

Religious.

The following remarks were written some time ago, as will appear from the date. An unavoidable circumstance prevented the writer from making them public as soon as was contemplated. The last Star has obligingly furnished us with the commencement of an interesting and judicious answer to the same extract on which I have animadverted. The author of the answer is to me unknown. I am happy to find that there is a remarkable coincidence in the view which we have taken of the subject under discussion. And indeed my remarks are in a great measure superseded, and might have been suppressed; but as they were ready for publication, it was not deemed improper to give them currency. They are respectfully offered to the Editors of the Register and Minerva. And for a particular reason an insertion is also requested in the Star, provided the Editors should not deem it inexpedient.

EVANDER.

Raleigh, October, 25, 1811.

REMARKS

On an Extract from the Herald of Gospel Liberty.

The "Herald of Gospel Liberty" is a small quarto newspaper, published at present, if I mistake not, in the city of Philadelphia. In point of incorrectness of style, weakness of sentiment, and barrenness of information, I will venture to assert that this paper has not a parallel in the United States. Its pretended object is to subvert the interests of Christianity, and no doubt it will have this effect, when self confidence, vanity and error are needed in the promotion and defence of that sacred cause.

I know of no one who has undertaken a formal refutation of the many errors with which the Herald of Gospel Liberty is fraught. The general opinion seems to be, "Let silent contempt measure and characterize the merits of the paper." A few weeks ago, however, an extract from it was honored with a place in two of the Raleigh papers; first in the Star by request, and afterwards in the Register. The extract to which I refer, purports to be an exposition of Romans, VIII, 29, 30, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many Brethren—Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified." The object of the writer is to show that these two verses give no support or countenance to the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination—and had his success been equal to his wishes, and to his ignorant unmanly zeal, opposition from any quarter would doubtless have been useless. But, unfortunate man! instead of giving us a fair exposition of the text, he has only exposed himself.

I am persuaded that a sensible Armenian, upon perusing the piece would be ready to wish that the expositor had either done more justice to his subject, or that he had said nothing at all about it.

Ever since the Reformation, not only the weak and the ignorant among Armenian writers, but also the learned and the ingenious have been trying their skill in order to reconcile this passage of scripture with their favorite system—But their various and far fetched explanations, and unnatural glosses, discover at once their disingenuity, and the difficulties under which they labor. "These writers have scarcely agreed in any thing but in determining to oppose the most natural and obvious meaning of the words." But in spite of all their twisting and expounding, these verses when suffered to speak for themselves, have always preached and will continue to preach predestination until the sounding of the last Trumpet. "And if this were the only place in the Bible in which the humiliating subject was expressly mentioned, we might confidently maintain, that the doctrine of individual predestination to Eternal Life, and the authority of the Apostle as an inspired writer, must stand or fall together."

But let us attend to the observations and reasonings of our expositor as exhibited in the extract—the following is the amount:

These verses when brought in to prove the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, prove too much, and therefore are no proof of that doctrine as held by the Calvinists.—His reasoning on the subject when reduced to a syllogism, stands thus: God has predestinated to eternal life all whom he did foreknow.

But God foreknew every individual that should ever exist in the world.

Therefore God has predestinated to eternal life every individual that ever has or ever will exist in the world.

And thus says our author upon the Calvinistic plan, too much is proved, viz. Universal salvation.

And that "all the difference he can see between Calvinism and Universalism, is in the numbers, one takes in a *start* the other all upon the same plan."

But the whole of the foregoing reasoning is nothing more than what Logicians call a sophism arising from the ambiguity of words.—The foreknowledge of God as expressed in the first term or major proposition of the foregoing syllogism, has a relation or rather meaning very different from his foreknowledge as expressed in the second term or minor proposition. God's foreknowledge as expressed in the major proposition, has relation only to such individuals of the human family as shall at last, in fact, be glorified in the kingdom of Heaven, 2 Timothy, II 19, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *the Lord knoweth them that are his.*" And again, John X, 14—"I am the good shepherd and know my sheep." Whereas the foreknowledge of God as expressed in the minor proposition, has for its object universal existence and relates to that attribute of deity which constitutes him the omniscient God.—The Lord is a God of knowledge—His understanding is infinite—Lord thou knowest

all things. [1 Samuel, II, 3—Psalms CXLVII, 5—St. John, XXI, 17.] Now I observe that as the foreknowledge of God in the major and minor propositions of the syllogism do not correspond, nor mean the same thing, so the conclusion drawn from these premises is good for nothing; and the whole reasoning of our expositor on this part of his subject is not a whit better than the following:

"A church is a building of stone or wood,
"A religious assembly is a church,
"Therefore a religious assembly is a building of stone or wood."

Here it is evident that the word church in the major and minor propositions means different things, and of course the conclusion is a mere Sophism, or rather mere nonsense arising from the ambiguity of words.

But if all this will not satisfy our expositor and his admirers, I will put the following argument by way of illustration into the mouth of a Socinian; and as soon as they are able to see the fallacy of it, (which I hope will be no difficult matter,) they will be able also to see the fallacy of the preceding reasoning against the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination.—The argument is as follows:

The Omniscient God has a perfect knowledge of every individual that ever has or ever will exist in the world.

But Jesus Christ at the day of Judgment will say to some individuals "I know you not whence ye are."

Therefore Jesus Christ is not the Omniscient God.

But no Socinian that I know of has been so ignorant as to use the above argument against the Divinity of Christ; I therefore think it a pity that any Armenian should be so lost to himself as to make use of an argument precisely similar and altogether as weak in reasoning against the Doctrine of Predestination.

In setting out, the author of the Extract says, "that for many years the verses" under consideration, "have been suffered to mean that all who ever will be saved, were foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified, from what they call, all eternity."

This statement I imagine is not exactly correct. If there be any Calvinists who hold that the Saints are called, justified and glorified from all eternity, I am unacquainted with them—the sentiment at least meets with no countenance, that I know of, from the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The Calvinistic doctrine, and in my opinion, the doctrine of sacred writ, seems to be this: God from eternity did foreknow and predestinate to eternal life all such as shall finally be saved; and these in due season, by the ministry of God's word and spirit are called, justified, adopted, and sanctified, and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. For a person to talk of his being called, justified & glorified from all eternity is in my opinion to talk perfect nonsense—it involves in it not only an error, but also an absurdity, inasmuch as justification and glorification prior to existence are impossible.—But it is the easiest thing imaginable to distinguish between the fixed intention of doing any thing and the actual performance of it; and such as make the distinction will have no occasion in defending the Calvinistic scheme to maintain so great an absurdity as the eternal justification of the elect.

But our expositor after attempting to set aside the Calvinistic explanation proceeds to give us what he conceives to be the true meaning of the two verses.—"Paul" says he, "was speaking of himself and other public characters, who were predestinated to do what no other men were ever called unto." He says verse 23, "And not only they but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit." Here he means himself and the other Apostles.—I deny the assertion. Let any person open his Bible and read from the 18th to the close of the 24th verse, and he will find that St. Paul in what he says has no reference at all to the other Apostles; but that he is speaking about the dreadful effects of sin on his lower Creation, verse 22.—"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, [that is, not only every creature rational and irrational, groaning and travaileth under the effects of sin] but ourselves also [we christians whether at Rome or elsewhere] who have the first fruits of the spirit, [viz. Peace of conscience and holy consolations] even we ourselves groan within ourselves [through manifold conflicts and temptations] waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body—that is, waiting for that period when our bodies shall be redeemed from the groans, made incorruptible, immortal and glorious, and publicly admitted into the mansions of the New Jerusalem."

Let the candid enquirer read all the 23rd verse which stands immediately connected with the verses under discussion, and he will find that St. Paul has no allusion at all to the other Apostles as such.—"And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them [viz. real christians of every description] who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate," &c.

But our expositor, not altogether satisfied with his argument from the context in Romans, turns over to the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians and quotes the 4th, 5th, 11th, and 12th verses, and endeavors to prove that St. Paul also in speaking there of election and predestination, has reference only to himself and the other Apostles, and not to saints in general. It is strange however, (as it is a matter of some moment) that St. Paul has no where told us explicitly, that when he speaks of election and predestination, he means only himself and the other Apostles.—The fact is, there is no shadow of proof that St. Paul or any other inspired writer has in any passage of scripture spoken exclusively of apostolic election and predestination.

As far as I know, the writer in the Herald of Gospel Liberty, is as singular as he is erroneous in his sentiments on this subject. Armenian writers in general, if I mistake not, have explained matters very differently, and in my opinion, more plausibly. "But it will require far more ingenuity than has yet been employed by them in the argument to make the Apostle's words,

consistently with the rules of English construction, and common sense, speak any other language than that of the personal and gratuitous predestination of all real saints in general to eternal life," without any reference to their foreseen graces or good works as the meritorious ground of the divine choice and predetermination. Ephesians I, 4, 5,—"According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, [not because we were foreseen as holy but] that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of saints by Jesus Christ himself according to the good pleasure of his will."—In these verses the Apostle evidently classes himself with the saints at Ephesus to whom he addresses the Epistle; but in the 11th & 12th verses he classes himself with Jewish converts in general who [had] first trusted in Christ, and who were also "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"—And then addressing himself, in particular to the Gentile Converts at Ephesus, he says in the 13th verse, "In whom ye also trusted after that ye had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise"—that is, "after they had believed, their faith was confirmed by the holy spirit, who had been promised by the Ancient Prophets, and by Christ himself before his ascension into heaven."

Such appears to me to be the drift and obvious meaning of the Apostle, in the verses cited by the author of the extract. As to what he says respecting the meaning of the expression "Image of the son of God," and conformity to that image, it is really so weak, so fanciful, so far-fetched, so destitute of foundation, and so much like the grasplings of a drowning man at a straw, that I feel no disposition to make a single remark on it. I shall therefore conclude with a quotation on this general subject from a pious writer, who, we are informed, learned his Divinity on his knees with his Bible in his hand.

"This doctrine of personal election to eternal life when properly stated, lies open to no objection, which may not likewise with equal plausibility be urged against the conduct of God, in placing one nation in a more favorable condition than another especially as to religious advantages, without the previous good or bad behaviour of either of them, or any discernible reason for the preference.—In both cases we may say, *unmerited favor* to one person, or people, is no injustice to others, and the infinitely wise God hath many reasons for his determinations which we cannot discern, and which he deigns not to make known to us."

In fact the grand difficulty in the whole of the Divine conduct equally embarrasses every system of christianity, and every scheme of Deism, except men deny that God is the creator and governor of the world. For wickedness and misery actually exist and abound; the fact is undeniable—the Almighty God could have prevented this; and we should have thought that infinite love would have preserved the creation from all evils of every description, yet infinite wisdom saw good to permit them amazingly to prevail! Till this difficulty be completely solved, let none object to truths, plainly revealed in scripture, on account of similar difficulties.—Our narrow capacities and scanty information do not qualify us to Judge, concerning what it becomes the infinite God to determine and to do.

And as for the objections made to the doctrines of Election, Predestination, and final perseverance as being inconsistent with free agency, accountability, commands, invitations, calls to repentance, faith and holiness, and diligence in the use of means; they universally, and altogether arise from misrepresentation and misapprehension of the subject.

EVANDER.

Raleigh, Oct. 16, 1811.

Edmund R Pitt, TAILOR AND HABI MAKER,

RESPECTFULLY informs his friends and the public, that he has removed to the house adjoining Mr. Cannon's Store, on Fayetteville street; where he will thankfully receive a continuance of orders in his line. No attention shall be wanting to give perfect satisfaction, and he pledges himself that his work shall be made up in the best, neatest and most fashionable manner.

A JOURNEYMAN will meet with employ, and the highest wages, by applying as above. An APPRENTICE will likewise be taken, if early application be made.

Raleigh, Oct. 11.

10-31.

SCHEME OF THE CAPE FEAR LOTTERY,

No. 111.	
1 prize of	1000 dollars
3	500
3	200
50	100
50	50
200	20
500	10
1200	5
2000 prizes,	Dolls. 25,000
3000 blanks,	
5000 tickets at 5 dollars,	Dolls. 25,000
Only one and a half tickets to a prize.	
STATIONARY PRIZES.	
1st draw number,	50 Dollars.
1st alter	100
1st do	200
1st do	500
1st do	1000
Subject to a deduction of 15 per cent.	

The drawing will commence in Raleigh on the third Monday of November next, and will be finished before the rise of the assembly.

The improvement of the navigation has commenced, and I flatter myself that in twelve months from this date it will be the greatest improvement ever made in North Carolina.

All prizes in the first and second classes of this lottery, will be received in payment for tickets in this class.

H. BRANSON, Pres't.

Fayetteville, Sept. 8.

A Teacher,

WILL be wanting in the *Germanon Academy*, some time in November next. A person who can come well recommended will meet with liberal encouragement.

THO'S T. ARMSTRONG.
Stokes county, Sept 1811.

State of North Carolina.

IREDELL COUNTY,
August Session, 1811.

James Irwin, vs. Rob't Bryson. Original Attachment.

It appearing that the defendant in this case is not within the limits of this state, it is Ordered that publication be made three months in the *Minerva*, that an attachment has issued against him, and that unless he appear at next court, and plead or reply, judgment will be taken against him.

JOHN NISBET, clk.

State of North Carolina.

IREDELL COUNTY,
August Session, 1811.

Robert Simonton, vs. Robert Bryson. Original Attachment.

It appearing that the defendant in this case is not within the limits of the state, it is ordered that publication be made three months in the *Minerva*, that an attachment has issued against him, and that unless he appear at next court and plead or reply, judgment will be taken against him.

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JOHN NISBET, clk.

State of North Carolina.

IREDELL COUNTY,
August Session, 1811.

James Fleming, vs. Robert Bryson. Original Attachment.

It appearing that the defendant in this case is not within the limits of the state, it is ordered that publication be made three months in the *Minerva*, that an attachment has issued against him, and that unless he appear at next court, and plead or reply, judgment will be taken against him.

JOHN NISBET, clk.

State of North Carolina.

IREDELL COUNTY,
August Session, 1811.

William Watts, vs. Robert Bryson. Original Attachment.

It appearing that the defendant in this case is not within the limits of the state, it is ordered that publication be made three months in the *Minerva*, that an attachment has issued against him, and that unless he appear at next court and plead or reply, judgment will be taken against him.

JOHN NISBET, clk.

State of North Carolina.

IREDELL COUNTY,
August Session, 1811.

Andrew Watts, vs. Robert Bryson. Original Attachment.

It appearing that the defendant in this case is not within the limits of the state, it is ordered that publication be made three months in the *Minerva*, that an attachment has issued against him, and that unless he appear at next court and plead or reply, judgment will be taken against him.

JOHN NISBET, clk.

State of North Carolina.

IREDELL COUNTY,
August Session, 1811.

John Stevenson, vs. Robert Bryson. Original Attachment.

It appearing that the defendant in this case is not within the limits of this state, it is ordered that publication be made three months in the *Minerva*, that an attachment has issued against him, and that unless he appear at next court and plead or reply, judgment will be taken against him.

JOHN NISBET, clk.

Printing

Executed at the *Minerva* Office, with neatness and despatch.