other preachers of the Gospel (1 Timothy 4: 13-16).

Verse 10. It is certain that God knows everything that is going on, and the fact is mentioned in connection with the knowledge of the Thessalonians to signify the unity of interest between God and his people. *Holily* and *justly* both mean virtually the same thing, but the first has special reference to one's responsibility to God, and the second toward his fellowman. In being unblameable on both counts, Paul could claim to have a conscience "void of offence toward God and man" (Acts 24: 16).

Verse 11. The tender attitude of Paul toward the Thessalonian brethren was due to his close association with them in the beginning of their service to Christ. There was so much opposition from the enemies that it bound the apostle and his converts with a nearness that was like that between a father and his children. That relationship of feeling caused him to exhort them toward their duty and to encourage them in their work for Christ.

Verse 12. To *walk worthy of God* means to walk or conduct themselves in a way befitting those belonging to God. This is especially true, since their call from Him was not into a work of a temporal nature, but was *unto his kingdom and glory*.

Verse 13. Paul was thankful for the respect shown the word of God that the Thessalonians manifested. Although it was delivered to them by the mouth of man, they regarded it as of divine authority. *Effectually work-eth* means to work with energy and power in those who believe it; it has no effect on those who disbelieve it.

Verse 14. *Followers of the churches*. Not that the churches were looked to for authority, but as good examples of right living in Christ Jesus. Judea was the place where the first churches were planted, amidst persecution, and the Thessalonians imitated them by enduring opposition brought by the Jews. (See Acts 17: 5-9.)

Verse 15. The Jews did not directly kill Jesus, because they did not have that authority (John 18: 31), but they caused it to be done, and for that reason they were charged with His

death. Jesus and Stephen accused them of killing the prophets before them (Matthew 5: 12; 23: 27-36; Acts 7: 52). *Persecuted* is rendered "chased us out" in the margin. That is correct, for the original word is defined by Thayer as follows: "To drive out, banish; to pursue; to persecute, oppress with calamities." Paul was virtually chased out in Acts 16: 39, 40. *Contrary to all men*. The Jews were forbidden to participate with the heathen in their false worship, but they were told not to oppress them (Exodus 23: 9). These instructions were observed for many years, but in later times, especially after the Greek and Roman Empire took control of the world, the Jews became suspicious of the Gentiles in general, and became bitter in their treatment of all who would not submit to their religious bigotry.

Verse 16. The feeling of the Jews toward the Gentiles as described in the preceding verse, will help to explain why they forbade the apostle to speak to the Gentiles, to offer them salvation through the Gospel. An example of their jealousy against any favor shown to them is recorded in Acts 13: 42-45. *To fill up their sins always*. Such an attitude of the Jews toward their fellowmen was so evil that Paul used the phrase in italics, meaning that it rounded out or completed a very sinful character, which was destined to bring upon them the wrath of God *to the uttermost*. This was brought to pass when the nation was rejected and their temple destroyed by the Romans.

Verse 17. *Being taken from you for a short time*. In Acts 17: 10 is the account of Paul's departure from Thessalonica, and his pause at Berea. He was still present with them in heart (or mind), and he desired and planned to return to them in body soon.

Verse 18. Acts 17: 13, 14 tells how *Satan hindered* Paul's return to Thessalonica. When the Jews persisted in their opposition to Paul's work, by even pursuing him to Berea, it was regarded as the work of Satan that hindered him from his plan.

Verses 19, 20. No man's salvation depends on the faithfulness of his converts if he has done his duty in teaching them. However, there is an added joy in seeing them remain true, and this is the *crown of rejoicing* meant in this verse. They must be faithful until Christ comes again (or until death). This is the reward that is meant in 1 Corinthians 3: 14, 15; 2

John 8 and 3 John 4. While the reward will not be given to the converts until Christ comes, yet the *hope* that it will be done was possible for Paul to enjoy in this life, by observing the faithfulness of his brethren.

### 1 Thessalonians 3

Verse 1. *Left at Athens alone.* This means the time when Paul had Timothy sent from him to go and visit the Thessalonians and inquire after their condition. Acts 17: 15 states that the brethren who conducted Paul from Thessalonica to Athens, were to return with a command for Silas and Timotheus (Timothy) to come immediately to him. However, when the apostle went to Corinth, both Silas and Timotheus joined him, coming from Macedonia (Acts 18: 5). This indicates that only Timotheus really went to Athens, the reason for which is not stated.

Verse 2. The notes on the preceding verse will explain why our present one mentions Timotheus only as being sent from Athens back to Thessalonica (in Macedonia), there to be rejoined by Silas when he came back from Athens; then together they left and went to Paul who was in Corinth. Paul calls Timotheus a *minister*, which is from DIAKONOS. Thayer's general definition of the word is, "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister." It is the word for "deacon" in every place in the King James Version. The word "minister" is never used in the New Testament as applying to preachers as a special class. *Fellowlaborer* means one who labors with another for a cause in which they both are interested; in the present case it was *the Gospel of Christ*. To *establish* denotes that they were to be further strengthened by being *comforted* through the message sent to them by Paul.

Verse 3. *Moved* is from a Greek word that means "to agitate, disturb, trouble," and Paul did not want the brethren to be disturbed by their *afflictions* or persecutions. *Are appointed* means to be destined to a thing, and it denotes that opposition is bound to come against those who are true servants of God. The reason is that such a life is a rebuke against the people of the sinful world, and they show their resentment by persecuting the doers of the righteous life. (See 2 Timothy 3: 12.)

Verse 4. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed" is as true on this subject as on any other. Paul wished that the brethren in Thessalonica would not be surprised by persecutions, lest they might thereby be "overtaken in a fault" (Galatians 6: 1). To prevent such a result, he told them to be prepared for the trials awaiting them.

Verse 5. In spite of the precaution mentioned in the preceding verse, Paul wished to reassure himself of their steadfastness, and hence he sent Timotheus to them (verse 2) to strengthen them in the faith.

Verse 6. Paul was not disappointed by sending Timotheus to inquire into the state of the Thessalonians, for he brought back a good report of their *faith* and *charity*. The first word has special reference to their service to God. The second is from one of the words that are elsewhere translated "love," and it is the form of love that is manifested in service to the brethren. *Desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you.* This sentence shows the close feeling that existed between Paul and the brethren whom he had led into the service of Christ. When men and women are sincere disciples of Christ, they will prize each other's company above all others.

Verse 7. Paul's afflictions were not removed by the service of the Thessalonians, but their example of steadfastness made it easier for him to bear them.

Verse 8. *We live* is a figurative or comparative term, not that Paul's physical life actually depended on the faithfulness of the brethren. Robinson defines the original in this place, "to live and prosper, to be happy, blessed." It is somewhat like the familiar expression of one whose circumstances have been changed from unfavorable to favorable; he will remark, "now this is more like living."

Verse 9. *What thanks can we render* means Paul thought he could not be thankful enough for the joyful feelings their faithfulness had brought him. *For your sakes* means Paul was rejoicing because of the benefit that would result for the Thessalonians for them to be true to God, before whom or in whose sight all conduct is known.

Verse 10. Having been so favorably impressed concerning the Thessalonians, it was natural that Paul would desire further association with them.

He offered daily prayers that he might have that privilege. There was nothing wrong about their faith, but they were still but babes in Christ, and Paul wished to impart more inspired information to them, to strengthen and build them up, and in so doing to *perfect* (make more complete) their faith.

Verse 11. There are just two persons named in this verse, but each of them has more than one name. *God* is the supreme ruler of the universe, and he is *Father* to all who will become His children by obedience. *Lord* means ruler, *Jesus* means saviour, and *Christ* means anointed. Paul invoked the help of these two great Beings in making a way for him to revisit the Thessalonians.

Verse 12. All good things can be made better; that is what is meant by spiritual growth. The good brethren at Thessalonica loved each other, and had an interest in the welfare of all men. The apostle exhorts them to increase in all such qualities.

Verse 13. *Stablish* is from the same word as "establish" in verse 2, and the meaning is to strengthen or confirm. *Unblameable in holiness* signifies a life of righteousness that avoids the evils of the world to such an extent, that they cannot be truly blamed with committing them.

### 1 Thessalonians 4

Verse 1. The gist of this verse is that the brethren in Thessalonica had been informed by Paul about how they should live. To please God, it was necessary that they grow or *abound more and more* in that good manner of walk.

Verse 2. Paul always made it plain that he was not preaching on his own authority. He had learned that nothing would be acceptable to God that did not agree with his Son. He understood that the former system under the law was replaced by that under Christ. (See Philippians 3: 9.)

Verse 3. The Thessalonians were Gentiles in the flesh, and had formerly lived in the indulgences of carnal pleasure, prominent among them being that of fornication; some even mixed it with their idolatrous exercises. *Sanctification* is from HAGIOSMOS, which Thayer defines, "consecration, purification." Acts 15: 9 says that the hearts of mankind are purified by faith, and Romans 10: 17

says that faith comes by hearing the word of God. All of this shows that sanctification is the result of hearing (in the sense of heeding) the word of God, thus giving another name for righteousness.

Verse 4. *Possess* is a key word in this verse. It comes from KIAOMAI, which Thayer defines, "to acquire, get or procure a thing for one's self." The sexual desire is a natural one, and God has provided a lawful means of gratifying it, namely, the marriage relation. A wife is called a vessel (1 Peter 3: 7), and Paul means for a man to *possess* (acquire) a wife as the means of lawful gratification, instead of finding satisfaction by committing fornication. The same thing is taught in 1 Corinthians 7: 2 as to the proper means of sexual gratification.

Verse 5. The original Greek word for *concupiscence* is defined by Thayer, "desire for what is forbidden, lust." The verse means the opposite of the preceding one. To commit fornication would be to obtain that which is forbidden by the Lord. The Thessalonians were Gentiles, but they had been made acquainted with God, and hence were expected not to do like the Gentiles who do not know Him.

Verse 6. *Defraud his brother*. When a man commits fornication, he has the relation with a woman who is another man's wife or some man's unmarried daughter. To do so is "to gain or take advantage of another, to overreach," which is Thayer's definition of the word *defraud* in our verse. God will revenge all who do this, and Paul gives warning in this epistle, even as he had done previously when among them.

Verse 7. This verse gives us a clear meaning of *holiness*. The subject being discussed is fornication, which is still under consideration in this verse. Hence the conclusion is that refraining from the uncleanness of fornication would be to show a quality of *holiness*.

Verse 8. Thayer defines the original for *despiseth*, "to reject, refuse, slight." When a man commits fornication he rejects the law against that evil and does wrong against *man*; that is, a human being. However, Paul means that it is not only a sin against man, but it is also against God, the giver of law against the evil act. It is just that God should restrict us in our bodily practices, since

He has given unto us his holy Spirit. The practical use of this Spirit with us is the teaching which He offers through the inspired word, that shows man a higher life in the use of his body.

Verse 9. The duty of mutual love is not new to the New Testament teaching. Leviticus 19: 18 commanded, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and the same thought is expressed in Psalms 133: 1. But the command is given new meaning for Christians by the unspeakable example of love that was shown to the world by Jesus.

Verse 10. These remarks were not in the nature of criticism, for the brethren in Thessalonica had shown their love for others in that they displayed the good example to the other Macedonians (chapter 1: 7). The point is that Paul wishes them to increase in the good spirit.

Verse 11. To *study* means to be concerned, and *be quiet* denotes to be settled and not meddlesome. It is explained by the apostle in the same sentence where he says *to do your own business*. To *work with your own hands* means to engage in some manual labor or occupation that will bring them an income. Paul had given these instructions orally when he was in their midst. (See 2 Thessalonians 3: 10.)

Verse 12. To *walk honestly* means to walk in a becoming manner. To be dependant upon others for the necessities of life is not always a fault, but it is so if one brings the condition on himself by a spirit of idleness. *Them that are without* refers to the people of the world. If they see Christians who are not willing to work for their own living, they will have an unfavorable opinion of the Gospel. In 2 Thessalonians 3: 10, Paul teaches that if a man will not work when he is able, he has no right to the good things of life. It is very plain that a lazy man is not a true Christian.

Verse 13. *Would not have you to be ignorant* simply denotes that Paul did not wish the brethren to be uninformed on the subject he was about to discuss. *Them which are asleep* means the Christians who had died, the last word being a figure of speech based on the apparent condition of those who are dead. The term is used with reference to death in the following passages. Acts 7: 60; 13: 36; 1

Corinthians 15: 6, 51; 2 Peter 3: 4. Sorrow over the death of loved ones is natural and right, which Jesus showed by his attitude toward the sisters of Lazarus (John 11: 35). But there is a difference between the sorrow when it is for those who "sleep in Jesus," for in that case there is a hope of a happy life after the resurrection.

Verse 14. *If we believe*, etc., means that it is as reasonable to believe one part of this verse as the other. The resurrection of Christ is a fact, hence the same God who brought his Son from the dead and up to Heaven, is able to bring others from death into Heaven. The same thought is expressed in other words in Hebrews 2: 10, where it is said that God will be "bringing many sons unto glory." It should not be overlooked that it is only those who *sleep in Jesus* who are being given such a prospect. All the dead will be resurrected at the last day (John 5: 28, 29; Acts 24: 15), but the resurrection of the unsaved is not being considered at all in this chapter.

Verse 15. Paul, speaking on authority of *the word of the Lord*, takes it for granted that there will be Christians living when the resurrection day arrives. The same is taught in 1 Corinthians 15: 51, and hence we have the assurance that no matter what may happen among the people of the world, true Christianity "shall not perish from the earth" while it is permitted to exist. *Prevent* is from *PHTHANO*, which Thayer defines, "to precede." The faithful disciples who are living when Christ comes will not precede the ones in their graves in going up to meet Him to be taken to heaven.

Verse 16. *Shout* is from *KELEUSMA*, which occurs only once in the Greek New Testament. Thayer defines it, "an order, command, specifically a stimulating cry." He then explains that by which animals are roused and urged on by man, as horses by charioteers, hounds by hunters, etc., or that by which a signal is given to men, such as to rowers by the master of a ship; to soldiers by a commander; with a loud summons, a trumpet-call." The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates it, "a shout of command." Matthew 16: 27 shows that when Jesus comes again, he will be "with his angels." They will be accompanied by the archangel (whose name is Michael, Jude 9), whose voice will announce the coming of

the great Master and Judge. Trumpets have long been used to signal the approach of important events, especially those of conquest (Exodus 20: 18; Numbers 10: 1-9; Joshua 6: 1-5; Judges 6: 34, 35; 1 Samuel 13: 3; and many others). The second coming of Christ will mark his final victory over all his enemies (1 Corinthians 15: 24-26); it will be fitting, therefore, that the event be signaled with the *trump of God. Shall rise first*. This cannot mean the first resurrection numerically, implying a second, for there will be only one literal resurrection; everybody will rise in the same hour (John 5: 28, 29). The word is explained in Thayer's lexicon to mean "before anything else is done." The idea is that the dead in Christ will be raised before the living in Christ are changed and taken up to meet Christ.

Verse 17. *Alive and remain* refers to the Christians who will be living on the earth when Christ comes. *Caught up together* means that after the dead in Christ have been raised incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15: 52), and the living in Christ have been changed (same verse), then all will ascend in one group to meet the Lord in the air. *So shall we ever be with the Lord*. The first word refers to the condition just described, namely, the righteous changed into an incorruptible body, and living in the constant presence of the Lord. This denotes that no sin will ever be committed by the righteous after the resurrection. The same grand truth is taught in Revelation 22: 11.

Verse 18. *Comfort* is rendered "exhort" in the margin, and that is one of the definitions given in the lexicon. However, verse 13 indicates that Paul wrote these verses for the comfort of those who were sorrowing over the dead, hence the word in the common version is correct.

### 1 Thessalonians 5

Verse 1. *Times and seasons* refer to the events described in the closing verses of the preceding chapter, namely, the second coming of Christ and the resurrection. *No need that I write*. Paul could not write the date of these events for no one but God knows that (Matthew 24: 36). Neither was there any *need* to write as a warning, if they are living as they should, for in that case they would

be prepared to meet Him when the day arrived. (See verse 4.)

Verse 2. Jesus had taught the world that His second coming would not be announced beforehand (Matthew 24: 42-44). There could be no advantage for the faithful disciples to know the exact date when Jesus is to come. In truth, it might be an incentive to carelessness if they knew the date, for they would act on the impression that "there is plenty of time yet." As *a thief in the night* applies to the arrival of *the day of the Lord*, and not a comparison of the Lord himself. A thief does not give any information of his plans, neither will there be any previous announcement of the coming of the last day.

Verse 3. *Shall say, peace and safety* is a figurative expression, representing the state of indifference that the people of the world will be indulging regarding the day of judgment. They will have scorned the warnings of the Lord, spoken to them through the teaching of the Word, and settled themselves in the false *peace and safety* of their life of sin. The pangs of a woman with child are sharp and sudden, throwing her into a state of fear or dread that can be fully understood only by one who personally has such an experience. (See Psalms 48: 6; Jeremiah 6: 24; 49: 24.) Paul uses it to illustrate the terrible state of mind into which the hordes of sinners will be thrown when they suddenly realize that they are faced with the doom of the judgment day. *Shall not escape*. When that awful day comes, it will be impossible to find a hiding place from the wrath of God, for the earth and all things therein will be melting with fervent heat, leaving them in the grasp of Him whose righteous law they have despised. (See 2 Peter 3: 10.)

Verse 4. *Not in darkness*. The brethren had been warned of the surety of the coming of Christ, although the time was not known. They had manifested confidence in the apostolic teaching by accepting it and living according to its precepts; in this sense they were not in the dark to be surprised as by a thief.

Verse 5. *Light and day* are figurative names for the truth, and are opposite night and darkness.

Verse 6. The hours of night are the natural ones for sleeping in the temporal realm. By the same token,

the disciples were expected not to be asleep (indifferent) concerning these spiritual matters, since they were living in the light and day of the truth. They should *watch* (be on the alert) and *be sober*, which means to be thoughtful and take life seriously.

Verse 7. Those who *sleep* (are indifferent) are in the night of spiritual darkness, which means they are lacking in understanding of the things that concern their soul. But that shortage of knowledge is not the Lord's fault, for He has offered full opportunity for the necessary information. *Drunken in the night*. With the increase of indulgence in intoxicating drink, this phrase would not have the same application as in former times. When there was such an abhorrence for the practice that most people literally chose the cover of darkness for the shameful vice. (See Acts 2: 15.) The principle is true, also, in the spiritual realm, for those who hate the truth, prefer to shun the investigation of their teaching.

Verse 8. *Who are of the day* is the opposite to the ones who sleep in the preceding verse, meaning that they have taken advantage of the light of truth that has been offered by the Lord. Paul exhorts all such to make good their advantage and their profession, by *being sober* which means to be seriously minded concerning the great affairs of the soul. The parts of a soldier's equipment are mentioned with greater detail in Ephesians 6: 11-17, taken from those used by the Roman soldier. The *breastplate* was a piece made of metal, covering the body from the neck to the hips, thus protecting the heart and other vital parts of the body. No greater protection can be provided a Christian than his *faith* in the Lord and his *love* for his brother. The former will prevent him from going into error, since faith comes by the word of God (Romans 10: 17), and the latter will keep him from making the fatal mistake of harming his brother. The *helmet* was a cap for the protection of the head. A Christian can face any foe and even rejoice in the presence of death, if he has the *hope of salvation* in his heart.

Verse 9. *Not appointed us to wrath*. If people come under the wrath of God, it is not because He prepared them for that purpose. Instead, the plan of the Lord is that men might be

saved through the Lord Jesus Christ. The cause why the wrath of God comes on men and women is shown in Ephesians 5: 6 and Colossians 3: 5, 6.

Verse 10. Christ showed his interest in the salvation of man in that He was willing to die for him. *Wake or sleep* means alive or dead when Jesus comes. (See 1 Corinthians 15: 51; 1 Thessalonians 4: 15-17.) *Live together with him* will take place after the second coming of Christ and the resurrection, referred to in the last-named passage.

Verse 11. *Comfort yourselves* is the same exhortation that is stated in 1 Thessalonians 4: 18. *To edify one another* means to build each other up in the faith by mutual support in spiritual instruction. These brethren had been doing this, hence the instruction of Paul is not a complaint against them, but rather an encouraging word for them to continue in the good work.

Verse 12. *Know* is from EIDO, and Thayer defines it in this passage to mean, "to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to," *Labor among you* is indefinite and could refer to any friends of truth if nothing specific had been added by the apostle. But he shows of whom he is speaking by the words *over you in the Lord*. Acts 20: 17, 28 and 1 Peter 5: 1, 2 plainly teaches that the elders are the ones who have rule over the congregations. *Admonish you* is one of the duties of the elders, and they do it for the sake of the souls of the flock (Hebrews 13: 17).

Verse 13. *To esteem them* has about the same meaning as to "have regard for" as defined in the preceding verse. *Be at peace among yourselves*. If the members of a congregation would always endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4: 3), it would simplify and lighten the task of the elders in their rulership.

Verse 14. To warn always implies a possible danger or unpleasant experience; and since it is the *unruly* (disorderly) who are warned, it denotes that the unpleasant experience would be brought on them by their own conduct. The unpleasant experience might consist either of disciplinary action by the church (2 Thessalonians 3: 6), or the sentence of punishment at the last day (Matthew 25: 46), or both. *Feebleminded* does not mean folks who are irresponsible mentally,

for such would not be in the church. The word means "faint-hearted" according to Thayer; disciples who are inclined to be easily discouraged in the presence of trial. *Support the weak.* Some members have less ability than others, and Paul would have the stronger ones to support them. (See Romans 15: 1.) In all the various conditions of human society, it is a gracious attitude to be patient or long-suffering.

Verse 15. *See that none render* is the same as saying "let none render evil for evil." The so-called golden rule (Matthew 7: 12), and Paul's teaching in Romans 12: 21 also will agree with the present verse. *Follow that which is good* is opposite rendering evil for evil. This kind of conduct was to be practiced among the disciples, and also was to be done toward all others. A Christian does not have the right to return evil for evil at all, whether to his brethren or to men of the world.

Verse 16. *Rejoice evermore.* We need to look elsewhere to learn what it is that Christians may and may not rejoice in. (See Romans 5: 2; 1 Corinthians 13: 6.)

Verse 17. *Pray without ceasing.* This would not mean that Christians are to spend every minute of their waking hours in prayer, for that would not leave them any time for other duties. It means for them never to cease being praying disciples, in the same sense we would say a man should not cease to partake of food or he would die.

Verse 18. This verse gives one specific form of prayer, namely, giving of thanks for *every thing*. Of course it means things that are good, and we should give thanks to God for them, since all such gifts come from Him (James 1: 17). Paul is still more specific in 1 Timothy 4: 5, where he shows we should give thanks to God for our food. Since this is *the will* of God, it follows that if disciples fail to give thanks for their necessities of life, they are failing to do the will of the Father.

Verse 19. *Quench* is from SBENNUI, which Thayer defines, "to suppress, stifle." The Spirit guided the writers of the New Testament (John 16: 13), hence to quench or try to hinder the word of God would be to quench the Spirit.

Verse 20. *To despise* means to be-

little or treat with indifference. *Prophesyings* refers to the speeches of the inspired prophets in the church in those days. Sometimes such were predictions of events still in the future, and at other times they consisted of exhortation and edification (1 Corinthians 14: 3). Verses 21-24 of the same chapter would indicate the importance Paul attached to prophesyings, and hence why he exhorted the Thessalonians not to treat them with indifference.

Verse 21. *Prove* is from DOKIMAZO, which Thayer defines at this place as follows: "To test, examine, prove, scrutinize," and he explains, "to see whether a thing be genuine or not." The passage applies to the various doctrines that were being offered by the teachers in religion. Disciples were warned not to take the mere word of any stranger, but to test his teaching by comparing it with the truths that had been delivered to them by inspired men. The same kind of warning is given in 1 John 4: 1, 2. After the disciples have applied the scripture test, they are to accept and hold fast to everything that passes inspection.

Verse 22. *Abstain* is from APECHO, which Thayer defines in this passage, "to hold one's self off, abstain." Hence it means that we should wholly refrain from the thing being considered. *Apparance* is from EIDOS, and in the present passage is defined by Thayer with the simple words, "form, kind," and he explains it to mean, "every kind of evil or wrong." Robinson defines it, "form, manner, kind." It therefore does not mean "resemblance of evil" as a popular theory claims. It is true the scriptures elsewhere teach that Christians should not indulge in anything that is doubtful or that might possibly be wrong, but that is not the meaning of our present verse. Nor does this explanation lessen the responsibilities of Christians in avoiding evil, as some fear, but rather does it make it more strict and far-reaching. Some professed disciples would cheerfully give up a number of evil practices, but insist on retaining some others on the ground that they are not in the same class, or that they are not as bad a "kind" of evil as the others. Our passage allows no distinction to be made between the so-called worse and lesser of evils. They are all—"every kind"—forbidden to Christians.

Verse 23. Every good thing is of God, but he is here said to be of *peace* because that is an outstanding result of being wholly *sanctified*. The word means to be devoted to the service of God, and such a condition is accomplished by the word of God (John 17: 17). As a general statement, the rest of this verse is a prayer of Paul that the entire being of the brethren be kept blameless, which means in obedience to the truth of God that has sanctified them, and that such a condition would exist until Christ comes again. *Spirit* and *soul* and *body*. This is the only place in the Bible where the three parts of the human being are named in one sentence. There is not much difference between the first two, for they are used interchangeably at various places in the sacred writings. However, since Paul uses them together in the present passage, there must be some difference, although they both refer to the inner or immaterial part of man, in contrast with the material or bodily part. Genesis 2: 7 states the origin of the body and soul of man. But God did not stop with the creation of those two parts. Zechariah 12: 1 states that God formed the spirit of man within him, thus completing the three parts of the human being. From the forgoing considerations, I will give to the readers the three parts of man as follows: The body is that part that is composed of the ground, made in the form of an animal (not a vegetable or mineral); the soul is the part that makes him a living animal; the spirit is the part that makes him a human, living animal. It should be added that God intended this being to have an endless existence, beginning with his stay on the earth, during which he was to be given opportunity to serve his Creator intelligently and spiritually. Because of this exalted purpose, God gave to this being a superior personality over all other living creatures, both as to his material and to his immaterial formation.

Verse 24. We usually think of the term *faithful* as applying to one who is true and obedient to another unto whom he is obligated. Yet it would not be appropriate to regard the Lord in that light; hence it means that He will make good all of the promises he has made to man. Such promises were made when He *called* man by the Gospel and promised him spiritual

benefits in this life, and endless joys in the life to come. *Who also will do it*. God not only has always been faithful, but always will be.

Verse 25. It is interesting that the apostle Paul felt the need for the prayers of the brethren, although he was an inspired man. That was because inspiration was not any special protection against misconduct in one's personal life; it guaranteed only that he would not make any mistake in his teaching. An inspired man could go wrong in his life, even though he had done his duty in his teaching (1 Corinthians 9: 27).

Verse 26. Paul was not starting any custom by this command. The salutation of a kiss was a common one in that age, and still is in some countries. The emphasis should be placed on the word *holy*, and the thought is for the brethren to be sincere when they greet each other.

Verse 27. There were no duplicating devices known in old times, whereby multiple copies of an epistle could be made and sent to all individuals of a congregation. The inspired documents were sent in care of some responsible person, who was expected to see that the other members would learn of their contents; hence the command to read this epistle to them. *Holy brethren* simply means righteous men and women of the congregation, since holiness and righteousness are names for the same quality.

Verse 28. Grace is the unmerited favor of Christ, which Paul wishes for the Thessalonians. It was a benediction with which he closed most of his epistles.

## 2 Thessalonians 1

Verse 1, 2. These verses are the same in thought as the opening verse of the first epistle to the Thessalonians. See that place concerning *Silvanus* and *Timotheus*.

Verse 3. In the preceding epistle Paul expressed thanks for the good report of the brethren in Thessalonica. He repeats it in this place, and adds the word *bound*, meaning he is urged toward his attitude by the great truths connected with the work of that congregation. *It is meet* denotes that it is proper because the good influence of their work made them deserving of such consideration. *Faith groweth* means they were increasing their good works as a result of their faith. (See