The Argument vpon the seconde Epistle of S. Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians by Des. Erasmus of Rote|rodame.

Forasmuche as Paul coulde not haue libertie to goe see the Thessalonians agayne, he confirmeth their consciences by Epistle, that they myght manfully suffre the affliccions layed vpon them for Christes sake: seeyng that they shall not want reward, nor the aduersaries escape punishmēt. Algaine, concerning the daye of the Lordes cumming, wherof he touched somewhat in the farther Epistle, he warneth them that they be not styrred with the sayinges of some, that affirme as though it were at hande: and as some thinke signifieth closely that the Empire of Rome must be first dispatched and Antichriste to come after that. Moreouer he beateth into theyr heades very earnestly, to restrayne suche as with their idlenes & nice curiositie haue been disturbours of the com|mune quietnes and ordre: and to enforce them vnto la|bour, in asmuche as Paul hime|selfe laboured among them with his owne handes. This Epistle he wrote from Athens by thesame men that he sente the farther Epistle by, as it is recorded by our argu|mentes.

The ende of the argumente.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the. ii. Epistle of S. Paul to the Thessalonians.

The fyrste Chapiter.

The texte.

Paul & Syluanus & Timothe. Vnto the congregacion of the Thessaloniās, in god our father, and in the Lord Iesus Christ. Grace be vnto you, and peace from god our father, & from the Lord Iesus Christ. We are bound to thanke God alwayes for you brethren (as it is mete) because that your fayth groweth exceadingly, and every one of you swymmeth in loue toward another betwene your selues, so that we our selues boast of you in the congre|gacions of God, ouer your pacience, and fayth in all your persecucyons and tribulacyons, that ye suffer, whiche is a token of the ryghtewes iudgement of God, that ye are counted worthy of the kyngdome of God, for which ye also suffer. It is verely a ryghtewes thynge with God, to recompence tribulacion to them that trouble you: and to you which are trou|bled, rest with vs, when the Lord Iesus shal shewe hymselfe from heauen with the angels of hys power, with flaminge fyre, whiche shall rendre vengeaunce vnto them that knowe not God, and that obey
not the Gospel of our Lord Iesus Chryst, whiche shalbe punyshed with
euvelastinge damnacyon, from the presence of the Lorde, and from the glorye
of his power, when he shall come to be glorifyed in hys sayntes, and to
become maruelous in al them that beleue: because our testimonye that we had
to you, was beleued euuen thesame daye. Wherfore also, we praye alwayes for
you, that our God wyll make you worthy of thys callyng and fulfyll all
delectacyon of goodnes, and the woorke of fayth with power: that the name of
our Lorde Iesus Christ maye be glorifyed by you, and ye by hym, accor\dyng
to the grace of our God and of the Lord Iesus Christ.

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Aul and Siluanus and Tymothe, vnto the company of the faithfull that
are assembled in spirite at Thessalonica, and be of one mynde towards god
our father and the Lord Iesus Chryst. We are bounden to render
aboundaunt thankes al\wayes to god for his aboundaunt liberalityte to you
warde, in that you doe not onelye through his helpe continue sted\faste in
those thinges that you haue begun, but also for that you daylye encrease
exceedinglye more and more in faythe and loue among your selues one to an
other, so muche that I thinke it not necessarie now to kyndle you vnto the
applyeng of godlynes by the examples of other, seyng we rather make
boaste of you to the other cōgregacions of god, and enflame other vnto
vertue by your example: in rehearsing your pacience & stedfasteness of
faythe in all your persecucions and affliccions, which you suffer, that the
iuste iudgemēt of god may be declared in you hereafter, at suche tyme, as
when you haue suffred vexaciō in this world for y* glory of his name, he
shal admit you into the felowshipe of hys kingdome: And contrary wyse
shall commit them vnto eternal punnyshement, that haue persecuted you
for malice of him. For certaynly thyss shall be the dealing of goddes
righteousnes, to pay vnto either parte rewarde worthie their dedes: to them
that punnyshe the innocent, affliccion: and to bestowe vnto you that are
troubled with vs, refreshing and comforte with vs in that daye, whan the
promisses of the gos|pel shall appeare, and when the Lorde Iesus shal shew
himselфе out of hea|uen openly vnto the world, not than after a lowe base
degre as he did at his first commyng, but waited vpon with the companyes
of angelles, as it is comelye for a myghtie prince: nor than gentill and
tractable to heale the wic|ked, but armed with an horrible fierie flame to
rendre vengeaunce vnto them that would not knowe god in this world, nor
obeye the gospel of our Lorde Iesus Chryste: so as they shall fele by
experience that he is righteous and mightie, whom being mercifull and
gentill they set naught by: and so as at leaste they maye learne by their
owne punyshmentes perforce to confesse the thinges to be true that the
gospel spake of. For they, inasmuch as they neuer
made end of their wicked doing, shall suffer pains ye' neuer shall haue ending: when they haue loked vpon the diuine face of the lorde and the maiestie of his power, whō thei côtemned in this world as a rascal or a vile persone. For at his first commyng he came to saue al men, but than he shal come to shewe him selfe gloruous, not in himselfe onely but in al his membres also, that are godly people, to the intent he may appeare wonderfull in al them that beleue his gospel. For in that daye the thinges shalbe openly seen of al men in you, which trusted in Christ at our recorde bearing, where y' ungodly contemned them and would not beleue: which daye that it maye be prosperous and ioyfull vnto you, we ceasse not to praye to the lord continually for you, that forasmuche as it hath pleased him to call you vnto the hope of this glorye, the same maye vouchesafe also to bee presentlie ready to helpe you in your travaile thitherwarde, that your conuexsacion be agreable to your profession, and to consūmate and fynishe perfetely that, which of his goodnesse he hath begonne in you: and to geue strength vnto your soules, that in manfullye bearing the vexations of the ungodly, you maye declare, howe myghtye the assured hope of eternal felycitie is in you, for whose sake you passe not euen vpon the life of your bodies: to the intent y' like as Christ glorified the father by his death, & was glorified of hym agayne by his resurreccion: so the name of the lord Iesu Christ maye be glorified now by your sufferaunce, and you glorified agayn by him in the daye of his commyng, not accorgyng to your owne deseretes but according to the mercy of our god and of the Lorde Iesu Chryste, without whose helpe all that you go about were of none effect.

The ii Chapiter.

The text

We beseche you (brethren) by the commyng of oure Lord Iesu Chryste, and in that we shal assemble vnto him, that ye be not sodenly moued from your mynde, nor be troubled, neither by spirite, neyther by wordes, nor yet by letter which shulde some to come from vs, as though th' daye of Chryst were at hande. Let no man deceaue you by any meanes, for the Lorde shal not come except ther come a departying fyrst, and that the synful man be opened the soone of perdicyon, which is an aduersary: and is earltyed aboue al that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he doth syt in the temple of God, boastynge hymselfe to bee God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you. I tolde you these thynges? And nowe ye know what with holdeth: euen that he myght be vtted at his tyme. For the mistery of the unquite doeth all ready worcke: tyll he, which now onelye letteth, be taken out of the waie. And th' shall that wycked bevttred, whom the Lorde shal consume with the spirite of hys mouth, and shall destroye with the appeareaunce of his commynge.
Furthermore brethren, we beseech you by this comming of our Lorde Iesu Christ, wherof we spake a littell afore, and by the fellowship of the glory, wherby we being the membres shalbe fastened vnto our head: that you be not sodaynlye moued from the mynde you are in though his commyng be prolonged, and be not alstonyed in your myndes, nether by feyned prophecie, ne by probable asserciō, nor by Epistle sēt in our name, as though the commyng of the Lorde were all ready at hand. Let no mā deceaue you by any meanes. For the lorde shal not come, onles a departing come first, & not afore the wicked man appeare, the childe of perdicion, who like as he is much vnlike vnto Christe, so muche is he his enemy, & is exalted aboue the sōne of God, & aboue al, that is called God, or power, that is deuoutly wurshipped: so muche that he shall sitte in the temple of God, shewing himselfe as God. Doe you not remembre, that whâ I was yet with you, I told you these thinges? And now you know, what is the let, yᵗ Christ cummeth not. In dede that the wicked man (as I saied afore) may in his propre tyme openly practise his tyranny vpon the Sainctes. For now wickednesse worketh his crueltie vnderhand by him, and the deuill by wicked menne rageth against the professours of the gospell, and as you perceyue by my tellyng, there is nothyng that letteth the aduersarie of Christe from shewyng himselfe openly, but only that in the meane while every one should holde still that he holdeth, vntil that kingdome, wherwith all other are holden in subieccion, be dispatched quyte out of the waye. And as soone as that shall come to passe, than shall that wicked one shew himselfe abrode openly, furnished with al kynde of iuglging castes and wylie disceytes, to bryng mankynde to destruccion. But for all his rageing with his deuilish spirite, the Lord Iesus shall choke him with the mightie blast of his mouthe, and for all his bostying of his false counterfaite shew of diuinitie, the Lorde shall obscure and abolishe him with the excellente clearenes of his commyng, euens as monstrous sightes of the night time and vayne appearaunces of thinges vanishe and goe a waye at the shynyng out of the bright sonne beames.

The texte.

Euen hym whose comming is after the workyng of Satan, with all lying power, signes and woonders: and with all deceyuab•enes of vntyghtewenes, among them that perish: because they receyued not the loue of the trueth, that they might be saued. And therfore, God shall sende them strong delusion, that they should beleue lyes, that all they might be damned whiche beleued not the trueth: but had pleasure in vnrightewenes. But we are bounde to geue thankes alwaye to God for you (brethren
beloued of the Lord) for because that God hath from the begynnyng chosen you to saluacion, thorow sanctifyeng of the spiyrte, and thorow beleuyng of the trueth wherunto he called you by oure Gospel, to obtayn the glory of our lorde Iesu Christ.

For that wylie deceiuer shall at his cūming be furnyshed with the spirite of Satan, for the Deuil shal practise his crueltie by him. And to the intente he maye the more cruelly worke his myschiefe, he shall not onely be armed with a puyssaunt great power, to make mens consciences afrayed, but al|so with lyeng, countrefaict castes of signes and wondres, wherin he shall pretende to folowe Christ, euen as the learned enchauntours folowed the example of Moses among the Egipci ans. To be briefe, there shall be no kynde of fraude, but he shalbe perfectely conyng in it to worke wickednesse. Howbeit itshal not availe him in any wise, but only to the hurting of such, as perishe (though he were not) through their owne vnbelefe. For thus their obstinate rebellion against Christ demerith, this is a reward wortby their desertes, that seing they receiued not Christ by whom they might haue been saued, who for his charitie sake was desyrrous to haue al mēne saued, & for his trueth sake opened playnly the things, that belonged to saluacion: now by the suffraunce of God, falsehead taketh place with thē in stede of trueth, tyranny for charite, a destroyour for a saue our: and so as thei shal beleue a wicked más lyenges, inasmuch as thei refused to beleue the sonne of God y\textsuperscript{t}preached nothing but truth. Thus shal it come to passe, y\textsuperscript{t}where thei should otherwise haue also perished because of their obstinate mysbelefe, than it shall manifestly appeare in all mennes sight, that they are iustly damned, forasmuche as they spightly forsoke Christe, and gaue credence at the first woorde to a craftie deceiuour and a wicked per|son. This stormy tempest, lyke as it shal declare them worthy dannaciō, so shall it sette forth your stedfastnesse more clearly. By reason whereof we are bounde to rendre alwayes thankes vnto God (my christianly well|beloued brethren) in that he suffred you not to continue still in errour, but chose you vnto saluacion from the beginning, not by the meanes of Mo|ses law, but by his owne spirite the geuer of holynes, and by your obedience wherwith you beleued the trueth simply and playnly. Besydes this, lyke as he chose you eternally from the beginnynge, so dyd he call you by our gospell preaching, to the intent the saluacion of you, which beleued than the lewes beleued not, should growe to the glorye of our Lorde Iesu Christe.

The texte.
Therefore brethren stande fast, and kepe the ordinaunces which ye haue learned: whether it were by oure preachynge, or by Epistle. Oure Lorde Iesu Christ hymselfe, and God our fāther (which hath loued vs, and hath geuen vs euerlastyng consolation, and good hope thorowe grace) comforte youre hertes and stablyshe you in all good saying and doynge.

The gospell that I delyuered vnto you was the true and very right goslpell, so that there is none other that you ought to loke for. Therfore stand fast in it brethren, and holde the thinges that we delyuered vnto you, and that you learned of vs, eyther by our preachyng, or by our Epistle. Vnto those it shall be your parte to applie your endeuour with all watching diligence. Moreouer the Lord Iesus Christ himselfe, and god oure father, which loued vs of his owne accorde, and called vs vnto saluacion, and by his spirite hathe geuen vs eternall consolation euen in these affliccions, to loke in good hope for the rewardes of the life in heauen, not by meanes of our deseruings, but by his owne free mercie, conforte your hertes more and more, and establishe and confirme you, to perseuer in all goodnes both in worde and in dede.

The .iii. Chapter.

The texte.

Furthermore brethren praye ye for vs, that the worde of God maye haue passage, and be gloryfyed, as it is also with you: and that we maye be deleyuered from vnreasonable and fro|ward men. For al men haue not fayth: but the Lord is faythfull, which shall stablyshe you, and preserue you from cuyll. We haue confydence thorowe the Lorde to you warde, that ye bothe do, and wyl do the thynges which we commaunde you. And the Lorde gyde your hertes to the loue of God and pacience of Chryste.

Furthermore brethren, like as we in oure suppiicaciouns to god helpe forward the busynesse of your saluacion, euen so it is reasō, that you in semblable case set forward the thinges that I goe about with your prayers to him also: that like as the doctrine of the gospel had spedy & prosperous encrease among you, so it may runne abrode and be published among all menne. For the more spedynesse whereof, praye you, that we maye through his helpe be deleyuered from suche men as be peruerse and frowarde, whiche hyndre withall theyr
possible means, that the doctrine of Christ be not sown without lette or hinderance. For all they beleue not the Gospel that heare the Gospel: and yet there is no cause why you should not beleue, for all theyr wicked endeavours. They spurne against the Gospel, but they shall not spurne it away, for it hath a sure protectour euens the Lord Iesus, which shall make you stedfaste against their vnruely wickednesse, and kepe you from euill, and finishe that he hath begunne in you, because he is true in his promises. He will not fayle to succoure you, so that you fayle not to followe his goodnesse: he will helpe, but whom those that are diligent endeavourers. Thus we speake, not that we doubt of your constant stedfastenes, but we haue rather a firme trust of you, that lyke as by the helpe of the Lord Iesu you doe as we gaue you in commandement, so ye wil doe stil hereafter: To conclude, the Lord Iesus with his grace gouerne your hartes, that they may goe on in the right course, and grow forward in the charitie of God, and in the looking for Iesu Christ. Charitie will cause you, to study continually to deserue well of all men, like as God is bounteously good to all men: and the looking for Christes commyng, shall make you to abyde manfully all maner of affliccions.

The texte.

We requyre you brethren by the name of our Lorde Iesu Christe, that ye withdrawe your selues from euery brother, that behaueth himselfe inordinately, & not after the institucion which he receiued of vs. For ye your selues know, how ye ought to follow vs. For we behaued not our selues inordinately among you. Neither tooke we bread of any man for naught: but wrought with labour & sweate nyght & daye, because we would not be chargeable to any of you: not but that we had autortie, but to make our selfes an eusälpe vnto you, to follow vs. For when we were with you, this we warned you of that yf any would not worke, the same shoulde not eate. For we haue heard saye that there are some whiche walke among you inordinately, working not at all, but beyng busybodies. Them that are suche, we commaunde and exhorte by our Lord Iesu Christ, that they worke with quietnesse, and eate theyr owne bread. Brethren, be not ye wery in well doyng.

And yf there be any among you, that contemneth to followe that trade of living, whiche we haue prescribed vnto you after the rule of the gospel, and lyce carelesly as he lusteth himselfe, and through his ydlenes disquiet your commune affaires, and yet albeit he doe naught himselfe, is a busie medler of other mennes doinges: we commaunde you by the autortie of our Lorde Iesu Christe, that you withdrawe your selfes from the company of him, if he haue the name of a christian. For it shall not yeke other to followe the example of vs, which albeit we vsed both the honour and charge of Apostelship, yet it greued vs neuer a whitte to be brought into a basse ordre among you, and we tooke no more vpon vs
than other men did: insomuch that we tooke not somuche as a piece of breade of any mans cost, but we forgote the dignitie of our office, and gatte with the labour of our hādes working day and night, the thinges that were neces[sary]ly requisite to the use of our lyuing, because we would be a burthen to no man: Not that we thought it was vnlawfull for vs to doe as the o[ther Apostles doe, but we would not vse our right as we myght haue done, because we would set our selues for a forme and an ensample, that other men should not be greued to folowe. That whiche we our selues did in dede, we commaunded you in woorde, that yf any would not worke, thesame should not eate.

Those deserue a liuing, that watchenight and day for your salvaciō. But idle curiositie and curious idleues deserueth no refreshing. For we haue hearde, that there be some among you, that disquiet your order, in that they will not worke, and so hauing naught to doe of theire owne, they must nedes medle of other mens busynesse. As yet I spare to name them, but whosoeuer they be, we commaunde them and yf they had leauer we should so doe, we hertily beseeche them by our Lorde Iesus Christe, that they disturbe not the commune quiet through their idlenes: and that inasmuche as they doe naught themselfes, they hyndre not other that are ocupied, but lette them quietly worke also, getting their liuyng with their owne handes, rather than to be greuouse vnto other with shamles cra|uings & vnsemelines. In dede they are worthy to haue nay of what they aske, howbeit it stādeth with christian humanitie to doe for them that deserue litlle, eyther for that, that they be men, or because peraduenture they maye amende and be better. Therfore brethren be not you weary of well doyng, to the worthy and also to the vnworthy.

The texte.

If any man obey not our saying, sende vs woorde of him by a letter: and haue no com|pany with him, that he may be ashamed. And counte him not as an enemy: but warne him as a brother. The very Lord of peace geue you peace alwayes, by all meanes. The Lorde be with you al. The salutation of me Paul, with myue owne hande. This is the token in Epistles. So I wryte. The grace of our Lorde Iesus Christe be with you all, Amen.

If there be any mā that despise to doe after our admonicions, aswel that I gaue you whan I was present with you, as nowe I wryte beeyng ab|sent from you: let this be a punishmēt ynough for christian charitie, that he may haue a lyuing that is of those condicions, but yet let him be noted in that he is put out of your company, to this only intente that beeyng ashamed he may repent and amende: And cast him not out as an utter ene|my, but rather admonishe him as a brother that went astray, whom
your mynde is to haue amended and not destroyed, eschewyng his company so as you may loue him in your hartes neuerthelesse. For y'
diuorcement that charitie alloweth, is receiued but only for a time, that he that hath offen|ded may repent. Furthermore the Lord Iesus the autor of peace, graunt you perpetuall peace in all your affaires. The Lord be euer with you all. This is the salutacion that I Paul wryte vnto you agayne with myne owne hande. This token you shall obserue in all myne Epistles written eyther to you or other. For I wryte this that no man shall deceyue you by counterfayte let|ters. The fauour and beneuolence of our Lorde Iesu Christe be euermore with you all.

Amen.

¶ Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon the latter Epistle of S. Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians.