the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghoſt which had been imparted, and by his own conduct when among them.

While he appeals, in the firſt chapter, to the mira­culous gifts of the Holy Spirit, he is very liberal in his commendations. He vindicates himſelf from the charge of timidity, probably to prevent the Theſſalopians from forming an unfavourable opinion of his for­titude, which his flight might have excited. He aſſerts, that he was not influenced by ſelfiſh or diſhonourable motives, but that he was anxious to pleaſe God and not man. He expreſſes a ſtrong affection for them, and how anxious he was to impart the bleſſings of the goſpel. He congratulates himſelf upon his ſucceſs; mentions it to their honour that they received the goſpel as the word of God and not of man, and there­fore did not renounce it when perſecution was raiſed by the Jews. He expreffes a ſtrong deſire to viſit the Theſſalonians; and aſſures them he had been hitherto retained againſt his will.

As a farther proof of his regard, the apoſtle in­forms them, that when he came to Athens, he was ſo much concerned, leſt, being diſcouraged by his ſufferings, they ſhould be tempted to caſt off their profeſſion, that he could not forbear ſending Timothy to comfort and ſtrengthen them; and expreſſes, in very ſtrong terms, the ſenſible pleaſure he felt, in the midſt of all his afflictions, from the favourable account he re­ceived of their faith and love; to which he adds, that he was continually praying for their farther eſtabliſhment in religion, and for an opportunity of making them an­other viſit, in order to promote their edification, which lay ſo near his heart, (chap. iii. throughout.)

Having now ſhown his paternal affection for them, with great addreſs he improves all that influence which his zeal and fidelity in their ſervice muſt naturally have given him to inculcate upon them the precepts of the goſpel. He recommends chaſtity, in oppoſition to the prevailing practice of the heathens; juſtice, in oppoſi­tion to fraud. He praiſes their benevolence, and en­courages them to cultivate higher degrees of it. He recommends induſtry and prudent behaviour to their heathen neighbours. In order to comfort them under the loſs of their friends, he aſſures them that thoſe who were fallen aſleep in Jeſus ſhould be raiſed again at the laſt day, and ſhould, together with thoſe who remained alive, be caught up to meet their Lord, and ſhare his triumph, (chap. iv.) He admoniſhes them to prepare for this ſolemn event, that it might not come upon them unawares; and then concludes the Epiſtle with various exhortations.

The ſecond Epiſtle to the Theffalonians appears to have been written ſoon after the firſt, and from the ſame place; for Silvanus or Silas, and Timothy, are joined together with the apoſtle in the inſcriptions of this Epiſtle, as well as of the former.

The apoſtle begins with commending the faith and charity of the Theſſalonians, of which he had heard a favourable report. he expreſſes great joy on account of the patience with which they ſupported perſecution; and obſerves that their persecution was a proof of a

righteous judgment to come, where their perſecutors would meet with their proper recompenſe, and the righteous be delivered out of all their afflictions. He aſſures them of his conſtant prayers for their farther im­provement, in order to attain the felicity that was promiſed, (chap. i.).

From miſunderſtanding a paſſage in his former letter, it appears that the Theſſalonians believed the day of judgment was at hand. To rectify this miſtake, he informs them that the day of the Lord will not come till **a** great apoſtacy has overſpread the Chriſtian world, the nature of which he deſcribes @@(g). Symptoms of this my!tery of iniquity had then appeared; but the apoſtle expreſſes his thankfulneſs to God that the Theſſalo­nians had eſcaped this corruption. He exhorts them to ſteadfastness, and prays that God would comfort and ſtrengthen them, (chap. ii.).

He requeſts the prayers of the Theſſalonians for him and his two aſſiſtants, at the ſame time expreſſing his confidence that they would pay due regard to the inſtructions which he had given them. He then pro­ceeds to correct ſome irregularities. Many of the Theſſalonians ſeem to have led an idle diſorderly life; theſe he ſeverely reproves, and commands the faithful to ſhun their company if they ſtill remained incorri­gible.

When the firſt Epiſtle to Timothy was written, it is difficult to aſcertain. Lardner dates it in 56; Mill, Whitby, and Macknight, place it in 64; but the ar­guments on which each party founds their opinion are too long to inſert here.

Timothy was the intimate friend and companion of Paul, and is always mentioned by that apoſtle with much affection and eſteem. Having appointed him to ſuperintend the church of Epheſus during a journey which he made to Macedonia, he wrote this letter, in order to direct him how to diſcharge the important truſt which was committed to him. This was the more neceſſary, as Timothy was young and unexperi­enced, (1 Tim. iv. 12.) In the beginning of the Epiſtle he reminds him of the charge with which he had intruſted him, to wit, to preſerve the purity of the goſ­pel againſt the pernicious doctrines of the Judaizing teachers, whoſe opinions led to frivolous controverſies, and not to a good life. He ſhows the uſe of the law of Moſes, of which theſe teachers were ignorant. This account of the law, he aſſures Timothy, was agreeable to the repreſentation of it in the goſpel, with the preach­ing of which he was intruſted. He then makes a digreſſion, in the fulneſs of his heart, to expreſs the ſenſe which he felt of the goodneſs of God towards him.

In the ſecond chapter the apoſtle preſcribes the manner in which the worſhip of God was to be per­formed in the church of Epheſus; and in the third explains the qualifications of the perſons whom he was to ordain as biſhops and deacons. In the fourth chapter he foretels the great corruptions of the church which were to prevail in future times, and inſtructs him how to ſupport the ſacred character. In the fifth chapter

**@@@ (g) For an explanation of this prophecy, Dr Hurd’s Sermons may be conſulted. He applies it to the papal power, to which it correſponds with aſtoniſhing exactneſs.**