

Our Baptist History

ROBERT & JAMES HALDANE

TWO SCOTTISH BROTHERS WHOSE MINDS & MONEY BELONGED TO GOD

The Baptist cause has flourished throughout the years by the conversion to the truth of immersion of many outstanding men who had been trained in other denominations. Such was the case of Robert and

James Alexander Haldane of Scotland. Robert was born on February 28, 1764, in London and was trained at Dundee and Edinburgh. James Alexander Haldane was born at Dundee on July 14, 1768, and received his education in the same schools. Both men served in the British navy, and in 1786 they inherited a large estate.

Robert Haldane "became a great writer and philanthropist, giving \$350,000 for charitable purposes within fifteen years, and during his life educating three hundred ministers of the Gospel at an expense of \$100,000."

James Alexander was converted early in life, traveled throughout Scotland as an evangelist, and was ordained in 1799 as an independent pastor in Edinburgh. Robert and James were outstanding men, and "as the Church of Scotland had no use for unauthorized preachers, they worked independently, trained men, building and endowing tabernacles, founding a Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home."

The brothers were so magnanimous that when the reports of the work of Carey in India began to circulate in England, "Robert Haldane devoted £35,000 to the work of the Missions" even though it meant supporting Baptist work.

We have mentioned the training of ministers of the gospel, but when

several of these preachers, upon study of the subject of baptism, were immersed and became Baptists, the Haldane brothers investigated the subject as well. Repudiating pedobaptism, both brothers, in time, were immersed, and in 1808 they became Baptists.

Both men were scholarly, but Robert Haldane authored meaningful volumes which have stood the test of time. Perhaps his best-known tome is Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, which he wrote in 1835. This book is still reprinted in our day and is considered a classic. In 1817, Robert Haldane lectured to theological students at Geneva and Montauban, and throughout his lifetime, he continued his generous gifts for the propagation of the gospel. Mr. Robert Haldane died on December 12, 1841, in Edinburgh.⁴

James Alexander Haldane continued his preaching ministry, serving gratuitously for fifty years, and he too authored several useful items. His pamphlets had a wide circulation, and he wrote An Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians in 1848. James

continued faithfully in his ministry until his death on February 8, 1851.

In the days when Baptists were not allowed to function freely and were openly persecuted, formal training of men for the ministry was impossible. Thus our Baptist forebears were primarily to be found in rural areas, and the ministers, though called of God, were unschooled. Some of them were brilliant, but they were considered uncouth by society. That rather reminds us of another who was tagged "the Baptist." His attire, attitude, and approach were quite different from the professional religionists of his day. Thankfully, however, God raised up from time to time those who were able to bear the message of truth into the halls of learning and before leaders of the genteel society. Such were the Messrs. Haldane, who, early in the nineteenth century, became champions of the Baptist cause in England.

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