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First and Second Thessalonians

FOR SENIOR CLASSES

SECOND QUARTER, 1903

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SABBATH-SCHOOL LESSONS ON

First and Second Thessalonians

For Senior Classes

SECOND QUARTER, 1903

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LESSON I.—*The Founding of the Church.*

APRIL 4.

(THESS. I : 1 ; ACTS 17 : 1-10.)

(1) Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

(1) Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: (2) and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, (3) opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. (4) And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. (5) But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathered a crowd, set the city on an uproar: and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. (6) And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the

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city, crying. These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; (7) whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. (8) And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. (9) And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

(10) And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Questions.

1. What was probably the earliest epistle written by the apostle Paul? Note 1.

2. Whom does he associate with him? 1 Thess. 1:1. Note 2.

3. What record have we of Paul's first visit to Thessalonica? Acts 17:1. Note 3.

4. What did they find of special interest in that city?

5. What course did the apostle take? Verse 2.

6. What was the burden of his preaching? Verse 3. Note 4.

7. How were some of the Jews affected?

8. What did they do? What other class did the gospel reach? Verse 4.

9. How did the apostle's success affect the Jews generally? Whom did these Jews choose? What did they do? How did their actions affect the city? Verse 5.

10. Whose house did they assault? and for what purpose?

11. Disappointed at not finding Paul and Silas, what

We expend sixty per cent of our efforts upon four per cent of our field.

did they do? What cry of alarm did they raise? Verse 6.

12. What charge did they bring against Jason? Of what did they accuse the believers? Verse 7.

13. How were the people and rulers affected? Verse 8. Note 5.

14. What did the rulers do? Verse 9.

15. What did the brethren do? Verse 10.

Notes.

1. It is generally agreed that the earliest epistle written by the apostle Paul was the first to the Thessalonians, about A. D. 52, the second epistle from one to two years later. The burden of the first epistle is the reception and power of the gospel message, the second coming of Christ, and the necessity of holiness and watchfulness. In the second epistle the apostle corrects wrong views obtained regarding the time of Christ's coming, foretells the great apostasy, and exhorts to practical godliness. Both epistles are eminently present truth to the people of God now. In the study of the lessons, above all things else study the epistle, and receive it, as it is in truth the Word of the Lord.

2. "Silvanus" is identical with Silas, a shorter form of the same word. He was a leading man and prophet in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22, 23), his name indicating that he was a Grecian Jew. He was chosen by the apostles to accompany Paul, to bear the message of the first council to the churches. Acts 15. Afterwards he labored with Paul, and was with him in some of his greatest trials. After Paul's imprisonment, he seems to have joined Peter. Timothy's father was a Greek, and his mother a Jewess of Lystra. He was converted under Paul's preaching, and proved a faithful soldier of God.

3. Thessalonica was an important city of Macedonia. It was

"One dollar now is of more value to the work than ten dollars will be at some future period."

named after Alexander's sister by Cassander, her husband. In Paul's time it was a free city of the Roman's, the capital of one of the four Roman divisions of Macedonia. Like other ancient cities, it was full of idolatry. It is now known by the abbreviated name Salonika. Its commerce is extensive with many nations. The population is about 80,000, of whom 30,000 are Jews and 10,000 Greeks. It contains many churches and schools of different denominations, and ought to be a good missionary center.

4. The burden of Paul's preaching always was what is ever the only remedy for man's great need,—Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

5. The word "rulers" is in the original "politarchs," not elsewhere found in the New Testament; but the word is found on the ruins of a triumphal arch in the city, and the names of seven politarchs given, an undesigned coincidence witnessing to the truth of the epistle.



LESSON II.—Preacher and People.

APRIL II.

I THESS. I:1-10.

(1) Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

(2) We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; (3) remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; (4) knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election, (5) how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for your sake. (6) And ye became imitators of us, and of the

Nine-tenths of the women of India never heard of a Saviour.

Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit; (7) so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. (8) For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything. (9) For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, (10) and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

Questions.

1. What message does Paul with his colaborers bear to the church of the Thessalonians? Verse 1.
2. For whom did the apostle give thanks and pray? Verse 2.
3. What did he remember? In whom and before whom was this work wrought? Verse 3. Note 1.
4. Of what was the apostle assured? Verse 4.
5. How did the gospel come to them? What did the brethren know? Verse 5.
6. Of whom did they become imitators? Under what circumstances and how did they receive the Word? Verse 6.
7. What did this fit them to be? Verse 7.
8. What was the effect of their faith? Of what did believers elsewhere bear witness concerning Paul's work? Verse 8. Note 2.
9. What did they say of the church? Verse 9.
10. For whom were they looking? Verse 10.

The needs of the cause of God are world wide.

Notes.

1. True faith—there is no other—always works. Love born of God labors cheerfully, joyfully; it must labor. And hope endures steadfast to the end. Faith works in love, hoping to the end. Love believeth all things, hopeth all things. Hope endures as seeing Him who is invisible.

2. Every true believer must be a missionary. Faith, living faith, must show itself. It must tell the story of its love to others. It must proclaim the Word of life. If it fail to find utterance and free utterance and free course, it will die. He who thinks to cherish in his own heart God's living gospel and not tell it to others, commits double crime: he holds from the starving the bread of life, and he commits self-murder. The bread he has eaten becomes poison; his righteousness becomes sin. God gives that we may give.

*LESSON III.—The Manner of the Preacher.*

APRIL 18.

I THESS. 2:1-12.

(1) For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found in vain: (2) but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict. (3) For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: (4) but even as we have been approved of God to be intrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts. (5) For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; (6) nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ. (7) But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth

The Son of God beggared Himself to enrich us.

her own children: (8) even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us. (9) For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. (10) Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe: (11) as ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying, (12) to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory.

Questions.

1. What could be said of Paul's preaching to the Thessalonians? Verse 1. Note 1.

2. Did his treatment at Philippi discourage him under like circumstances at Thessalonica? Verse 2.

3. Of what three things did his teaching not partake? Verse 3. Note 2.

4. Of what had he been made steward? How did he fulfil his trust? Verse 4.

5. What did he not use in respect to them? What did he not have to conceal? Before whom had he fulfilled his mission? Verse 5.

6. What did he not seek? What did he not assume when he had the right? Verse 6. Note 3.

7. What was his manner toward them? Verse 7.

8. How dear were these souls to the apostle? Verse 8.

9. What did he call to their remembrance? How earnestly did he labor? Verse 9.

Prayerfully consider the unentered fields.

10. What example did he set? Verse 10.

11. How did he deal with them? Verse 11.

12. To what object did he testify? To what had God called them? Verses 11, 12.

Notes.

1. When the grace of the gospel of God came to the apostle Paul, it came "not in vain." It was revealed not only *to* him, but *in* him. Gal. 1:16. The proof that it was not in vain was the service he rendered for God: "*I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.*" 1 Cor. 15:10.

2. These things in the negative imply their positives. His exhortation was not of error; it was therefore of truth. It was not of uncleanness. It was unlike the teaching of paganism, in which licentiousness and lewdness were taught as a part of its abominable nature worship, and which is ever regarded lightly by carnal man where the rays of the gospel have not shown. He taught purity of motive, of heart, of thought, of word, of life. He was without guile. He did not hide the principles of God's truth; he did not need to. The blessed things of Christianity are not a cloak to deceive, a fair thing to hide something which will not bear the light. Paul did not teach thus, though he was so charged with doing. He shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.

3. That they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel, is apostolic and divine. Paul brought to the Thessalonians the higher life; surely he had a right to partake of their things which supported the physical man. But he did not do it. He did not seek glory from them or from others, nor was he burdensome. His course was an example of unselfishness, and it demonstrated that he did not break from traditional Judaism and become a Christian for gain. But it is the duty of the church to remedy this by supporting the servants of God

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

The unselfishness of the servant of God should not develop unhospitable, selfish churches.



LESSON IV.—The Reception of His Message.

APRIL 25.

I THESS. 2:13-20.

(13) And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe. (14) For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus: for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews; (15) who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; (16) forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost.

(17) But we, brethren, being bereaved of you for a short season, in presence not in heart, endeavored the more exceedingly to see your face with great desire: (18) because we would fain have come unto you, I Paul once and again; and Satan hindered us. (19) For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming? (20) For ye are our glory and our joy.

Questions.

1. How did the apostle preach the gospel to the Thessalonians? See last lesson.

2. How did they regard his message?—They “received the word of the message.” Whose word was it? How

“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.”

did they accept it? How did it affect them? Verse 13. Note 1.

3. Of whom were they imitators? What similar experience did they have? Verse 14. Note 2.

4. What does he say of these Jewish persecutors? Verse 15.

5. What did they forbid? Why? In what would such conduct result? What came upon them in consequence? Verse 16.

6. Over what did Paul mourn? What did he greatly desire? Verse 17.

7. What did he purpose to do? Who hindered? Verse 18.

8. What question did he ask? With what question did he answer it? Verse 19.

9. What positive reply did he make? Verse 20.

Notes.

1. The Word of God received as the word of men is nothing. It is as the touch of Jesus by the curious, careless crowd. The word of men accepted as the word of God is nothing, and worse than nothing. It leads to deification of the human, to slavish tyranny, to fanaticism. It is not faith to receive men's words; it is credulity. It is faith, and it is necessary to salvation, to receive the message of God as the Word of God, letting it have free course in our lives, and then only will its creative power effectually work wonders.

2. It is worthy of note that this church in Thessalonica became imitators, followers of the church of God in Judea. It is admitted by all candid students that the churches in Judea were Sabbath-keepers. Of course, well-instructed Christians must be.

"The advent message to the world in this generation"—our watchword.

But it is expressly said that these Christians from among the Gentiles were in all their persecutions followers of the faithful in the very primitive churches. They were therefore Christian Sabbath-keepers.

3. Only Jesus Christ can understand the true minister's burden for the souls of those for whom he labors. There is coming to be a belief, and it is evident in practise, that plain preaching of the truth, mere formal requests put in mere nominal belief, and conventional visiting are all that is required of the minister of Christ. It was not so with Paul. He not only preached a full gospel, but he labored, *travailed*, night and day in tears and prayers for souls. His very life went out in soul anguish for them. He had no hope unless they were saved. Any crown given him would be a lie, unless he had conquered Satan in souls, the strongholds of sin. He could not be partaker in the joy of Christ if souls were not saved. His glory, his joy, his crown, at Jesus' coming were all to be wrought out here in his labor for souls. All who know Christ are ministers of His; and no soul will go alone into glory.



LESSON V.—Comforted in Their Faithfulness.

MAY 2.

I THESS. 3:1-13.

(1) Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone; (2) and sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith; (3) that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed. (4) For, verily, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to suffer afflictions; even as it came to pass, and ye know. (5) For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might

"There shall be delay no longer"—our confidence.

know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain. (6) But when Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to see us, even as we also to see you; (7) for this cause, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our distress and affliction through your faith; (8) for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. (9) For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; (10) night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

(11) Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you: (12) and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you; (13) to the end He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

Questions.

1. What did Paul greatly desire? 1 Thess. 2:17.
2. When he was unable to see them personally, what did he do? For what purpose did he send Timothy? Verses 1, 2, above.
3. By what would he not have them moved? What did he recall to their knowledge? Verse 3.
4. What had he before told them? What proof had they had? Verse 4. Note 1.
5. How did he manifest his anxiety for them? Verse 5. Note 2.
6. What news did Timothy bring back? Verse 6.

"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

7. How did this affect the apostle? Because of what? Verse 7.

8. How did he express the intensity of his desire toward them? Verse 8.

9. What question does he ask expressive of his joy? Verse 9. Note 3.

10. What did he still desire? Why? Verse 10.

11. What prayer does he offer respecting himself? Verse 11.

12. What prayer does he offer for them? Verse 12. Note 4.

13. Why does he desire them to abound in love? Before whom? and when? Verse 13. Note 5.

Notes.

1. "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It may *seem* otherwise, but there is no exception. There may be no outward persecution to many. Life may flow on smoothly. Friends and neighbors may be kind, and perhaps of the same faith. Oh, how many content themselves in such circumstances to drift on, doing really nothing which demands sacrifice! They pay tithe; yes, but that is less than they have paid to maintain evil habits in sin. They know no burden of soul, no sacrifice of time or money. To live godly is to do as Jesus Christ did,—labor for others, give life for others. And he who does this, though he may meet with no human persecution, will meet the power of the adversary. But better the persecution and affliction with Jesus than a life of ease without Him.

2. Every humble man of God wants human company in his labors. It is God's plan to send men out at least "two and two." Greater strength and confidence are gathered in prayer and counsel. *One shall chase a thousand; but two shall put ten thousand*

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to flight. Yet Paul was willing to labor alone in the great, strange city for awhile, so that the new converts might not be left too long. When he had left them, he was forced to flee from them. Now he did not wish them to become discouraged by his afflictions or their own.

3. David said in the Spirit, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?" Paul counted the conversion of these souls and their steadfastness in God as benefits which God had granted him.

4. "Abound in love one toward another." Oh, how much need there is of it! We can not abound toward others if not our brethren. Love grows by cultivation, by doing, by giving. He who shuts himself from ministry to his brethren can not love them.

5. "At the coming of our Lord Jesus." Literally at His personal presence, for so the word means. See 2 Cor. 7:6, 7; 10:10. He is here now by His ambassadors, and by His Spirit; but not in the sense of His promise. John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11. That promise will not be fulfilled until He comes in His own personal presence. Then we shall see Him as He is, this "same Jesus." That is the hope of the church.



LESSON VI.—*Walking with God.*

MAY 9.

I THESS. 4:1-12.

(1) Finally then, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk,—that ye abound more and more. (2) For ye know what charge we gave you through the Lord Jesus. (3) For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; (4) that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in

We expend sixty per cent of our efforts upon four per cent of our field.

sanctification and honor, (5) not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles who know not God; (6) that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also we forewarned you and testified. (7) For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. (8) Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth His Holy Spirit unto you.

(9) But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; (10) for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren that are in all Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more; (11) and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even as we charged you; (12) that ye may walk becomingly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing.

Questions.

1. What general exhortation does the apostle give as to conduct? What admonition is there to continued progress? Verse 1. (See Micah 6:8; Phil. 3:13, 14; 1:9; 2:12.)

2. Of what does he remind them? Verse 2.

3. What great general truth does he express? What specific prohibition grows out of this? Verse 3.

4. What further instruction does he give? Verse 4.

5. Who should not be an example? Verse 5. Note 1.

6. What solemn warning does he utter? Verse 6.

7. To what has God called us? Verse 7.

8. What does he say of those who reject this instruction? Verse 8.

9. Of what had he no need to write? Of whom does the Christian learn to love? Verse 9.

"One dollar now is of more value to the work than ten dollars will be at some future period."

10. What proof had the Thessalonians given of their love? Should they be satisfied with this? Verse 10. Note 2.

11. What three things should they study to do? Verse 11.

12. What twofold result would accrue from such conduct? Verse 12.

Notes.

1. All man-made religions, all perversions of the true religion, fostered or in some way excused the sins reprov'd in this lesson, making it easier for the natural heart to indulge them. The religion of Jesus Christ, the gospel of God, takes all these things from the heart and life if it is truly received. In these days the wickednesses of Sodom are being repeated on a much larger scale. The words of the Christian man should be pure and clean words.

2. We must never be content with present effort. The fruits of our work may have reached to the confines of our country; an apostle may have commended our work of faith, our labor of love, our patience of hope; our praise may be in all the churches; but all the past will prove a curse if it be not made a foundation for broader, better work. The rule always, if we would not die, is to "abound more and more."



LESSON VII.—The Coming of Christ.

MAY 16.

I THESS. 4:13-18.

(13) But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep

Nine-tenths of the women of India never heard of a Saviour.

in Jesus will God bring with Him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; (17) then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Questions.

1. Of what would the Lord not have His children ignorant? What should they not do? Verse 13. Note 1.

2. What is the basis of the hope that those who die in Jesus will rise again? Verse 14. Note 2.

3. What assurance does the apostle give that those who live when Jesus comes will have no preference over those who sleep? Verse 15.

4. What will be the manner of the Lord's coming? What will then take place? What change will be wrought in those who are raised from the dead? Verse 16. Note 3.

5. Who will then join the risen ones? Whom will they all meet in the air? For how long will they be with Him? ^{1, 7} Note 4.

6. For what has God given these words to the sorrowing? Verse 18.

Notes.

1. Dark and devious as are all sin's ways, of the final outcome there need be no doubt to the child of God. Satan has endeavored to blind the world to the nature of death, to make

The needs of the cause of God are world wide.

men believe that it is something which it is not. To the child of God it is a dreamless sleep, which were it not for Christ's power, would know no waking. To those who know not Jesus, whom the apostle here calls "the rest,"—those outside the fold of Christ,—there is no hope of seeing again those who have died. But over the cloud of His people's sorrow God hangs the covenant-bow of hope in Him.

2. As surely as Jesus died and rose from the dead, just so surely will those who sleep in Him arise. As God brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great "Shepherd of the sheep," so will He bring the sheep with the Shepherd. Heb. 13:20; 2 Cor. 4:14. Christ, the Head, is not complete without His body, the church. But when He was raised from the dead, His people were in promise raised with Him, and when they are brought from the grave in fact, they are still brought "with Him" in the fulfilment of the promise.

3. Among the erroneous theories everywhere prevalent concerning our Lord's second coming is that one of the Greek words rendered coming (*parousia*) is said to mean a secret coming, the "secret rapture of the saints," when Christ will manifest Himself to the elect among His people, and not to the world. But verse 16 of this lesson forever settles as to what shall be the manner of Christ's coming (*parousia*, verse 15). "The *Lord Himself* shall descend from heaven, *with a shout*," with mighty voice, with trumpet. The whole thought of the text is that of grandeur, glory, noise, commotion. It is an event that all the earth shall witness. He shall come "with all the holy angels" (Matt. 25:31), illuminating the whole heavens from the east to the west (Matt. 24:27). And "every eye shall see Him." Rev. 1:7. It will be "the Lord Himself," and not another, "this same Jesus," and not a representative. It will be His own personal, bodily presence; for so the original word means. See 2 Cor. 7:6, 7, where the word is applied to the bodily coming of Titus; and to Stephanas (1 Cor. 16:17), and to Paul (Phil. 1:26). In all cases it refers to a manifested, bodily, personal presence.

The Son of God beggared Himself to enrich us.

“Archangel” means chief angel. This is Michael, meaning “who-is-like God,” another name of our blessed Lord. Compare Dan. 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9. Christ is chief over all the heavenly host (Joshua 5:13, 14), and He holds the keys of death and the grave (Rev. 1:18; John 5:28, 29).

The righteous dead do not arise from the grave, then to be judged and changed. They come up immortal (1 Cor. 15:52), showing that judgment has already passed upon their cases, and that they are counted worthy to obtain a resurrection out from among the dead ones (Luke 20:35). The thought in the text is not that the dead in Christ will rise first, that is, before the dead out of Christ arise, though that is true, but that the dead in Christ arise before the living are caught up to meet the Lord.

4. Our Lord at His coming does not touch the earth. As it rolls to meet Him in the air, it brings all His captive dead, escorted by angels of light. These He takes to the glorious mansions on high (John 14:3), where they reign with Him a thousand years in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 20:4). At the end of that time, Jesus comes, and all the saints with Him. Zech. 14:5. Then His feet will rest upon the earth, a place will be prepared for the holy city (verse 4), sin and its fruits will be forever destroyed, and the long, blest reign of God's people will begin, never more to end.



LESSON VIII.—The Children of Light.

MAY 23.

I THESS. 5:1-11.

(1) But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. (2) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (3) When they are saying, Peace and safety,

Prayerfully consider the unentered fields.

then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in nowise escape. (4) But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: (5) for ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; (6) so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. (7) For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that are drunken are drunken in the night. (8) But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

(9) For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, (10) who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. (11) Wherefore exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.

Questions.

1. Of what had the apostle no need to write to the believing brethren? Verse 1.

2. What did they perfectly know? Verse 2. Note 1.

3. What would "they," the unbelieving, be doing? What would come upon them? What would be the result? Verse 3. Note 2.

4. How would it be with the brethren? Verse 4.

5. Why would they not be overtaken? What are they not of? Verse 5. Note 3.

6. What then should they not do? What should they do? Verse 6.

7. What are we told is done in the night? Verse 7. Note 4.

8. What should the children of the day do? What should they put on? Verse 8. Note 5.

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

9. To what has God not appointed us? To what has He appointed us? Through whom? Verse 9. Note 6.

10. How does the apostle show that even death should not be a discouragement? Verse 10.

11. What should be our attitude toward each other in this watching time? Verse 11.

Notes.

1. The day of the Lord does not open with Christ's coming. It begins with the pouring out of the plagues and the awfully solemn declaration of God that mankind by the acceptance or rejection of the gospel of God's grace have passed that line of fixed character beyond which there is no change. Zeph. 1:14, 15; Rev. 14:9, 10; 15:1; 22:11, 12. That day will not be ushered in by heavenly trumpet or heavenly glory; the careless sin lover will not know when it comes, even as the careless householder knows not the approach of the thief. 2 Peter 3:10. But the waiting, watching, faithful child of God will know. See Rev. 3:5.

2. "When they shall say." Note that it is not a prediction of peace and safety to come; it is proclaimed to be present. See Isa. 2:3-5; Rev. 18:7.

3. The children of light are those who are by faith begotten of Christ Jesus the Light of the world, born of the Spirit of light, filled with the Light of the world, and are shining for God, witnesses of the glory of His goodness. See John 12:36; 8:12; 1 John 1:7; Ps. 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19; Matt. 5:16.

4. The earth is in the darkness of the night of sin. And even as in the physical world, it is a time of revelry, drunkenness, and stupid slumber. While God's people as pilgrims are passing through this dark world, God gives them light. They carry the day with them. When darkness covered Egypt, there was light in the Israelites' dwellings. So when spiritual darkness settles

The offerings for this quarter go to the most needy fields.

upon the people of the earth, there will be a light within and upon the faithful of God. See Isa. 60:1, 2.

5. The breastplate of faith and love is the same as the shield of faith and the breastplate of righteousness. Eph. 6:14, 16. The hope of salvation is placed in the helmet, over the brain, the seat of the mind, not over the heart, the organ of feeling or emotion. God would have His children possess an intelligent hope.

6. Most precious assurance does God give His children. He has *not* appointed us to wrath. If we reap wrath, it will be because *we* have chosen it. He has appointed us to salvation. Nothing in all the universe will prevent its consummation but our own choice. Living, we may be His. Dying, we may be. Sleeping or waking, dying or living, if we are His, we are safe. The love of Christ covers all else but the sin that we love. Rom. 8:38, 39. The child of God who would be discouraged because of death has here a message of hope and cheer. Jesus Christ lives; in Him is all our hope.



LESSON IX.—Practical Instruction for the Children of Light.

MAY 30.

I THESS. 5:12-28.

(12) But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; (13) and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. (14) And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. (15) See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all. (16) Rejoice always; (17) pray without ceasing; (18) in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward. (19) Quench not the Spirit; (20) despise not prophesyings; (21) prove all things; hold fast that which is good; (22) abstain from every form of evil.

(23) And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (24) Faithful is He that calleth you, who will also do it.

(25) Brethren, pray for us.

(26) Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss. (27) I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren.

(28) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Questions.

1. Who are to be recognized by the brethren? Verse 12.

2. How and for what are they to be esteemed? With whom are we to be at peace? Verse 13. Note 1.

3. What attitude are we to assume toward the disorderly, the discouraged, the weak, and all others? Verse 14.

4. What course are we not to follow toward unfair dealers? What should be our course of life? Verse 15.

5. What three things are we enjoined to do? Whose will is thus expressed? Verses 16, 17, 18.

6. What are we not to quench? How? Verse 19.

7. What should not be despised? Verse 20. Note 2.

8. How are we to learn and regard the good? Verse 21.

"The advent message to the world in this generation"—our watchword.

9. From what are we to abstain? Verse 22.

10. In yielding to do on our part, what does God accomplish? What inspired prayer is offered for us? Verse 23.

11. What glorious assurance is given us? Verse 24.

12. What does every true servant of God ask in the inspired request of the apostles? Verse 25.

13. What token of affection is mentioned as manifest among believers? Verse 26.

14. To how many did the Lord design this instruction to go? Verse 27.

15. With what benediction does the epistle close? Verse 28.

Notes.

1. "At peace." There are turbulent spirits in this world of sin who can be at peace with no one, and above all with Christians. Yet as much as possible consistent with truth and righteousness, the child of God should live at peace with these. Rom. 12:18. But there is absolutely no reason why the children of the God of all peace should not be at peace among themselves, at peace with even the admonisher and reprover.

2. "Despise not prophesyings;" that is, do not consider them as of no account. There will be in the last days prophesyings many, false and true. Both are of vast account, the one in leading to death and destruction, the other to light and duty and life. "Prove all things," not by studying the false, but by knowing the true,—God's Word. Measure all voices by having God's voice written in your heart, your life attuned to its principles.

"There shall be delay no longer"—our confidence.

LESSON X.—*A Message of Comfort.*

JUNE 6.

2 THESS. I :1-12.

(1) Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: (2) Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(3) We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; (4) so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure; (5) which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; to the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; (6) if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you (7) and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, (8) rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus; (9) who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, (10) when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believe (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day. (11) To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfil every desire of goodness and every work of faith, with power; (12) that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Questions.

1. With whose greeting does this epistle open? To what church? Verse 1. Note 1.

2. What benediction does the Spirit give through them? Verse 2.

3. For what did the servants of God give thanks? Verse 3.

4. How did this affect Paul and his associates? Under what circumstances were the faith and love of the brethren specially manifested? Verse 4.

5. Of what was this conduct a manifest token? For what purpose was the affliction? For what did they suffer? Verse 5.

6. Of what were they assured? Verse 6.

7. To what event is the child of God to look for deliverance? Verse 7. (Matt. 16:27.)

8. Into what two classes will the enemies of God be divided? Verse 8.

9. What will be their punishment? Verse 9.

10. In whom will He then be glorified? Because of what are they then found His saints? Verse 10. (1 Thess. 2:13.)

11. What inspired prayer is recorded for God's people? Verse 11.

12. What blessed result would follow its fulfilment? According to what? Verse 12. Note 2.

Notes.

1. The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written a year or more after the first. Its great theme is the coming of Christ.

The offerings for this quarter go to the most needy fields.

Both epistles were given not alone *for* those *to* whom they are immediately addressed, but *for* all in all time. The second epistle corrects some erroneous ideas the brethren had obtained, namely that the coming of Christ then impended. The apostle tells them that other events must intervene before Christ comes. He shows them, however, the importance of that coming to His people in all ages; for at that time all will receive their reward, both good and evil.

2. According to God's grace does He give; according as we appropriate it by faith will we receive and grow.



LESSON XI.—*The Lawless One.*

JUNE 13.

2 THESS. 2:1-12.

(1) Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; (2) to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; (3) let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, (4) he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. (5) Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? (6) And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. (7) For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work; only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation of His coming; (9) even he, whose com-

We expend sixty per cent of our efforts upon four per cent of our field.

ing is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (10) and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: (12) that they all might be judged who believed not the truth; but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Questions.

1. Concerning what two things did the apostle intreat his brethren? Verse 1.

2. To what end did he beseech them? Verse 2.

3. Against what did he warn them? What must surely come first? What power must be revealed? By what other term is he called? Verse 3. Note 1.

4. Against whom is he opposed and exalted? Where does he presume to sit? Whose prerogatives does he assume? Verse 4. Note 2.

5. Of what did Paul remind them? Verse 5.

6. What did he say they knew? To what end is the restraining? Verse 6. Note 3.

7. What power was already working in the church? What hindered its development into the man of sin? How long would it be restrained? Verse 7. Note 4.

8. When all restraint was removed, what would occur? What would follow the lawless one's career? Verse 8. Note 5.

9. What marks the time of Christ's coming? How will Satan work? For and in whom will Satan thus

"One dollar now is of more value to the work than ten dollars will be at some future period."

work? How is he thus permitted to work for these? Verses 9, 10.

10. What follows the rejection of the love of the truth? What are men permitted to believe? What will be the consequence? Verses 11, 12. Note 6.

Notes.

1. "The falling away" is noticed in 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:1-5, and elsewhere. "The man of sin." Not a man of sin, nor a *sinful man*, but the aggregation of forces of sin organized and used by the enemy for the express purpose of the overthrow of righteousness, a system of which a man is at the head, standing for the very thought of the transgression or perversion of God's law. 1 John 3:4. "Son of perdition" means devoted to utter destruction. The wages of sin is death. These are not titles which this power adopts, but are names indicative of its character as God sees it.

2. Not against God alone does the man of sin exalt himself, but against all that opposes him. He assumes to be the true God. He places himself in the church of God (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:19-22) as its director. The one power which has done this pre-eminently is the Papacy; and in whomever it is done in a limited degree, the same spirit rules.

3. God would not permit the development of this power in His church till the time came when the church refused to be longer guided by Him. Then it would be the time of the Papacy, "the lawless one." See a fuller description in Dan. 11:36-39.

4. Iniquity is always at work in the natural heart of carnal men. It is born and stays with them till they are regenerated by divine grace. We do not wonder at its working there; we expect its workings and fruits. The great secret of iniquity is when it insinuates itself in the church of God, and is there given place. See Acts 20:29, 30. It will be seen that its center is self, self-admiration, self-sufficiency, self-aggrandizement, self-worship,

Nine-tenths of the women of India never heard of a Saviour.

as opposed to the self-denial and self-effacement of Christ Jesus. "One that restraineth." The body of the individual is designed to be a temple of God, filled with His Spirit. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. No lesser power can keep man from sin and preserve him from the power of the enemy. Gal. 2:20. This is as true of the church as it is of the individuals who compose the church. As long as Christ reigns within, so long as His Word is the law, His Spirit the sanctifier, no power can set its throne there or have any control over the life. And as long as faith bids Christ dwell in the heart in a sufficient number of His people, the lawless one will be restrained in the church. Not until the heart shall say, I prefer my way to God's way, not until Christ is shut out, taken out of the way, can the lawless one—of whom the highest type is Satan—reign in the place of God. "Keep thy heart above all keeping."

5. When the Spirit of Christ is bidden to depart by our choice of His rival, then the lawless one will be revealed in person and church. That fullest development has not yet been seen. Within the fold of mystical Babylon there have always been protesting and faithful ones. When Babylon shall become wholly filled with the power of the enemy, when Christ's people shall have been called out (Rev. 18:1-4), then Jesus Christ shall appear in His glory. With the breath of His mouth shall He slay the wicked one, and by the forthshining of His presence bring him to nothing. His presence destroys sin; and the lawless one with all his horde has identified himself with sin.

6. God sends no arbitrary punishment, no delusion to destroy; it is Satan who seeks to destroy, and not until men reject every means of salvation does God give them over to Satan's delusions. But that soul who receives the *love* of the truth can never be deceived to destruction.

The needs of the cause of God are world wide.

LESSON XII.—*Chosen of God.*

JUNE 20.

2 THESS. 2:13-17; 3:1-5.

(13) But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (14) whereunto He called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (15) So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours.

(16) Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, (17) comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

(1) Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also it is with you; (2) and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men: for all have not faith. (3) But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one. (4) And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command. (5) And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.

Questions.

1. What did the apostle always feel bound to do? Why? To what were they chosen? In what? Verse 13.

2. Through what did He call them? Unto the obtaining of what did He call them? Verse 14.

3. In view of these assurances, what should believers do? To what were they to hold? Verse 15. Note 1.

The Son of God beggared Himself to enrich us.

4. What feeling have Christ and the Father toward Their children? What have They given us? Through what? In what will They establish and comfort us? Verses 16, 17. Note 2.

5. What is one of the final exhortations the apostle makes? Why does he wish the prayers of the brethren? Chapter 3, verse 1. Note 3.

6. From whom did he wish to be delivered? What reason does he give? Verse 2.

7. What witness does he bear to the Lord? What will the Lord do for His people? Verse 3.

8. What confidence had the apostle in the brethren? What prayer did he make for them? Verses 4, 5.

Notes.

1. "Stand fast and hold." Stand fast for service; hold faithful to the orders. The word "tradition" does *not* mean a body of laws or instructions handed down from generation to generation, with no other authority behind it than age and what men have said. The word is used in its literal meaning, "delivery, handing over; what is transmitted, intrusted to." By word or epistle, Paul committed or intrusted to the Thessalonians the word of the gospel. It was their duty to hold it to the end.

2. There is no difference in the disposition, attitude, and feeling toward us of the Father and the Son. Both love us. Both give us eternal comfort and good hope. Both do it through grace, unmerited favor. Both will comfort and establish in every good word or work. / But in Their love to us They must permit the unrest and instability when our work is of self and evil.

3. "Pray" not simply for ourselves, but for the servants of God; "pray" that God's Word may go freely, swiftly, mightily,

Prayerfully consider the unentered fields.

and be glorified by fruit; "pray" that other souls may be searched out and saved, even as it searched you out. Thus does God speak to all His children. Thus will His Spirit lead us to do.



LESSON XIII.—Important Instruction.

JUNE 27.

2 THESS. 3:6-18.

(6) Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. (7) For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; (8) neither did we eat bread for naught at any man's hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: (9) not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us. (10) For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat. (11) For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. (12) Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. (13) But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing. (14) And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. (15) And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. (16) Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all. (17) The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. (18) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

"The advent message to the world in this generation"—our watchword.

Questions.

1. What does the apostle command the brethren? and in whose name? Verse 6. Note 1.

2. Who ought they to imitate? How could he speak of the conduct of himself and his fellow-laborers? Verse 7.

3. What did the apostle not do? How did he labor? Why? Verse 8. Note 2.

4. Did he have the right to be supported by them? Why then did he so labor? Verse 9.

5. What instruction had he before given them? Verse 10.

6. Of what had Paul heard? What were these disorderly ones doing? Verse 11.

7. What did he earnestly exhort this class to do? Verse 12.

8. What exhortation did he make to the brethren? Verse 13.

9. What should be done with the man who ignored these instructions? What is the end in view? Verse 14.

10. What should not be counted? How should he be admonished? Verse 15.

11. What twofold blessing does the apostle pronounce? Verse 16.

12. What attestation does he give to the genuineness of his epistles? Verse 17.

13. With what benediction does he close? Verse 18. Note 3.

"There shall be delay no longer"—our confidence.

1. This is the word of the Lord, and that church which fails to heed it will suffer. But it is worth while to study what it does not mean. It does not mean ill treatment of the person, nor arbitrary action in his absence, nor voting him out of the church without labor, nor leaving our responsibility of his soul to others, nor sympathizing with him in his wrong when some one has faithfully admonished him. It does not mean that any unchrist-like course should be pursued toward him. It does not mean that we should stand with him in the wrong, but should labor to show him the wrong, and the whole intent of the labor should not be in any way to please ourselves, but to please God by the conversion of the wrong-doer, if possible. Read Matt. 18:15-17; Romans 14; Gal. 6:1, 2; James 5:19, 20. After all gospel means are exhausted, then, for the sake of Christ's cause, take the ultimate action of withdrawing from him, yet standing ever ready to help him.

2. Yet the apostle had the right to partake of their substance. He had given them spiritual food; surely they should be glad that he had the right to partake of their temporal food. See 1 Cor. 9:4-18. And yet in this very respect the apostle intimates that he did wrong in not teaching the church to bear burdens. If a minister of God or a parent bears too many burdens in the fulness of his heart, the children or members are strangely made selfish and thoughtless. For the best interests of all, it is good that each one learn to bear the yoke in his youth. There are some burdens which ought to be blessings to the children of God. See 1 Thess. 5:12, 13.

3. What a God is our God! It is grace and peace at the beginning; it is grace and peace at the close. The first word and the last word are a message of His goodness to the undeserving; and all the intermediate words are instruction, which, if heeded, will yield us all the blessings of His grace. Do not let the study of these epistles stop with these lessons.

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