

THE EXPOSITOR.

AND as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.—Acts xiii. 48.

This text has been most pitifully misunderstood. Many suppose that it simply means, that those in that assembly who were *fore-ordained* or *predestinated* by God's decree, to eternal life, believed, under the influence of that decree. Now, we should be careful to examine what a word means, before we attempt to fix its meaning. Whatever *Tetlagmenoi* may mean, which is the word we translate *ordained*, it is neither *proselagmenoi* nor *prorismenoi*, which the Apostle uses, but simply *tetlagmenoi* which included no idea of *pre-ordination*, or *predestination* of any kind. And if it ever did, it would be rather hazardous to say, that all those who believed at this time were such as actually *persevered unto the end*, and *were saved unto eternal life*. But, leaving all these precarious matters, what does the word *tetlagmenoi* mean? The verb *tallo* or *lasso* signifies to *place, set, order, appoint, dispose*; hence it has been considered here as implying the *disposition or readiness of mind* of several persons in the congregation, such as the *religious proselytes* mentioned verse 43, who possessed the reverse of the *disposition* of those Jews, *who spake against those things, contradicting and blaspheming*, verse 45. Though the word in this place has been variously translated; yet of all the meanings ever put upon it, none agrees worse with its nature and known signification than that which represents it as intending those who were *predestinated* to eternal life: this is no meaning of the term, and should never be applied to it. Let us without prejudice, consider the scope of the place: the Jews contradicted and blasphemed; the *religious proselytes* heard attentively, received the word of life: the one party were utterly *indisposed*, through their own stubbornness to receive the Gospel; the others, destitute of prejudice and prepossession, were glad to hear, that in the order of God, the Gentiles were included in the covenant of salvation through Christ Jesus; they, therefore, in this good state and order of mind, believed. Those who seek for the plain meaning of the word, will find it here: those who wish to make out a sense, not from the Greek word, its use among the best Greek writers, and the obvious sense of the evangelist, but from their own creed, may continue to puzzle themselves and others; *kindle their own fire, compass themselves with sparks, and walk in the light of their own fire, and of the sparks which they have kindled; and in consequence, lie down in sorrow, having bidden adieu to the true meaning of a passage so very simple, taken in its connexion, that one must wonder how it ever came to be misunderstood and misapplied.*—Adam Clarke.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, &c.—Jude 4.

The word which is here rendered "ordained," is literally *fore-written*; and the word rendered "condemnation," signifies legal *punishment or judgment*. The passage means, therefore, either that the class of men spoken of had been *foretold* in the Scriptures, or that their punishment had been there formerly typified, in those examples of ancient times of which several are cited in the following verses; as Cain, Balaam, Korah, and the cities of the plain. Mr. Scott, indeed, very well interprets the text, when he says, "The Lord hath foreseen them, for they were of old, registered to this condemnation; many predictions had, from the beginning, been delivered to this effect." But when he adds, "Nay, these predictions had been *extracts*, as it were, from the registers of heaven; even the secret and eternal decrees of God, in which he had determined to leave them to their own pride and lusts, till they merited and received their condemnation," we may well ask for the proof. All this is manifestly gratuitous; brought to the text, not deduced from it; and is, therefore very unworthy of a commentator. The extracts from the

register of God's decrees, as they are found in the Scriptures, contain no such sentiment as, that these abusers of the grace of God only, did that which they could not but do, in consequence of having been "left to their own pride and lusts;" and excluded, before they were born, from the mercies of Christ. If this sentiment is not in the "extracts", it is not in the original register; or else something is there which God, in his own revealed word, has not extracted, and respecting which the commentator must either have had some independent revelation, or have been guilty of speaking very rashly. On the contrary, in the parallel passage in 2 Peter, ii. 1-3, where the same class of persons is certainly spoken of, so far are they from being represented as excluded from the benefits of Christ's redemption, that they are charged with a specific crime, which necessarily implies that participation in it, with the crime of "denying the Lord that bought them."—R. Watson.

MISCELLANY.

THE PROPHETIC DEW-DROP.—A delicate child, pale and prematurely wise, was complaining on a hot morning, that the poor dew-drops had been too hastily snatched away, and not allowed to glitter in the flowers like other happier dew-drops, that live the whole night through, and sparkle in the moon-light, and thro' the morning onwards to the noon-day. "The sun," said the child, "has chased them away with his heat or swallowed them up in his wrath."—Soon after came rain and a rainbow; whereupon his father pointed upwards. "See," said he, "there stand the dew-drops gloriously re-set—a glittering jewelry—in the heavens; and the clownish foot tramples on them no more. By this, my child, thou art taught that what withers on the earth blooms again in heaven."—Thus the father spoke, and knew not that he spoke pre-figuring words; for soon after the delicate child, with the morning brightness of his early wisdom, was exhaled like the dew-drop, into Heaven.—Jean Paul Richter.

A PERSON, in high life, once went to Sir Eardly Wilmot, late Lord chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, under the impression of great wrath and indignation, at a real injury which he had received from a person high in the political world, and which he was meditating how to resent in the most effectual manner. After relating the particulars, he asked Sir Eardly, if he did not think it would be *manly* to *resent* it! "Yes," said that eminent man to the bench, "it will be *manly* to *resent* it; but it will be *Godlike* to *forgive* it." The gentleman declared, that this had such an instantaneous effect upon him, that he came away quite a different man, and in a totally different temper from that in which he went.

PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA.—The following important intelligence, to all who take an interest in the progress of Christianity in the world, will be read with pleasure by them. A letter from St. Petersburg dated June 23, says—"We learn from Pekin, where a mission from the Greek Church of Russia has existed since the time of Peter the Great, that upwards of 300,000 Chinese have embraced Christianity, and that there was every reason to believe that all persecution of Christians was on the point of ceasing. The Emperor himself is said to have studied Christianity, and to hold it in respect. While, at his accession to the throne, Christian blood was frequently made to flow. The rigorous laws against the Christians now exist only on paper, and their execution is intrusted to such Mandarins alone as are favourable to the Christians. The law of 1835, although in terms applying to all Christians was directed solely against the English, of whose political influence the Emperor began to be afraid. There are in China several vicariats, whose chiefs are to be found in Pekin, Nankin, and Macao."—Paris Paper.