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AN EVALUATION OF THE RSV TRANSLATION  
OF ST. PAUL'S LETTERS  
TO THE THESSALONIANS

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

---

by  
James Lowell Dishop  
June 1956

Approved by: Victor P. Bartling  
Advisor

Harold H. Shuler  
Reader



Short Title

THESSALONIANS IN THE RSV--AN EVALUATION

or

RSV THESSALONIANS--AN EVALUATION

## AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Elmer E. Foelber, former professor of English at Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and present Editor in Chief at Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri. Mr. Foelber made available to this writer his extensive library of dictionaries, grammars, and books on American usage. He also examined, in its preliminary stages, the material that is presented in Chapter II of this thesis, offering his suggestions, and confirming or correcting the various conclusions of this writer.

Mr. Foelber also read the completed first draft of this thesis, making corrections and offering suggestions that have been incorporated into this final draft.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A Statement of the Problem Investigated

The question which this writer has undertaken to answer in this thesis is this: How does the Revised Standard Version of the letters of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians compare with the Authorized Version of sixteen-hundred eleven, commonly called the King James Version, as an English translation suitable for public and private use by the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod?

#### Validation of the Study

For many years, this writer has keenly felt that the King James Version is not adequate for the English-speaking segment of the Church of today. He has occasionally noticed inaccuracies in translation, and he has frequently been disturbed by the fact that the English of the King James Version does not speak clearly to the young, nor to adults who have not carefully studied the English language as it was used in the early part of the seventeenth century. Until the time when he undertook the preparation of this thesis, this writer had never done any careful investigating of the matter.

On the other hand, this writer has been acquainted with the Revised Standard Version for several years, and he has



frequently used it. He has noticed that it speaks much more clearly to the people of today than does the King James Version. At the same time, he has noticed that some uncommon expressions still exist in the newer version. He has also noticed that at times the Revised Standard Version conveys an altogether different meaning from that conveyed by the King James Version. But until the time when he began the preparation of this thesis, this writer had not carefully investigated the accuracy of the Revised Standard Version.

This writer has been very much interested in the possibility that the Revised Standard Version may soon replace the King James Version. He has viewed this possibility with mixed emotions, eager to see introduced into use in the Missouri Synod a version that would speak more clearly and simply to present-day Americans than does the King James Version, and at the same time uncertain about the actual value and usefulness of the Revised Standard Version on the basis of accuracy of translation.

When this writer learned that the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is presently very much interested in this same question, and that Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is presently willing to accept studies in this area as theses, he saw in this an opportunity to do some careful studying in this field, thereby satisfying some of his own curiosity, and at the same time producing a thesis that would be of practical value to his church.



The study of the present problem has been a tremendously fruitful experience for this writer. He has profited from this study in numerous ways, many of which he did not anticipate at the time he began his study. He hopes that this thesis will be of some real value also to his fellow-Lutherans of the Missouri Synod.

#### Definition of the Scope of the Problem

This thesis covers the eight chapters of the two letters to the Thessalonians, and no more. No conclusions or general statements that are made in this thesis on the basis of the study of these two letters are to be applied to any other part of the Bible in either of the two versions investigated.

This thesis does not pretend to be a commentary on the letters to the Thessalonians. Nor does it seek to solve all of the exegetical problems that occur in these letters. Its only purpose is to determine the relative value of the Revised Standard Version and King James Version for the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

This writer has undertaken this comparative evaluation from various angles. In evaluating from the standpoint of English, he has worked with one big question in mind, How well does each of the two versions present the letters to the Thessalonians to present-day American readers? In evaluating from the standpoint of mechanics, the chief question in his mind has been, Are the mechanical features of the Re-



vised Standard Version that differ from those of the King James Version assets or liabilities to the Revised Standard Version? In evaluating from the standpoint of the Greek text, this writer has not undertaken to finally establish what is the best Greek text, but he has operated with what modern scholars generally consider a good Greek text, and he has undertaken to determine how closely the two versions follow this text. In evaluating from the standpoint of accuracy of translation, he has not attempted to solve all the problems of translation, but he has worked with one big question in mind, Does the Revised Standard Version at any point in the letters to the Thessalonians subvert Scriptural doctrine or give evidence of being an intentional mistranslation?

#### Assumptions Basic to This Study

In addition to all the usual assumptions that must be made in the realm of epistemology when one undertakes an objective research project, this study is based on the following assumptions:

When this writer speaks of Scriptural doctrine, he speaks as a Lutheran, who interprets the Scriptures according to the Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord.

This writer also assumes the hermeneutical principles that the meaning of any passage of Scripture is single, and that Scripture passages are to be interpreted literally, unless the passages themselves, or their contexts, indicate



that they are to be interpreted in some other way. He also assumes that unclear passages are to be interpreted in the light of clear passages.

This writer assumes that contemporary literary English has all the dignity that is necessary for use in public worship services.

Except at those points where this writer raises questions concerning this matter, he assumes that the twentieth edition of the Nestle text of the New Testament contains the best choice of Greek manuscript readings that can be made on the basis of scholarship up to the present time.

#### Definition of Terms

For the sake of brevity and ease of reading, a number of abbreviating symbols are used in this thesis. KJV is the symbol for the so-called King James Version. RSV is the symbol for the Revised Standard Version. In the text, the word Thessalonians is always written out in full, except in parentheses, where it is written Thess. In the Appendices, where spacing is essential, the word is further abbreviated to Th. In references to the first or second letter to the Thessalonians together with the chapter and verse, first and second are always written 1 and 2, respectively; and the chapter and verse references are also given in Arabic numerals. This is done for the sake of easier reference.

When in this thesis the writer refers to the KJV or the



RSV without specifying book, chapter, and verse, such references are to be understood as references to the two letters under discussion unless it is obvious that the writer is speaking in a general way about either of the two versions.

Whenever this writer refers to the editors, or the modern editors, without specifying further to whom he is referring, the following three editors of the Greek New Testament are to be understood: Tischendorf, Weiss, and Westcott-Hort. Nestle also is considered a modern editor. But he is always referred to specifically.

Whenever this writer refers to the commentators without further specifying to whom he is referring, the following three commentators are to be understood, unless the statement clearly indicates that more than just these three men are meant: Milligan, Frame, and Hendriksen.

#### Style of Presentation

Much of this thesis is of a very technical nature. To present this material in a way that would be perfectly clear to any layman would require endless explanation of technical terms that are a part of theological nomenclature. This thesis, since it is presented to the faculty of Concordia Seminary, assumes that the reader is a theologian who is familiar with this technical terminology. Therefore, this writer uses this terminology freely without pausing to explain, for example, what a manuscript is, and what are the problems



involved in the study of Greek manuscripts.

### Overview of Organization

Chapters two, three, four, and five are evaluations of both the KJV and the RSV that are relatively independent of one another. Each of these chapters evaluates the two versions from a specific standpoint. Chapter two is an evaluation of the English of the two versions. Chapter three is an evaluation of certain mechanical or technical features of the RSV. Chapter four is an evaluation of the two versions on the basis of the Greek text that they follow. Chapter five is an evaluation chiefly of the RSV, but partly also of the KJV, with respect to accuracy of the translation.

Chapter six offers suggestions for improvement of the RSV. This chapter is based on the four chapters that precede it, and it offers suggestions on the basis of each of the four separate evaluations.

Chapter seven sums up the findings of chapters two to five and includes suggestions for further study in certain areas.

### A Brief History of the Problem

When the RSV was first published, it was greeted with enthusiasm by some, with curiosity by others, and with violent criticism by still others. In the past few years, some have praised the RSV, while others have condemned it.



Very recently, many Protestant denominations in the United States have adopted the RSV as their official English Bible.

Many members of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod have asked questions about the RSV. Their questions have been met with a variety of answers. Some pastors have recommended the RSV to their parishioners for use in home devotions. Other pastors occasionally use the RSV in public worship, especially when the RSV has a good and clear translation of a text or pericope which the KJV translates inaccurately or ambiguously. Still other pastors have condemned the RSV. Some of this last group have gone so far as to refer to it as the heretical Bible. Others have charged that the translators are modernists, and that, therefore, they reflected unorthodox theological bias in their translation. Still others have not made such sweeping statements, but, without themselves having actually looked into the problems involved, have charged the RSV with false doctrine or intentional mis-translation at specific points.

Because of the numerous questions of Lutheran pastors and laymen, Synod has appointed a committee to study the RSV carefully and to report its findings, so that truthful answers can be given to those who in the future will ask questions. Originally, this committee studied in a general way the English versions that have been published in recent years. Now efforts are being concentrated on the RSV in particular.



Careful studies are being made of the RSV from various points of view. Just recently a study of the proof-texts of the Synodical Catechism was completed by Dr. George V. Schick of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The results of this study have been printed in the March, 1956, issue of the Concordia Theological Monthly (XXVII, 161-83). The particular phase of the committee's study of which this thesis is a part is aimed at evaluating individually all the books of the Bible in the RSV.

#### Major Sources upon Which This Study Was Based

The chief sources with which this writer has operated are: the King James Version of the Bible as found in the Thompson Chain Reference Bible and others; the Revised Standard Version of the Bible in the revised edition; the Greek texts of Nestle (various editions, but particularly the twentieth) and of Westcott-Hort; the Lexicons of Thayer and Souter; and the commentaries of Milligan, Frame, and Hendriksen. The full references are given in the Bibliography.

#### Summary of Findings

With respect to all the aspects investigated, the RSV is superior to the KJV for contemporary Americans. But the RSV is not perfect from any of these standpoints. We, therefore, suggest improvements in all areas. The RSV does not subvert Scriptural doctrine at any point in the letters to



the Thessalonians. And it is suitable for both public and private use by the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ENGLISH OF THE KJV AND THE RSV

#### Introduction

Though scholars and students of the Bible who study it in the original languages have known for many years that the KJV is based upon a text that is in many places no longer considered authentic, and though these same scholars and students have known for many years that the KJV contains some translations that are considered poor in the light of recent studies in the Greek of the New Testament, no Lutheran or Protestant has ever for this reason seriously questioned the use of the KJV either in public worship services or in private devotions. At the same time, most people recognize that linguistically the KJV is very much out of date today. Particularly young people find the English of the KJV almost unintelligible in places, because of the archaisms.

From this it naturally follows that if, on the one hand, the RSV had followed the same text that the KJV follows, and if the RSV had translated this text in such a way as to produce the same meaning that the KJV produces, and if, on the other hand, the RSV had brought the English of the KJV up to date, at the same time retaining the dignity and literary excellence of the KJV, there would be no ground for anyone to condemn the RSV or speak against its use in public or private



devotions.

Chapter IV of this thesis is devoted to the task of determining whether the text followed by the RSV is inferior, equal, or superior to the text followed by the KJV. Chapter V is devoted to the task of determining whether the RSV translates less accurately, as accurately, or more accurately than the KJV. This present chapter, without regard to text or accuracy of translation for the moment, is devoted to the task of determining the value of the English of the RSV for public and private devotions.

This writer has carefully compared the KJV and the RSV with each other and with modern principles of grammar and usage. He has checked points of grammar and usage with numerous dictionaries, grammars, and books on American usage. He has further discussed his findings with Mr. Elmer E. Foelber, former professor of English at Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and present Editor in Chief at Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri.

### Dignity

The RSV translators were conscious of the need for a translation that would be dignified and reverent. In introducing the RSV New Testament, Weigle writes,

For use in public and private worship, it is not necessary that the language of the English Bible be stiff or strange or antique, or that it convey the impression of a self-conscious effort to be reverent. But it must not be irreverent, and it must not be colloquial or trivial. For use in worship the Bible must be cast, not in what



is merely the language of today, but in enduring and simple diction which is worthy to stand in the great tradition of Tyndale and the King James Version.<sup>1</sup>

The RSV translators have succeeded in producing an English version of the letters to the Thessalonians that is couched in dignified English. There are no vulgar, illiterate, colloquial, or provincial words or expressions in these letters. The language of the RSV is also above the level of good conversational English. It is thoroughly good modern American literary English.

#### Rhythm

If by rhythm one means that the words flow in such a way as not to be either monotonous or unduly staccato, but to be interesting and forceful, one can demand of a Bible translation that it be rhythmical. If, on the other hand, one means by rhythm that the words must approximate the metrical patterns of verse, one has no right to demand this of any Bible translation, because the Bible simply is not verse. Even the poetic sections of the Bible are not verse, as we usually understand the term, but are what is today called free verse, the form practiced by Walt Whitman.

Weigle comments on this subject,

Much even of the prose of the King James Bible has the beauty, and something of the rhythm, of poetry. But it

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<sup>1</sup>Luther A. Weigle, "The English of the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament (n.p., 1946), pp. 57-8.



is a mistake to assume that all of the Bible is poetry, or that, to be readable and suited for use in public worship, the translation must be rhythmic.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Foelber has informed this writer that when the KJV came into being, English prose as a distinctive literary form had not yet fully developed. Hence the style of the KJV is usually referred to as poetic-prose or verse-prose. Curiously enough, some poets of our day are experimenting with the verse-prose style of the KJV.

There is a certain rhythm to all free expression in words of thought and emotion. The problem in translating is to adjust the rhythm of the translation to the idea and emotion of the original. Very often the KJV is misleading, because it couches in smooth and even rhythm certain expressions that by their content and emotion demand a degree of irregularity. Thus the language of the KJV often detracts from the seriousness and forcefulness of the original.

The RSV translators have attempted to convey the spirit of the original into the English translation. At times this demands that the English be anything but smooth, just as the Greek is anything but smooth in these instances. For example, in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, the rhythm of the KJV is much too placid for the content of St. Paul's condemnation of the idle:

For even when we were with you,  
this we commanded you,  
that if any would not work,  
neither should he eat.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 57.



For we hear that there are some  
which walk among you disorderly,  
working not at all,  
but are busybodies.

In contrast to this smooth-flowing language, the RSV speaks forcefully. (We arrange the lines in verse form again, simply in order to show that the words are not verse.)

For even when we were with you,  
we gave you this command:  
If any one will not work,  
let him not eat.

For we hear that some of you  
are living in idleness,  
mere busybodies,  
not doing any work.

On the other hand, while the RSV does not have the evenness of verse in the letters to the Thessalonians, it does have a beauty all its own as it adjusts regularity and irregularity to fit the content and mood of the various passages. The RSV never becomes monotonous. Nor is it unduly staccato. The words flow in such a way that they are interesting and forceful. This beauty is further enhanced by various literary devices, such as alliteration. (Alliteration was once considered a basic part of English verse. But today it is frequently used also in what is commonly considered prose.) This writer does not know whether these literary devices were consciously used by the translators. But they do occur, and they add much to the beauty and attractiveness of the translation.

### Fluency

In a book that is to be read in public, the greatest



possible fluency is highly desirable, in order that the reader may not stumble over difficult phrases. Even for private devotions, fluency is a genuine asset. In private devotions, the actual words of the text are to serve as the means through which God speaks to the heart of the reader. Awkward expressions, which cause the reader to pause to ponder the mechanical aspect of wording, break the reader's communion with God.

The RSV translators recognized this need for fluency in their translation. Weigle writes,

A requirement that has constantly been kept in mind by the present Committee is that the Bible should be translated into language that is euphonious, readable, and suited for use in public and private worship. It must sound well, and be easy to read aloud and in public. The choice of words and ordering of phrases must be such as to avoid harsh collocations of sound, and consonantal juxtapositions over which tongues will trip and lisp--that sentence is an example of what must not be in the English Bible.<sup>3</sup>

The RSV has a high degree of fluency. For the modern American reader it is much easier to read than the KJV. Words are arranged in such a way in the RSV that the mind of the reader flows, or is carried, right along with the current of thought, without having to stop occasionally to figure out how it managed to get to this particular place, or what is the connection to the previous thought.

#### Tongue-twisters in the RSV

While it is perfectly possible for a person to read both

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



letters to the Thessalonians aloud many times without stumbling a single time, there are several places where the sequence of words is such as may at times cause difficulties for the reader.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1.--In the addresses of both letters, the words of the Thessalonians could cause difficulty. The sequence of syllables is such as could cause the reader to make a th out of the ss in the word Thessalonians. This same problem occurs in the KJV. There seems to be no way of avoiding this danger without employing some form of circumlocution.

1 Thessalonians 2:3.--In the expression error or uncleanness there is a possibility that the reader may have difficulty enunciating the sequence of n's without running them together. The reader can avoid this danger by making a note in his Bible that he should pause after error. Another solution to the problem would be to translate, "For our appeal does not spring from error, nor from uncleanness, nor is it made with guile." The insertion of the n between the two or's eliminates the difficulty. But this makes the sentence more clumsy grammatically. One could translate with the KJV, deceit. But error is a better translation. Furthermore, the use of both deceit and guile in the same sentence sounds redundant.

1 Thessalonians 2:20.--In the sentence, "For you are our



glory and joy," it is difficult to enunciate are our clearly. This difficulty exists also in the KJV. It could be solved by borrowing some of the emphasis that is in the preceding Greek sentence, and translating, "Yes, you are indeed our glory and joy." This translation would not be entirely accurate. But it would not do any violence to the sense of the original. This writer can think of no other solution to this problem.

2 Thessalonians 2:1.--In the expression and our assembling it is very easy to omit the a from the word assembling. The KJV avoids this difficulty by using the word gathering. Assembling seems to be a slightly better word in modern usage. But perhaps, for the sake of ease of reading, gathering should be used here.

2 Thessalonians 2:6.--In enunciating the expression then the lawless one, the tongue is inclined to assume the th position when it should be assuming the l position at the beginning of lawless. The two positions are very closely related. The KJV avoids this difficulty by translating in an entirely different way. The RSV is clearly a better translation at this point. This writer can think of no solution but to warn the reader to be on his guard.

Other Possible Difficulties.--In four other places most readers will probably have no difficulty. But there is a possibility that some persons may have difficulty with the following expressions: themselves report (1 Thess. 1:9); for



our appeal (1 Thess. 2:3); love of the brethren (1 Thess. 4:9); you may be made worthy (2 Thess. 1:5).

### Tongue-twisters in the KJV

In addition to the tongue-twisters that the KJV has in common with the RSV, it has also the following ones: how holily (1 Thess. 2:10); that that day (1 Thess. 5:4); or our (2 Thess. 2:15).

### Lucidity

A translation is of little value to the reader if it is not lucid, or clear. If the reader does not understand what he is reading, or if he becomes lost or confused in the language, he might almost as well read his Bible in the original languages, even though he understands neither Hebrew nor Greek. The rest of this chapter discusses the lucidity of both the KJV and the RSV from the standpoint of grammar and usage.

### Archaisms of the KJV Replaced by the RSV

From the standpoint of modern American English, the RSV is definitely an improvement of the KJV. The RSV has replaced much of the archaic spelling, grammar, and usage of the KJV. In some instances, this replacing of archaisms has involved also a change in the meaning. Such instances, if they are significant, are discussed in either Chapter IV, "The Greek Texts Followed by the KJV and the RSV," or Chapter V, "Accuracy



of the KJV and RSV Translations." This present section deals only with instances in which the RSV replaces archaisms of the KJV with preferred modern American expressions without in any way changing the meaning of these expressions.

For the sake of simplicity we have broadened the meaning of the terms archaic and archaisms in this section to include not only words, expressions, grammar, usage, and spellings that are today actually considered old or out of date, but also words, expressions, and spellings that are second choice rather than preferred, or are preferred among the British but not among Americans living in the United States.

Spelling.--There are eighteen places in these letters to the Thessalonians where the RSV uses the same word as the KJV but replaces an archaic spelling with the preferred modern one. These eighteen instances of such improvement involve nine different words. A list of these words and the places where they occur is given in Appendix A.

Words and Expressions.--In forty-six places the RSV replaces the archaic ye with the modern you.

In nineteen places where the KJV uses the neuter pronouns which and that with reference to persons, the RSV uses the pronoun who, or in some other way eliminates these neuter pronouns without changing the meaning.

In eleven places the RSV replaces the longer unto with the simple to.

In six places where the KJV uses the auxiliary verb shall



to express the future indicative with the third person, the RSV uses the auxiliary verb will.

In five places the RSV eliminates the archaic eth and th endings from verbs in the third person singular.

In four places where the KJV uses the word man in the general sense of one, id est in the expressions any man and no man, the RSV uses the word one.

In four places where the KJV uses yourselves as the subject of a clause or sentence, the RSV has you yourselves.

In three places the RSV replaces the verb might with may.

The KJV uses the word of three times in the sense of from. Here the RSV has from.

Where the indefinite article an is used twice in the KJV before words beginning with an h, the RSV uses the article a.

Where the KJV twice has Holy Ghost, the RSV has Holy Spirit.

Twice the KJV separates the two words of the expression not only, inserting the rest of the phrase between them. The RSV follows the modern procedure of keeping the two words together and placing the rest of the phrase after them.

The RSV uses the possessive adjective my before words beginning with either consonants or vowels, while the KJV uses the adjective mine before words beginning with a vowel.

In thirty-six places the RSV replaces archaic words or expressions with other words or expressions which in modern usage mean the same as the archaic words once did.



There are six other places where the RSV replaces archaisms of the KJV without changing the meaning of the translation. But these other instances defy any attempt at classification.

All archaisms of the KJV that have been replaced by the RSV without changing the meaning are listed, together with their locations in these letters, in Appendix A.

Perhaps we may have missed a few instances of improvement of this kind. But the instances that we have discussed and listed should be sufficient to demonstrate that from the standpoint of modern American usage, the RSV is definitely an improvement of the KJV.

#### Archaisms Retained by the RSV

For some reason, the RSV has retained a few archaic words. While these archaisms are still in use today, they are so chiefly because they are in the KJV. Outside the circle of pastors they are hardly ever used.

The first of these is the word brethren. The standard English plural of brother today is brothers. To many people it may sound strange to substitute the word brothers for the familiar biblical term brethren. But people can become accustomed to a new word rapidly, especially when the new word is not new at all, but is taken from everyday usage, while the old word is seldom, if ever, used outside the context of the Bible. All three of the commentators consulted, Milli-



gan, Frame, and Hendriksen, used the word brothers. Milligan wrote forty-eight years ago, and Frame wrote forty-four years ago. If already at that time they could use the word brothers, why not use it today? The word occurs twenty-four times in the letters to the Thessalonians.<sup>4</sup>

The second archaism that remains in the RSV is the word beloved. Especially in the expression where it occurs, "brothers beloved by God," there is no need to cling to this archaic word. The simple loved will serve just as well. Although some may feel that beloved indicates a greater degree of endearment than loved, this is only an imagined distinction, not a real one. This archaism occurs in 1 Thessalonians 1:4 and in 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

The third archaism that remains in the RSV is the word travail, used in the sense of the labor of childbirth. Modern Americans use the medical term labor in their everyday speech, while the word travail is seldom, if ever, used. This archaism occurs in 1 Thessalonians 5:3.

Questionable Expressions of the RSV.--Five other expressions of the RSV can be questioned. In these cases, it is impossible to render a final judgment. But we can at least raise a few questions and offer some possible suggestions.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:2 and in 2 Thessalonians 3:16 and 3:18, the expression you all occurs. As it stands in context,

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<sup>4</sup>1 Thess. 1:4; 2:1,14,17; 3:7; 4:1,9,10(twice),13; 5:1,4,12,14,25,26,27; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2:1,13,15; 3:1,6,13.



this is perfectly good English. However, to the minds of many people, the expression you all, even when properly used, suggests a southern colloquialism. For this reason alone, it might be better to use the expression all of you. Another argument in favor of all of you is this, that the emphatic word in the three phrases is all. While it does receive some emphasis as it stands as the last word of the clause in the RSV, it would receive greater emphasis if it were placed next to the preposition, so that the phrases would read, "for all of you," and, "with all of you."

In 2 Thessalonians 1:9, the expression "they shall suffer the punishment" occurs in the RSV. While shall can be defended as either intensive or prophetic, it is hardly ever used even in these senses today. They will has become the universal expression to cover all cases.

The word for is used thirty-five times in these two letters as a conjunction. We have not been able to find a single book on American usage that even questions the propriety of using for as a conjunction. However, some people maintain that the word is hardly ever used in this sense today in newspapers, magazines, or books. According to these people, the word is used as a conjunction chiefly in sermons. This writer has not checked the validity of these assertions.

Since for usually reproduces the Greek conjunction γάρ, it is a very handy word to use in translating. In order to eliminate it from a translation, translators could simply



omit it in some places. But in other places they would have to replace it with a wide variety of other words. In Chapter VI, "Suggestions for Improvement of the RSV," we give our recommendations on this matter.

The word upon seems to be losing out to the simpler on in modern usage. In 1 Thessalonians 5:3 and 2:16, the expression come upon is used in the RSV. This expression is still used today. But the elements of suddenness and surprise that are the major emphases in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 might be better expressed by using the appropriate forms either of the verb surprise or of the verb attack. In 1 Thessalonians 2:16, it might be more vivid to say that God's wrath has overtaken them at last.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:8, upon could easily be replaced with on: "inflicting vengeance on those who do not obey." In 2 Thessalonians 2:11, the word upon could just as well be omitted entirely: "Therefore God sends (upon) them a strong delusion." In 2 Thessalonians 3:15 the RSV uses on where older English would have used upon: "Do not look on him as an enemy." This is good.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:10, the word might occurs in this expression: "who died for us so that whether we wake or sleep we might live with him." It is difficult to determine whether might or may is better here. Perhaps in the context even shall live or the present, we live, is to be preferred as a clearer expression of what St. Paul means. This is consider-



ed further in Chapter VI, "Suggestions for Improvement of the RSV."

### Sentence Structure and Grammar of the KJV

The KJV has often been referred to as a great example of classical English literature. This may be true. Even if the KJV is abandoned from common use, it can still remain a great English classic. For those who wish to study classical English literature, the KJV can continue to rank with Chaucer and Shakespeare.

But the Bible is not intended to be a classic which is studied only by those who are interested in the classics. The Bible is a book that is to be used, studied, and meditated upon by all Christians, learned and unlearned, old and young, theologians and laymen.

For this reason, the Bible should be couched in a literary style that is familiar and that follows current rules of grammar. After all, grammar is not just an arbitrary thing set up to cause head-aches to writers. Grammar is intended to help people express themselves according to universally-accepted norms, so that they will say precisely what they mean and clearly indicate their meaning through their adherence to grammatical rules, and so that others will be able, by following these same rules of grammar, to understand clearly and precisely what the writer means to say.

The translators of the KJV are not to be faulted for not



following modern rules of grammar. Very naturally and correctly they followed the grammatical rules of their day. But many of these rules are so completely outmoded today, that the modern reader who is not acquainted with classical English rules of grammar finds the KJV confusing and difficult to understand. The KJV simply does not speak clearly and precisely to Americans of this present era.

Furthermore, there are places where the KJV translators followed the Greek in a legalistically literal way, translating tenses according to a rigid consistency. As a result, rules of English sequence of tenses were violated. Certain sequences of tenses that are perfectly legitimate in Greek are not legitimate in English. Where the Greek of the New Testament is good New Testament Greek, it should be reproduced in good English, even if this requires a greater degree of flexibility in transcribing moods and tenses.

While we so frequently speak of the beauty and simplicity of the KJV, and while we urge our people to study their Bibles, if any student were to write a composition in which he would employ the sentence structure, the word order, the use of tenses, and the punctuation that is used in the KJV, he would find his paper returned to him so badly marked up in red that he would hardly recognize it as the neat paper that he handed in. KJV grammar was good in its day; but it simply is not acceptable today.

A careful reading of the letters to the Thessalonians



in the KJV reveals the following points of grammar that are not acceptable today:

1. Improper use of commas in series. For example, "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus" (1 Thess. 1:1). Modern grammar demands either "Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus" or "Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus." For other examples of this same error, see 1 Thessalonians 1:2,5,9.
2. Use of commas where they destroy the proper connection between words, as between two nouns connected by and, both of which are objects of the same preposition; or between verb and object. We cite a few examples: "from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:1); "we were willing to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only" (1 Thess. 2:9); "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord" (1 Thess. 1:6); "having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (1 Thess. 1:6).
3. Use of colons in place of semi-colons, periods, or commas. See e.g., 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7; 2:1-2,3-4,5-6,7-8,9,10-11,14-16.
4. Use of semi-colons where commas should be used. See e.g., the end of 1 Thessalonians 1:9, "to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven."
5. Use of neither . . . nor . . . nor in a series. Modern grammar demands that neither . . . nor be used only of alternatives, not of three possible choices. See e.g., 2 Thessalonians 2:2.
6. Misplacing of both in the sequence both . . . and. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 2:15, we find, "who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us." The Greek demands, "who killed both the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us." Disregarding the Greek, English grammar would permit another solution: "who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us." But the position of both in the KJV, together with the punctuation of the KJV, is intolerable today.
7. Misuse of the sequence not . . . but. In 1 Thessalonians 2:4, we find, "not as pleasing men, but



God." Modern English grammar demands either "not as pleasing men, but as pleasing God" or "as pleasing not men, but God."

8. Misuse of double negatives. See for example the confusing sequence of neither . . . nor . . . nor . . . neither . . . nor in 1 Thessalonians 2:5-6. The double negative occurs in this expression: "nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others."
9. Use of sequences of tenses that do not follow. See the following words in their contexts: "we were willing to have imparted" (1 Thess. 2:8); "sounded . . . is spread" (1 Thess. 1:8); "we had suffered . . . and were shamefully entreated" (1 Thess. 2:2); "as we were allowed . . . so we speak" (1 Thess. 2:4); "we . . . being taken . . . endeavored" (1 Thess. 2:17); "when they shall say . . . then sudden destruction cometh" (1 Thess. 5:3).
10. Inversion of subject and predicate when not necessary for emphasis or for any other reason. See e.g., 1 Thessalonians 2:5, "For neither at any time used we flattering words."
11. Use of would not as the past tense of will not, in the sense of did not want to. Modern grammar and usage demand did not want to. See e.g., 1 Thessalonians 2:9, "because we would not be chargeable."
12. Intercepted modifiers, leaving the modifier stranded, not clearly indicating what it modifies. An example of this occurs in 2 Thessalonians 1:10, where, at the end of a very long sentence, we read, "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." The parentheses help to clarify the matter for the reader. But the hearer will have difficulty trying to link the modifier to the proper verb. Actually, in Greek, the expression in that day modifies everything from verse six to verse ten. This will all take place on that day, the final day of judgment. This is clear in Greek. But in English it would make more sense to place the modifier almost anywhere else in the sentence than to place it at the end.
13. Use of unduly long sentences, where they might easily be divided into shorter sentences without destroying the connection between the various parts



of the Greek sentence. These long sentences in English actually lose the connection between parts of the sentence in many instances. An example of an extremely long sentence is 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10. This is all one sentence in the KJV. Compare the ease with which the RSV divides this into four sentences without weakening the connection at all, but adding to the clarity and ease of reading.

14. Although do is not wrong in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, are doing is much preferred today. The expression reads, "even as also ye do."
15. Use of difficult or confusing word order.
16. Placing of pronouns and possessive adjectives in such a way that their antecedents are not clear.

These examples should be sufficient to demonstrate that the grammar of the KJV is not acceptable today. How inconsistent we are! We send our children to school to learn correct modern English grammar. Then at home, in church, or at Sunday school, we read to them or have them read from the KJV.

#### Sentence Structure and Grammar of the RSV

In contrast to the sentence structure of the KJV, the sentence structure of the RSV is excellent according to modern rules of grammar. This writer has had to search diligently to find any places at all where he could suggest improvements in the grammar of the RSV.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:3, there is an anacoluthon in the Greek text. Many attempts have been made to smooth out this grammatical error. But the best solution seems to be to let it stand as a break in the grammatical thinking of St. Paul



in the process of dictating the letter. We commonly make this same mistake today. Therefore, the RSV is correct in reproducing this anacoluthon in English. The sentence reads,

For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.

As it stands in the RSV, the anacoluthon remains a technical mistake in grammar. This could be made grammatically correct by dropping the comma after Achaia and inserting a dash instead. But why not let it stand as Paul dictated it?

In 2 Thessalonians 2:2, we find the sequence either . . . or . . . or. This sequence is perfectly permissible in Greek. But in English, either . . . or must be used only of alternatives, not of three or more choices. The RSV tries to get around this difficulty by means of punctuation:

We beg you not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us.

It would be better to drop the either, and read,

We beg you not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited by spirit, word, or letter purporting to be from us;

or, perhaps,

We beg you not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited by spirit or by word or by letter, purporting to be from us.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:9, we read,

It was not because we have not that right, but to give you in our conduct an example to imitate.

This does not follow exactly as we would expect in English. The two parts of the sentence are not parallel. This could



be improved by adding a few words:

It was not because we have not that right, but because we wanted to (or, purposed to) give you in our conduct an example to imitate;

or, possibly:

It was not because we have not that right, but because it was our purpose to give you in our conduct an example to imitate.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:14, the series of admonitions should be preceded by a colon, not a comma. It should read, "And we exhort you, brethren: admonish the idle," etc.

In 1 Thessalonians 3:6, there is a possibility that the reader may have difficulty reading the sentence as it stands. In the RSV, the sentence reads,

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you," etc.

If the rest of the sentence is to stand as it is, it would be better to eliminate the comma after you. But there is danger that as the reader reads, "the good news of your faith and love and reported," he will anticipate that reported is the third member of the series of words connected by and. If he looks ahead, he can avoid falling into this trap. But the reader would be protected from this danger if a comma were inserted after love. In this case, the first comma should also be retained.

### Conclusion

The material presented in this chapter demonstrates



clearly that the RSV is equal to, and in most respects superior to, the KJV from the standpoint of English. The RSV is modern, and at the same time dignified. It is clear and simple, and at the same time fluent and beautiful. From the standpoint of English, the RSV translation of the letters to the Thessalonians is definitely an improvement of the KJV for contemporary American readers. It is worthy of use in public worship services and in Bible classes. At the same time, it has the qualities that make it useful and edifying for private devotions.

In this chapter, the paragraphs of the RSV are first of all evaluated as paragraphs. They are then compared with the paragraph divisions that have been made in three popular paragraph systems.

The verse divisions of the RSV are evaluated in only the three places where they are not the same as the verse divisions made by Nestle.

The RSV division of Greek sentences into shorter English sentences is considered in only a general way.

The footnotes of the RSV are studied for the purpose of determining the reasons for their inclusion and their value to readers and teachers.

#### Paragraph Divisions of the RSV

Since the RSV divides the letters to the Thessalonians



### CHAPTER III

## MECHANICS OF THE RSV

### Introduction

This chapter is a report of the results of a study of certain mechanical features of the RSV. The study was divided into four major areas: the paragraph divisions of the RSV, the versification of the RSV, the RSV division of long Greek sentences into shorter English sentences, and the footnotes incorporated into the RSV.

In this chapter, the paragraphs of the RSV are first of all evaluated as paragraphs. They are then compared with the pericopic divisions that have been made in three popular pericopic systems.

The verse divisions of the RSV are evaluated in only the three places where they are not the same as the verse divisions made by Nestle.

The RSV division of Greek sentences into shorter English sentences is considered in only a general way.

The footnotes of the RSV are studied for the purpose of determining the reasons for their inclusion and their value to readers and teachers.

### Paragraph Divisions of the RSV

While the KJV divides the letters to the Thessalonians



strictly according to chapters and verses, the RSV organizes the thoughts of these letters into paragraphs. This is a decided improvement for the modern reader, who is accustomed to thinking, writing, and reading in units or paragraphs.

The paragraph divisions of the RSV are not those of the Nestle text, Milligan, or Frame. Nor are they adopted by Hendriksen. The RSV seems to follow a system of its own. Divisions are made according to major units, with new paragraphs beginning where there are major shifts in subject matter or in approach to a subject. The major parts of the letters are separated by double spacing.

While some may prefer a more narrow division into still shorter paragraphs, it must be agreed that the divisions that are made in the RSV are very good.

#### RSV Paragraph Divisions and Pericopic Divisions

In connection with the RSV division of the text into paragraphs, it seems interesting and worthwhile to consider how these divisions compare to the pericopic divisions that have been made.

A study of the Standard Epistles, the Eisenach Epistles, and the Synodical Conference Epistles has revealed that pericopes from the letters to the Thessalonians occur a total of seven times in these pericopic systems.

In the Standard Epistles, selections occur four times:

Reminiscere, the second Sunday in Lent--1 Thess. 4:1-7;  
The twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity--1 Thess. 4:13-18;



The twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity--2 Thess. 1:3-10;  
 The twenty-seventh Sunday after Trinity--1 Thess. 5:1-11.

In the Eisenach Epistles, selections occur twice:

The fifteenth Sunday after Trinity--2 Thess. 3:6-13;  
 The twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity--1 Thess. 5:14-24.

In the Synodical Conference Epistles, one selection occurs:

The eighteenth Sunday after Trinity--2 Thess. 3:1-5.

In four of these instances the pericope is exactly one paragraph in the RSV. These instances are the fifteenth, eighteenth, twenty-fifth, and twenty-seventh Sundays after Trinity.

In the other three instances, the pericopes do not constitute exactly one paragraph in the RSV. These three are considered briefly in the following paragraphs.

The Standard Epistle for Reminiscere.--This pericope ends with the seventh verse of 1 Thessalonians 4. The RSV includes the eighth verse in this paragraph. From the standpoint of paragraphing, the eighth verse definitely belongs with the first seven verses.

By closing with the seventh verse, the Standard pericope has a climactic and forceful ending. The seventh verse reads, "For God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness."

However, the eighth verse gives added force to the preceding admonitions. The eighth verse reads, "Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you."

In this particular instance, the Standard pericope may



well be retained as it is, or the eighth verse may be added, according to the preference of the pastor.

The Eisenach Epistle for the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.--This pericope includes verses fourteen to twenty-four of 1 Thessalonians 5. The RSV has one paragraph including verses twelve to twenty-two, and another paragraph including verses twenty-three and twenty-four. The first paragraph is a list of admonitions. The second paragraph is a prayer for divinely effected sanctification of the Thessalonians, so that they may be found blameless at the coming of the Lord.

The addition of verses twenty-three and twenty-four to the list of admonitions is good. It adds the divine or gospel motivation and power to the list of human duties.

But why does the pericope begin with verse fourteen? The list of admonitions clearly begins with verse twelve. The first two verses of this paragraph deal with a proper respect and esteem on the part of the Thessalonians for those who are over them in the Lord. These verses also include an admonition to peacefulness. Since these verses are used nowhere else in the pericopic systems examined, why not include them in this pericope? These two verses certainly fit the rest of the pericope, which deals with spiritual duties all the way through.

The Alternate Standard Epistle for the Twenty-sixth Sunday after Trinity.--This pericope includes verses three to ten



of 2 Thessalonians 1. The RSV has one paragraph including verses three and four, and another paragraph including verses five to twelve. These two paragraphs are related.

The subject matter of the pericope is Paul's thankfulness for the growth of the Thessalonians in the face of afflictions, including an explanation of the reason why they are presently suffering affliction in God's economy, and a promise of future rest from affliction at the time when the Lord comes to judge the afflictors.

The theme for the Sunday is definitely eschatological. The Gospel is the story of the final judgment, Matthew 25: 31-46. The propers deal with both the punishment of the wicked and the glorification of the believers. While the theme is at the same time a warning to hypocrites who may be present in the congregation, its chief message is one of comfort to the believers.

The Standard pericope closes on a note of glorification. But the brief reference to glorification is so close to a longer treatment of the punishment of the afflictors, that the reading of the pericope may leave a feeling of judgment and fear rather than comfort in the hearts of the hearers.

The last sentence of the pericope reads:

They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

If the last two verses of the paragraph were included in



the pericope, this would add additional comfort and would apply the glorification of Christ in his saints personally to the hearers, just as Paul himself applied it to the Thessalonians. Verses eleven and twelve read:

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfil every good resolve and work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Versification

At three points, the RSV deviates from the versification of the Nestle text.

1 Thessalonians 2:6-7.--Here the RSV follows the KJV. The point of division is of no significance for the meaning of the two verses. By following the KJV, the RSV avoids throwing confusion into verse references which in the past have been given according to the KJV versification. The verse division also seems to come more easily and logically at the point where it comes in the KJV than at the point where it comes in Nestle.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12.--Here the RSV again follows the KJV. Again the point of division is of no significance as far as meaning is concerned. Following the KJV simply avoids confusion.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8.--Here the RSV does not follow the versification either of the Nestle text or of the KJV. And here the point of division is of greater significance. While



both Milligan<sup>1</sup> and Frame<sup>2</sup> follow the Nestle versification, they indicate in their remarks<sup>3</sup> that the phrase in flaming fire is to be taken with the preceding thought and is not to be understood as the means by which Christ will inflict vengeance on the disobedient. In order to make this clear to the English reader, who can not tell by case endings with which thought the phrase in flaming fire is to be taken, the RSV moves this phrase from verse eight into verse seven.

This slight change should prove very helpful to modern readers. And since it involves only three words, it should not cause much confusion for those who look up references given in books that follow the KJV versification.

Hendriksen has adopted this shift in versification made by the RSV.<sup>4</sup>

#### Division of Sentences

In languages like Greek, that have distinctive case endings for nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, it is possible to

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<sup>1</sup>George Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Erdmans, 1953), p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>James Everett Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), p. 221.

<sup>3</sup>Milligan, op. cit., pp. 88, 90; Frame, op. cit., pp. 232, 233.

<sup>4</sup>William Hendriksen, Exposition of I and II Thessalonians, in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), pp. 153, 159.



write very long sentences without danger of confusing the reader. Sometimes it is almost impossible to translate one of these long sentences into modern English without completely confusing or even misleading the reader. This is due partly to the fact that modern English has lost most of its distinctive marks of case, and partly to the fact that modern American readers are not accustomed to paying careful attention to long sentences. Sometimes it is possible to keep the meaning clear in English only by making use of an elaborate sentence structure involving colons, semi-colons, parentheses, and dashes. This is very poor modern sentence structure.

The RSV has taken the liberty of dividing Greek sentences into two or more English sentences, where this helps to make the meaning more readily intelligible to modern American readers, and where it can be done without destroying the connection between the divided parts of the Greek sentence. Where the connection between the parts of the original sentence can be preserved in English without the use of conjunctions, the conjunctions of the original have frequently been dropped in the RSV at the points where long Greek sentences have been divided into shorter English sentences.

It might be argued that this destroys some of the flavor of the original. But this point is at best only debatable. On the other hand, the value for the modern reader of a clean and clear text far outweighs any small amount of flavor of



the original that may possibly be lost. This writer personally believes that if Paul had written in modern English, he himself would not have used the long, involved sentences that he sometimes used when he wrote in Greek.

### Footnotes

The RSV has introduced footnotes to the translation. These footnotes either contain references to variant readings of other Greek texts or suggest the possibility of a different translation of some words or phrases. Because laymen and even theological students have asked questions about these footnotes, we consider them here as a part of this evaluation.

Some of the questions that have been asked are these:

(1) Why does the RSV cite some variant readings and not others? (2) Are the alternate possible translations a reference to the KJV translation? (3) Is it wise to place into the hands of laymen a translation that admits the possibility of other translations or even of other textual readings? Will this lead to confusion or doubt on the part of laymen? Many other questions have been asked or could be asked. But these seem to this writer to merit consideration here.

### Why Are Some Variants Cited, But Not Others?

In the letters to the Thessalonians there are three footnotes in the RSV that refer to variant readings in the Greek



text. These variants occur in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, and 2 Thessalonians 2:13. These variants are easily identified in the footnotes by the fact that they are introduced by the words, "Other ancient authorities read. . . ."

In the two letters to the Thessalonians, the criteria for including variants in the footnotes of the RSV seem to have been these: (1) Is the variant well enough attested to make it impossible for one categorically to reject it as spurious? (2) Would the adoption of the variant make a significant change in the meaning of the translation? An affirmative answer to one or the other of these questions is not sufficient to warrant the inclusion of a variant in the footnotes. Both questions must be answered affirmatively.

There are well-supported variants that are not included in the footnotes of the RSV. But none of these would make any significant difference in the meaning of the translation. On the other hand, there are variants that would change the meaning of the translation which are not included in the footnotes of the RSV. But none of these variants is well enough supported, in the opinion of the translators, to merit inclusion into the footnotes. This writer suggests in Chapter VI, "Suggestions for Improvement of the RSV," that one variant that has been omitted from the footnotes be placed either into the text or into the footnotes.

The three variants that have been included in the footnotes of the RSV satisfy both of the criteria, attestation



and significance.

1 Thessalonians 2:7.--Here there is a choice between gentle and babes. Though some people may consider babies gentle, though either word would make sense in the context, and though neither word would cause any doctrinal difficulty or disturb the meaning of the point Paul is making in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, it does make a difference in the meaning and interpretation of the contextual clause whether one reads gentle or babes.

A study of the apparatus of Nestle demonstrates that there is good external attestation to both readings. The editors Weiss and Tischendorf were persuaded by the evidence to include gentle in their texts. However, Westcott-Hort were so sure that babes is the correct reading, that they did not even place the other reading into the margin, but only listed it in the appendix as a noteworthy rejected reading. Nestle follows the majority of these editors and includes gentle in his text.

Milligan follows Westcott-Hort and reads babes, although he takes note of the fact that "most modern editors and commentators . . . favor  $\eta\pi\iota\omicron\lambda$ ."<sup>5</sup> Frame is sure that babes is the correct reading, and he cites both Westcott-Hort and Bishop Lightfoot in support of his rejection of gentle.<sup>6</sup> On

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<sup>5</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>6</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 100.



the other hand, Hendriksen is so sure that gentle is the correct reading, that he does not even mention the existence of another reading in his comments on this verse.<sup>7</sup>

2 Thessalonians 2:2 and 13.--The external evidence for the other two variants cited in the footnotes of the RSV is thoroughly discussed elsewhere in this thesis.<sup>8</sup> Both of these other variants make a difference in the translation.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, the choice is between lawlessness and sin. Exegetically, as Hendriksen says,<sup>9</sup> in the final analysis it makes no difference which reading one adopts, because "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). Yet it does make a difference in English whether one reads lawlessness or sin.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, the choice is between from the beginning and as the first converts. Obviously, to say that God chose the Thessalonians from the beginning is not the same as to say that God chose them as the first converts.

Do Alternate Translations Refer to the KJV?

In the four places in the letters to the Thessalonians where references to alternate possible translations are made, these references are not to the KJV. These four alternate possible translations occur in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 and 4:6,

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<sup>7</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>8</sup>2 Thess. 2:3, infra, pp. 54-5; 2 Thess. 2:13, infra, pp. 58-9.

<sup>9</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 170.



and in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 3:3. All four of these alternate possible translations are easily identified in the footnotes by the fact that they are preceded by the word Or.

These four footnotes occur at points where the exact meaning of the Greek is not absolutely certain. The word or words translated one way by the RSV may also be translated in another way which would render a different meaning. Commentators are not agreed on the best translation, even after they have thoroughly studied these words in their contexts.

Therefore, the RSV translators give the translation that they prefer in the text, but mention in the footnotes that one could equally as well translate in another way.

All of the four passages are difficult ones. A list of them shows the difficulty involved in deciding exactly how they should be translated.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:16 we find: "But the wrath has come upon them εἰς τέλος ." This could be translated, "But the wrath has come upon them at last," or, "But the wrath has come upon them completely," or, "But the wrath has come upon them for ever."

In 1 Thessalonians 4:6 we find: "that no man . . . πλουνεκτεῖν his brother ἐν τῷ πράγματι." This could be translated, "that no man . . . wrong his brother in this matter," or, "that no man . . . defraud his brother in business."

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 we find: "God chose you . . . to be saved, ἐν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι." This could be trans-



lated, "God chose you . . . to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit," or, "God chose you . . . to be saved, through sanctification of spirit."

In 2 Thessalonians 3:3 we find: "The Lord . . . will . . . guard you ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ." This could be translated, "The Lord . . . will . . . guard you from evil," or, "The Lord . . . will . . . guard you from the evil one."

#### Dangers and Values of Footnotes

Is it wise to place into the hands of laymen a translation that admits the possibility of other translations or even of other readings? Will this lead to confusion or doubt on the part of laymen?

Naturally, any layman who would take the time to compare any other translation with the KJV would come to the conclusion that these translations do not say the same thing, and that at times they seem to be so far removed from one another that they could hardly be based on the same Greek text. In this day, when laymen are so well informed on other matters, why let them live under the delusion that their English version is word for word perfect and the verbally inspired word of God? Why not face the facts and problems of the Greek text as well as the difficulty of translation with them? An informed layman will not be any more likely to lose his faith in verbal inspiration because of these things than will a clergyman. A frank discussion of the problem with



the laymen will demonstrate to them that one can still hold to verbal inspiration of the original text even while one recognizes the difficulties in determining the exact text in some places and the exact meaning in other places. Such a discussion will also be sure to point out to the laymen that these difficulties do not destroy or even weaken the Christian faith. In the letters to the Thessalonians, there is not a single variant or alternate translation given in the footnotes of the RSV that would in any way add to, detract from, or alter an article of the Christian faith.

The inclusion of the important variants and alternate translations in the footnotes makes the RSV acceptable, useful, and handy for all Bible class teachers or parochial school teachers. If a particular teacher, and this applies particularly to pastors who are teaching Bible classes, personally chooses to adopt one of the variants or alternate translations given in the footnotes, he can do so in his presentation much more readily if the class is equipped with copies of the RSV than if the members of the class all have texts containing only one possibility. In the latter case, the teacher would have to go into a long explanation of his reason for changing the text or would have to twist the words of the English text to include the meaning that he considers correct. With the variants and alternate translations already given, the teacher can simply tell the class that he prefers to adopt the footnote, and then give a few reasons



for his preference. These reasons will flow naturally from his presentation of the context.

### Conclusion

With respect to the mechanical features of paragraph divisions, versification, division of long Greek sentences into shorter English sentences, and incorporation of important variant readings and alternate possible translations into the English text in the form of footnotes, it must be agreed that in all of these areas the RSV is definitely an improvement of the KJV for the modern American reader as well as the pastor or teacher who studies the Greek text before delivering his sermons or his lectures to a Bible class.

### Preliminary Considerations

In introducing the RSV New Testament, Grant writes,

The Greek text of this Revision is not that of Westcott-Hort, or Bezae, or Scrivener; though the readings we have accepted will, as a rule, be found either in the text or the margin of the new (1913) edition of Bezae (Cambridge, 1941).<sup>1</sup>

Grant goes on to say,

<sup>1</sup>Professor C. Grant, "The Greek Text of the New Testament," in *Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Scriptures* (N.Y., 1946), p. 41.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE GREEK TEXTS FOLLOWED BY THE KJV AND THE RSV

Before anyone can translate anything, he must first establish the text upon which he will base his translation. Likewise, before anyone can evaluate a translation, he must first determine what text the translator has followed. This chapter is therefore devoted to the task of trying to determine which Greek texts have been followed by the KJV and the RSV.

Other things being equal, it follows naturally that a translation which follows the most nearly authentic text is to be preferred to a translation which follows a text that is not as well authenticated. This study has clearly demonstrated that the RSV follows, if not the best Greek text, at least a much better text than the one which the KJV follows.

### Preliminary Considerations

In introducing the RSV New Testament, Grant writes,

The Greek text of this Revision is not that of Westcott-Hort, or Nestle, or Souter; though the readings we have adopted will, as a rule, be found either in the text or the margin of the new (17th) edition of Nestle (Stuttgart, 1941).<sup>1</sup>

Grant goes on to say,

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick C. Grant, "The Greek Text of the New Testament," An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament (n.p., 1946), p. 41.



We have concurred in following Westcott and Hort. Not that we agreed in advance in favor of Hort--quite the contrary, there was no such unanimity; our agreement is really a tribute to Westcott-Hort, which is still the great classical edition of modern times.<sup>2</sup>

Grant further states,

Not a single important variant in the whole New Testament escaped our scrutiny; each was considered, not only once but repeatedly, as our Revision was itself revised in the three or four successive drafts it went through.<sup>3</sup>

The Lutheran Church--Missouri has never adopted any particular Greek text as its official text. While some pastors and professors still prefer to operate with the Westcott-Hort or Souter text, the large majority of them today operate with the latest edition of Nestle available to them, although they may not always agree with its choices in every case. Because of this tendency to follow Nestle, this writer has carefully examined both the KJV and the RSV in the light of the twentieth edition of Nestle (Stuttgart, 1950). This has been done in full recognition of the fact that the RSV translators did not have a copy of the twentieth edition. In the three instances where the RSV does not follow the twentieth edition of Nestle, both the sixteenth and seventeenth editions have been consulted.

#### Difficulties Involved in This Study

It is difficult to work backwards and to try to deter-

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 42.



mine by looking at a translation which text it follows.

Therefore a few observations are in order here.

In some instances where Nestle lists variants, a translation does not indicate which text it follows, because any of the variants listed would produce the same translation.

In other instances, following a variant may cause a translation to insert or omit minor words, such as and or for, or to supply objects of verbs. However, another translation, following a reading in which the opposite phenomenon occurs, may still produce an identical translation, inserting or omitting minor words or supplying objects simply in order to fill a need in the English language.

As a result of this, in some instances where a translation may follow an inferior reading, this is not clearly evident in the translation. In other instances, a translation may seem to follow an inferior reading, when it is actually only making the meaning intelligible to the modern English reader.

All such instances are omitted from this report on the text. Those that are significant are discussed in Chapter V, "Accuracy of the KJV and RSV Translations." This present report covers only those instances where it is clearly evident that either the KJV or the RSV follows a variant which Nestle relegates to the apparatus.

#### Deviations of the KJV and the RSV from Nestle

In no case does either the KJV or the RSV follow a con-



lecture of any sort in determining its text. All deviations of the RSV from the Nestle text are supported by good manuscript evidence, while all deviations of the KJV from the text adopted by Nestle are supported by manuscripts, versions, or both.

While the RSV clearly departs from the Nestle text (twentieth edition) only three times, the KJV seems to follow what Nestle today considers an inferior text in thirty-nine places. This must not be construed as a criticism of the intelligence or honesty of the translators of the KJV. In their day they had to operate with the best manuscripts then available. But since 1611, new manuscripts have been discovered and much scholarly research has been put into the study of the text in order to try to determine as well as possible what most likely was the original text. New findings have brought many readings that were considered correct in 1611 into disfavor today. Therefore, while the KJV translators are not to be condemned for not following what are today considered better readings, it must certainly be agreed that, with regard to the Greek text that is followed, the RSV is definitely an improvement of the KJV.

In fairness to the KJV, lest anyone get the impression that all copies should be taken out of circulation because it follows inferior readings in so many instances, it must be said that in most of the instances mentioned above, the



difference in text is insignificant, makes little or no change in the meaning of the text, and certainly does not in any way affect the doctrinal content of these letters to the Thessalonians.

#### Deviations of the KJV from Nestle

The thirty-nine deviations of the KJV may be divided in the following manner. In twenty-five places the KJV evidently follows the so-called Koine family of texts. In twelve places it follows some other reading, probably at the suggestion of another version, notably the Vulgate. In two places it follows a reading rejected by Nestle but supported by good manuscript evidence and adopted by the editor Weiss. In all of these thirty-nine places, the RSV follows the reading of the Nestle text.

It would be tedious to list the first thirty-seven deviations here. They have all been listed for reference purposes in Appendix B. However, the last two deviations warrant discussion here.

2 Thessalonians 2:3.--Here the KJV follows the Koine family of texts. The RSV follows the reading adopted by Nestle, but gives the alternate reading in a footnote. This is the famous man of sin or man of lawlessness passage. While man of lawlessness is adopted by Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, and Nestle, man of sin is supported by an impressive amount of external evidence and is adopted by Weiss, while Westcott-



Hort place it in the margin. Milligan,<sup>4</sup> Frame,<sup>5</sup> and Hendriksen<sup>6</sup> all adopt the Nestle reading. Evidently, man of lawlessness is the original reading. But here is the external evidence for the two readings (taken from Milligan).<sup>7</sup>

man of lawlessness: Greek uncial manuscripts: Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, and a few others; versions: Egyptian Sahidic and Bohairic; Church fathers: Origen (1/5 of the time), Cyril of Jerusalem, and others.

man of sin: Greek uncial manuscripts: Codex Alexandrinus; Codex Claromontanus, Codex Boernerianus, and most others; versions: ancient Latin and Vulgate, Syriac Peshitta and Marcian, and Gothic; Church fathers: Latin version of Irenaeus, Origen (4/5 of the time), Hippolytus, Eusebius, Ephraim the Syrian, John Chrysostom, Latin version of Origen, Ambrosiaster, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and many others.

2 Thessalonians 2:8.--Here the KJV follows the Koine family of texts, while the RSV follows Nestle. The word in question is Jesus, in the expression the Lord Jesus. Whether Jesus is inserted or omitted makes very little difference. It is important only from the standpoint of trying to determine exactly what was in the original text. Since it is of minor importance otherwise, a brief survey of the evidence

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<sup>4</sup>George Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Erdmans, 1953), pp. 95, 98-9.

<sup>5</sup>James Everett Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), pp. 243, 249.

<sup>6</sup>William Hendriksen, Exposition of I and II Thessalonians, in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), pp. 167, 170.

<sup>7</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 98.



is sufficient here (taken from Nestle).

Jesus is omitted by Codex Vaticanus, the Koine family of texts, and very many other uncial manuscripts. Weiss omits it from his text.

Jesus is inserted by Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, the original copy of Codex Claromontanus, Codex Boernerianus, and other uncial manuscripts. It is also inserted by the Latin and Syriac traditions as well as by the Church father, Irenaeus. This reading is adopted by Tischendorf.

Both Westcott-Hort and Nestle indicate their uncertainty about this reading by including Jesus in their texts, but enclosing the word in brackets.

#### Deviations of the RSV from Nestle

The RSV departs from the Nestle text in three places, namely, 1 Thessalonians 3:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, and 2 Thessalonians 3:6. Of these three departures from Nestle, only the first two are of any real significance. In both of these places the RSV adopts the reading of the majority of the editors (Tischendorf and Westcott-Hort), while Nestle goes against these editors in his recent editions. As late as the sixteenth edition (1936), Nestle was still following the other editors. But beginning with the seventeenth edition (1941), Nestle has relegated the readings of the majority of editors to the apparatus in these two places. The RSV translators had the seventeenth edition of Nestle available to them. Still they chose to follow Tischendorf and Westcott-Hort in these two places.

In both of these places it is very difficult to make a choice from among the variants that occur. Even the commen-



tators do not entirely agree in their selection. In order to demonstrate the problem involved, the authorities supporting the various readings are listed below (taken from Nestle).

1 Thessalonians 3:2.--Here five possible readings occur. Of these five, only the first and third merit serious consideration today. The five possibilities are these:

1. our brother and God's co-worker in the gospel;
2. our brother and co-worker in the gospel;
3. our brother and God's servant (minister) in the gospel;
4. our brother and God's servant and co-worker in the gospel;
5. our brother & God's servant & our co-worker in the gospel.

The authorities for these readings follow.

God's co-worker: the original copy of Codex Claromontanus; minuscule 33; the ancient Latin versions d and e; the Church father, Ambrosiaster. Westcott-Hort place it in the margin as a first-choice alternate reading. Nestle adopts this reading.

our co-worker: Codex Vaticanus. Weiss adopts it, and Westcott-Hort place it in the margin as a second-choice alternate reading.

God's servant (minister): Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Porphyrianus; Vulgate, Syriac Marcian. Westcott-Hort and Tischendorf adopt this reading.

God's servant (minister) and co-worker: Codex Boernerianus.

God's servant (minister) and our co-worker: the Koine family of manuscripts and most others; Syriac Peshitta.

The first reading is adopted by Frame.<sup>8</sup> Milligan also leans toward this reading, although he does not use it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Frame, op. cit., pp. 124, 126-7.

<sup>9</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 37.



The third reading is adopted by Hendriksen.<sup>10</sup> Milligan also uses this reading, although he questions its validity.<sup>11</sup> This reading is the one adopted by the RSV.

The fifth reading is adopted by the KJV.

This writer personally feels that the first reading is most likely what was originally written. However, one can not seriously criticize the RSV for adopting the third reading, which is adopted by the majority of editors and commentators.

2 Thessalonians 2:13.--Here there are two possible readings. They are these:

1. God chose you from (the) beginning for salvation;
2. God chose you as a first-fruit for salvation.

The authorities for these readings follow.

from (the) beginning: Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Psi, the Koine family of manuscripts, Codex Claromontanus, and very many other manuscripts; most ancient Latin versions, Syriac Peshitta. Westcott-Hort and Tischendorf adopt this reading.

as a first-fruit: Codex Vaticanus, Codex Boernerianus, minuscule 33, and other manuscripts; the ancient Latin version f, Vulgate, Syriac Harclean, Egyptian Bohairic. Weiss adopts this reading, while Westcott-Hort place it in the margin. Nestle adopts this reading.

The first reading is adopted by Hendriksen<sup>12</sup> and Frame.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., pp. 81, 83-4.

<sup>11</sup>Milligan, op. cit., pp. 36-7.

<sup>12</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., pp. 187-8.

<sup>13</sup>Frame, op. cit., pp. 277, 279-80.



While Milligan also includes this reading, since he operates with the Westcott-Hort text, he has a preference for the second reading.<sup>14</sup>

Both the KJV and the RSV adopt the first reading. However, the RSV does give the second reading in a foot-note.

2 Thessalonians 3:6.--The third departure of the RSV from Nestle involves only the insertion or omission of the word our in the expression in the name of our (the) Lord Jesus Christ. Since this is of minor importance, and since the attestation is comparatively simple, it is not necessary to list all of the evidence here.

Nestle follows Weiss and Westcott-Hort, and omits our.

The insertion of our is supported by many impressive manuscripts, including all of the Koine family and all of the so-called Hesychian family, with the exception of Codex Vaticanus. Tischendorf includes our in his text.

Westcott-Hort place our in the margin.

Here both the KJV and the RSV follow the large majority of manuscripts and include the word, even though this reading is rejected by the majority of the editors.

### Conclusion

From the standpoint of the text that it follows, the correctness of the KJV can hardly be defended today. On the

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<sup>14</sup> Milligan, op. cit., pp. 106-7.



other hand, the correctness of the RSV can hardly be challenged beyond the point of raising a few questions. Certainly not everyone will agree at all points with the choice of text made by the RSV. But no one can prove beyond doubt that the RSV has chosen a single reading that is definitely inferior to another reading.

The personal suggestions of this writer in this matter are presented in Chapter VI, "Suggestions for Improvement of the RSV."

The preceding chapters have demonstrated that the RSV is superior to the KJV with respect to modern American English, metrical features, and the Greek text that it follows. Therefore, the chief task of this chapter is to evaluate the accuracy of the RSV translation. If the RSV is an accurate translation, then, in view of all the other advantages over the KJV, it is worthy to take the place of the KJV for use in public and private devotion.

However, we have not completely overlooked the KJV in our study. Where particularly good or poor translations of the KJV have come to our attention, they have been included. In some instances where the RSV is outstandingly superior to the KJV, this fact is mentioned.

The procedure which we follow in presenting this material is as follows. Rather than go through the two letters verse by verse, pointing out strong points and weak points, we have again tried to classify them wherever possible. Under each



## CHAPTER V

### ACCURACY OF THE KJV AND RSV TRANSLATIONS

#### Introduction

We do not intend to solve in this chapter all the exegetical problems that occur in the letters to the Thessalonians. Nor do we intend to give a thorough evaluation of the accuracy of the KJV translation. The preceding chapters have demonstrated that the RSV is superior to the KJV with respect to modern American English, mechanical features, and the Greek text that it follows. Therefore, the chief task of this chapter is to evaluate the accuracy of the RSV translation. If the RSV is an accurate translation, then, in view of all its other advantages over the KJV, it is worthy to take the place of the KJV for use in public and private devotions.

However, we have not completely overlooked the KJV in this study. Where particularly good or poor translations of the KJV have come to our attention, they have been included. In some instances where the RSV is outstandingly superior to the KJV, this fact is mentioned.

The procedure which we follow in presenting this material is as follows. Rather than go through the two letters verse by verse, pointing out strong points and weak points, we have again tried to classify items wherever possible. Under each



classification, the sequence of verses in the text is followed.

Where it is impossible to determine dogmatically what the proper interpretation of a particular passage is, we show how the RSV handles the exegetical problem, and we indicate whether the RSV translation is textually possible, supported by good evidence, and in conformity to the context and the rest of Scripture.

Where the RSV translation is an accurate translation, but for some reason we prefer a slightly different translation, these instances are not included in this chapter, but are given in Chapter VI, "Suggestions for Improvement of the RSV."

### Basic Considerations

The RSV is an authorized translation, intended for public and private use by all American Protestants. This intended use of the RSV necessarily imposes certain restrictions upon it. The RSV must say what the Greek says; but it must not say more than the Greek says. The RSV must not become involved in exegetical controversies. Where the meaning of the Greek text is clear, there is no problem. But where good, scholarly and orthodox, commentators can not agree on the exact interpretation of a passage, the RSV must try to avoid taking sides wherever possible. Otherwise, by taking sides, the RSV would render itself useless to many of the people for



whose use it is intended.

On the other hand, every translation is necessarily also an interpretation, at least to some extent. The RSV can not avoid interpreting. Where it does interpret, we must evaluate the interpretation on the basis of its usefulness to the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

It would be ideal if a translation could say exactly the same thing in English that the original says in Greek, and in exactly the same way. But this is not possible. Even where the Greek can be literally translated into English words, such a translation is often not nearly as meaningful and clear as the original was to Greek readers. Therefore, a literal translation must often be discarded in favor of a paraphrase, in order to bring out in English the full meaning of the original. A good translation is one that conveys to the reader through the medium of English words the same thought content, images, and mood that the original conveyed to its readers through the medium of Greek words.

#### Especially Good Translations of the RSV

"With joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 1:6), brings out the genitive of source.

"What a welcome we had" (1 Thess. 1:9), a very good paraphrase.

"Our visit to you" (1 Thess. 2:1), a good paraphrase.

"Our appeal does not spring from error" (1 Thess. 2:3);



appeal is a good translation, and spring from brings out the genitive of source.

"To share with you . . . our own selves" (1 Thess. 2:8).

"Displease God and oppose all men by hindering us" (1 Thess. 2:16).

"You yourselves know that this is to be our lot" (1 Thess. 3:3), a very good paraphrase.

"As you learned from us" (1 Thess. 4:1), a good interpretation of παρελάβετε.

"Do so more and more" (1 Thess. 4:1 and 4:10), a very good paraphrase.

"And indeed you do love all the brethren throughout Macedonia" (1 Thess. 4:10), a very good paraphrase.

"Aspire to live quietly" (1 Thess. 4:11).

"So that you may command the respect of outsiders, and be dependent on nobody" (1 Thess. 4:12), an excellent paraphrase.

"For that day to surprise you" (1 Thess. 5:4), a good paraphrase.

"So then let us not sleep" (1 Thess. 5:6), an emphatic conclusion.

"Let us keep awake" (1 Thess. 5:6).

"Since we belong to the day" (1 Thess. 5:8), a good rendering of the participial construction.

"Therefore encourage one another" (1 Thess. 5:11).

"To respect those who labor among you" (1 Thess. 5:12),



an excellent rendering of *εἰδέναι*.<sup>1</sup>

"See that none of you repays evil for evil" (1 Thess. 5:15).

"Seek to do good to one another and to all" (1 Thess. 5:15), a good interpretive paraphrase.

"Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22).

"Since indeed God deems it just" (2 Thess. 1:6), a good interpretive paraphrase. Literally, the phrase reads, "If indeed (it is) a just thing with God." The context indicates that an affirmative is implied in the condition: "If indeed it is a just thing with God (as it certainly is)."

"When he comes on that day" (2 Thess. 1:10), a good transposition of the adverbial modifier to a place where it makes more sense in English than it would at the end of the verse.

"To the effect that the day of the Lord has come" (2 Thess. 2:2).

"Unless the rebellion comes first" (2 Thess. 2:3). The commentators transliterate with apostasy. But the dictionary

<sup>1</sup>This rendering is supported by the following commentators:

George Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Herdmans, 1953), p. 71.

James Everett Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), p. 192; cf. pp. 147-8 for further comments on the term.

William Hendriksen, Exposition of I and II Thessalonians, in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), footnote, p. 134.



definition of apostasy makes it a pretty weak word today. Rebellion is much more forceful.

"Exalts himself against . . . every object of worship" (2 Thess. 2:4), a good rendering of *ἐβύρα*.

"They refused to love the truth" (2 Thess. 2:10), and, "If anyone refuses to obey what we say" (2 Thess. 3:14). These are both good interpretive paraphrases. The first one also makes the objective genitive clear.

"And so be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10), a good paraphrase.

"That the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph" (2 Thess. 3:1), an excellent paraphrase.

"It was not because we have not that right" (2 Thess. 3:9), an excellent translation.

"Living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work" (2 Thess. 3:11). Mere busybodies is transposed from its original position in the Greek. In Greek there is a very forceful play on words. The RSV does not have the same play on words. But it retains the force of the expression by transposing mere busybodies. The play on words can not be exactly expressed in English. The best approximation of the original pun would probably be, "Living in idleness, not at all busy, but busybodies." But even this does not really express the feeling of the Greek. The RSV is a good translation here.

"To do their work in quietness and to earn their own living" (2 Thess. 3:12), a good interpretive paraphrase.

"What we say in this letter" (2 Thess. 3:14), a very good



Paraphrase.

"But warn him as a brother" (2 Thess. 3:15).

"This is the mark in every letter of mine" (2 Thess. 3:17), a good explanatory (interpretive) insertion.

### RSV Translations Highly Superior to the KJV

KJV: "In God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ."

RSV: "In God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:1). There is no ἐν in the Greek text. The RSV ties the Father and the Son more closely together than does the KJV.

KJV: "patience"; RSV: "steadfastness" (1 Thess. 1:3 and 2 Thess. 1:4).

KJV: "Brethren beloved, your election of God." RSV: "Brethren beloved by God, that he has chosen you" (1 Thess. 1:4). "Beloved by God" is much better than "beloved, your election of God." "That he has chosen you" is a very good interpretive paraphrase, exactly bringing out the meaning of the Greek. The Greek says literally, "the electing of you." "That he has elected you" might be preferred to the RSV translation by some. But since modern Americans usually associate the word elect with voting, chosen is actually a better translation.

KJV: "comforted"; RSV: "encouraged" (1 Thess. 2:11).

KJV: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing." RSV: "And we also thank God constantly for this" (1 Thess. 2:13). The KJV gives the impression that it is pointing to



what has gone before. The RSV clearly points to what is to follow; and this is correct.

KJV: "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." RSV: "Esteem them very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thess. 5:13). The RSV is more clear to the modern reader.

KJV: "Wherefore also we pray always for you." RSV: "To this end we always pray for you" (2 Thess. 1:11).

KJV: "He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." RSV: "He who not restrains it will do so until he is out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:7). In addition to being an improvement of the KJV from the standpoint of modern English, the RSV makes it very clear who the second he is. The it refers to the "mystery of lawlessness," not to the "man of lawlessness." The RSV translation keeps the antecedent of it clear, and it makes it clear that the he who must first be out of the way is the one who is doing the restraining, and not the lawless one. The KJV does not say this, but it gives the impression to many careless listeners that the one who must be out of the way is the lawless one. Then, when the listener hears verse eight, he becomes confused.

KJV: "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you." RSV: "But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you" (2 Thess. 3:3).

KJV: "That we might not be chargeable to any of you."



RSV: "That we might not burden any of you" (2 Thess. 3:8). The KJV is vague to modern readers. The RSV in context is more clear.

#### Especially Good Translations of the KJV

"Unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father" (1 Thess. 1:1), a good interpretive paraphrase, clearly showing that it is the church, not the Thessalonians, that is to be taken with the expression "in God the Father," etc.

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober" (1 Thess. 5:8), good emphasis on us in contrast to those who sleep and those who get drunk at night. The RSV also brings out this emphasis, but in a different way.

#### Poor Translations of the RSV

"How you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). This is weak. The KJV is more forceful: "To serve the living and true God." But this is not what the Greek says. It is not necessary to say the God. It is clear from the context who this God is. But there should be a greater emphasis on living and true than there is in the RSV. This is the point of contrast between the idols and God. The Greek emphasizes these adjectives by placing them after the noun: "a God, living and true." A perfectly literal translation would be more forceful here than the RSV



translation. Or, perhaps one would prefer to translate: "a God who is living and true," or, "a God who is alive and genuine."

"If anyone will not work" (2 Thess. 3:10). The Greek says, "If someone (anyone) does not wish (does not have the will) to work." In old English, this is the meaning of the word will. In modern English, a more accurate translation would be: "If anyone does not want to work." However, it is possible that the RSV translators meant will not in the sense of stubborn refusal. If so, however, it would be better to translate: "If anyone refuses to work." The word will is too easily misunderstood to mean a simple future.

#### Especially Poor Translations of the KJV

"The Lord direct your hearts . . . into the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Thess. 3:5). Milligan specifically rejects this translation of the KJV.<sup>2</sup>

"Not because we have not power" (2 Thess. 3:9). If the KJV had translated: "Not because we have not authority," this would have been better. Here the RSV has an excellent translation: "It was not because we have not that right."<sup>3</sup> The Greek word is ἐξουσίαν.

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<sup>2</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Already discussed, supra, p. 66.



## RSV Omission of Greek Words

The RSV Does Not Translate *καί*

In 1 Thessalonians 5:25, it is not certain whether the *καί* is really a part of the text. But if it is, it could well be translated: "Brothers, pray for us, too." Paul has been telling the Thessalonians how he constantly prays for them. In the preceding context he has just uttered a prayer for them. Now he is asking them to pray also for him. Frame thinks this means: "Pray for us as well (as for yourselves and others)." But his reason for adopting this view<sup>4</sup> is no more convincing than the one which we have set forth above.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:5, the RSV does not translate *καί* in the expression: "for which (*καί*) you are suffering." Frame and Hendriksen translate with you too. But Milligan omits the *καί* from his translation; and this seems to be the best thing to do. If the *καί* has any significance, it is probably this, to call attention to the fact that this is really what "you" are suffering for. One might translate: "for which, indeed, you are suffering." But it is probably smoothest to omit the *καί* altogether. The sentence conveys the meaning in English without the word.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:11, the RSV does not translate the first *καί* in the sentence. Here there seems to be no real purpose for translating the *καί*, unless one takes it in the

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<sup>4</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 215.



sense that Frame does,<sup>5</sup> which this writer considers doubtful.

### The RSV Does Not Translate *δέ*

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, the fact that the RSV begins a new paragraph makes translation of the *δέ* unnecessary.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:5, it seems unnecessary to translate the word.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:8, the *δέ* of *οὐδέ* can be translated with and, or it can be omitted. It makes no difference.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:14, the RSV accounts for omitting *δέ* by beginning a new paragraph. If one should want to translate it, one could use now or however.

### Other Words Not Translated

In 1 Thessalonians 1:5, the RSV omits *καθώς* at this point:

for our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.  
(*καθώς*) You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

The clause following the *καθώς* is an epexegetis of what has preceded.<sup>6</sup> The RSV, by dropping the *καθώς* and beginning a new sentence, keeps the sentence from becoming a long one, and at the same time retains the force of the conjunction. The very fact that the new sentence begins with "you know,"

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<sup>5</sup>Frame translates: "We too as well as you pray"; op. cit., pp. 238-9.

<sup>6</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 9.



makes it clear to the reader and hearer that what follows is a further explanation of what has just been said.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:7, the RSV does not translate  $\delta\tau\epsilon$ . The sentence reads: "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; ( $\delta\tau\epsilon$ ) we were not idle when we were with you." Here it would be difficult to translate the  $\delta\tau\epsilon$ . Obviously it is epexegetical. But to translate with namely would be no better than to translate with because. What follows does not give the reason why or the way in which the Thessalonians are to imitate the Apostles. It goes on to remind them of how the Apostles acted when they were with them. It reminds them of the example which they are to imitate. One could translate with for, or simply omit the  $\delta\tau\epsilon$  and place a semi-colon after imitate us, as the RSV does.

#### Unwarranted Translations of the KJV

In 1 Thessalonians 1:10, the KJV translates: "Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." The Greek word is in the present tense,  $\rho\upsilon\acute{\nu}\eta\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota$ , and there are no textual variants.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:8, the KJV translates: "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is no textual warrant for the insertion of Christ.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:17, the KJV inverts the order of work and word for no apparent reason whatsoever. The text reads: "in every good work and word." The KJV translates: "in every good word and work."



## RSV Handling of Exegetical Problems

In 1 Thessalonians 1:2, a problem arises in determining with what to take ἀδιαλείπτως. By his versification, Nestle indicates that it is to be taken with verse two. But by his punctuation, he indicates that it really belongs with verse three. Commentators are not sure where it fits. Milligan takes it with verse two,<sup>7</sup> while Frame takes it with verse three.<sup>8</sup> The KJV takes it with verse three, translating: "making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith," etc. The RSV takes it with verse two, translating: "constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering," etc. This writer personally prefers the RSV translation.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:3, there is a series of twenty-two genitives. The RSV translates a part of the series thus: "your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope." While it is grammatically possible to translate this series in the following manner: "your work, namely, faith; and labor, namely, love; and patience, namely, hope";<sup>9</sup> the commentators agree that faith, love, and hope are genitives of source. They express this in various ways in their transla-

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>9</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 47.



tions. The RSV leaves the meaning vague, as does also the KJV. It would be a great improvement if the RSV would translate these genitives as it does in verse six of the same chapter: "joy inspired by the Holy Spirit." The present series would then read: "your work inspired by faith, and labor inspired by love, and steadfastness inspired by hope." Or, one could substitute prompted by or resulting from for inspired by.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:11, some more genitives occur. Since they fit into this discussion, we include them here. The expression reads in the RSV: "fulfil every good resolve and work of faith by his power." The commentators agree that of faith is again a genitive of source and should be translated as we have suggested in the preceding paragraph. But on "εὐδοκίαν ἀγαθῆς" they do not agree. Milligan translates: "good pleasure (or, delight) in goodness."<sup>10</sup> Frame also takes it as resolve after goodness.<sup>11</sup> But Hendriksen takes it as a genitive of source, and translates: "resolve prompted by goodness."<sup>12</sup> The RSV translation nicely avoids the controversy. A good resolve is always a resolve to do something good. At the same time, only inherent goodness or a desire to be good can prompt a person to make a good resolve.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:3, the word ἐμπροσθεν occurs. Here

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<sup>10</sup> Milligan, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>11</sup> Frame, op. cit., p. 240.

<sup>12</sup> Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 163.



it is difficult to determine with what this word is to be taken. Does it modify remembering, the virtues of the Thessalonians, their hope specifically, or Christ? The RSV takes it with remembering, and translates, "remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." The commentators attach ἐμπροσθεν loosely to hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. Grammatically, this seems the most logical. But the RSV translation is not by any means ruled out by grammar. And it certainly makes much more sense than any attempt loosely to attach ἐμπροσθεν to the end of the sentence. Left at the end, the phrase hangs on so loosely that neither the reader nor the hearer knows exactly what its significance is. The RSV gives a very clear meaning. But perhaps the RSV is more clear than what Paul originally meant.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:2, it seems that the RSV translation, "in the face of great opposition," best fits the context, although Hendriksen reverts to the thought of the KJV by translating: "with profound solicitude."<sup>13</sup>

In 1 Thessalonians 4:4, the exact meaning of τὸ ἐαυτοῦ σκεῶς κτεῖσθαι has long been debated. Many commentators in the history of the Church have taken σκεῶς as referring to the body. Other commentators, from early times to the present, have understood σκεῶς as a clear reference to a person's wife. Milligan favors body and gives some strong support to

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-1.



this translation,<sup>14</sup> while Frame presents both sides, but prefers wife.<sup>15</sup> In this same verse, Frame also thinks that *εἰ δένα* means respect, or appreciate the worth of.<sup>16</sup> The RSV translates: "that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor."

In 1 Thessalonians 4:6, the RSV translates: "that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in this matter." In a footnote, the RSV suggests the possibility of another translation: "that no man transgress, and defraud his brother in business." Milligan, Frame, and Hendriksen would all agree with the RSV. Milligan points out specifically that *ἐν τῷ πράγματι* does not here mean, "in matters of business," and that in no case can it mean, "in any matter," as the KJV translates.<sup>17</sup> Milligan and Frame suggest translating "take advantage of" rather than "wrong."

In 1 Thessalonians 4:14, the RSV translates: "even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep." Milligan translates: "those who have fallen asleep through Jesus." While he admits the grammatical possibility of the translation adopted by the RSV, he uses the following expansion of the clause to explain his own translation:

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<sup>14</sup>Milligan, op. cit., pp. 48-9.

<sup>15</sup>Frame, op. cit., pp. 148-50.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 146, 148.

<sup>17</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 50.



so also we believe that those who fell asleep through Jesus, and in consequence were raised by God through Him, will God bring with Him.<sup>18</sup>

But Milligan's expanded clause says a lot more than his simple translation does. His translation stresses the fact that the Christians have fallen asleep through Jesus. The RSV translation would seem to stress the fact that it is through Jesus that God will resurrect the believers and bring them with Him on judgment day. Since to fall asleep through Jesus really doesn't make much sense,<sup>19</sup> this writer personally prefers the RSV translation. There is no heresy involved in either translation.<sup>20</sup>

The concept of idleness on the part of some of the Thessalonians occurs at several points in the RSV (1 Thess. 5:4; 2 Thess. 3:6,7,11). Whether the verb, adjective, and adverbs that occur in the text actually mean idleness, or not (and there is disagreement among scholars on this point), it is clear from the context that idleness is the thing that St. Paul had in mind. Therefore, the RSV translation is much more vivid than the KJV, which translates: "unruly" (1 Thess. 5:14), and "disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6,7,11).

In 1 Thessalonians 5:14, the RSV translates: "admonish

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>19</sup>St. Paul speaks of the dead in Christ in verse 16 of the same chapter.

<sup>20</sup>For an interesting discussion of the arguments on both sides of the issue, see Hendriksen, op. cit., pp. 112-3.



the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all." The KJV has all men. Milligan and Frame understand πάντας as referring to all men in general. Hendriksen translates: "exercise patience toward everyone."<sup>21</sup> But in his comments, he applies the exercising of patience to anyone who is "disorderly, faint-hearted, or weak."<sup>22</sup> In the context, it would seem that the most natural thing would be to take πάντας with the three preceding types of weak brothers. The idle, the fainthearted, and the weak are all masculine plural nouns. πάντας is also masculine plural. The RSV seems to have the right idea here. At least, those who might disagree, can not accuse the RSV of falsifying the text or of translating in a way that is not in accord with grammar and the context.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:5 and 11, the expression make worthy occurs in the RSV. In both of these places Milligan<sup>23</sup> and Hendriksen<sup>24</sup> translate with the expression count worthy, as does the KJV. Frame uses deem worthy.<sup>25</sup> Since there are two different, though related, words involved; and since there is general unanimity among scholars on the meaning of the one

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 133, 135.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>23</sup>Milligan, op. cit., pp. 88, 96.

<sup>24</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., pp. 156-7, 162.

<sup>25</sup>Frame, op. cit., pp. 221, 226-7, 240.



term in its context here, but not on the meaning of the other; we consider the two verses separately.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:11, the expression in question is: "ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν." Thayer gives as the meaning of ἀξιόω (also with reference to this verse), "to judge worthy, deem deserving."<sup>26</sup> Souter translates, "I account or treat as worthy."<sup>27</sup> Liddell and Scott also give these meanings (and others) for this word. But they do not give a single instance of usage of the term in classical Greek in the sense of make worthy.<sup>28</sup> Moulton and Milligan support the meaning "count worthy" with evidence from the papyri and inscriptions, although they cite only one example from an inscription in which the verb is used in this sense, and only one example from a papyrus in which the noun ἀξιωμα is used in this sense.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, the article in Kittel gives the translation "wuerdig machen" as the only meaning possible in the context of 2 Thessalonians 1:11 because of the meaning of the

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<sup>26</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: American Book Co., 1889), p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander Souter, A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (8th edition; New York: American Book Company, 1897), p. 156.

<sup>29</sup> James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1930, p. 51.



Greek word κλήσις.<sup>30</sup> In a footnote, the author of this same article refers to Ernst von Dobschuetz's commentary (in German) on the letters to the Thessalonians (1907). This footnote also cites the letter to Diognetus (9, 1) as another place in which ἀξιόω is used in the sense of make worthy. Bauer translates the expression in 2 Thessalonians 1:11 in this way: "dasz euch Gott wuerdig mache der Berufung, der ihr bereits Folge geleistet habt."<sup>31</sup> He also cites the letter to Diognetus as another example of this use of the word.

The passage in the letter to Diognetus reads:

ἔτι ἐν τῷ τότε χρόνῳ ἐλεγχθέντες ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἔργων ἀνάξιοι ζωῆς νῦν ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ χρηστότητος ἀξιωθῶμεν, καὶ τὸ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς πανευφραντες ἀδύνατον εἰσέλθειν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ θεοῦ δυνατοὶ γεννηθῶμεν [italics mine].<sup>32</sup>

Notice how ἀνάξιοι and ἀξιωθῶμεν run parallel to ἀδύνατον and δυνατοὶ γεννηθῶμεν.

Furthermore, as Kittel and Bauer point out, count worthy makes no sense in this context. Paul is telling the Thessalonians that he always prays for them that "our God may make you worthy of his call." Here Paul is speaking of sanctifi-

<sup>30</sup> Werner Foerster, "ἄξιος, ἀνάξιος, ἀξιόω, καταξιόω," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), I, 379.

<sup>31</sup> Walter Bauer, Griechisch-Deutsches Woerterbuch: zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der uebrigen urchristlichen Literatur (Vierte, voellig neu bearbeitete Auflage; Berlin: Alfred Toepelmann, c.1952), col. 142.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Bihlmeyer, Die Apostolischen Vaeter, in Sammlung Ausgewahlter Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichtlicher Quellen-schriften (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1924), pp. 146-7.



cation. The Thessalonians have already been called (1 Thess. 1:4). Now to say "We pray for you that our God may count (or, consider) you worthy of his call" makes no sense at all. God has already counted them worthy of his call, and he has called them. Paul now prays that by his power God may sanctify the Thessalonians and make them truly worthy of the call which they have already received and experienced. Paul is not praying that the Thessalonians may finally come to deserve by their own works the call of God. But he is praying that by the grace of God they may be made into people who fully live the new life into which they have been called, "so that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in you" (2 Thess. 1:12).

It is also interesting that there are no textual variants to indicate that some scribe noticed an expression here that made no sense, and tried to correct it. This would seem to indicate that the meaning make worthy was not as uncommon in the early Church as we often think.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:5, after having spoken of the steadfastness and faith of the Thessalonians in all their persecutions and afflictions which they are enduring, Paul goes on to say, "This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, εἰς τὸ καταξιώθηκα ὑμᾶς τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, for which you are suffering." Thayer says that καταξιών means "to account worthy, judge worthy."<sup>33</sup> Souter translates the word

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<sup>33</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 335.



with "I deem (count) worthy."<sup>34</sup> Liddell and Scott give the same meaning.<sup>35</sup> Moulton and Milligan state: "Like the simplex, *καταξιόω* denotes not 'make' but 'count worthy.'"<sup>36</sup> They then offer one example from the papyri and one from an inscription in which the verb is used in the active voice in this sense. These examples are followed by two examples from the papyri and one from an inscription in which the passive voice of the verb is used in this sense.<sup>37</sup> The article in Kittel gives this meaning for the verb in this verse: "Fuer wuerdig halten und demgemaesz handeln = wuerdigen, auch einer Strafe. . . . das N T ausschliesslichem Gebrauch des Kompositums *καταξιόω* die Unverdientheit goettlicher Gnadengabe ausdrueckt."<sup>38</sup> Bauer gives as the meaning of the passive voice, "gewuerdigt werden."<sup>39</sup>

From this it seems that a number of translations are possible: (1) That you may be counted worthy of the kingdom; (2) That you may be guaranteed the kingdom; (3) That you may be granted (or, given) the kingdom; (4) That you may be honored (or, avored) with (the gift of) the kingdom. The first

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<sup>34</sup>Souter, op. cit., p. 127.

<sup>35</sup>Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 766.

<sup>36</sup>Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., p. 330.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 330-1.

<sup>38</sup>Foerster, op. cit., pp. 379-80.

<sup>39</sup>Bauer, op. cit., col. 753.



doesn't really make much sense. What can persecution have to do with God's counting a person worthy of the kingdom? It is probably for this reason that the RSV translators chose to use made worthy, thinking that the context demands it in spite of the fact that most scholars (at least all of the ones that we have consulted) deny the validity of this translation.

The RSV translation really involves no heresy. We often speak of persecution as a purging, as a purification by fire, purging out the dross and leaving only the pure sterling. We also call persecution a testing of faith and a strengthening of faith for those who do not fall in times of persecution. And by faith we are worthy of the kingdom, not by virtue of our own worthiness, but by virtue of the worthiness of Christ, imputed to us by faith in him. In the verses that follow, the RSV makes it clear in its translation that the kingdom will be given to believers.

Perhaps it would be better in this context to translate according to one of the possible translations that we have listed above as 2, 3, and 4. A fifth possibility also makes good sense in the context: "That you may fully appreciate the kingdom." But this may be stretching the Greek too far.

In 2 Thessalonians 1:7, the RSV translates: "his mighty angels," as does also the KJV. Milligan and Hendriksen prefer "angels of his power."<sup>40</sup> But Frame argues well for his

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<sup>40</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 89; Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 159.



translation, which is: "his angels of power."<sup>41</sup>

In 2 Thessalonians 1:8, it is debatable whether "those who do not know God" and "those who do not obey the gospel" are the same group of persons, or whether the one group consists of heathen, while the other consists of Jews. The RSV makes them two separate groups: "inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Frame also adopts this view.<sup>42</sup> Milligan and Hendriksen think that both expressions refer to the same people.<sup>43</sup> The KJV also refers both expressions to the same people. If this view is correct, the simplest way to alter the RSV would be to drop the second upon those who. But it is not at all certain that the RSV is not correct.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:2, the RSV takes only letter as the thing purporting to be from Paul: "either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us." This writer likes Milligan's statement that any or all of the things mentioned are included.<sup>44</sup> A slight adjustment in the RSV translation would convey this meaning: "not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited by spirit or (by) word or (by)

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<sup>41</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 221, 233.

<sup>43</sup>Milligan, op. cit., pp. 88, 90; Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>44</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 95.



letter, purporting to be from us."

In 2 Thessalonians 2:4, the RSV translates: "who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god." The KJV translates: "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God." Obviously, what Paul wants to say is that the man of lawlessness recognizes no God but himself. He sets himself above all Gods. But no Christian can speak of Gods in the plural, because he knows that there is only one true God. For this reason, Paul inserts the word *λεγόμενον*. The entire expression reads, "*πάντα λεγόμενον θεόν*." Most commentators feel that Paul is here including both the true God and all the false gods who are called God by others in this one expression, as we have indicated above.<sup>45</sup> But this does not solve the problem of translation. If we translate as does the RSV, the expression can include only the false gods. If we translate as does the KJV, the expression, taken literally, suggests the possibility that the things (or person/s) that we Christians call God are not actually God at all. We only call them God, just as the heathen call many things God. If we translate, "every one called god,"<sup>46</sup> "every one called God,"<sup>47</sup> or, "everything (that is) called God,"<sup>48</sup> we still have

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<sup>45</sup>For a fuller exploration of this aspect of the problem, cf. Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 255; Hendriksen, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-8.

<sup>46</sup>Milligan, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>47</sup>Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>48</sup>Hendriksen, *op. cit.*, p. 170.



not solved the problem. If we paraphrase to indicate that the expression includes both the true God and the false gods, then we are no longer saying what St. Paul said. Since it is not absolutely certain that Paul was including both, the RSV translation is possible. But it would probably satisfy more people to translate as the KJV does.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9, the RSV translates: "with all power and with pretended signs and wonders." The KJV has: "with all power and signs and lying wonders." The three commentators feel that both *πάση* and *ψεύδους* are to be taken with all three accompanying features of the coming of the lawless one. In order to indicate this in their translations, they translate like this: "attended by all power and signs and wonders inspired by falsehood,"<sup>49</sup> or, "all manner of false miracles and false signs and false wonders."<sup>50</sup> But *δυνάμει* is singular, while *σημείois* and *τέρασιν* are plural. Therefore, *δυνάμει* does not seem to mean "miracles," except by interpretation, perhaps. And if it means "power," it can hardly be pretended, although it could spring from falsehood. We can not solve the problem here. The RSV seems to be better than the KJV. But perhaps the RSV could still be improved at this point. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that the RSV translation is better than that of the commen-

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<sup>49</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>50</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 102.



tators consulted.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10, the RSV translates: "and with all wicked deception." The commentators take *ἐκ κείνης* as a genitive of source, and translate: "all deceit that originates in unrighteousness,"<sup>51</sup> and, "all deceit inspired by unrighteousness."<sup>52</sup> Milligan has a very good paraphrase of this idea: "every kind of unrighteousness calculated to deceive those," etc.<sup>53</sup> The RSV pretty well conveys the sense as it stands. But perhaps it could be improved.

#### Minor Points at Which Some Might Criticize the RSV

"Taking care of" seems weak for "cherishing" (1 Thess. 2:7). But "taking care of" is the common expression today, while "cherishing" is hardly ever used. The fact that this is tender care is clear from the context.

Although too much stress must not be placed on *ἐαυτῆς*,<sup>54</sup> it seems that in this context "her own children" would be better than the RSV "her children" (1 Thess. 2:7).

The RSV inserts a non-textual modifier in 1 Thessalonians 2:16. But since it is an explanatory insertion for the sake of clarity, it seems to be a good thing. The RSV reads,

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<sup>51</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 184.

<sup>52</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>53</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 22.



"God's wrath." Certainly it is implied in the text that this wrath is God's wrath.

In 1 Thessalonians 3:2, the RSV reads, "to establish you in your faith and to exhort you." Literally, both the establishing and the exhorting are with respect to "your" faith. One might prefer, "to strengthen you and to encourage you with respect to your faith."<sup>55</sup>

In 1 Thessalonians 3:11 and 2 Thessalonians 2:16, *αὐτός* and a singular verb go with God the Father and Son. Neither the KJV nor the RSV adequately expresses this. In the first instance, a good translation would be: Now may God himself, our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct, etc. In the second instance, it is awkward to try to express the Greek construction: Now may he, our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father, who, etc.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3, the RSV replaces "fornication" of the KJV with "immorality." "Immorality" may be less specific, but even "fornication" is not an entirely accurate translation. "Immorality" seems pretty good here.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13 and 5:6, both the KJV and the RSV translate *οἱ λοιποί* with "others." To say "the rest" would not be entirely accurate in these contexts. "Others" is better.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:14, the RSV translates: "For since

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<sup>55</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 81.



We believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so," etc. This is a good interpretation of the  $\epsilon\iota$  . . .  $\sigma\upsilon\tau\omega\varsigma$ . The commentators paraphrase in their comments in order to bring out the full meaning.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, some might prefer to take "with the archangel's call and with the sound of the trumpet of God" as an apposition to "with a cry of command."<sup>56</sup> But the RSV may just as well be correct in making a series of the three expressions.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:3, it would be more literal to say, "they will by no means escape." The RSV reads, "there will be no escape."

In 2 Thessalonians 1:9, the word "exclusion" in the RSV is an interpretive paraphrase. Perhaps this is more than the Greek says. But it nicely emphasizes the textual thought of separation. Perhaps more accurate would be: "They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, exclusion," etc, substituting a comma for the and of the RSV.

"By his appearing and his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8) is not literal. But it is probably better for the modern reader than any of the translations suggested by the commentators. Literally, the phrase reads, "by the manifestation of his coming."

"Strong delusion" of both the KJV and the RSV (2 Thess. 2:11) might be questioned. But Milligan supports this, making

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<sup>56</sup>So Milligan, op. cit., p. 59; Frame, op. cit., p. 174.



it even stronger, and translating, "fatal delusion."<sup>57</sup>

Where the RSV has "what is false," and the KJV has "a lie" (2 Thess. 2:11), some prefer to make this more definite, and read, "the lie," or, "the falsehood," specifically, the falsehood of the Anti-christ. Perhaps in context it would be better to translate: "that falsehood."

In 2 Thessalonians 3:6, some might prefer "draw back from" or "shrink back from" to the RSV translation, "keep away from." But the RSV translation is good, nevertheless.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:13, it would seem to be better to take the acrist as ingressive, and translate, "become weary," or, "grow weary," than to state simply, "do not be weary," as do both the KJV and the RSV.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:14, "become ashamed" or "be put to shame" or "be shamed" would seem to be better than the KJV and RSV translation, "be ashamed."

In 2 Thessalonians 3:16, since "peace" has the article both times in Greek, it might be better to translate: "Now may the Lord of (real) peace himself give you his (or, that) peace." The KJV and RSV have "give you peace."

### Conclusion

The RSV is not a perfect translation. Neither is the KJV. There never has been and probably never will be a per-

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<sup>57</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 105.



fect translation. But the RSV has done a very good job of translating the letters to the Thessalonians into language that speaks clearly to Christians of today. There are, as we have indicated, many points at which not everyone will agree with the RSV interpretation. This is necessarily the case with any translation. In Chapter VI of this thesis, "Suggestions for Improvement of the RSV," we offer our own suggestions for changes in the RSV translation. At some points we feel that the RSV has adopted a doubtful rendering. At other points our suggestions are only personal preferences.

There is not a single place in the letters to the Thessalonians where there is reason to accuse the RSV translators of intentionally mistranslating the Greek text. There are some translations that seem to be poor. But many of these have simply been taken over directly from the KJV. Others occur in places where no one can dogmatically state the true meaning of the passage. In many of these places, the RSV translators have been forced to make some choice, and at times they may not have made what we would consider the best choice. But it is evident that in every case they have tried to make the choice that seemed best to them in the context and that would make the most sense to modern American readers.

The RSV certainly does not at any point in these letters translate in such a way as to subvert Scriptural doctrine, as has been charged, or to vitiate the doctrinal content of any passage.



## CHAPTER VI

### SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE RSV

#### Introduction

Though the RSV translation of the letters to the Thessalonians is a good and useful translation as it stands, we offer in this chapter some suggestions for its improvement.

It would be possible for anyone who has studied the letters to the Thessalonians to make suggestions for changes in almost every verse of the RSV translation. Many of these suggestions would necessarily be personal opinions only, which would not at all be preferred by many others. Such a list of suggestions would hardly be of any real value.

This writer understands that the translators of the RSV are planning revisions. He believes that they will be inclined to heed well-grounded suggestions. He therefore offers in this chapter the suggestions which he feels would, if heeded, prove to be real assets to the translation.

This chapter is divided into two major divisions. The first offers suggestions on the basis of chapters two to five of this thesis. This section is simply a collection of the suggestions that have already been made, in order that they may be viewed in a unified and easy-to-read presentation. The second section offers suggestions that have not previously been referred to in this thesis.



The first of these major sections is further divided into two more sections, the first dealing with suggestions for changes that this writer personally feels would be decided improvements, the second mentioning, for the sake of completeness, changes that this writer feels could be urged upon the RSV with good support, but which this writer personally feels need not be included.

### Suggestions on the Basis of Chapters Two to Five

#### Mechanics of This Section

Since the changes that are suggested in this section have been thoroughly discussed earlier in this thesis, a very simple reference device is used in this section. In each case, we quote a sufficient portion of the RSV to indicate the significance of the suggested change, incorporating the change into the quotation, and placing the altered parts in italics. After each alteration stands a subscript. This subscript is not a reference to a footnote, but a reference to the previous page of this thesis on which the discussion of this change begins.

#### Suggestions for Decided Improvement

Note: Some of these suggestions are highly recommended by this writer. Others are not as important, but are preferred by this writer to the readings of the RSV. These are distinguished from one another in the following way. Read-



ings which this writer highly recommends are followed by an a written in superscript position. Readings which he does not consider as important, but prefers to the RSV readings, are followed by a b written in superscript position.

This writer highly recommends that wherever the word brethren occurs, it be replaced with the word brothers.<sup>a</sup><sub>22</sub>

This writer would prefer to see many of the for's eliminated or replaced with other words. It may not be possible to eliminate this word in every case. But it would be an improvement to replace it with more meaningful words as frequently as possible. Appendix C contains a list of the occurrences of this word, together with specific suggestions for each occurrence.

#### First Thessalonians

1:2. "We give thanks to God always for all of you."<sup>a</sup><sub>23</sub>

1:3. "remembering before our God and Father your work inspired by faith, and labor prompted by love, and steadfastness resulting from hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>a</sup><sub>74</sub>

1:4. "For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you."<sup>a</sup><sub>23</sub>

1:9. "how you turned to God from idols, to serve a God who is living and true."<sup>a</sup><sub>69</sub>

2:3. "For our appeal springs neither from error nor from uncleanness, nor is it made with guile."<sup>a</sup><sub>17</sub>

2:7. "But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking



care of her own children."<sup>a</sup><sub>88</sub>

2:16. "But God's wrath has overtaken them at last."<sup>b</sup><sub>25</sub>

2:20. "Yes, you are indeed our glory and joy."<sup>a</sup><sub>17</sub>

3:2. "our brother and God's servant in the gospel of Christ." This writer highly recommends that co-worker<sup>a</sup><sub>57</sub> be placed either into the text, to replace servant, or into the footnotes as an alternate reading.

3:6. "But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love, and reported that you always remember us kindly."<sup>a</sup><sub>32</sub>

3:11. "Now may God himself, our Father and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you."<sup>a</sup><sub>89</sub>

4:6. "that no man transgress, and take advantage of his brother in this matter."<sup>b</sup><sub>77</sub>

5:3. "then sudden destruction will attack<sup>b</sup><sub>25</sub> them as labor<sup>a</sup><sub>23</sub> attacks<sup>b</sup><sub>25</sub> a woman with child."

5:10. "who died for us so that whether we wake or sleep we shall live with him."<sup>b</sup><sub>25</sub>

5:14. "And we exhort you, brothers: admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted."<sup>a</sup><sub>32</sub>

5:25. "Brothers, pray for us, too."<sup>b</sup><sub>71</sub>

## Second Thessalonians

1:5. "This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be guaranteed the kingdom of God."<sup>a</sup><sub>79,82</sub>

1:8. "inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God



and on those who do not obey."<sup>a</sup><sub>25</sub>

1:9. "They will<sup>a</sup><sub>24</sub> suffer the punishment of eternal destruction <sup>b</sup><sub>90</sub> exclusion from the presence of the Lord."

1:11. "To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and by his power fulfil every good resolve and work inspired by faith."<sup>a</sup><sub>75</sub>

2:1. "Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering to meet him."<sup>a</sup><sub>18</sub>

2:2. "not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited by spirit or by word or by letter, purporting to be from us."<sup>a</sup><sub>31</sub>

2:4. "who opposes and exalts himself against everything called God or an object of worship."<sup>a</sup><sub>86</sub>

2:11. "Therefore God sends them<sup>a</sup><sub>25</sub> a strong delusion, to make them believe that falsehood."<sup>b</sup><sub>91</sub>

2:13. "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brothers loved by the Lord."<sup>a</sup><sub>23</sub>

2:16. "Now may he, our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father, who loved us."<sup>a</sup><sub>89</sub>

3:9. "It was not because we have not that right, but because we wanted to give you in our conduct an example."<sup>a</sup><sub>31</sub>

3:10. "If any one does not want to work," or, "If any one refuses to work."<sup>a</sup><sub>70</sub>

3:13. "do not become weary in well-doing."<sup>a</sup><sub>91</sub> Still better would be: "do not become tired of doing good."

3:14. "have nothing to do with him, that he may become ashamed."<sup>a</sup><sub>91</sub>



3:16. "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times in all ways."<sup>b</sup><sub>91</sub> "The Lord be with all of you."<sup>a</sup><sub>23</sub>

3:18. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you."<sup>a</sup><sub>23</sub>

#### Possible Suggestions Not Preferred by This Writer

1 Thessalonians 1:3. "remembering your work inspired by faith, and labor prompted by love, and steadfastness resulting from hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father."<sup>a</sup><sub>75</sub>

1 Thessalonians 4:14. "even so, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus."<sup>a</sup><sub>77</sub>

1 Thessalonians 5:14. "help the weak, be patient with all men."<sup>a</sup><sub>78</sub>

2 Thessalonians 1:11. "To this end we always pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his call."<sup>a</sup><sub>79,80</sub>

#### Suggestions Not Previously Referred to

Many of these suggestions fall into the realm of pure personal opinion. But they are offered for consideration for what they are worth. Wherever there is an issue of any kind involved, some reference is given to support our suggestion. But many of the suggestions are made simply on the basis of this writer's so-called common sense. The reader may take these for what they are worth, and accept or reject them on



the basis of his own superior knowledge or greater amount of experience or common sense.

This writer contends that the words beseech, admonish, charge, and exhort are not clearly understood by very many people today. Even pastors, who use these words the most frequently, often do not really know their exact meaning. The dictionary says that they are still good words today. But this writer would like to see them replaced with more commonly used and understood words.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:1, beseech could be replaced with beg, or even with request.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:12, beseech could be replaced with beg, request, or even, simply, ask. Cf. the RSV translation of 2 Thessalonians 2:1.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:12, admonish could be replaced with counsel.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:14, admonish could be replaced with warn. Cf. the RSV translation of 2 Thessalonians 3:15.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:11, charge could be replaced with command. Cf. the RSV translation of 2 Thessalonians 3:4,10,12.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:11; 3:2; 4:1,10; 5:14; and 2 Thessalonians 3:12, exhort could be replaced with urge. In some instances, it might even be best to replace it with advise.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:16, the first comfort could be replaced with encouragement, and the second one could be replaced with encourage.



In 1 Thessalonians 1:2, ἐνί might be better expressed by translating, when we pray.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:5, it would seem to be better to translate, "not only in word, but also with power, and with the Holy Spirit and full conviction."

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9, where the RSV does translate the ἐν of attendant circumstances with the word with, it would be more clear to the modern reader to translate, "The coming of the lawless one . . . will be attended by (or, accompanied by) all power and by pretended signs and wonders."<sup>1</sup>

There are several places where it would seem that the personal pronouns need special emphasis, since Paul uses them where they are not grammatically needed unless he means to emphasize them.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:6, it would be more emphatic to translate, "And you for your part became imitators."

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, it would be more emphatic to translate, "And we, too, thank God constantly." We also can mean we, too. But it can also be taken to mean simply that we do this in addition to something else that we do.

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<sup>1</sup>So translated by the following commentators:

James Everett Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), p. 244.

William Hendriksen, Exposition of I and II Thessalonians, in New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), p. 184.



Here it seems to mean, "we too, as well as you."<sup>2</sup>

In 1 Thessalonians 2:17, "Now we, since we were" would be more emphatic than the RSV translation.<sup>3</sup> However, this would involve some other difficulties in the sentence.

In 1 Thessalonians 3:5, "For this reason I, when I could" would be more emphatic than the RSV translation. But this would again involve other difficulties.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:13, one could bring out the emphatic switch in subject by translating, "But you, brothers," or "But as for you (or, now as for you), brothers."<sup>4</sup>

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9, "how you turned to God from those idols of yours" would bring out the definite article attached to idols.<sup>5</sup>

In two places, the real contrast that is pointed out by the Greek word ἀλλά, could be brought out more forcefully by translating, "On the contrary," or, "But on the contrary." These two places are 1 Thessalonians 2:2 and 2:4.<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of a word study completed last semester, this writer would prefer to see 1 Thessalonians 2:2 trans-

<sup>2</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 117; Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>4</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 298; Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>5</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. the following: George Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 17; Frame, op. cit., p. 91; Hendriksen, op. cit., pp. 59, 63.



lated, "but though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we came right out in the open (again) with the help of our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the face of great opposition."

In 1 Thessalonians 2:9 and 2 Thessalonians 3:8, the Greek words *κόπος* and *μόχθος* occur in the same order each time. The first time the RSV translates, "labor and toil"; the second time it translates, "toil and labor." In both places "toil and hardship" or "labor and struggle" would probably be better. At least, the RSV could be consistent, and not turn the words around.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:9 and 2 Thessalonians 3:8, Paul talks about the fact that he worked when he was in Thessalonika. The Thessalonians knew exactly what he meant. But many people today think, unless they are instructed otherwise, that this means that Paul and his companions worked hard at preaching the gospel. It would be more clear to say, "we worked at a trade."<sup>7</sup>

1 Thessalonians 2:13 could be improved in this way: "you accepted it not as man's word but as what it really is, God's word, which is at work." This is more emphatic. It also makes it clear that it is the word that is at work.

1 Thessalonians 3:4 could be improved by replacing come to pass with happened or turned out.

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<sup>7</sup>Hendriksen, op. cit., pp. 65-7.



1 Thessalonians 4:9 could be improved by reading: "But concerning love for the brothers."<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps it would be more vivid to translate 1 Thessalonians 5:2: "you yourselves know accurately." Or perhaps exactly or perfectly well would be better.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:5, why not translate, "we do not belong to the night or to darkness"? Cf. the RSV translation of 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

1 Thessalonians 5:10 could be improved by translating, "whether we are awake or sleeping," or, "whether we are watching or sleeping."

In 1 Thessalonians 5:14, perhaps "uphold the weak" would be the best translation.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, wholly is particularly ambiguous when it is read aloud to others. We suggest a paraphrase: through and through.<sup>9</sup>

In 1 Thessalonians 5:27, perhaps "I solemnly appeal to you" would be more clear to modern hearers than "adjure."<sup>10</sup>

In 2 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2:13, "we feel personally obligated" would probably be more clear than "we are bound."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 103; Frame, op. cit., p. 157.

<sup>9</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 77; Frame, op. cit., p. 210; Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Alexander Souter, A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 85.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Milligan, op. cit., p. 86.



Relief from persecution would seem to be better idiom than rest from persecution (2 Thess. 1:7).

In 2 Thessalonians 2:4, perhaps sanctuary would be more accurate than temple.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:6, "in his time" can give the impression that it means "when he gets ready." But evidently the time is not his own good time, but the time set for him by God. Perhaps it would be more clear to say, "at the time set (or, appointed) for him," or even, "when his time comes," although this latter suggestion, too, could be misunderstood.<sup>12</sup>

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10, the present tense could be brought out better with a paraphrase: "those who are (already) on the path of (or, way to) destruction,"<sup>13</sup> or even, "those destined to destruction."<sup>14</sup>

In 2 Thessalonians 3:3, perhaps it would not be putting too much emphasis on the ἐστίν to translate, "But the Lord really is faithful."<sup>15</sup>

In 2 Thessalonians 3:4, it would be better idiom to translate, "that you are doing and will continue to do."

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, this writer would prefer to read the Greek in this way: "For also, when we were with you,

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. Frame, op. cit., p. 263.

<sup>13</sup>Milligan, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>14</sup>Frame, op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 289.



this we commanded you"; and to translate: "Indeed, when we were with you, we gave you also this command."

### Concluding Remarks

This writer has tried to indicate by the way in which he has expressed himself just exactly how he feels about the various suggestions made. He would appreciate very much having some of them incorporated into a revised RSV. Others he has offered as only one man's opinion. He hopes that these personal suggestions will stimulate thinking on the part of others who are much better qualified than he to make the final decision on what things to change and what things not to change.



## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this study, we set out to find the answer to this question: How does the RSV translation of the letters of St. Paul to the Thessalonians compare with the KJV as an English translation suitable for public and private use by the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

In the course of this investigation we have found that the RSV is equal to, and in most respects superior to, the KJV from the standpoint of modern American English. We have found that certain mechanical, or technical, features of the RSV are a definite improvement of the KJV. We have found that the RSV certainly follows a much better Greek text, in the light of modern research and scholarship, than does the KJV. We have found that the translation of the RSV is at least as accurate as that of the KJV, although it is not, as no translation ever can be, a perfect translation.

With regard to our special point of study, we have found that the RSV does not at any place intentionally mistranslate the Greek. Nor does it at any place translate in such a way as to subvert Scripture doctrine or to vitiate the doctrinal content of any passage.

Therefore, on the basis of this study and these findings, we conclude that the RSV is superior to the KJV as a translation suitable for both public and private use by the



Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. And we hereby commend and recommend the RSV to the pastors and members of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod for such use.

While it is to be hoped that improvements that will be made in the process of revising the RSV will make it even more accurate and will cause it to speak even more clearly to modern Americans, as it stands right now, the RSV is useful, certainly not heretical or harmful, and it speaks the words of St. Paul in language that is for the most part clear and meaningful to adults and youth, highly educated and those who are not highly educated.

While the degree of superiority varies in the different points from which we have evaluated the RSV in comparison to the KJV, as an overall picture, the RSV is very highly superior to the KJV.

#### A Word of Caution

This evaluation is based completely and solely on the letters to the Thessalonians. While we hope that the RSV translation of the other books of the Bible will also prove to be useful and valuable to the Church, so that the entire Bible in the RSV can be used by the Church, we have no information concerning the other books of the Bible included in our conclusion. Nor is our conclusion in any way to be applied to any other books of the Bible in the RSV until those books have been separately evaluated.



## Areas for Further Study

### Concordance Work

This writer, while not actually concerned with the matter, noticed at times in the course of preparing this thesis that there seem to be inconsistencies of translation in the RSV. He checked a single item that especially impressed him, and found that both the KJV and the RSV are inconsistent in translating at least one Greek word in contexts where it means exactly the same thing each time. Furthermore, he found that the RSV is not following the KJV in this inconsistency.

The specific inconsistency that this writer traced is this. In 1 Thessalonians 2:10, the RSV translates ἀμέμπτως with blameless. In 1 Thessalonians 3:13, the RSV translates ἀμέμπτως with unblemishable. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, it again translates ἀμέμπτως with blameless. In Greek, ἀμέμπτως is an adverb, while ἀμέμπτους is an adjective. But they are actually only different forms of the same word. In the course of translation into English, both words become adjectives. Why not consistently use one English word, as Paul used one Greek word, since the meaning is exactly the same in all three instances?

In the first two places, the KJV translates with unblameably and unblameable. In the third place, it translates with blameless.

Obviously, many words have more than one meaning, both



in English and in Greek. It is often necessary to translate a single Greek word with a variety of English words, where the context demands varying meanings. But where the context does not demand a different word, why not use the same English word every time?

While this may seem to be of minor significance, this writer has often in the past been irritated by this kind of inconsistency in the KJV. The elimination of these varying translations, where the meaning of the word in context does not vary and where the English words used are synonyms anyhow, would actually help to preserve the flavor of the original language better.

Therefore, this writer suggests that, after all the evaluations of the individual books of the Bible in the RSV translation have been made and tentative improvements in the text of the RSV have been made, before the revised edition of the RSV is published, someone or some committee should do a thorough job of concordance work on the RSV. This work should not be done simply in order to produce a concordance of the RSV, but in order to discover unnecessary inconsistencies in the translation. Such a thorough concordance job, concentrating especially on books that were written by the same author, should then be taken into consideration and evaluated with a view to making further revisions in the RSV in the direction of greater consistency. Finally, the concordance itself could be published in conformity to the newly adopted readings of the RSV.







## APPENDIX A

### ARCHAISMS OF THE KJV REPLACED BY THE RSV

#### Archaic Spelling of the KJV Replaced by the RSV

KJV	RSV	Location
alway	always	1 Th. 2:16; 2 Th. 2:13
cloke	cloak	1 Th. 2:5
ensample	example	1 Th. 1:7; 2 Th. 3:9
honour	honor	1 Th. 4:5
Judaea	Judea	1 Th. 2:14
labour	labor	1 Th. 1:3; 2:9; 3:5; 5:12
stablish	establish	1 Th. 3:13; 2 Th. 2:17
Timotheus	Timothy	1 Th. 1:1; 3:2,6; 2 Th. 1:1
unblameable	unblamable	1 Th. 3:13

#### Places Where the RSV Replaces Ye of the KJV with You

1 Th. 1:5,6,7,9; 2:2,8,9,10,11,13(3 times),14(twice),19,20;  
 3:4,6,8; 4:1(3 times),2(twice),9(twice),10(twice),11,12(twice),  
 13; 5:1,4,5; 2 Th. 1:4,5(twice),12; 2:5,6,15; 3:4,6,7,13

#### Neuter Pronouns Which and That Replaced by the RSV

KJV	RSV	Location
God which	God who	2 Th. 2:16
Jesus which	Jesus who	1 Th. 1:10



KJV	RSV	Location
Gentiles which	heathen who	1 Th. 4:5
we which	we who	1 Th. 4:15,17
them which	those who	1 Th. 4:13,14,15
others which	others who	1 Th. 4:15
he that calleth	he who calls	1 Th. 5:24
you that believe	you believers	1 Th. 2:10,13
they that	those who	1 Th. 5:7(twice)
them that	those who	2 Th. 1:6,8
them that are such	such persons	2 Th. 3:12
all that believe	all the believers	1 Th. 1:7
all them that	all who	2 Th. 1:10

Places Where the RSV Replaces Unto of the KJV with To

1 Th. 1:1(twice),5; 2:2,8,9; 3:11; 4:15; 5:27; 2 Th. 1:1,2

The RSV Replaces Shall of the KJV with Will

KJV	RSV	Location
the Lord shall	the Lord will	1 Th. 4:16; 2 Th. 2:8; 3:3
the dead shall	the dead will	1 Th. 4:16
day shall come	day will come	2 Th. 2:3
that Wicked shall be revealed	the lawless one will be revealed	2 Th. 2:8



The RSV Eliminates Eth and Th Endings of the KJV

KJV	RSV	Location
groweth	is growing	2 Th. 1:3
opposeth	opposes	2 Th. 2:4
exalteth	exalts	2 Th. 2:4
God hath	God has	1 Th. 5:9
doth already work	is already at work	2 Th. 2:7

The RSV Replaces Man of the KJV with One

KJV	RSV	Location
any man	any one	2 Th. 3:14
any man's bread	any one's bread	2 Th. 3:8
no man	no one	1 Th. 3:5; 2 Th. 2:3

Places Where the RSV Replaces Yourselves with You Yourselves

1 Th. 2:1; 3:3; 5:2; 2 Th. 3:7

Places Where the RSV Replaces Night with May

1 Th. 2:16; 3:10; 2 Th. 2:6

The RSV Replaces Of with From Three Times in 1 Th. 2:6

KJV	RSV
seek glory: of men	seek glory: from men
of you	from you
of others	from others



The RSV Replaces An with A Before Words Beginning with H

KJV	RSV	Location
an helmet	a helmet	1 Th. 5:8
an holy kiss	a holy kiss	1 Th. 5:26

Places Where the RSV Replaces Holy Ghost with Holy Spirit

1 Th. 1:5,6.

The RSV Corrects the KJV Separation of Not Only

KJV	RSV	Location
not the gospel only	not only the gospel	1 Th. 2:8
not to you in word only	to you not only in word	1 Th. 1:5

The RSV Replaces Mine with My

KJV--mine own hand    RSV--my own hand    Location--2 Th. 3:17

The RSV Replaces Archaic Words or Expressions with Others

KJV	RSV	Location
as touching	concerning	1 Th. 4:9
touching you	about you	2 Th. 3:4
as that	to the effect that	2 Th. 2:2
for this cause	for this reason	1 Th. 3:5
like things	the same things	1 Th. 2:14
after the working of	by the activity of	2 Th. 2:9



KJV	RSV	Location
follow	imitate	2 Th. 3:7,9
followers	imitators	1 Th. 1:6; 2:14
wrought	worked	2 Th. 3:8
prevent	precede	1 Th. 4:15
recompense	repay	2 Th. 1:6
shewing	proclaiming	2 Th. 2:4
shew of us	report concerning us	1 Th. 1:9
trieth	tests	1 Th. 2:4
prove	test	1 Th. 5:21
entreated	treated	1 Th. 2:2
travail	toil	1 Th. 2:9
charity	love	1 Th. 3:6 2 Th. 1:3
evermore	always	1 Th. 5:16
epistle	letter	1 Th. 5:27 2 Th. 2:15; 3:14,17
salutation	greeting	2 Th. 3:17
letteth	restrains	2 Th. 2:7
for nought	without paying	2 Th. 3:8
are contrary to	oppose	1 Th. 2:15
good tidings	good news	1 Th. 3:6
stand fast	stand firm	2 Th. 3:15
is meet	is fitting	2 Th. 1:3
allowed of God	approved by God	1 Th. 2:4
to be put in trust	to be entrusted	1 Th. 2:4



KJV	RSV	Location
what manner of men	what kind of men	1 Th. 1:5

# Six Miscellaneous RSV Improvements of the Language of the KJV

KJV	RSV	Location
any thing	anything	1 Th. 1:8
because that	because	1 Th. 4:6 2 Th. 1:3
effectually worketh	is at work	1 Th. 2:13
the very God of peace	the God of peace himself	1 Th. 5:23
make you to increase	make you increase	1 Th. 3:12



## APPENDIX B

### KJV DEVIATIONS FROM THE NESTLE TEXT

Places Where the KJV Follows the Koine Family of Texts,  
While the RSV Follows Nestle in Rejecting the Koine Reading

#### KJV and Koine

#### RSV and Nestle

#### First Thessalonians

1:1 from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ	omit
1:5 in (much assurance)	omit <u>ἐν</u> : with full conviction
1:7 ensamples (plural)	an example (singular)
1:8 (but) also	omit <u>also</u>
2:9 for (labouring)	omit <u>for</u>
2:13 For this cause <u>also</u> thank we God; only one <u>καί</u>	<u>And we also</u> thank God for this; two <u>καί's</u>
2:15 their own (prophets)	omit <u>their own</u> : the prophets
3:2 concerning (your faith); <u>ἡμεῖς</u>	<u>ὁπότε</u> (but translation is weak): <u>in your faith</u>
4:1 omit <u>just as you are doing</u>	include
4:8 hath given (aorist)	gives (present)
4:11 (your) own (hands)	omit <u>own</u> : your hands
5:3 For (when they shall say)	omit <u>for</u>
5:15 both (among yourselves)	omit <u>καί</u>
5:27 (the) holy (brethren)	omit <u>holy</u> : the brethren
5:28 Amen	omit



## KJV and Koine

## RSV and Nestle

## Second Thessalonians

1:2 (God) our (Father)	omit <u>our</u> : God the Father
2:2 (day of) Christ	(day of) the Lord
2:4 (he) as God (sitteth)	omit <u>as God</u> : he takes his seat
2:8 shall consume	will slay (different Greek word)
2:10 in (them that perish)	omit <del>ev</del> : for those who are to perish
2:11 shall send (future)	sends (present)
2:16 (God), even (our Father)	omit <del>ka</del> : God our Father
3:4 (we command) you	omit <u>you</u>
3:12 <u>by our</u> Lord Jesus Christ; <del>id</del>	<u>in</u> the Lord Jesus Christ; <del>ev</del> ; omit <u>our</u>
3:18 Amen	omit

Places Where the KJV Follows Some Other Reading Rejected by Nestle; the RSV Follows the Reading Adopted by Nestle

## KJV and Rejected Reading

## RSV and Nestle

## First Thessalonians

2:12 hath called (aorist)	calls (present)
2:19 (crown of) rejoicing	(crown of) boasting; different Greek word
4:8 (unto) us	(to) you
4:13 I (would not have you ignorant)	we (would not have you ignorant)



## KJV and Rejected Reading

## RSV and Nestle

## First Thessalonians

- 4:14 them also which sleep; involves inverted word order      those who have fallen asleep; takes καί with preceding
- 5:7 be drunken      get drunk (different Greek word)
- 5:21 prove all things; omit δε      but test everything; include δε  
subscript to letter      omit

## Second Thessalonians

- 1:10 (them that) believe; pres.      (who) have believed; aorist
- 1:12 (name of our Lord Jesus) Christ      omit Christ
- 3:6 (tradition which) he (received)      (tradition that) you (received)
- subscript to letter      omit



## APPENDIX C

### SUGGESTIONS FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE CONJUNCTION FOR

The following suggestions do not exhaust all possibilities. Nor does this writer feel that it is always necessary to replace or eliminate the conjunction for. But he here suggests some ways of eliminating the word without doing damage to the thought sequences of the text.

#### First Thessalonians

##### Location \* Suggestion for Eliminating the Word

- 1:4 - - It could be omitted here.
- 1:5 - - It could be replaced with since.
- 1:6 - - For you received could be translated by embracing.
- 1:8 - - It could be replaced with yes indeed.
- 1:9 - - It could be omitted here.
- 2:1 - - It could be replaced with indeed, or omitted.
- 2:3 - - It could be replaced with indeed.
- 2:5 - - It could be replaced with to be sure, or indeed.
- 2:9 - - It could be replaced with certainly, or of course.
- 2:11 - - It could be replaced with indeed.
- 2:14a - It could be paraphrased, This is evident from the fact that.
- 2:14b - It could be paraphrased, in this way, that.
- 2:19 - - It could be replaced with after all.
- 2:20 - - It could be replaced with yes indeed.



## Location \* Suggestion for Eliminating the Word

- 3:4 - - It could be replaced with because.
- 3:8 - - It could be replaced with because.
- 3:9 - - It could be replaced with indeed, or omitted.
- 4:2 - - It could be omitted here.
- 4:3 - - It could be replaced with and.
- 4:7 - - It could be replaced with besides, or and because.
- 4:9 - - It could be replaced with because, or since.
- 4:14 - - It could be omitted here.
- 4:15 - - It could be omitted here.
- 4:16 - - It could be replaced with because, or but.
- 5:2 - - It could be replaced with because, or indeed.
- 5:5 - - It could be replaced with no, or omitted.
- 5:7 - - It could be omitted here.
- 5:9 - - It could be replaced with because.
- 5:18 - - It could be replaced with because.

## Second Thessalonians

## Location \* Suggestion for Eliminating the Word

- 2:3 - - It could be replaced with because, or omitted.
- 2:7 - - It could be replaced with true.
- 3:2 - - It could be replaced with because.
- 3:7 - - It could be omitted here.
- 3:10 - - It could be replaced with indeed.
- 3:11 - - It could be replaced with but.



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