(Isthm. 6:18) which speaks of two departures of the clan of the Aegidae from Thebes to Sparta.

So we see that both the late form *apostasia* and the earlier form *apostasis* may be used in the general sense of departure, even though various specialized types of departure are more commonly involved. The fact that the word is used once in the N.T. in the sense of departure from a man's teaching (Acts 21:21), is no sufficient proof that it has a similar use here. The particular idea of departure from the faith does not fit very well here, as a sign whose absence will relieve the anxiety of the Thessalonian believers. In addition to all this, the reference to the man of sin immediately afterwards could easily lead one to the false conclusion that the previous word designated a related idea, since this was a common use of the word.

If we take the word here in the well-authenticated general sense of departure, and understand the phrase, "the departure" to refer to the departure of the saints, which has been so fully described in I Thessalonians, rather than to a departure from the faith which has not as yet been mentioned anywhere in the Thessalonian epistles, the resulting teaching is far more reasonable as an answer to the problem of the Thessalonian Christians, and no longer contradicts the rest of the New Testament.

Further proof of the correctness of the suggested interpretation is provided by Paul's repetition of the same sequence a few verses further on. Reiteration is a frequent feature in all good teaching. After Paul has given the sequence in v. 3, he describes the man of sin in v. 4. In v. 5 he reminds his readers that this sequence is nothing new: he had explained it to them while he was with them. In v. 6-8 he repeats the sequence: "he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that Wicked one be revealed." The first statement clearly speaks of a departure, and is doubtless the same departure as that referred to in verse 3.

The old English word "let" means "hinder!" The Revised Version substitutes