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## Sermon Study on 2 Thess. 3:6-14

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of the principles it enunciates are sound, and in so far as it helps better to understand human thought-life and personality, and may thus lead to a better application of God's Word and Biblical principles in dealing with human personalities, it is not without value. And, finally, in so far as it is subversive of Christian faith, we ought to know it, so that we may counteract its destructive influence.

Baltimore, Md.

H. D. MENSING

## Sermon Study on 2 Thess. 3:6-14

Eisenach Epistle for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

The congregation at Thessalonica, the modern Saloniki, was founded by Paul about the year 51, or, as some hold, as early as 49 or 50, immediately after he had left Philippi, Acts 17:1-10. Though he had been permitted to spend only a short time at Thessalonica, Acts 10:2, 5, 10, he had laid the foundation so well that this congregation became a center from which the Gospel spread far and wide within a few months and was an "ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia," 1 Thess. 1:2-10. Paul had sought to return to Thessalonica in order to confirm the brethren in the truth; yet circumstances beyond his control had made this impossible, 2:17, 18. Instead he sent Timothy, who brought a very favorable report, 3:1-13. There were, however, many who were disturbed by questions concerning the time and manner of the advent of Christ, chaps. 4, 5. In his first letter Paul had instructed, warned, comforted them. Reports, however, coming to him while he was preaching at Corinth informed him that the congregation was still being disturbed by men, some of them even purporting to represent Paul, who taught that the day of the Lord was close at hand and that therefore it was no longer necessary to go about one's daily occupation, 2 Thess. 2:1, 2; 3:11. The apostle found it necessary to write another letter, in which he again commends the brethren for their patience and faith in tribulation, 1:3-10, prays that God would "fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness," 11, 12, gives them a detailed instruction regarding the signs preceding the coming of the Lord, thanks God because He has chosen them to salvation, and commends them to His grace, 2:11-17.

Two more matters must be brought to the attention of the Thessalonians as he is about to close his letter. The word finally, τὸ λοιπόν, 3:1, "serves properly to introduce the concluding remarks of an epistle; cp. 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:8; Eph. 6:10; 2 Thess. 3:1." (Meyer on 1 Thess. 4:1.) One is a request, the other a command.



As the apostle had assured the Thessalonians of his prayer for them, 2 Thess. 1:3, 11; 2:13 ff., so he requests them to pray for him, 3:1, 2. This request with the attached promise, v. 3, at once paves the way for a willing reception of the command, for the "free course and glorification," 3:1, of a word of the Lord which he is constrained to transmit to them, even though it is not a word of comfort nor of promise but of command. And now note Paul's consummate skill and tact in introducing this command, which apparently touched a rather sore spot in the spiritual life of the congregation. He does not simply command the indolent busy-bodies to go back to work. That command comes only after a lengthy preparatory discourse in which the apostle bends every effort to gain their good will and make them ready to obey his command. First he expresses his confidence that they are doing the things which he is commanding and will do them, v. 4. The Thessalonians have at all times proved their willingness to submit to the Word of the Lord, and he entertains not the slightest doubt that they will do so in the future, no matter what he commands them. Surely there is no Christian that would refuse to obey the will of God. Then, in v. 5, in a fervent prayer, Paul asks God to direct their hearts into that love of God and that patient waiting for Christ so necessary for the fulfilment of the command he is to issue. After having paved the way for the command, he still does not proceed at once to the command given in vv. 10-12, but lays down a general principle, the correctness of which they will have to admit, that of withdrawing from every brother that walks disorderly and not in keeping with the doctrine they have learned. Again, no Christian will deny the justice of this demand and the necessity of obedience to this rule if a Christian congregation is at all to exist. A Christian congregation would sign its own death-warrant if it tolerated open transgression of, and rebellion against, the doctrine of Christ. The apostle continues to prepare the way for his final command by pointing to his own example of maintaining himself, although he had the power to ask them for support, vv. 7-9. And only then does he apply all these truths to the situation prevailing at Thessalonica. It seems that unwillingness to work was one of the besetting sins of the Thessalonians even before their conversion, as inordinate pride in Roman citizenship characterized the Philippians, Acts 16:20 ff., the desire to hear some new things the Athenians, Acts 17:21, immorality the Corinthians. This natural inclination was fostered by the men preaching the uselessness of working because of the coming of the Lord's Day. We shall call attention to other indications in the text pointing to the same conclusion. Add to this the youth and inexperience of the congregation, the very



brief period of instruction, interrupted by the sudden persecution, and the extreme caution with which the apostle approaches his subject will appear to be due not to lack of courage, not to pusillanimity or pussy-footing, but to his loving consideration, cp. 1 Thess. 2:7, 8, and to his Christian tact, to the fact that he was not a striker, a pugnacious, quarrelsome fellow, not a brawler, ready at all times to start a fight, but patient, *ἐπεικής*, equitable, fair, mild, gentle, 1 Tim. 3:3. We cannot but admire Paul's loving solicitude, his tactful consideration, and at the same time his unyielding firmness, his unwavering determination to do his duty even in a delicate, difficult, dangerous situation. A fine example of a true *Seelsorger*, who seeks only the welfare of the flock committed to him by the great Shepherd of the sheep.

*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us, v. 6. "We command."* We includes Sylvanus and Timothy, 1:1. *Παραγγέλλομεν*, literally, to transmit a message along from one to another, used particularly of the order of a military commander which is passed along the line by his subordinates (Thayer). Military orders must be obeyed, whether we understand the necessity of them or not. The apostle and his associates transmit the order not of some human superior, some human military authority. They command *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Note the full form, to lend due weight to his command. He whom God has anointed, Is. 11:2, to be the Savior of mankind, Matt. 1:21, He who is the Lord of all, whom you readily acknowledge as your Lord and King, whose word you are willing to obey because He is your King, and gladly, willingly obey, because He is your Savior King, He is *our* Lord, yours and mine. We all are His subjects, united with Him by faith as His brethren, united by this common faith in Him into one great brotherhood of believers. This name is not an empty title. The name of God is God Himself as He has revealed Himself, and the name of Jesus Christ is Christ Himself with all His gifts and blessings. To do something in the name of Christ means to do something as being united with Him, in His sphere, endowed by Him with all the blessings procured by His suffering and death for all mankind, invested by Him with all the authority delegated by Him to His members, particularly to those whom He has chosen as His servants and stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4:1; Gal. 1:1. United with Him, vested with His authority, in His name, we command. No longer does the apostle beseech and exhort; there is now a sterner tone in his admonition; he demands as one vested with authority by the King and Lord Supreme, as one who



must insist on obedience, immediate obedience, without equivocation, without hesitancy. Yet he is sure that his command will be received in good faith; for those addressed are *brethren*, so called, so acknowledged by him. As a brother he speaks to brethren, in affectionate, brotherly solicitude, providing for their eternal welfare, in order that they may be and remain united in faith as brethren of Christ Jesus and brethren among themselves. Yet in order to accomplish this blessed result, he must command, he must transmit the order given to him by the great Captain of their salvation. He dare not shirk the duty imposed upon Him by the Lord, to whom he vowed allegiance and unhesitant obedience, Acts 9:6.

There were in the congregation such as were walking disorderly, ἀτάκτως. Again the apostle uses a military term, describing a soldier walking out of ranks, breaking the rank and file. This disorderliness consisted in not walking "after the tradition which he received of us." Παράδοσις, that which has been delivered, given over, entrusted, to one. The word is quite frequently used of the traditions, the opinions, and judgments of the scribes, the rituals and ceremonies of the Pharisees, handed down orally from one generation to the other. Paul does not hesitate to use this word of the doctrine he preached, not in the sense in which the traditions of the Pharisees were handed down nor in the sense of the tradition of the Church of Rome. Paul calls his doctrine a tradition because it was not of his own making; it was delivered to him by Christ Himself, Gal. 1:11, 12; 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3. The Thessalonians had received it as such, 1 Thess. 2:11-13, even those who now no longer walked in accordance with it. As soldiers must march in rank and file, as they must obey the orders of their superiors, so Christians, the soldiers of the Lord Jesus, must all walk together as one company, in strict order, in full keeping with the Word and will of the Captain of their salvation. Some of the members at Thessalonica had forgotten this simple truth. They walked disorderly. And it seems as if their misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the apostle's teaching concerning the approach of the day of the Lord caused this unruliness. As soldiers on their way home from war are apt to break ranks when they approach the end of their long march, as breaches of discipline are likely to occur more frequently during the last days of school, as vacation time, the days of freedom from the strict rules of school, draws near, so these Christians, believing the end of the world to be close at hand, became restless, excited. Instead of taking special pains to be counted worthy of their calling, 2 Thess. 1:11, the prospect of perfect liberty in yonder world so soon to be entered caused them to chafe under the restraints still imposed upon



them by their Lord and Master; they began to break ranks, to become disorderly. They did not realize that they completely mistook the nature of their future liberty and their present obligations and were in danger of losing both their present state of adoption and their future heritage. Their disorderliness was not merely an occasional lapse of discipline, a brief yielding to a sudden and unexpected attack by Satan. The present participle, walking disorderly, denotes a habit, a custom, a characteristic. They made it a habit, it had become second nature with them, to walk out of step with the brethren, out of step with the will and Word of Christ. This was not the first time that Paul had called the attention of the Thessalonians to this sin of disorderliness. Already in his first epistle he had exhorted the congregation to warn those that are unruly, 1 Thess. 5:14. While they were to be patient with all men; while they were to comfort the "feeble-minded," the faint-hearted, the discouraged; while they were to support, to aid and care for, the weak, these unruly, disorderly members were to be warned, their mind was to be set right, they were to be told that their disorderliness must cease. There the apostle uses the adjective *ἀτάκτους*; now he speaks of such as are making it a habit of walking disorderly. The warning had not had the desired effect. Whether the congregation was satisfied with a mere admonition, a one-time warning, even when they saw that it was being ignored by the erring brethren, or whether the disorderly members persisted in the error of their way in spite of continued remonstrances on the part of the congregation, we cannot tell. At all events the disorder was not stopped, it did not even diminish, it rather increased and spread with alarming rapidity. Sterner measures must be taken, and should have been taken, by the congregation when their admonition proved inadequate to remedy the situation. Since the congregation failed to do its duty, perhaps because it failed to see the seriousness of this sin in spite of the repeated instructions received by word and by epistle (cp. v. 10; 1 Thess. 5:14), or whether they were unwilling to decrease the small number of their membership by stern measures of discipline, or what the reason may have been, the apostle finds it necessary no longer to beseech and exhort, as in 1 Thess. 4:1; 5:12, 14; 2 Thess. 2:1, nor merely to admonish, as in 2:15; 3:1, but to command, to exercise the authority given him by the Lord Jesus Christ. It may be noted here that the apostle uses the word "command" in his letters to the Thessalonians only when he warns against disorderliness and refusal to work, 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:4, 6, 10, 12. The Thessalonians, otherwise so willing to obey, had to be commanded to refrain from this particular sin.

His command is as brief and to the point as it is unmistakably



clear, *that ye withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly.* "Withdraw," στέλλεσθαι. The word in the active voice, like the German *stellen*, means to set, to place; the middle, to place oneself, to set oneself; with ἀπό, to place oneself away from; hence, to remove oneself, to withdraw, to go away, to avoid association. The word occurs only here and 2 Cor. 8:20: "avoiding this, that no man should blame us." While there the object to be avoided is the possibility of being blamed, the object in our passage is not impersonal, a trait, a habit, etc., but very definitely personal. The apostle here does not command the congregation to avoid disorderliness (that, of course, is involved), but primarily he demands that they withdraw themselves "*from every brother that walketh disorderly.*" Just what this withdrawal means the apostle tells us in v. 14, where he further explains the mode of procedure against disorderly brethren: *If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man.* Although these unruly members did not regard their conduct as blameworthy, although they wanted to remain members of the congregation and be regarded as such, they really were without excuse. Even if they had not heard the apostle during the weeks of his personal activity in Thessalonica, even if they had not read, or heard of, the first letter, the admonition of this one epistle is sufficient instruction. If any one, no matter who he may be, disobeys this word of God, continues to live disorderly, after having been clearly and definitely shown the sinfulness of his conduct, the congregation must do what it should have done long ago with men of this stamp, it should *note* him. Σημειῶ means to mark, distinguish by marking; the middle, to mark or note for oneself, the middle indicating the inner relation to one's act. This marking should be a matter in which the members should take a personal interest, a matter of conscience flowing from a sense of duty towards God, who demands such noting of the erring brother, towards the erring brother, who needs the attention of his brethren, towards themselves, to keep a clear conscience, 1 Tim. 5:22, towards the congregation, to preserve it from corruption and guard its good name. Lange remarks that this word was used of physicians who mark the symptoms of disease, also of grammarians who make the remark, "Note this." *And have no company with him.* The best manuscripts read συναναμίγνυσθαι, the infinitive of purpose or rather result, so that you will not be mixed up together with him. Note again that it is the person whom they should avoid, with whom they should not be mixed up, not merely his disorderliness. The passive form is much more emphatic than the active. The apostle does not merely tell the Thessalonians, *Do not mingle with disorderly members;* his command is, *Do not be mixed together with them. Do not associate with them nor permit them to associate*



with you. The apostle uses the same word in connection with the disciplinary proceedings against the fornicator, 1 Cor. 5:9, 11, where the context makes it perfectly clear that he does not prohibit every manner of social and civic intercourse with all that are not children of God; for then Christians would have to go out of the world. Both in his letter to the Corinthians and in our passage the apostle has in mind an intercourse with the erring brother who is being disciplined whereby we would create the impression or cause him to believe that we still regard him as a member in good standing, that we are condoning his sin, excusing his manifest transgression, looking upon his disorderliness as a small matter, which cannot affect his connection with the congregation. The apostle goes so far as to prohibit a fellowship apparently so harmless as eating with such a person if such eating together would be construed by him as a clean bill of health. Needless to say, the more intimate the nature of Christian association and fellowship, the more carefully it is to be avoided as far as the brother walking disorderly is concerned. The prohibition of prayer-fellowship, of altar-fellowship, of such a man's participating in the business meetings of the congregation, is included in the *στέλλεσθαι* and in the *συναναμίγνυσθαι*, in withdrawing from him, v. 6, and in having no company with him, v. 14, until this withdrawal and this refusal of companying with him has had its desired effect, the sincere repentance of the erring brother and his removal, by public apology, of the offense given to the Church and to them that are without. Yet, as long as he is not manifestly impenitent, as long as he is not excommunicated, we are not to consider him an enemy but to admonish him, remonstrate with him as with a brother. Lenski very correctly writes: "The word is not 'consider' or 'treat him as a brother.' The Thessalonians are to consider him *ἄτακτος*, as nothing less than disorderly; as to treatment, they are to withdraw, to refuse fraternal association, until shame results. But they are not to turn their back upon him and at once to abandon him as hopeless. Their part is to be remonstrance; see the word as explained in 1 Thess. 5:12 and used regarding the disorderly in 1 Thess. 5:14. His sin and folly is to be held up to him in a brotherly way and with brotherly intent. To call this a difficult proceeding is not true; it is the one Christian and even natural thing to do. What if this remonstrance proves in vain? The answer to that question need not be explicitly stated, it can readily be supplied—the sinner drops out of the congregation." (*Commentary on Thessalonians*, p. 478.)

*For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, v. 7.* I need not tell you, the apostle means to say, that it is necessary to withdraw



from every brother walking disorderly, for you yourselves know how to follow us. With our command, v. 6, our example agrees, and to this example the apostle now appeals as a further inducement to obey his command. A person walking disorderly does not follow the example of Paul and his fellow-preachers. He walks along paths different from those on which the Thessalonians saw their first teachers walking. He separates himself from these teachers and their manner of life and therefore from all true followers and disciples of their teachers. Dare the Thessalonians then continue intimate fraternal intercourse and fellowship with such an unruly person? Dare they acknowledge him as a member in good standing who deliberately, manifestly, walks altogether contrary to the example of the apostles? You know how you ought to follow us. You know because we have taught you that Christian disciples must needs, *δεῖ*, follow their teachers; else they would cease to be disciples, followers, adherents, of their teachers. You know; for from our example you have learned exactly how, *πῶς*, to follow us in order to remain disciples of our common Lord and Master. In pointing to himself as an example worthy to be followed, the apostle is not becoming guilty of self-exaltation. In the first place, he names not only himself but also his fellow-workers as examples. In the second place, it is the same humble apostle speaking here that writes 1 Cor. 15:9; 1 Tim. 1:15, who points to his life as a pattern for others not in a spirit of vain boasting; who confesses: 1 Cor. 15:10; who follows up his enumeration of his conscientious labors, 2 Cor. 11:18 ff., by the remarkable confession: 12:5-11. His life is a pattern for others; why? We read the answer Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:7-21; 4:12, 13. Having been apprehended of Christ, living his life in the faith and intimate communion of Christ, he is a pattern indeed for others to follow; *for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.* *Ἐταχθήσαμεν*, the aorist is the constative aorist, which "treats the act as a single whole irrespective of the parts or time involved" (Robertson). Not guilty of disorderliness! That is the verdict every Thessalonian Christian would be willing to pronounce on the conduct of their teachers among them. That is the example we gave to all the members of the congregation. We are your teachers, you our disciples. Must you not follow us and avoid, shun, withdraw from, those who by word and example are practising and teaching the very opposite of our orderly behavior?

In the two preceding verses the apostle had warned against disorderliness in general. He had laid down the underlying principles covering every form of unruliness. If he had written no more, we could not know just which particular form of disorderliness he had in mind or whether he was at all thinking of any



one form of this sin. But he does not leave his readers in doubt as to his meaning. He is not satisfied with generalities, as so many pastors are, who think they have done their full duty if they have warned against sin in general, against worldliness in the abstract, without telling their people just what sin they have in mind and without informing them just why it is wrong. The apostle will presently be using very blunt language. Again we marvel at his supreme tactfulness in approaching nearer and nearer to his subject. In v. 8 he begins to enlighten his readers on the nature of the disorderliness of which he is thinking at that time and which in his mind makes it a matter of duty for every Christian to withdraw from the brother guilty of it. He does that by recalling to the Thessalonians one of the customs whereby he and his assistants proved their good behavior among them, the refusal to ask for monetary support while preaching to them.

*Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught but wrought with labor and travail night and day that we might not be chargeable to any of you, v. 8.* "Neither" connects and distinguishes at the same time. It was a particular form of disorderliness that the apostle avoided; yet this form was not the only one. "For naught," *δωρεάν*, is impressively placed at the beginning, gratuitously, as a gift, without payment. "Bread were we eating"; the imperfect describes what was his custom during the entire time of his activity at Thessalonica. "Any man's," *παρά τινος*, from any one, proceeding from "any one's wealth or store" (Thayer). "But" (we ate) "in labor." *Κόπος* denotes the intense labor, united with trouble and fatiguing body and soul, "and travail," *μόχθος*, difficult labor, connected with hardship and distress. "Night and day." During the daytime he and his assistants preached and taught. On three Sabbaths they reasoned with the unbelieving Jews, answering their sophistries. When weary and tired, grieved at the hardness of their hearts, cp. Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1, 2, they went back to their homes after the day's work; they found it necessary to work at hard manual labor, most likely at their trade of tent-making, cp. Acts 18:3, until the small hours of the night. The present participle denotes this working as habitual. This they did "that we might not be chargeable to any one of you," *ἐμβαρῆσαι*, to be burdensome, to put a burden on one, which is the meaning of the archaic "chargeable" in the Authorized Version. Love of the brethren, a kind consideration of their poverty, was the motive of this policy, although the apostle had the full right to ask the Thessalonians to support their pastors and teachers.

*Not because we have not power but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us, v. 9.* The right and authority to look to their congregations for their maintenance and support was



given to all His messengers by Christ Himself, Matt. 10:9-11, the Twelve, Luke 10:4-8, the Seventy. Paul charged Timothy to instruct the congregations not to be remiss in this duty, 1 Tim. 5:17, 18, as he himself in very pointed language calls the attention of the Corinthians to this part of their obligations to their pastors, 1 Cor. 9:1-14. A Christian congregation sins against this clear will of the Master and disgraces itself if it will not pay a living salary to its pastor and teacher though well able to do so. Yet during his ministry at Thessalonica Paul had not made use of this right to ask for a salary or for some other means of support. His motive was not only his reluctance to burden them, 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8; with him it was a matter of principle not to ask the congregations founded by him for a salary, or wages. From the moment that he was called into the apostolate he was determined that, "when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge," may preach it gratuitously, without accepting money for his work, "that I abuse not my power in the Gospel," in order that I do not fully use my authority, my right, 1 Cor. 9:18, and to protect himself against slandering tongues, 2 Cor. 11:7 ff. In our verse Paul adds still another reason, one that again seems to strengthen the impression that the Thessalonians were inclined to a life of *dolce far niente*; that idleness, doing as little as possible, was indeed sweet to them. He found it necessary to teach them by his own example, by his willingness to earn his own bread in an honest way, by working with his own hands in hard labor. His own example had lent special force to his instruction during those weeks of his personal ministry, had taught them in a very practical manner how they ought to follow him.

*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that, if any would not work, neither should he eat, v. 10.* "For also," *καὶ*, in addition to our example, while we were with you, this we commanded you, cp. vv. 4, 6, transmitted it to you as the will of the Lord. The imperfect describes the continued insistence with which this commandment was impressed upon the Thessalonian Christians, perhaps because their natural inclination made it necessary to stress especially this point of Christian ethics. The Thessalonians had not been left in ignorance as to God's will. They had been told that there was no choice in this matter, that the whole question of labor was no longer an open one, to be answered at their discretion, that it was settled by divine command. "That," *ὅτι*, is merely recitative, introducing the command: "If any would not work, neither should he eat." If any has not the will, the intention, the firm determination, to work,—and this implies improving every opportunity and making use of every lawful means of obtaining work,—he shall not eat. The imperative makes



short work of this form of disorderliness. If one does not want to work, he shall starve! In the eyes of the Judge he has forfeited his life. Unwillingness to submit to the divine command, Gen. 3:19, is a mortal sin, consigning every one guilty of it to death. The true nature of this evil habit, its wickedness, its pernicious character, its sinister consequences, could not have been more succinctly and clearly stated than in this brief sentence. The apostle does not say that one is under the obligation to work only if a living wage is being paid, he does not say one word about the right of labor to strike, to quit working if in their opinion or in the opinion of their leaders they ought to receive better wages. The Lord has promised to bless the honest labor of His children, Ps. 128:1, 2; Matt. 6:33; He has pronounced the curse upon all employers who will not pay a just wage, Jer. 22:13; Jas. 5:4. But the same God has said, has commanded, "If any would not work, neither should he eat." A lesson, this, that our Christians cannot learn too well, that must be impressed upon them, lest they become guilty of disorderliness and thus subject to God's displeasure and punishment.

For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies, v. 11. After tactfully preparing the way, the apostle now in plain, unmistakable language pictures the actual condition existing at Thessalonica and urges the need of quick and decisive change. "We hear," we are hearing, reports are constantly coming to our ear. These reports evidently were not of the nature of idle gossip, of groundless slander, else Paul would not have wasted any time on them. They were sufficiently substantiated, so that Paul could publicly charge the guilty ones with their delinquency. "There are some which walk among you disorderly," the same expression as in v. 6; only here the adverb is emphasized by being placed at the end of the phrase and separated from "walk" by "among you." Some walking among you, a congregation that in so many respects is an example to all other congregations, among you disorderly. The very position of the words stresses the contrast between the "some" and the congregation and proves the need of withdrawing from such as were actually by their conduct separating themselves from the congregation. Note that the apostle does not say of you, but among you. These disorderly people were actually endangering their standing as members of the congregation. If they would not change, they would no longer be of the Christians, but merely among them; and even that would finally have to cease. "Working not at all," nothing, μηδέν, habitually doing nothing, idlers, loafers, "but are busybodies." Note the play on words, ἐργαζομένους and περιεργαζομένους. The περί in conjunction with verbs and substantives often has the sense of beyond, because that which surrounds



a thing does not belong to the thing itself but is beyond it. *Περίεργος* is used of superfluous, impertinent things, as, e.g., the "curious arts" of Acts 19:19, magic, soothsaying, etc. The present participle denotes a man who makes it a custom of walking round about work, but exercising extreme care not to come into close contact with it. As the German puts it: *Er geht um die Arbeit wie die Katze um den heißen Brei*. He is constantly running about, gadding, gossiping, but very careful not to soil his hands by labor. Conybeare: "Busybodies who do no business." Jowett: "Busy only with what is not their business."

Now, *them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ that with quietness they work and eat their own bread*, v. 12. "Now, them that are such," that are of this nature, whom this description fits. The apostle does not charge the whole congregation with disorderliness. He is just and addresses these sharp words to such only as need them, as are guilty. "We command"; again the same word used vv. 4, 6, 10. There is but one course to take if they want to remain God's children. And in order to make them willing to choose this only correct way, Paul adds: "and exhort," admonish, speak to you personally and earnestly, "by our Lord Jesus Christ"; cp. v. 6. Both command and exhortation are spoken by authority and in the spirit of the Lord Jesus, patiently, lovingly, yet firmly; and the apostle insists on strict obedience. He gives here an example of a mode of withdrawing from such brothers. He does not directly address them but speaks of them in the third person, while both before and after this verse he speaks to the Christians at Thessalonica in the second person. His admonition and command is that with quietness they work and eat their own bread. They must *work*, as Christ commands; and their teachers worked with labor and travail. They must *eat their own bread*, as their teachers ate no man's bread for naught. They must do that with quietness, as their teachers did not behave themselves disorderly among them, vv. 7, 8. *With quietness*. *Ἡσυχία* is a quiet, unobtrusive life, keeping silence when silence is needed, and conducive to their own and the general welfare. It is a very comprehensive word. Quietly should the Thessalonians go their way, undisturbed by thoughts of the Last Day, unperturbed by the malice, the hatred, the scoffing, the persecution, of their enemies. Quietly they should work, without lamentation or grumbling, without complaining of their hard lot, without boasting of their accomplishments. Quietly, orderly, they should attend to their duties, their calling, without arrogating to themselves the right to teach what God does not want them to teach and where He does not call them to teach, without disturbing the peace of mind of their fellow-Christians by their idle, useless, foolish, sinful speculations



on matters that God did not reveal. In every respect they should lead a quiet, orderly life, walking in rank and file with all their brethren in strict obedience to the will of their Lord, in full and willing submission to the only norm of their faith and life, the Word of God as preached and proclaimed to them by the apostle and his associates; cp. v. 14.

*But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing*, v. 13. "Be not weary in well-doing." Καλοποιεῖν means to do what is καλόν, "that which is good, excellent in its nature and characteristics and therefore well adapted to its end" (Thayer). The context decides the exact nature of well-doing the writer or speaker has in mind. Here it is placed in contrast to disorderliness and being busybodies. Though others are remiss in their duties; though manifesting your faith by a Christian life will expose you to ridicule, persecution, hardships; though you may be told by your own brethren that it is folly to labor in view of the close proximity of the end of the world, do not become weary. Ἐγκατέω means to behave badly in a matter, hence to become tired, weary, lose courage. Such weariness must not be found among Christians. The soldiers of Christ must not lose courage, must not tire in their service. That would be another form of disorderliness, contrary to the will of God and to the example of the apostles, who were untiring in the performance of their duties in their mission-work, in their daily labor, in their prayers, etc. Cp. 1 Thess. 2:7-13; 2 Thess. 1:2, 11, etc. The aorist is ingressive=do not become tired. Resist the very first indications of weariness. This well-doing implies that they seek earnestly to root out all disorderliness which had begun to invade the congregation. That is part of the excellent thing to do, and that should be done well, done thoroughly, done in a manner adapted to its end, gaining the brother and ridding the congregation of this evil. Hence the admonition vv. 14, 15.

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In the standard Gospel-lesson for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity the Lord warns against foolish, sinful cares and worries and exhorts to that loving trust in the heavenly Father which enables the Christian to lead a truly care-free life. In the Eisenach Epistle-selection the apostle inveighs against that spirit of carelessness and independence which forgets that "every one of us is a part of a whole, a member of an organic body, with functions to discharge which can be discharged by no other, and must therefore be steadily discharged by himself," and that "it is the beginning of all discipline and of all goodness to have fixed relations and fixed duties and a fixed determination to be faithful to them." (*The Expositor's Bible*.) He censures severely that philosophy of life which holds that the world owes us a living, and a living



to our liking, a life of ease and plenty, with the least possible exertion on our part. In preaching on this text, one may speak *On the Wickedness of Walking Disorderly*. That is sinning against God's command, giving offense to others, destructive of one's salvation.—*Paul Combating Disorderliness*. He insists on God's will; he points to his own example; he demands withdrawal from the erring brother.—*The Christian's Attitude toward His Work*. He works in grateful obedience to his Lord; in order to give an example to others; in order to eat his own bread.—*The Necessity of Brotherly Admonition*. It is demanded by God, by the welfare of the erring brother, by the welfare of the congregation.—*The Spirit of Brotherly Admonition*. Loving consideration of the erring brother's welfare. Strict adherence to the Word of God.

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