

“AS MANY AS WERE ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE
BELIEVED.”

EXPOSITION OF ACTS XIII. 48.

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the name of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

Individuals and nations are sometimes seen entering the field of battle, and there fighting in deadly conflict. But truths never go to war with one another, they live in peace and harmony, the only battles which they fight are against falsehood, ignorance, and error. We firmly believe that all truths are not only true, but in perfect harmony with each other. The truths of science for example, never contradict the truths of the Bible, and the truths of the Bible never contradict the truths of science. The starry firmament,—the scriptures of the earth's crust,—and all the forces of nature in the physical universe are from God as really as the written word. The volume of creation and the written revelation are both from God, and we are sure they never did, and never can contradict each other. Our interpretation of the one may contradict our interpretation of the other; or our interpretations of both may be false, but there is perfect harmony, consistency and truth in the revelations themselves.

In like manner one portion of the word of God never contradicts another; though the interpretations of that word by fallible erring men often do.

The reader is aware that the passage at the head of this article has been often quoted to prove the absolute unconditional and irresistible decree of election;—that an exact number were fixed upon in a past eternity, irrespective of faith, or character, and all the rest were unconditionally left beyond the possibility of salvation. But we believe such a doctrine as this to be utterly opposed both to reason and to revelation, and that the passage under consideration, when rightly understood, and interpreted, not only gives no countenance to the dogma of unconditionalism, but teaches the very reverse of that doctrine.

We shall endeavour to shew that the word *ordained* in the passage before us has no reference whatever to *fore-ordination* or unconditional predestination in a by-gone eternity, but has reference, to the *ordering, arranging or, disposing*, of objects either, present or in prospect. The proper rendering of the verse, as we