

History of the Baptists" has the following: The "distinguishing principles of Baptists—these may be stated thus:

"I. THAT THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURES CONTAIN THE FULL AND SUPREME AUTHORITY OF CHRIST IN ALL THAT REVEALS TO CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRACTICE, WHETHER IN DOCTRINE, ORDINANCE, THE ORDERING OF A HOLY LIFE, OR IN THE ADMINISTERING OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT." This sentence he prints in capitals. Then he says, in ordinary type "These alone must be followed; and all legislation, canon, creed or decree, springing from tradition, ecclesiastical authority, or usage of antiquity, not enjoined in the Scriptures, is to be resisted and rejected from whatever source it may spring, either inside the local church or outside, as intolerable in the faith and practice of the churches. We find a wide difference between a simple confession or declaration of what the Bible teaches, and an authoritative creed. What is an authoritative creed? Dr. Armitage says, "that it is an imperative test which must be enforced in the interest of absolute uniformity." Alexander Campbell said in 1832 that "an authoritative creed" is an abstract of human opinion concerning the supposed cardinal articles of Christian faith, which summary is made a bond of union, or term of communion." He said that a Christian ought to oppose every authoritative creed, prepared by philosophers, conferences, synods, or some individual leader," "as opposed to the wisdom and benevolence of Jesus Christ." Twenty-five years after he began to advocate the union of Christians on the original and divine basis. He said: "Our opposition to creeds arose from a conviction that, whether the opinion in them were true or false, they were hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity, and joy of Christians, and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ." Alexander Campbell, Francis Wayland, and Thomas Armitage, speak the same things, in substance, on the subject of authoritative human creeds. The omission of the word *authoritative* from any statement in opposition to human declarations of religious faith renders this statement seriously defective. The opposition of these good and grand men was not to a simple confession or declaration of what the Bible teaches, but to using this "confession or declaration" "as an imperative test which must be enforced in the interests of an absolute uniformity!" or as Mr. Campbell would say, the making of such a document, "a bond of union or term of communion." But was not Alexander Campbell opposed to making any kind of a written declaration of his faith? He was not. He said in 1839, While we are always willing to give a declaration of our faith and knowledge of the Christian system, we firmly protest against dogmatically propounding our own views, or those of any fallible mortal, as a condition or foundation of church union and co-operation." In the *Millennial Harbinger* for 1846, page 385, he publishes a statement of his faith in eight distinct propositions or articles. The fraternal regard of Mr. Campbell for his Baptist brethren in 1853 may be read in his work on, "Christian Baptism, with its Antecedents and Consequents."

The Dedication is as follows, italics and Capitals. *To Baptists of every name and party, in the United States of America and in the British Provinces, who speak our vernacular, as an humble tribute of his respect and esteem on account of their uniform and persevering advocacy of freedom of thought, and speech, and of action, in all that pertains to the rights of conscience, and to civil liberty, as well as for their constant and untiring efforts to sustain the Apostolic institution of "Christian Baptism, and especially to those who plead for the union and co-operation of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, on the basis of "ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, ONE*

BODY, ONE SPIRIT, AND ONE HOPE," this volume is respectfully and affectionately inscribed by THE AUTHOR."

Note this language, "To Baptists of every name, * * * especially to those who, etc." Does not this mean: "Especially to those BAPTISTS who plead for union and co-operation," etc.?

Was this kindly Christian feeling general among those of whom Disciples are wont to speak as "the fathers?" Dr. Richardson, the chosen biographer of Mr. Campbell, said in March, 1866, the year and the month of Alexander Campbell's death, that "ecclesiastically and formerly connected with the Baptists as we were in the beginning, we have never been wholly separated from them; for, in spite of misunderstanding, and the efforts of a few to create differences, there have constantly been more or less intercommunion and fraternal intercourse. At no time have we separated ourselves, or denied fellowship to a Baptist brother, or refused to receive as a member one accredited by letter from a Baptist church. We have, in reality, ever claimed the Baptists as our brethren. We have never admitted that there was any just cause for division between us, and have constantly cherished the hope that a little time would terminate all unprofitable controversies, and sweeten the asperity of feeling produced in certain cases by the speculative polemics of a too earnest opinionism." If any man understood "the fathers" Dr. Richardson certainly did. He says that when visiting Mr. Campbell a short time before his death, and speaking to him of union between Baptists and Disciples, "he expressed himself as greatly delighted with it, and earnestly in favor of consummating it upon a true scriptural basis. He said it would indeed be a great achievement if all baptized believers could be united in one communion, and would work wonders in regard to the spread of the truth and the conversion of the world.

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ORDAINED OR DETERMINED—WHICH.

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And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. —Common Version, Acts xiii. 48.

And as many as were determined for eternal life, believed. —Dodridge.

In the discussion of the scripture at the head of this article, two positions are generally taken, which are fairly expressed by the two translations given. The position of those who would retain the word "ordain" in this scripture is thus expressed:

"A divine ordination is the *cause*, not the effect, of any man's believing." If a "divine ordination is the cause" of our believing, then there can be no belief without this "cause;" and man is thus relieved of all responsibility in the matter. But, will the scriptures sustain such a theory? We think not. If this position cannot be sustained, then it is evident that to translate the word here rendered "ordain" is a mistake. The Word of God is its own best interpreter. "Let God be true," whatever may become of the theories of men.

In Acts x. 34, 35, we read: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that fears Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." It would hardly seem possible to misunderstand this scripture. The spirit of God, by the mouth of Peter, says: "God is no respecter of persons." Does not this plain declaration conflict with the theory under consideration? How can it be true that "God is no respecter of persons," when, at the same time, we are to understand that only such can believe as have been caused to do so by a "divine ordination?" Does He not have a special respect for those whom He "ordains to eternal life," that they may be thus moved to believe, and come to the Lord?

Again, we read in II. Peter, iii. 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This plain scripture, too, gives no support to the theory that only such can believe, and come to repentance as have been before "ordained to eternal life." The Lord having "died for all," is still waiting, "not willing any should perish," but is manifesting His goodness, that by this men may be led to repentance. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Rom. ii. 4, 10. Thus it is seen that the "goodness of God" is the cause of men believing and coming to repentance, and not a "divine ordination," as some would have us think.

By these and other scriptures that might be named, it is evident that the theory of a "divine ordination" as the cause of faith, is not sustained by the scripture.

Let us next consider the other side of this question, as expressed by the translation of Dr. Doddridge and others: "As many as were determined for eternal life, believed," and see how this agrees with the word of the Lord. In the first place, let it be noted, that the same Greek word, which, in this verse under discussion, is translated "ordain," is in Acts xv. 2, correctly rendered "determined." Here it is used to express the state of the mind of the brethren. "They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about "a certain question that was troubling them. That is they were disposed, or determined, to send these brethren up to Jerusalem to settle this question. To apply this rendering to the scripture under consideration we will see that it makes a complete harmony with all parallel passages, and may thus be relied on as the correct translation of this much disputed scripture.

Again, the very nature of the faith by which we "lay hold on eternal life" involves the will of the believer. There will be no "belief to the saving of the soul," unless there is a desire, a determination, to be saved. Christ says: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God." John vii. 17. Men must be willing to believe, and obey God before they can have an experimental knowledge of the Christian religion. Many scriptures might be quoted in proof of this proposition, but the following are thought sufficient for our present purpose. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Rom. x. 10. Again, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. Acts viii. 37. The man of Ethiopia had heard Philip preaching Jesus, and had a desire to obtain eternal life; hence, his readiness to believe the preaching, and to show his faith by his obedience. Being "determined for eternal life" caused him to believe what he heard, and doing the will of God gave him the experimental knowledge, so that "he went on his way rejoicing."

Take again the case of the conversion of the three thousand on Pentecost. Peter had preached Christ to those people, and had convicted them of their great sin, and had awakened in them a desire or determination to be saved; hence their earnest question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts ii. 37. The answer was, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Now we read in verse 41 that "they that gladly received His word were baptized." This shows the state of the mind of at least three thousand on that occasion. Doubtless there were many among those who heard that day, who were not disposed to believe, hence they did not receive the word.