

sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," (which, in all cases, is apprehended by faith,) as the *media* through which our election is effected,—“elect *through* sanctification of the Spirit,” &c. These cannot, therefore, be the *ends* of our personal election; for if we are elected “*through*” that sanctification of the Spirit which produces obedience, we are not elected, being unsanctified and disobedient, in order to be sanctified by the Spirit that we may obey.

Very similar to the passage just explained is, 2 Thessalonians ii. 13, 14: “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” * * But the calling of the members of this church is not represented by the Apostle as the *effect* of their having been chosen, but, on the contrary, their election is spoken of as the effect of “the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;” and these, as the effects of the calling of the Thessalonians by the Gospel, “whereunto,” to which sanctification and faith, “he called you by our Gospel.” * * *

There are scarcely any other passages in the New Testament which speak expressly of personal election; but there is another class of texts in which the term “election” occurs, which refers to believers, not distributively, but collectively; not personally, but as a body, either existing as particular churches, or as the universal church. * * Thus the Synod of Dort quotes, as the leading proof of its doctrine of personal election, Ephes. i. 4—6: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” * * If, indeed, the election spoken of in this passage were personal election, the Calvinistic doctrine would not follow from it; because it would admit of being questioned, whether the choosing in Christ before the foundation of the world, here mentioned, was a choice of certain persons, as *men* merely, or as *believing men*; the latter of which is surely the most rational. * * But, according to the Calvinists, this election was made *arbitrarily*, that is, without any reason but that God would have it so; and to this sense they bend the clause in the passage under consideration, “according to the *good pleasure* of his will.” This phrase has, however, no such arbitrary sense. “The good pleasure of his will” means the benevolent and full acquiescence of the will of God with a wise and gracious act; and, accordingly, in verse 11, the phrase is varied, “according to the *COUNSEL* of his own will,”