

1 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

Thessalonica was a very large, populous, and flourishing city, it was “liberae conditionis”, as Pliny says^{f1}, a free city, and the metropolis of Macedonia; it was formerly called Halis^{f2}, and had the name of Thessalonica given it by Philip king of Macedon, on account of his conquest of Thessalia, which this name signifies; and some say he gave this name to a daughter of his on that occasion, who was afterwards the wife of Cassander; who, others say, called this place by his wife's name^{f3}, which before was Therme: its name with the Italians is Salonichi, and is now in the hands of the Turks, as all Greece is: here the Apostle Paul came after he had been at Philippi, and stayed about three weeks, and preached every sabbath day, and his ministry was blessed to the conversion of some Jews, a multitude of devout Greeks, and many of the chief women of the place, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church; to which the apostle wrote this epistle, and is the first of all the epistles he wrote: the occasion of it was this; the unbelieving Jews, vexed to see the apostle's success, raised a mob of the baser sort of people, and assaulted the house of Jason, where the apostle and his companions were; but Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Berea, which the rabble understanding, followed them thither; when Paul was sent as if he was going to the sea, but was conducted by the brethren to Athens, who gave orders that Silas and Timothy should come to him with all speed, as they did; and Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the young converts there; and returning with good news of their faith, and charity, to the apostle at Corinth, he sent them from thence this epistle, and not from Athens, as some have thought: the design of which is to encourage them under their afflictions and sufferings; to exhort them to stand fast in the Lord, to abide by his truths and ordinances, and to live an holy life and conversation, and to regard the several duties of religion, towards God and one another, and those that were set over them; and in it he instructs them concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the coming of Christ, articles of very great

importance and concern: the writing of this epistle is placed by Dr. Lightfoot in the 51st year of Christ, and in the 11th of Claudius Caesar.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle's salutation of the persons it is written to; his thanksgiving for blessings received by them; an account of the manner in which the Gospel came to them, how they behaved when it was preached to them, and of the success of it in their conversion. The inscription which expresses the names of the persons concerned in the epistle, and describes those to whom it is written, and also the salutation, which is the same as in other epistles, are in (~~ΣΟΜΕ~~1 Thessalonians 1:1) and then follows a thanksgiving to God made in prayer to him for the special graces of the Spirit bestowed on them, as faith, hope, and love, and the lively exercise of them in which they were; the source and spring of which was the electing love of God, (~~ΣΟΜΕ~~1 Thessalonians 1:2-4) and the evidence of their election of God to the apostle, was the manner in which the Gospel came to them; not merely in the external ministry of it, but in the internal efficacy of it, through the power of the Holy Ghost, (~~ΣΟΜΕ~~1 Thessalonians 1:5) and the effects of it upon them; it found an hearty reception among them, in much affliction, and with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that they not only professed it, and became the followers of Christ and his apostles, but were examples unto others, (~~ΣΟΜΕ~~1 Thessalonians 1:6,7) for the fame of the Gospel being preached unto them, and of their faith, were spread everywhere, so that the apostle had no need to say anything about it, (~~ΣΟΜΕ~~1 Thessalonians 1:8) the manner of their entrance among them, and the issue of it, their conversion, were so manifest to all; which is described by what they were turned from, idols; and by what they were turned to, the living God; and by the ends of it, which were to serve God, and wait for Jesus Christ; the arguments engaging to which are, his relation to God as his Son, his being raised from the dead by him; his being in heaven, exalted at his right hand there, from whence he is expected; and his having, by his sufferings and death, delivered his people from wrath to come, (~~ΣΟΜΕ~~1 Thessalonians 1:9,10).

Ver. 1. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus*, etc.] These are the persons concerned in this epistle, and who send their greetings and salutations to

this church; Paul was the inspired writer of it, and who is called by his bare name, without any additional epithet to it, as elsewhere in his other epistles; where he is either styled the servant, or apostle, or prisoner of Christ, but here only Paul: the reason for it is variously conjectured; either because he was well known by this church, having been lately with them; or lest these young converts should be offended and stumble at any pompous title, which they might imagine carried an appearance of arrogance and pride; or because there were as yet no false apostles among them, who had insinuated anything to the disadvantage of Paul, as in other places, which obliged him to assert his character and magnify his office; or rather because this was the first epistle he wrote, and he being conscious to himself of his own meanness, and that he was the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be called one, chose not to use the title. Silvanus is the same with Silas, who was with the apostle at Thessalonica and at Corinth, when he wrote this epistle; he was originally a member of the church at Jerusalem, and was one of the chief of the brethren there, and a prophet; (see ~~417b~~ Acts 17:4 18:5) (~~415d~~ Acts 15:22,23), Timothy was also with the apostle at the same place, and was sent back by him from Athens to know their state, and returned to Corinth to him with Silas; he stands last, as being the younger, and perhaps was the apostle's amanuensis, and therefore in modesty writes his name last: the reason of their being mentioned was because, having been with the apostle at this place, they were well known by the church, who would be glad to hear of their welfare; as also to show their continued harmony and consent in the doctrines of the Gospel; they stand in the same order in (~~419b~~ 2 Corinthians 1:19),

unto the church of the Thessalonians: which consisted of several of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, both Jews and Gentiles; (see Gill on "~~417b~~ Acts 17:4"), who were called under the ministry of the word by the grace of God, out of darkness into marvellous light, and were separated from the rest of the world, and incorporated into a Gospel church state. This was a particular congregated church of Christ. Some have thought it was not as yet organized, or had proper officers in it; since no mention is made of pastors and deacons, but the contrary is evident from (~~415d~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13), where they are exhorted to know, own, and acknowledge them that laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and esteem them highly for their works' sake. This church is said to be

in God the Father; were interested in his love and free favour, as appears by their election of God, (~~410b~~ 1 Thessalonians 1:4), and they were in the

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

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

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

Ver. 2. *We give thanks to God always for you all*, etc.] For all the members of this church, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, officers or private Christians; for their being a church, for the gifts bestowed on them, for the graces hereafter mentioned that were wrought in them and exercised by them; the glory of all which is given to God, and thanks for the same, which shows them to be gifts of his, and not in the least owing to any merits of men: the apostle ascribes nothing to their free will, previous dispositions and qualifications, diligence and

industry; nor does he attribute anything to himself and to his companions, who were only ministers by whom these believed; but he refers all to God, to his grace and goodness: and he returned thanks to him for it, and that “always”; whenever he thought of it, made mention of it, or was at the throne of grace, as follows,

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

Ver. 3. *Remembering without ceasing*, etc.] The phrase “without ceasing”, is, by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, joined to the last clause of the preceding verse; and the remembrance the apostle speaks of is either a distinct thing from the mention made of them in prayer, and suggests that they bore them on their minds at other times also; or it is the same with it; or rather a reason of their mentioning of them then, because they remembered them, and the following things of theirs:

as your work of faith; by which is meant not the principle of faith, for as such that is God's work, the product of his grace, and the effect of his almighty power; but the operative virtue and exercise of it under the influence of the grace of God: the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, “the work of your faith”; and so some copies, and the Syriac version, “the works of your faith”. The Targumist in (³⁰¹²Habakkuk 1:12) represents God as holy *a twnmyh ydbw*[b, “in works of faith”: faith is a working grace, it has a deal of work to do, it has its hands always full, and is employed about many things; it is the grace by which a soul goes to God, as its covenant God, lays hold on him as such, pleads his promises with him, asks favours of him, and is very importunate, and will have no denial; and by which it goes to Christ as at first conversion, afterwards for fresh supplies of grace, out of that fulness of grace that is in him; it receives him and all from him, and through him pardon, righteousness, adoption of children, and an eternal inheritance; and it is that grace which carries back all the glory to God and Christ, and to free grace; it glorifies God, exalts Christ, humbles the creature, and magnifies the grace of God, it has much work to do this way; and it works by love, by acts of love to God, to Christ, and to the saints; and it puts the soul upon a cheerful obedience to

every ordinance and command, and hence obedience is styled the obedience of faith; and indeed all good works that are properly so are done in faith, and faith without works is dead; it is greatly engaged against the world and the devil; it is that grace by which Satan is opposed and overcome, and by which the believer gets the victory over the world; so that he is not discouraged by its frowns, and cast down by the trials and afflictions he meets with in it, nor drawn aside by its snares and allurements; something of this kind the apostle had observed and remembered in these believers: he adds,

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

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

in the sight of God and our Father; or before God and our Father; which may be read in connection either with the above graces, which were

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

Ver. 4. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*] Which intends not an election to an office, for this epistle is written not to the officers of the church only, but to the whole church; nor to the Gospel, the outward means of grace, since this was common to them with others, and might be known without the evidence after given; nor does it design the effectual calling, sometimes so called for this is expressed in the following verse as a fruit, effect, and evidence of the election here spoken of, which is no other than the eternal choice of, them to everlasting life and happiness: this is of God, an act of God the Father, made in Christ Jesus before the world began, and which springs from his sovereign will, and is the effect of his pure love and free favour; and therefore these persons who are the objects of it are said to be “beloved of God”; for so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read the words, and which agree with (2 Thessalonians 2:13) for this choice does not arise from the merits of men, or any conditions in them, or from the foresight of their faith, holiness, and good works, but from the free grace and good pleasure of God; and is the source and spring of all grace, and the blessings of it, and even of good works; and is a sure, immutable, and irreversible act of God, being founded on his own will, and not on the works of men; the knowledge they had of this was not what the Thessalonians themselves had, though they might have, and doubtless had the knowledge of this grace, and which may be concluded with certainty from the effectual calling; and is a privilege which many particular believers may, and do arrive unto the knowledge of, without any extraordinary revelation made unto them: but here it intends the knowledge which the apostle and his companions had of the election of the members of this church; not by inspiration of the Spirit of God, but by the manner of the Gospel's coming unto them, and the effects it had upon them, as expressed in the following verses; and from their faith, hope, and love, mentioned in the preceding verse; and which was the ground and

foundation of their thanksgiving for them; *see on Gill* “^{² Thessalonians 2:13”.}

Ver. 5. *For our Gospel came not unto you*, etc.] The apostle calls the Gospel “our Gospel”, not because he and his fellow ministers were the authors of it; for in this respect it is solely of God, being the produce of his wisdom and grace, and by the revelation of Jesus Christ, hence he calls it the Gospel of God in (^{¹ Thessalonians 2:2,8,9) nor because they were the subject of it, for they preached not themselves, but a crucified Christ, and him only, though it was a stumblingblock to some, and foolishness to others; but because it was committed to their trust, and they were the preachers of it, and agreed in the ministration of it; and it is opposed to, and is distinct from, that which was preached by the false teachers; and here intends not barely the Gospel itself, but chiefly their preaching of it: and this came unto them being sent of God, for wherever the Gospel comes, it comes with a mission and commission from God; and being brought unto them by the apostles, who were bringers and publishers of the good tidings of good things, it came unthought of, unsought and unasked for by them; and that not only externally, which to have is a great blessing, but internally, εἰς ὑμᾶς, “into you”; it came not barely into their ears vocally, and into their heads notionally; but into their hearts, and worked effectually there; it was mixed with faith, and was profitable; it became the ingrafted word, and dwelt richly in them: for it came to them not}

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

but in power; not merely preached in a powerful way, or attended with miraculous operations, though doubtless both were true; for the apostle was a powerful preacher, and his ministry was confirmed by signs and wonders and mighty deeds; but from neither of these could he conclude the election of these people: but the preaching of the Gospel was accompanied with the powerful efficacy of the grace of God, working by it upon them; so that it became the power of God unto salvation to them; it came to them in the demonstration of the Spirit of God, and of power, quickening them

who were dead in trespasses, and sin, enlightening their dark understandings, unstopping their deaf ears, softening their hard hearts, and delivering them from the slavery of sin and Satan; from whence it clearly appeared that they were the chosen of God, and precious:

and in the Holy Ghost; the Gospel was not only preached under the influence, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and attended with his extraordinary gifts for the confirmation of it, which it might be, and be no proof of the election of these persons to eternal life; but it came by the power of the Holy Spirit to their souls, working and implanting his graces in them, as faith, hope, and love, and every other; and he himself was received along with it, as a spirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and of faith and adoption; all which gave full evidence of their election:

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

as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. The apostle appeals to themselves for the truth of what he had said; who must have observed, and could not but remember, with what meanness they appeared, with what fear and trembling, with what plainness and simplicity, without the enticing words of man's wisdom; what a contemptible figure they made, how they wrought with their own hands, and endured reproach and persecution for their sakes, that they might obtain salvation by Christ with eternal glory; and had nothing to recommend them to them, to win upon them, and engage their attention, and strike their affection; or persuade them to receive their persons, and believe their doctrines; wherefore the effects their ministry had upon them were not owing to the

charms of words, the force of language, and power of oratory; or to any external thing in them, or done by them; but must be ascribed to the Spirit of God, and to the power and efficacy of his grace.

Ver. 6. *And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord*, etc.] So far followers of them as they were of Christ, in embracing the Gospel, submitting to the ordinances of it, professing the name of Christ, and suffering for his sake; the Alexandrian copy reads, “of God”, and others, “of Christ”:

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

in much affliction; referring to the uproar made by the baser sort of people, instigated by the unbelieving Jews, and the trouble they gave to Jason and other brethren, mentioned in (~~ACTS~~ Acts 17:1,5-9) and this is a considerable commendation of them, that at a time when others were offended and fell off from hearing the word, and a profession of the Gospel, they should receive it, and that

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

Ver. 7. *So that ye were ensamples to all that believe*, etc.] They were not only followers of Christ and his apostles, whom they took for examples of faith, holiness, courage, meekness, and patience; but they were patterns of good works; and of suffering afflictions to other believers, even to all that knew them, or heard of them, particularly

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

and Achaia; another part of Greece, the metropolis of which was Corinth, where there also was a very considerable church; but these saints at Thessalonica set them an example in many things, and particularly in acts of beneficence and liberality, being one of the churches of Macedonia spoken of in (~~400~~2 Corinthians 8:1).

Ver. 8. *For from you sounded out the word of the Lord*, etc.] By which is meant the Gospel, and is so called because it is from the Lord, as the author of it: and it is of the Lord, as the subject of it; and it is by the Lord, as the minister or dispenser of it; and it is owing to the efficacy of his grace that it is useful and successful, and ought to be attended to, received, and obeyed, not as the word of man, but as the word of the Lord. This is said to have “sounded out”, alluding to the blowing of a trumpet, to which the Gospel is sometimes compared, as to the silver trumpet under the law, for the gathering of the people of Israel; or to the trumpet blown in the years of jubilee, which proclaimed liberty, release of debts, and restoration of inheritances, as the Gospel in a spiritual sense does; or to the trumpet used in war to prepare for the battle, and therefore should not give an uncertain sound; or as used musically, the Gospel being a joyful sound; and this sounding of it may denote the clear publication and open declaration, and large spread of it far and near: though, when it is said to sound forth from the Thessalonians, it is not to be understood as if the Gospel first began to be preached among them, and from thence went to other places; it was preached at Philippi before it came to them, and at many other places before it was there; the word of the Lord, according to the prophecy of (~~200~~Isaiah 2:2) came from Jerusalem; Christ and his apostles first preached there, and from thence their words and sound went to the ends of the earth; but not so much the preaching of the Gospel, as the fame and report of its being preached in this place, is here meant: and so the Latin translation of the Syriac version renders it, “for from you went the report of the word of our Lord”; the fame of its being preached and received at Thessalonica, in the manner it was, spread itself,

not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place; not only at Philippi, Berea, Athens, and Corinth, and other cities and towns in those countries, but also in other parts of the world; and what greatly contributed to it were the uproar that was made at Thessalonica, and continued at Berea upon the first preaching of the Gospel in those parts by the unbelieving Jews; as also the large numbers both of Greeks and Jews, and of devout women of considerable families, that were converted: to which

may be added, that Thessalonica was the metropolis of Macedonia, and a city of great trade, and much frequented from all parts both by sea and land; and by this means it came to pass, that not only the fame of the preaching of the word among them went abroad everywhere; but, as the apostle adds,

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

so that we had no need to speak anything; the Syriac version adds, “concerning you”; concerning the preaching of the Gospel among them, their faith in it and profession of it, all being so well known in the several places where they came; for it seems it was usual with the apostles, when they came to any place, to speak of their success in others, and of the faith, and hope, and joy of other Christians, for the encouragement of, and as ensamples to those to whom they minister; but with relation to the Thessalonians this was unnecessary.

Ver. 9. *For they themselves show of us*, etc.] Either the above reports of the preaching of the Gospel to the Thessalonians, and of their faith in God; or rather the persons to whom these reports were brought, openly and publicly, and largely declared concerning

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

and how ye turned to God from idols; immediately and at once, upon the preaching of the Gospel to them, being first turned by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; for the first work of conversion is God's work;

then they themselves, under the influence of the same grace, turned to the one God, from their internal idols, their sins and lusts, and from their external idols, their many false and fictitious deities: for the Thessalonians before the Gospel came among them were idolaters; here the “Dii Cabiri”, the great and chief gods of the Gentiles, were worshipped; as Jupiter and Bacchus, Ceres and Proserpina, Pluto and Mercury, Castor and Pollux, and Esculapius; these the Macedonians, and particularly the Thessalonians, worshipped with great devotion and reverence^{f4}: but now they turned from them and forsook them,

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

Ver. 10. *And to wait for his Son from heaven*, etc.] The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the natural, essential, and eternal Son of God; and whoever is truly converted, is not only turned to God the Father, and believes in him; but also believes in, receives, embraces, and professes his Son Jesus Christ; who became incarnate, and, in the human nature he assumed, obeyed, suffered, and died and rose again, and ascended into heaven, where he now is, and will be till the time of the restitution of all things; when he will descend from thence, and come and judge the world in righteousness; and from thence the saints expect him, and look and wait by faith for eternal glory and happiness by him, and with him at his appearance and kingdom; so that many articles of faith are contained in this expression, which these Thessalonians were acquainted with, believed, and acted upon: and Christ the Son of God is further described as that person

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

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