

from "the beginning," in that sense of the words.* They were later than many others in receiving it. Any reader of the Acts may remember that the Apostles had largely prosecuted the work of their mission in other parts before they were beckoned to go into Macedonia; and Thessalonica was one of the famous Macedonian churches. Besides, the expression—"from the beginning," has its obvious interpretation in parallel passages where we have the same idea, only in different words. Thus in Ephes. 1, 4, "before the foundation of the world," is the phrase used in the very same relation to electing love: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ; 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."

Then, further, the election is "to salvation." It is not merely to the opportunities or means for salvation. To these also, no doubt: they are mentioned anon. But salvation itself is here, and here first—the end before the means. For, that final salvation is to be understood, is plain from this, that the salvation is inclusive of "the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" mentioned in next verse, as the end both of the election and of the calling; and because, moreover, it is distinguished from *sanctification* which, though itself a part of the salvation, is here ranked as a means to the complete end,—“through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.”

* The interpretation sought to be forced on the words, "in the beginning,"—though supported by Michaelis, has been rejected on critical grounds, by Schott, Ellicott, Lange, &c. The argument briefly is, that such a sense would require some supplementary expression with *arche* (as in Phil. 4, 15,) or obviously involved in the context 1 John 2: 7, 24, see also Dr. Eadie on Eph. 1, 4,) who justly marvels at Adam Clarke finding an allusion in the phrase "from the foundation of the world" to the commencement of the Jewish state. No wonder trides with the subject in a like manner. Calvin rightly saw, long ago, that the Apostle's object was to comfort the elect in all time, as well as christians of the earliest age of the Gospel. The word *heilato* forbids such an unnatural interpretation, (Lange). Indeed no relief is found from the supposed difficulty of these subjects in those theories that suppose a reference merely to a general choice of the Gentiles to the privilege of a Gospel state, for sovereignty must still on this hypothesis be confessed. All nations have not been chosen, and masses of the outwardly called, reject the offered salvation. Surely it was not for a thing of so uncertain result that the Apostle breaks forth in thanksgivings and blessings so fervent!