

Christ and religious sects. So shall we best fulfill the mission which has been imposed upon us.—*Christian Evangelist.*

Burying and Planting.

On the first of May one of our city families removed to New Jersey. The first work was to put the garden in order. Charley, a precocious little boy, watched his father intently for two or three mornings, asking innumerable questions about the why and wherefor of planting potatoes, corn, peas and squashes. He caught the idea, as many older people catch ideas, by the tail. It was the third night when his father came home that there was general mourning in the family. Several choice china dishes, a score of costly ornaments from the parlor, and three or four valuable small pictures had disappeared. In the confusion Charley had been forgotten. The maid said he had been amusing himself in the garden all the afternoon. His father went out and found him planting the last picture. The little fellow wanted to raise a whole crop of beautiful things, and failed to see why if twenty potatoes would grow from one, twenty pictures and china cups and articles of vertu could not be produced in the same way.

The difference between planting and burying is as poorly understood by many grown people as by the little city boy. And there is a vast deal of burying done under the pretense of planting. People are too apt to forget that burying is not planting, and that every investment of time, talents, interest, and money which is not likely to yield a return of something valuable is not planting, but burying. A great deal of the money spent by thoughtless, fashionable people yields no return of comfort, of happiness, of anything desirable; it is simply buried. A large proportion of the investments made by shrewd business men under the infatuations of speculative crazes are not planted, but buried. Only last week a railroad bed which cost nearly a quarter of a million dollars was sold for \$35,000; the original investment was money buried. More than half of the things bought in these days because other people have such things—articles of dress, ornament, finishing gewgaws—give no pleasure to the buyer, and add nothing to the satisfaction of living; they represent money buried. Of the fashionable excursions taken

every summer, costing enough to make a family comfortable for the winter, or educate a boy or girl, very few will add one particle of real health and enjoyment to the travelers, and many will bring weariness, dissatisfaction, and heartache. All the dissipations bury money, and what money cannot buy, in a grave from which there is no resurrection. To read worthless or poor books; to go to places of amusement which merely entertain, without lifting the sentiments and imagination; to spend time in gossip with idle companions; to form habits which lead to costly and hurtful practices; to drop into vices which drain out the heart's life—is a burying of what ought to have been saved to plant. And from burying nothing but decay and ashes come. The trouble with most people is that they have spent their days in burying instead of planting, or in planting what had better been buried.

To plant wisely and generously is the great thing. The secret of happy, profitable living, of health, and friendship, and public respect, is in knowing how and what to plant, and doing the work well in the season of it. Every good lesson learned is a seed planted to bring forth fruit in its season. Every good habit, every good book read, every noble purpose carried out, every true friendship formed, are things planted that will yield a rich harvest in due time. It is as foolish to expect happiness from recklessness and folly as a crop of paintings from planting chromos in the back yard. It does not come in that way. Wickedness planted brings forth wretchedness. It is only by planting the best things at the right time, and in a wise and generous way that the rich harvest is insured.—*Christian at Work.*

"Ordnained to Eternal Life."

Once more the International Lessons bring before the Bible-studying public a passage of Scripture which has for centuries marked a division line between great bodies of Christians, and which can hardly be treated fully, and with fairness, without indicating the denominational preferences of the writer. According to our custom in such a matter, we do not close our columns against the expression of positive opinions on the point at issue, by the writer of our Critical Notes for the time being; but, in view of what he may have to say on one

side of the mooted question, we give a place to what another critic may say on the opposite side.

The question of "predestination" as over against "the freedom of the will," has been in sharp discussion amongst Christians for at least fifteen centuries. And no single passage of the New Testament has been of more prominence in this discussion than the words in the current lesson of the International Series, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The practical question in the study of this passage has been, and still is, Did those persons believe because they were ordained? or, Were those persons ordained because they believed—or on the ground that they would believe?

When this passage was under consideration in the lesson for July 15, 1877, the Rev. Dr. Kendrick, writing in our columns, took the ground that Luke here "declares clearly that the divine foreordaining purpose determined the fact and the number of the believers," and that "this carries with it in essence the doctrine of election—a doctrine essential to our conception of Deity." On the other hand, the Rev. Newman Hall, also writing in these columns, said:

"What is the meaning of the word 'ordained'—*tetagemnoi*? The verb is found in I Cor. 16: 15, 'Ye know the house of Stephanas, that they have *addicted* themselves ["set themselves" in the Revised New Testament] to the ministry of the saints,'—*etaxan heautous*, that is, they ordained, ordered, disposed, addicted themselves to this service. Also in Rom. 13: 1, 'The powers that be are ordained [*tetagemnai eisin*] of God, that is, are arranged, appointed. In these cases, reference is made only to the present time. In the former case, persons devoted themselves to a certain work; and in the latter, it is God's appointment that there are civil magistrates to maintain order. So in this passage we may read, 'As many as were disposed to, addicted to, set in order for eternal life (by whom, whether themselves or God, is not stated), believed. The context seems to settle the meaning. In verse 46 we are told that the Jews were not disposed to receive the message of eternal life; they judged themselves unfit for it, they thrust it away, they were not in a state of reciprocity and desire, they did not 'addict themselves' to seeking salvation, they were not

therefore 'ordained to eternal life.' But, in contrast to their condition, we are told that the Gentiles were candid in listening, felt their need of the gospel, desired to be saved, cultivated an inquiring and receptive disposition, and so, ordained to eternal life, it was not wonderful that they should receive what they so desired, and that they 'believed.'"

And now that the passage is again before our readers, Dr. Woolsey asserts that "Luke speaks both historically and theologically;" moreover, that "there is no good reason for the translation 'had arranged themselves, or put themselves, in the ranks for eternal life, which some have given to this passage.'" As over against this, we lay before our readers the statements of Dr. D. D. Whedon, a prominent Methodist scholar, in his Commentary on Acts. He says on this point:

"'Ordnained to eternal life'—should be rendered, *disposed to eternal life*. It plainly refers to the eager predisposition just above mentioned in the heart of many of these Gentiles on learning that old prophecy proclaims a Messiah for them. As many as were so inclined to the eternal life now offered, committed themselves by faith to the blessed Jesus. Rarely has a text been so violently wrenched from its connections with the context, and strained beyond its meaning for a purpose, than has been this clause in support of the doctrine of predestination. There is not the least plausibility in the notion that Luke in this simple history is referring to any *eternal decree predestinating* these men to eternal life. The word here rendered, *ordained* usually signifies *placed, positioned, disposed*. It may refer to the material or to the mental position. It is a verb in the passive form, a form which frequently possesses a reciprocal active meaning; that is, it frequently signifies an action performed by one's self upon one's self. Thus in Rom. 9: 22, *The vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction* are carefully affirmed, even by predestinarians, to be fitted by themselves. Indeed, the very Greek word here rendered *ordained* is frequently used, compounded with a preposition, in the New Testament itself, in the passive form with a reciprocal meaning. Thus Rom. 13: 1, *Be subject unto the higher powers*, is literally, *place yourselves under the higher powers*.