

A decorative border of roses and leaves surrounds the text.

The Absolute Predestination of all Things

Elder Samuel Trott

FOR THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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Tom Adams

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No. 1.

THIS sentiment as expressed in the Prospectus of the “Signs of the Times,” has called forth so much invective from some, and so much ridicule from others of the popular Baptists of this region that one would conclude some strange and absurd idea had been advanced; some whim daringly promulgated as a part of the secret things of God.

It therefore, may not be amiss, to re-examine the subject, and enquire whether it be a revealed truth of God, or a visionary notion of man, which is calling forth such malicious sneers from those who profess to be the servants of God.

Predestination is the same in meaning, with fore-ordination or fore-appointment; and is with God, one with pre-determination; for as God declares, so He determines, the end from the beginning; saying my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. Thus the pre-determination of God, to admit sin into the world embraced in it the decreeing of the time, manner, result &c. of that event. And His pre-determination to bruise His Son in the place of sinners included in it the instruments, time, place and manner of His death. Compare Acts 2:23 and 4th, 25-28, and John 13:1, and Heb. 13:11,12. The doctrine of predestination, then, is this, that God has so pre-determined every event, as to fix with such precision its limits and bounds, its causes and effects, that with Him it is divested of all contingency. This Brother Beebe, is the monstrous doctrine, which you engage to maintain, in your Paper, and which we Old Fashioned Baptists, some of us, profess to believe, and which is drawing down upon you and us the reproaches and contempt of all the learned gentry among the Baptists.

The term absolute, has been prefixed by yourself and others to the word predestination, to distinguish the doctrine you hold from the idea of a conditional predestination. Strictly speaking, however, this is an unnecessary appendage. A conditional predestination, is no predestination; for the predestination of an event conditionally, is but a pre-determination to leave the event undetermined, and therefore excludes predestination altogether.

Having thus briefly explained what we mean by predestination, I will proceed to show that it is a doctrine taught in the Scriptures. In relation to the salvation of the Elect we have the doctrine of predestination expressed in direct terms, as in Rom. 8:29,30 – “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son &c. – Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called &c.” And Eph. 1:5 – “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ &c.” and verse 11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” In these passages, we have not only the word predestination used in the translation, but in the original the Greek word employed is of a corresponding signification; being Proorizo, formed of Pro, before, and Orizo, to bound, or limit, to determine, to define &c., and is derived from the theme: oros = a bound or limit, or the end of a thing. Hence the literal signification of the word, used is, a fixing before, the bound or limit, of a thing or event.

If we look at the connection, we shall find the idea conveyed by the word, fully sustained by its use in these cases. In Rom. 8:29 & 30 the whole of the Apostles argument in these and the following verses of this chapter are in support of the declaration he makes. Verse 28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” To this the inquiry might be made, How, Paul, can we know this? “For, or because,” is the answer, “whom He

did foreknow” that is as the objects of His purpose and call, “He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren.” This did decree that they should be like Christ, should partake of His image; should as His brethren participate in that life that is in Him, in a justification from the demands of the law, in the Father's peculiar love and care, in the resurrection, and in that glory which the Father gave Him, &c. And this was no inefficient purpose, “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.” Paul now retorts some inquiries to those who might doubt the assertion made in verse 28. He asks in verse 31, “What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Or more emphatically, “who against us,” that is, who is it that is against us? He goes on to confirm his position by a series of inquires in which he shows that the predestination of God is firm against all the assaults of tribulation or distress, &c., and against death and life, and angels and principalities, and powers, and things present, and things to come, and height and depth, &c. Thus we see that the predestination of God in this case not only secures the leading purpose that the elect shall be conformed to the glorious image of His Son, but also fixes the limits, and determines the end of all things which transpire in relation to them.

Again, if we refer to the use of the word in Ephesians we shall find that the predestination and the determination or purpose of God go together. Thus Chapter 1, verses 4-6, “According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. – To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Predestination is here represented to be according to the good pleasure of His will, and is a decreeing of the objects of His choice unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world; but determines at that early period their being accepted in the Beloved; and of course decides with certainty their repenting, believing, and being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; things necessarily embraced in their experimental acceptance in Christ. Again, in verse 11 the Apostle speaks of having obtained an inheritance as the result of that predestination of God which is according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. Here then we have in these and the connecting verses every part of salvation brought to view as the predestination of God. For He worketh all things, not according to the caprice of fallen men, nor according to any fortuitous circumstances which may transpire, but according to the counsel of His own will. If then it is a fact, as the Apostle declares, that God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; then does the counsel of God's own will not only determine with certainty all the parts of salvation and fix the whole chosen race, blameless before Him in love in the possession of their inheritance, as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, but also decrees the result of all events according to His good pleasure.

If all persons with whom we have to do were disposed, cheerfully, to submit to the decision of Divine Revelation, there would be but one question more to decide in order to determine whether all things, absolutely, or things in a limited sense, are predestinated, or worked according to the decision of the counsel of God's own will, & that question is, – how far does the government of God extend? If His government extends universally over matter and mind, then there is no movement either of matter or mind but what God works after the counsel of His own will, or determines the result thereof according to the good pleasure of His will. King Nebuchadnezzar evidently thought that God's Dominion was universal over Heaven and earth for he said of Him, “He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou?” Dan. 4:35. And the king was certainly correct in this, for Christ assured His Disciples in

Matthew 28:18, that all power was given to Him in Heaven and in earth; that is as Mediator. If so, God had it in His own hands to give. Again, Christ says in John 17:2 “As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou has given Him.” Hence, His power is over the wicked as well as over those to whom He gives eternal life; and it being all power, it must extend to both matter and mind, as there can be no disposing influence, or power, besides, and therefore, the devices both of men and devils, as well as their actions, must be under His control.

Still, however many persons are unwilling to believe that the predestination of God has anything to do with the wicked actions of men or devils. They, in order to be consistent with themselves, ought to believe that wickedness is under the control of an opposite power, and that God exercises no control over wicked actions or thoughts, to limit their extent, or to overrule their results in accordance with His purposes; lest thereby He should be charged with being the author of sin.

I think, however, I shall be able to bring from the Scriptures of truth several facts which go to prove that the predestination of God determines the results, fixes the limits and so controls the actions and devices of wicked men and devils, so as to cause them to terminate in the furtherance of His own glorious purposes.

But as I wish not to be tedious, I will leave the further consideration of this subject for another number.

S. TROTT

Fairfax Court House, Va. Dec. 18th 1833.

Signs of the Times

Volume 2, No. 3

January 8, 1832

No. 2.

Brother Beebe: – I proposed at the conclusion of the preceding number to show from the Scriptures of truth that the predestination of God extends to the wicked actions of men, that is, that God decreed or predestinated every wicked act, which He permits man to perform, so that man does not act out any part of the enmity or corruption of his heart further than God has predestinated to permit Him, and so that every act, however vile, has its allotted place in the government of God, and accomplishes the very purpose for which it was designed in the eternal council. – The first proof I shall bring in support of this position is the declaration of the Apostle, relative to the crucifixion of Christ as recorded in Acts 2:23, “Him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” I know there are those who say that the event accomplished by the death of Christ was so glorious and of so great magnitude as to justify the making use of wicked men or predestinating their acts relative to it. But this is measuring the mind of God by our little contracted views. We are apt to be so dazzled by splendid events as to overlook the means by which the event may have been accomplished; whereas if the event had been less splendid, we should have condemned those means. But let us beware of attaching such imperfections to God. – As great as was the benefit accomplished by the death of Christ, it did not lead God to overlook the perpetrators of the act. – Judas received his marked punishment, and went to his own place, and the Jews are to this day receiving the punishment of their crime, as denounced upon them by Moses in Deut. 28. As great as was this event, there were many circumstances connected with it which were done with wicked hands and yet were foretold of God, and of course, had been determined. He was delivered up, that is to be slain, by the determinate council and fore-knowledge of God. Jesus says of His life, “No man taketh it from me but I lay it down of myself.” John 10:18. Yet, in this laying down of His life was involved the wicked act of Judas in betraying Him to the Jews, of the Jews in delivering Him to Pilate, of Pilate sending Him to Herod, and His being sent back, and of Pilate's delivering Him up to be crucified though he found no fault in Him. Judas' act was evidently predestinated; for Christ said to His Disciples, “One of you shall betray me,” and when asked of John who it was, He designated Judas by a sign; “And after the sop Satan entered into him,” John 13:21-27. And even farther back than this, it was designated, compare Acts 1:15-20 with Psalms 41:9, and 109:8. Thus also Herod and Pilate's combining to deliver up Christ as also the Jews and Gentiles being united in that act was predestinated of God. See Acts 4:25-28, compared with Psa. 2:1,2. The circumstance of the Jews wagging their heads at Him and mocking Him, &c., their parting His garments among them were prophesied of. See Psalms 22:7, 8-18; and that these circumstances were not foretold upon the mere ground of God's foreknowing that they would do these things. See the circumstance of their giving Christ gall mingled with vinegar as prophesied of in Psalms 69:21, and the fulfillment as recorded in John 19:28-30; from which it is manifest that the prediction governed the event, hence that the prediction might be fulfilled, Jesus says, I thirst. Indeed it is altogether idle to attempt to separate the foreknowledge of God from His predestination; for How could God foreknow that certain persons would give to Christ vinegar and gall unless He had predestinated to bring those very persons into existence, to preserve them alive to that time, to give them health and strength sufficient to attend on the crucifixion, to leave them to the enmity of their hearts, and to give them the occasion to act out this enmity by Christ's saying, I thirst, and then suffer them to offer that insult? So of every event fore-known to God. If God then fore-knows all things, all the circumstances necessary to bring those all things to pass must have been predestinated of God. It is said by the Apostle relative to what Herod and Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of

Israel, did to Christ, that they did “whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” Acts 4:27,28.

Another proof in support of the doctrine that the wicked actions of men are predestinated of God is found in Isaiah 10:5,6 “O Assyrian; the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation, I will send him against an hypocritical nation and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.” Here God in the clearest manner declares what use He will make of the Assyrian. Can any say that He did not predestinate the Assyrians taking the prey, &c.? Yet, these were acts of violence and cruelty in the Assyrians as is manifest from the connection, verse 7, “Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.” And verse 12, “Wherefore it shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria and the glory of his high looks.” In perfect accordance with what God says of the Assyrians relative to their ambitions, murderous course, that they are the rod of His anger. The Psalmist in praying to be delivered from the wicked that opposed him, and from his deadly enemies, says, “Deliver my soul from the wicked which is Thy sword, from men which are Thy hand, O Lord, &c.” Psalms 17:9-13,14. Can the wicked thus be God’s sword and God’s hand, and He not determine and govern their acts. And if their acts were fore-known to God, did He not predetermine or predestinate those acts? Hence it is said in Proverbs 16:4, “The Lord hath made all things for Himself, yea even the wicked for the day of evil.” Some may suppose that by the day of evil, for which the wicked are made, we are to understand their own destruction. But such is not the faith of the Old School Baptists. They do not believe that God in bringing the wicked into existence had no higher object in view than their destruction. By the day of evil, we understand, the day in which God brings evil upon His people or upon others. It has pleased God to bring His church and people through great tribulations; from whence are their tribulations to arise but from the persecutions of the wicked? God will give those blood to drink who have shed the blood of saints and prophets; by whom will He do it? Not by the righteous. He has made the wicked for this day of evil; and so has He prepared instruments for every evil day. Thus says the Psalmist, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain,” Ps. 76:10. What is this but a predestination, that limits and bounds even the wrath of man, letting it go just so far as to accomplish the purpose of God, and no further?

If the above is not sufficient to establish the fact that God predestinates the evil acts of men, we have additional proof from the history of Joseph and his brethren.

Joseph says to his brethren, “Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life;” and again, “God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So it was not you that sent me hither, but God.” Gen.45:5-7,8. And in Gen.50:20, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive.” Thus we see that whilst Joseph's brethren thought evil against him and wickedly devised means to put him out of the way, in order to disappoint his dreams, God had determined that this very wickedness of theirs should be the means of bringing about the fulfillment of those dreams, and to terminate in His and their good. So also He employed the wickedness of Potiphar's wife, to bring about the ultimate exaltation of Joseph, and consequently to fulfill the purpose for which God sent him into Egypt. So full was Joseph in the belief of the predestination of God in that thing from the manifestation he had received that he said plainly to his brethren, It was not you that sent me hither, but God. And as full proof that this affair was

determined on before-hand, or predestinated of God, we have not only the thing revealed to Joseph in dreams, but the dwelling of Israel in Egypt and the length of time they should be there was foretold to Abraham. See Gen. 15:13-16.

These several proofs which I have brought forward are not to be considered as so many peculiar instances in which God's government is exerted over the wicked actions of men; but rather as special illustrations of the universal government of God. They show how surely He will cause the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain. Ps. 76:10. The soldiers must not break the legs of Jesus though so commanded, but they pierce His side that the Scripture might be fulfilled; that is, that the foretold purpose of God should stand. See John 19:31-37. So Joseph's brethren could neither kill him, nor leave him to perish in the pit, nor could Reuben deliver him; but the company of Ishmaelites must needs come along at that juncture of time and they sell him to be carried down into Egypt. These several instances which are thus particularly recorded of God's making the wickedness of men and devils subserve His purpose, are sure pledges that in spite of the combined malice and rage of both, He will roll on His gracious purposes, accomplish all His promises, and fulfill every prophecy. He that could make the enmity of Joseph's brethren, and desire of gain in the Ishmaelities, the wickedness of Potipher's wife and the ingratitude of Pharaoh's steward all combine to accomplish the exaltation of Joseph and the purpose God had in view, will while He causes judgment to begin at the house of God, surely accomplish at the appointed time, the complete destruction of the Man of sin, in all his branches.

And dear child of grace, however much men may revile you and hate you, or Satan may desire to have you, – you have a sure pledge both from the declaration of God, and from what you have seen of His overruling providence that all things work for your good, as they did for the good of Joseph when taken from his father, and for the good of David when hunted as a partridge upon the mountains. For as it is said in Prov. 16:9, “Man’s heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.” In the next number I purpose noticing some of the objections brought against this doctrine.

S. TROTT.

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Signs of the Times

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February 5, 1834

No. 3.

Brother Beebe: – I will now notice some of the objections, which are made to the doctrine under consideration.

The objection most frequently made is that this doctrine represents God as the author of sin. Most of those who make this objection will allow that God governs the world and that no event takes place but by His permission. Where is the difference between them and us? It appears to be something like this. We believe that God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that He has a wise design in every event which He either permitteth or causeth to take place, that each event and all the transactions of men, even the vilest, are as so many links in the great chain of that providence by which the eternal purposes of God are connected together, and drawn on to their ultimate and glorious consummation; that from eternity God drew the wondrous plan of His government, saw through the operations and bearings of every event, and assigned to each its place and use in the dispensation of His providence, His justice, or His grace. They, if I can comprehend their views, believe that God has not beforehand determined the wicked actions of men, that merely as a spectator He suffers the wicked to go on according to their own wills. Of course, if God has had no previous determination relative to their acts, He can have no design in permitting them unless it be simply the general design of leaving those persons to aggravate their condemnation. Now it would seem to me that if either of these systems makes God the author of sin it is the latter, for it makes God to be, in a most wanton manner, accessory to the vices of men. But why is such a system preferred? Surely, only because it takes the government from God and gives it to the will of man.

But says one in the case of an assassin's way-laying a man and murdering him, it would be horrid to suppose that God had predestinated this barbarous act. Where is the preacher who talks thus, if called to preach on this funeral occasion, that would tell the afflicted relatives that God had nothing to do with this affair, and therefore instead of exhorting them to eye the hand of God in it, and to be submissive to His will, would direct them to regard only the hand of the assassin? And yet he ought thus to tell them to be consistent.

The Master said to His disciples, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Mt.10:29-31. Christ had been telling them not to fear them that kill the body, &c., in reference to persecutors, and then brings in the case of the sparrows. Would not the disciples naturally be led to think of the sparrows as exposed to the ravages of birds of prey? And when thus assured that the hawks could not seize their prey but by the will of God they would feel such confidence in the care of their heavenly Father, as to believe that their bloody persecutors could not take their lives until His gracious purpose was accomplished, and He for wise purposes saw fit to suffer them to be put to death.

If God thus taketh care for sparrows, can it be supposed that any human being will be left to fall by the hand of an assassin without our heavenly Father? If any can find comfort in believing that men's lives are thus left to the sport of chance, I envy them not that comfort.

Let us take another view of this subject. I think it more consistent with what God has revealed of His universal government to suppose that the days of this murdered man were numbered, that the designs of God in His existence on earth were accomplished, and the period had arrived for his being taken

from it; and that God had determined to leave him who was the assassin thus to manifest the enmity and depravity of his heart, to be a warning to others, and to receive that open punishment which his depraved principles merited. Also that such afflictions as attended this affair God had seen fit to appoint unto the relatives, if not to result in their good, yet for wise and good purposes.

I do not see that this view of the subject any more makes God the author of sin than any other system would short of that of the Magi which supposed the existence of two gods, the one good and the other evil. Not any more than the Lord's having appointed to Peter the death by which he should glorify God made Him the author of the sin of his persecutors. See John 21:18-19.

But to give, if possible, a clearer illustration of this subject, I will offer a few remarks on the text, Luke 13:4-5, "Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." I have said in a former number there is no movement either of matter or mind but what has been so fixed by the counsel of God to work for His glory. In the text above quoted I think there is an illustration of this fact. In the case of the eighteen being slain by the fall of the tower of Siloam, are the following circumstances to be noticed.

First, the passage gives no statement of the special cause which produced the fall of the tower; neither is there any intimation that it was occasioned by anything miraculous. The whole account appears clearly to imply that it was what would be termed at this day a mere casual event. Second, the Jews having been taught by their lively oracles, to acknowledge the hand of God in every event, considered this a special visitation of God upon those who were slain and accounted for it by supposing that they were sinners above others. This latter idea the Master evidently designed to correct and to impress upon the minds of His audience that they were sinners equally with those eighteen, and like them, exposed to the judgments of God, unless they repented with that repentance which their law required of them as national Israelites.

Whilst we are left ignorant of the direct cause of the tower's falling, whether it was carelessness in building, negligence in repairing, the wear of time, or some other circumstances, the fact is evident that the materials of which it was built, having been undermined or in some other way removed from their proper balance one upon another, fell by the regular operation of the law of gravitation, and in their fall killed eighteen persons. Can any be so hardened in opposition to the sovereignty of God as to contend that He by whom alone the sparrow falls, had no hand in the death of these persons? Yea, is it not manifest from the improvement which the Saviour made of the event that it was designed as a warning to the inhabitants of Jerusalem of the impending judgments which hung over their heads? These impending judgments of which the Jews were thus warned were brought upon them, as the event shows, by the instrumentality of the Roman arms. That these impending judgments were limited and bound by the predestination of God is evident from Matt.24:15-28, and Luke 21:17,24. It is equally manifest that it was the ambition and pride of the Romans which impelled them forward to the destruction of this devoted people.

Now if in the one case God could accomplish His purpose of cutting off those eighteen persons by the instrumentality of the effect of the law of gravitation upon the materials of the tower in Siloam without diverting that law from its regular course of operation, why could He not in the other case bring His threatened and defined judgments upon the Jews by the instrumentality of the Romans thirst for conquest and blood without being the author of their sin or without infringing upon their free-agency in the act? Some may say that God was the author of the law of gravitation. True, God did establish it in

the original creation of matter; and so did He originally permit sin to enter into the world and man to become so depraved as that it is as natural for him to sin as it is for a heavy body to fall to the earth. And there was no more necessity for God, in the one case, to produce a new principle of depravity in the hearts of the Romans than, in the other case, to produce a new principle of gravitation or give a new bias to that heart. In the one instance God had only to permit the interposition of certain occasions to bring the law of gravitation into effect upon the materials of the tower and to bring those eighteen persons within its reach to accomplish His purpose concerning them. So in the other case, He had only to permit the Jews, by their turbulency and rebellion, to provoke the resentment of the Romans to be the occasion of their acting out their bloody cruelty, so far as God had determined to permit them.

What I have said upon this subject is probably not sufficient to satisfy the minds of some who may think they are honest inquirers after truth. But it is not dependent on me to vindicate the revelation and ways of God from the charge of sin. Let those who charge that doctrine which God has revealed, with a sinful tendency, answer to Him for it.

I will offer a few remarks for the consideration of those who think that God has too great affairs to manage to concern Himself with the smaller particles of matter, such as are seen floating in the air; for such professors there are. I would ask them whether they believe in the resurrection of the body? If so, whether they believe that God will raise the bodies of all or only of such whose bodies He can find on the resurrection morn? We know that the bodies of many have been burned to ashes, and those ashes scattered towards the four winds of heaven; the bodies of others have been left to molder to dust on the surface of the earth; the graves of many have been opened and the dust that once composed the bodies mingled with other particles of earth, not to insist upon the continual process through which matter is passing of decomposition and new organizations, by which that which was once the component part of an animal body becomes incorporated in a vegetable substance, &c. How can any person with these facts in view believe that God will or can raise the bodies of all persons unless they believe that He exercises infinite knowledge and that universal disposal of all things, that every particle of matter is present to His notice, passing through what process it may, filling by His direction the very place and accomplishing the very object He designed? Is this knowledge too wonderful for your comprehension? So it is for mine. But is it too extensive for our God whose understanding is infinite? Other objections I leave for another number.

S. TROTT

Fairfax Court House, Va.

Signs of the Times

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February 19, 1834.

No. 4.

Another objection urged against the doctrine of predestination is that it would involve the notion of the fatalists and destroy the free-agency of man and consequently his accountability. These notions must arise from ignorance of the true character of God who, as an efficient intelligence, governs the world in wisdom and righteousness, causing everything to result in the greatest good. But in answer to the objection, suffice it to say that the universal experience of man and the sure word of prophecy both unite in establishing the fact that man in all his sinful transactions acts freely, and is accountable there for. I will notice a few instances in which the consciousness of guilt was manifested in persons, relative to transactions manifestly predestinated of God. We have an instance in the case of Joseph's brethren. Although Joseph declared that it was God who sent him into Egypt, yet when their father was dead his brethren sent unto him saying, "We pray thee forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy Father." Gen. 50:17. We have another instance in Judas who committed the very crime which had long been predicted, and which the Master pointed him out as the one destined to perform, yet when he had committed the base act, he in contrition said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." Matt. 27:4. An instance of acknowledged free-agency we have in the case of the Assyrian, who was the rod of God's anger against the Jews. God says of him, "I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, by the strength of my hand I have done it and by my wisdom, &c." Isa. 10:12,13. Thus it is that men and devils, instead of frustrating or retarding the righteous government of God by the acting out of their enmity, are, in their very acts of sinning against Him, made by His wise government to bring about His holy and eternal purposes. This view of the holiness and majesty of God, manifested in His overruling the sins of men to the promotion of His purpose of grace whilst it fills His enemies with wrath, constrains the believer to exalt Him and to worship at His footstool under a feeling sense that He is holy.

I now pass to the consideration of an objection made by the popular Baptists, more particularly against this doctrine as held by the Old School Baptists. Even those who profess to believe the doctrine of predestination make it, when professed by an Old School Baptist, to be a very Pandora's box from whence springs Antinomianism and everything which they are accustomed to consider as evil in us. It is, according to their representation, our belief in the Absolute Predestination of all things that keeps us from engaging in the Benevolent enterprizes of the day and prevents us from preaching repentance and faith as conditions of salvation, and from making any efforts to convert sinners, and in a word that it makes us very idle and wicked professors. This is the most unhallowed of all the objections made against this doctrine. It is the very course pursued by the Jews against our Master, that by raising a prejudice in the public mind against Him and His doctrine that they might more easily accomplish His death. As they thus succeeded against Him to do with wicked hands, what the counsel of God had before determined to be done, so will they succeed against the two witnesses.

But let us, Dear Brethren, rejoice with His early disciples in being accounted worthy to suffer persecution for our Lord's name sake. This course pursued by the popular Baptists in reproaching this doctrine, and us for holding it, whilst they admit it even to be a Bible doctrine, is the most decisive testimony as to what manner of spirit they are of, that could be had. It is, I sometimes think, undeniably an instance of our being reviled and having evil said of us falsely for His sake. The christian knows ordinarily, owing to a sense of the corruptions of his heart, the instances are not many when he can clearly draw the conclusion that it is for Christ's sake he is reviled. Hence, how thankful ought we to be

for the privilege granted us of having such an unequivocal testimony that the blessing recorded in Matt. 5:11 & 12 belongs to us.

It is not in one solitary instance, or two that we are reproached for holding this doctrine. There appears for a few months past to have been a general concert on the subject. Preachers whilst professing to preach the doctrine of predestination, have in the very same discourses, represented it to be Antinomianism and to have the most deadening influence when held by certain Baptists, meaning the Old School brethren. Others have given the same views of the subject in their publications in the religious papers: witness the Letter of a certain celebrated preacher in Virginia published in the Religious Herald, of Dec. 20th, 1833. But it is perhaps proper to answer the objection, however unprincipled it is. The objection seems to imply that the whole sum of our faith is the doctrine of predestination; that all our religious course is determined by our belief of this one point of revelation.

It is true that believing in the predestination of God, we have no idea of procuring or of being instrumental in producing the salvation of one individual not chosen of God unto salvation; nor that one of the travail of Christ's soul will die without experiencing the renewing of the Holy Ghost and thus being prepared for the society of Heaven, whether that individual die in infancy or in old age, whether he was born in New York, in Rome, in Mecca or in Peking. But we as firmly believe that God has chosen His people to salvation thro' sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth; that: It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, and that whilst the preaching of the Cross is unto them that perish, foolishness; unto us who are saved it is the power of God. –

Let those who think and speak of tracts and Sunday Schools as the more efficient means of converting the world ponder this text and think seriously on the distinction drawn between those who perish and those who are saved. The one class esteem the preaching of the Cross, or Christ crucified, as far surpassing any scheme of men as the power of God surpasses the weakness of man. But they do not consider the difference between the preaching of the Cross, and Sunday School teaching or reading of tracts to consist so much in any natural superiority of the one over the others, but simply in the fact that the one is the appointment of God delivered to us through the volume of eternal truth and that the others are not. Attendance therefore on the one calls for and authorizes the exercise of faith in God, that He will bless His own appointments, whereas there can be no authorized faith in relation to the others because God has made no revelation concerning them. And according to the Apostle's views of the subject, the reason why God has instituted the simple preaching of the Cross, unadorned with wisdom of words, is that by such preaching God might make foolish the wisdom of the world, and that the faith of His people should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. See 1st Cor. 1:18-29 & 2:4,5. The above may suffice to show that it is not our belief in the doctrine of predestination alone that prevents us from uniting in the Benevolent enterprizes of the day, as they are styled, but the fact that God has appointed the one institution and but the one has its due weight with us, and ought to have with all who have confidence in the wisdom of God. But again our belief in the predestination of all things gives us confidence to believe that not an instrument shall be wanting, or a circumstance fail, that God ever designed to employ, or ever would own for bringing an individual of the Election of God into the liberty of the Gospel, or for establishing him in the hope and consolations thereof. It also leads us to believe that Christ's people will be willing in the day of His power, according as they are called to believe in Him, to confide in Him, to profess His name, to enter the ministry, and that with just such gifts as He has bestowed on them, and to go and occupy these gifts wherever He in His providence directs; and that their willingness to these things will be from a manifestation of the day of His power to their souls, and not from any offered worldly accommodations.

Hence we have no confidence in the Divine call of any person to the ministry who enters it or goes forward in it only as some salary or mission fund is proffered for his accommodation. Neither when they go forth from these considerations can we believe that God will make their labors a blessing. Consequently we stand opposed to Missionary and Theological school systems. The preacher made willing in the day of Christ's power to enter the ministry does not need these proffered accommodations to stimulate him to action. Neither does he need for this end the notion of becoming popular by a display of School polish or by multiplying converts. He has to preach to answer his own conscience. Being an earbored servant, he will desire to be found faithful. And feeling that he is a servant, he will feel it to be his province to follow the directions of his Lord, to keep strictly to his written orders; to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season, and to leave it to his Master's will to accomplish his own purpose by the word preached. Thus the predestination of God has secured that belief in the Absolute Predestination of all things will not make His servants idle, but on the contrary, it becomes an incentive to active obedience. The same is the case, as might be shown from the word, with all His other children in their several relations.

It is true that the servant of the Lord may sometimes be left to seek his own accommodation, rather than do his Master's Will, but when this is the case, the Lord will assuredly send leanness into his soul, or otherwise so chastise him as to bring him back to a cheerful discharge of duty.

As to antinomianism, those who know the meaning of the word, when they use it certainly do know that it is a base calumny upon us. They know that what offends them in our preaching relative to the law is our contending so strongly for the spirituality and unchangeable nature of the law, and that nothing but that full and perfect righteousness, found in the obedience of Christ as the representative of His people, could release from condemnation. If instead of preaching the Apostles' doctrine which establishes the Law, we preached the abrogation of the eternal law and that man is, as they say, on pleading terms with God, and by which many seem to mean that man is on grounds for proposing terms of acceptance, with God, we should then in the estimation of the popular be very lawful and holy men.

In reference to the charge that our belief in the doctrine of predestination occasions our not preaching that men should repent and believe, I would remark in the first place that according to our understanding of the Scriptures, repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ are essential parts of that salvation to which the elect of God are predestinated. These things therefore we preach. But the repentance to which God has predestinated His people is a heart repentance, a godly sorrow for sin; a turning with heart-loathing from self and all self-doings, as being defiled with sin. We do not, therefore, and dare not, preach a mere Ahab or Ninevite repentance, as that which characterizes persons as entitled to the consolations of the Gospel. There is the same corresponding difference between the one repentance and the other, that there is between the deliverance granted to Ahab & Nineveh, and that salvation which cometh by Christ. It is true that if we could satisfy our consciences by preaching the word repent instead of preaching that repentance which is the result of the regenerating operations of the Holy Ghost, we should much better please the unregenerate and popular professors as we should then preach a repentance of which they have some conception.

Again, Christ, by nailing the handwriting of ordinances to His cross, so took the Sinai covenant, as such, out of the way that it never after should, by all the contrivances of men, be introduced into the plan of God as any part of the system of salvation. Hence Christ, after His resurrection, made known to His Disciples that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47). The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus

Christ. If therefore there is any meaning in the expression, In His name, it must mean something very different from preaching repentance and remission of sins in a legal form. So we understand it as fixed by the predestination of God, and therefore we do not preach repentance as a condition upon which salvation is suspended. But while we preach the manifested obligation of all, both Jews and Gentiles, as the creatures of God to return unto Him by repentance, or as the Apostle has it, But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, and whilst we preach the absolute necessity of heart repentance as a predestined part of the salvation of God, we preach that Jesus Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel; and that no repentance short of that which He giveth in making His word as a fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces, either manifests the person as entitled to, capacitates him for receiving the consolations of the Gospel. Hence that no other is of any avail.

Thus far our belief in the predestination of God effects our preaching repentance.

So faith, we preach, not as a condition of salvation, but as the gift of God. And the faith we preach is as distinct from any natural belief of the human mind as the internal revelation or testimony of the Spirit of God is distinct from the testimony of men: the one is external and natural, the other is internal and spiritual; the one is comprehended and received by the natural powers of the human mind, the other can be understood and relied on only by spiritual life imparted. In a word, we believe that the predestination of God has fixed eternally the point that none but that system of salvation which God has decreed, that truth which God has revealed, and that order which He has established, shall stand. We would, therefore, be wholly conformed in understanding, in feeling and walk to that system, be grounded in that truth, and bounded and defined by that order which God has revealed. Being thus established in the truth of God and sustained by His word, if persecution come, let it come, we shall feel the assurance that the two Beasts with their Image, and all their drilled and mustered forces, can go no farther in their rage than our God has determined to permit them, that they cannot afflict us, only as He has designed the affliction in mercy unto us, that they cannot take our lives one moment before our Father has accomplished His wise purposes with us in this vale of tears.

Such an established belief in the predestination of God serves to preserve us, amidst the various trials of life, and amidst the rage of persecution from that fretful, sullen, and heart-sunken spirit manifested by Saul when he said, "Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, &c., – that all of you have conspired against me; and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, &c." I Sam. 22:7,8. But on the contrary, it will enable us to manifest that patient, resigned spirit which David manifested when he said to Saul, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee, but mine hand shall not be upon thee," (I Sam. 24:12), and when he said of Shimei, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David, who shall then say wherefore hast thou done so;" – "Let him alone and let him curse for the Lord hath bidden him, it may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for His cursing this day." 2 Sam. 16:10-12. In the case of Saul we see manifested the genuine temper of that spirit which will not have the Lord to reign over him, and which therefore rejects the purpose of God; in the other that humility and meekness which is incident to a belief and acquiescence in the Sovereignty of God.

But David did not believe that God's having bidden Shimei to curse, or in other words, His having predestinated this act, exonerated him from guilt. Hence David's directions to Solomon, I Kings 2:8,9.

I will here leave the subject, praying that whilst others reproach us for believing in the Absolute Sovereignty of God, the Lord would bless us with more unshaken confidence in His universal

predestination and with a more entire submission to His Sovereign Will in all things, and that whilst others indirectly charge God with revealing a doctrine that leadeth to licentiousness, God may manifest in us that the belief of His truth and the power of His grace can so overcome the corruptions of our nature as to enable us to lead quiet, peaceable and godly lives.

S. TROTT.

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