

THE ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS

By

Samuel Trott, 1833

[Samuel Trott is given the credit for the drafting of the **Black Rock Address of 1832**, which document called upon Particular or Predestinarian Baptists of the “Old School” of divinity to come together in opposition to the “New School”, or “New Divinity,” introduced among Baptists by Andrew Fuller in 1782 in England. The New Divinity swept American churches between 1813-1820, and had set up a conditional scheme of universal appeals and an incomplete salvation based upon the view of a “General” atonement by Christ. It rejected the view of a complete and finished salvation of a “particular” people, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The greatest doctrinal difference between the New Divinity School and the Old School basically was this: The New School made the “Gospel” a set of propositions to all mankind to “close with Christ”; while the Old School recognized that Christ having already atoned for the sins of God’s elect, the “Gospel” was “glad tidings” of this finished salvation; which glad tidings would be received by all born of the Spirit, for whom Christ died. The former preached “invitations” to sinners, while the latter preached the “Gospel” to sinners. The former depended upon preachers to help God save all He could, while the latter depended upon the Holy Spirit to call God’s elect, whom He had saved, from death to life, and to conversion by the “*foolishness of preaching*”. From 1818 to 1832, those opposed to the New Divinity, and mission movement, were referred to as “Old School Baptists.” The New School became known as “Missionary, or Means Baptists.” The division was practically completed between 1820 and 1845. By 1845, the New School was deeply embedded with Arminians, sprinkled with some Calvinists. The Old School has always gone beyond Calvin, hence were “**Hyper-calvinistic**.”

In each succeeding generation since that time, there has always been among the Old School, some men to arise, saying, “Doctrine, doctrine, doctrine! Why not instead, preach love, love, love” and thereby led the

feeble minded and fearful astray. Such are unaware of the warning by the Apostle John, “*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*” (I John 1:9). Solemn warning is this! –ED]

Samuel Trott on Predestination

This sentiment, “*The absolute predestination of all things*” 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 advocated; some whim daringly promulgated as a part of the *secret things of God* (Deuteronomy 29:29).

It therefore, may not be amiss, to re-examine the subject, and inquire 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*” (Isaiah 46:10). Thus the pre-determination of God, to admit sin into the world embraced in it the decreeing of the time, manner, results &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 4:25-28, and John 17:1, and Hebrews 13:11,12). The doctrine of predestination, then, is this, that God has so predetermined 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*, that 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 Baptists.

The term “*absolute*” has been prefixed to the word “*predestination*” by yourself and others, 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 at all; 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 Romans 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 Ephesians 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 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 bounds or limit, of a thing or event.****

If we look at the connection, we find the idea conveyed by the word, fully sustained by its use in these cases. In Romans 8:29 & 30, the whole of the apostle’s 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 firstborn 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 the glory that 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*" (Romans 8:28). Paul now retorts some inquiries to those who might doubt the assertion made in verse 28, He asked 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 inquiries 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 heights and depth, &c. Thus we see that 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 that 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 goes 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 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, or 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 works 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 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, and 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 both 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?*” (Daniel 4:35). And the king was certainly correct in this, for Christ assured His disciples in Matthew 28:18, that “*all power is given unto Me in heaven and earth;*” that is, as Mediator. If so, God had it in His own hands to give. Again, Christ said 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 both good and wicked men and devils, so as to cause them to terminate in the furtherance of His own glorious purposes.

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 counsel 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 **necessary 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*" (Acts 1:25), and the Jews are to this day receiving the punishment of their crime, as denounced upon them by Moses in Deuteronomy 28:49-68; and by David, of Judas, in Psalm 109: 6-20. As great as was this event, there were many circumstances connected with it

that were done by “*wicked hand*” and yet were revealed beforehand by God, and of course, had been **determined**. He “*was delivered up,*” that is, to be slain, “*by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge 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 acts of Judas in betraying Him to the Jews (Zechariah 11:12; Psalm 109), of the Jews in delivering Him to Pilate, of Pilate sending Him to Herod, of His being sent back, and of Pilate’s delivering Him up to be crucified though “*he found no fault in Him*” (See Psalm 69:19,21; Deuteronomy 21:7; Psalm 22:18). 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 this sign: “*And after the sop Satan entered **into** him*” (Psalm 109:6; John 13:21-27). And even farther back than this, it was designated (Compare Acts 1:15-20 with Psalm 41:9, and 109:8). All of these are **wicked acts of wicked men**. Thus also Herod and Pilate’s combining to deliver up Christ as also the Jews and Gentiles being united in that act was predestinated (See Acts 4: 25-28 compared with Psalm 2: 1,2). The circumstance of the Jews wagging their heads at Him and mocking Him, *etc.*, their parting His garments among them were prophesied (See Psalm 22:7, and 8:16); and that these circumstances were not foretold upon the mere ground God’s *foreknowing* that they would do these things. See the circumstance of their giving Christ gall mingled with vinegar as prophesied of in Psalm 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 of God. If

God then foreknows 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 wicked men are predestinated of God is found in Isaiah 10: 5,6 – “*O Assyrian; the **rod of Mine anger, and 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 street.” Here God in the clearest manner possible 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 in 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 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 were 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.*” (Psalm 17:9-13, 14). Can the wicked thus be God’s *rod, sword, and hand*, and He not determine and govern their acts? And if their acts were foreknown to God, did He not *predetermine* or *predestinate* those acts? Hence it is said in Proverbs 16:4, “*The Lord 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 under-*

stand, 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 tribulation*” (Acts 14:22); from whence are their tribulations to arise but from the persecutions of the wicked? God will give those blood to drink that have shed the blood of saints and prophets; by whom will He do it? Not by the righteous. He has made the “*wicked for the 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; and the remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain*” (Psalm 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 and controls 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 preserved life;***” and again, “***God sent me before you to preserve 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***” (Genesis 45: 5-7,8). And in Genesis 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 while Joseph’s brethren thought evil against him and **wickedly devised means** to put him out of the way, in order to disappoint his prophetic 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 Potipher’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 beforehand, or predestinated of God, we have not only the thing **revealed** to Joseph in dreams, but the dwelling of Israel in Egypt and the actual *length of time* they should be there was foretold to

Abraham, “*Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them **four hundred years**;*” and “*But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full*” (Genesis 50:13,16).

These several proofs that 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*” (Psalm 76:10). The soldiers must not break the legs of Jesus though so commanded, but they pierced 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, (as they first considered) nor leave him to perish in the pit, (where they had put him next) nor could Reuben deliver him (though he desired to do so); but the company of Ishmeelites must needs come along at that exact juncture of time and place and they sell Joseph to be carried down into Egypt, and not somewhere else! These several instances that are thus particularly recorded of God’s making the wickedness of men and devils serve 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 Ishmeelites, the wickedness of Potipher’s wife and the ingratitude of Pharaoh’s steward all combine to accomplish the exaltation of Joseph and the purpose of 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 together 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 mountain*” (I Samuel 26:20b). For as it is said in Proverbs 16:9, “*Man’s heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.*”

OBJECTIONS TO THE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS:

The objection most frequently made to this doctrine is that it 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 permits or causes 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 purpose 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 bearing in the 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 “free 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 their view**, 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 of God from Him 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 the 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*" (Matthew 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 takes care of 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 own heart**, to be a warning to others, and to receive that open punishment that his depraved principles merited. Also that such afflictions are attended this affair God had seen fit to appoint unto relatives, if not to result in their good, yet for wise and good purposes. "*It is appointed unto men once to die, etc.*"

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 [Zoroastrianism]. Not any more than the Lord's having appointed 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 dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*" I have said above that there is no movement either of matter or mind but what has been fixed by the counsel of God to work for His glory. In the text above 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 case that 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.

While 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 the other, 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 Savior made of the event that it was designed as a warning to the inhabitants of Jerusalem of the impending judgments that hung over their heads? These impending judgments of which the Jews were thus warned were brought upon them, as the events of history shows, by the instrumentality of the Roman arms. That these impending judgments were *limited* and *bound* by the predestination of God is evident from Matthew 24: 15-28, and Luke 21: 17,24. It is equally manifest that it was the ambition and pride **of the Romans** that 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 of 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 will 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 together within its reaches to accomplish His purpose concerning them. So in the other case, He had only to permit the Jews, by their turbulence 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 the truth. But it is not dependent upon 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 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 such 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 organization, by which that which was once the component part of an animal body becomes incorporated in a vegetable substance, *etc.* 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* ?

Another objection urged against the doctrine of predestination is that it would involve the notion of the *Fatalist* 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 to 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*" (Genesis 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*" (Matthew 27:4). An instance of **acknowledged free volition** 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.*" (Isaiah 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 while it fills His enemies with wrath, constrains the true believer to "*exalt Him and to worship at His footstool*" (Psalm 99:5) 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 Enterprises [Modern missionary and social gospel movement – Editor] 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, while 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 the sense of the corruption of his own heart, the instances are not many when he can clearly draw the conclusion that it is for Christ’s sake that 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 Matthew 5:11 and 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 while 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 on 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 December 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 in 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*” (Isaiah 53:11) 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 through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;*” that: “*It pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching** to save **them that believe,***” (II Thessalonians 2:13) and that while the “*preaching of the cross is unto them that perish, foolishness; unto us who **are saved** it is the power of God*” (I Corinthians 1:18).

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” (I Corinthians 1:18-29, and 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 enterprises” of the day, as they are styled, but the fact that God has appointed the one institution and but 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 all “*be willing in the day of His power*” (Psalm 110:5), 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 God 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 be 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 ear-bored 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 apostle's doctrine which *establishes the law*, we preach the abrogation of the eternal law and that man is, as they say, *on pleasing 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*" (II Corinthians 7:10); a turning with *heart-loathing from self and all self-doing*, 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 Ahab and Nineveh, and that salvation that comes by Christ. It is true that **if** we could satisfy our consciences by preaching the *word “repent”* instead of preaching that repentance that is the result of the regenerating operation 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*” (Colossians 2:14), 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 salvation. Hence Christ, after His resurrection, made known to His disciples that “*repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name*” (Luke 24:47), among all nations beginning in Jerusalem. 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 sin 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*” (Acts 17:30), and while we preach the **absolute necessity** of heart repentance as a predestinated 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 the forgiveness of sins*” (Acts 5:31); and that no repentance short of that which He gives in making His Word as a “*fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces*” (Jeremiah 23:29), 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 affects our preaching repentance.

So *faith* we preach, not as **a condition** of salvation, but as the “*gift of God*” (Ephesians 2:8). 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 that 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*,” that the “*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 upon 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 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 Samuel 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 Samuel 24:12), and when he said of Shimei who cursed him, “*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*”(II Samuel 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 in I Kings 2:8,9).

I will here leave the subject, praying that while 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 while others indirectly charge God with revealing a doctrine *they think* leads to licentiousness, God may manifest in us that the belief of the 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.

FURTHER REMARKS RELATIVE TO PREDESTINATION

By
Samuel Trott, **1834**

[Editor's note: The Reader may find it informative, that after having read the above article by Samuel Trott on Predestination in **1833**, in which he made it crystal clear that Predestinarians **do not** make God the Author of sin; yet there was even then a class of men that still insisted after having read the above, that he taught that God was the Author of sin! We note this because the same is still true today, in **2005**, there is such a class of men that insists that anyone who believes in the Absolute Sovereignty of God over all things "*makes God the Author of sin*" ! Regardless how often or how clearly a Predestinarian vindicates the righteousness and holiness of God, and strongly denies that God can be the author of anything contrary to His divine nature, they still insist upon it, and tell and teach others also. Why? Only God knows. We can only suspect that such have a devilish preconceived bias against God as GOD, and as some once said, "*We will not have this Man reign over us*" (Luke 19:

14). Almost to a man, those who make this vicious false charge will insist upon man having a “free” will. It is possible, as Gordon Clarke once said, “Any man who claims to believe in the sovereignty of God and the free will of man, is either mad, or has the wrong definition of both terms!” If you have not read the above article, we strongly suggest you read it first to determine what Trott actually taught. – Editor]

REMARKS ON PREDESTINATION, S. Trott

Brother Beebe,

Having understood that several of our Brethren in different places, as well as others, have so construed my piece on the *Absolute Predestination of All things*, as to infer that I represent God to be the Author of sin, I have been led to look over that article to see if I did make any slip on that point, and leave any sentence so worded as to give just ground for their construction. But I do not find a single sentence therein, that by any fair interpretation, represents God as being the Author of sin in general, or as compelling the creature to a sinful choice by any arbitrary force put upon his mind. I think, if any of our Brethren, who have taken up this wrong idea of the article on Predestination would take the trouble to examine it again impartially, they will find that so far from my representing God as being so the author of sin as to exempt man from guilt in his sinful transactions, I have endeavored particularly to show, while the predestination of God determines that sin, and the sinful acts of men and devils, shall result in the accomplishment of His own glorious purposes, that this predestination does **not destroy the free volition of man**, but leaves him free to act according **to his nature**, and consequently conscious of his guilt, and **justly subject to punishment for his crimes**, as in the case of Joseph’s brethren and of the Assyrian, and of Judas and the Jews.

Persons who make these objections to my views as published seem to overlook the fact that I speak of **God’s government** in this case as being a predestination, or pre-determination, to permit such and such acts of depravity to take place, and to cause them to produce certain results, and

to transpire under certain circumstances; and not a predestination **to compel** men to perform those acts.

I know that many persons have, in their minds, so attached to the term *predestination* the idea of arbitrary force exerted upon the minds of men, compelling them to act, as never to attend to any other explanation given to the subject. Whereas by attaching such an idea to the term *predestination* when spoken of God, they divest Him of that infinite wisdom and understanding that belongs to Him, and bring Him down to a level with us short-sighted mortals. Man when he absolutely predetermines an act or event, acts foolishly, for he knows not what an hour may bring forth. Not so with God. He can, and does “*declare the end from the beginning*” with all the attendant circumstances.

Persons who suffer their minds to be thus swayed by **their prejudices** against a term they did not understand, can scarcely fail of attaching to the combined terms, *absolute predestination*, every thing awful and tyrannical. The plain natural meaning of the term *absolute* is **unconditional**, in this sense, and in this sense only it is used in this connection. And while we contend for an *absolute* or *unconditional predestination*, we **deny** that there is any thing like an **arbitrary** purpose or act to be found in the government of God.

In order, *if possible*, to be more clearly understood upon this point, I will offer a few additional remarks:

1st. That such is the depravity of human nature, that so sure as he is given up to the sway of any one of his passions, and comes into contact with circumstances exciting him to the gratification of that passion, so assuredly he perpetrates the crime to which his inborn depraved passion urges him. David, in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah, being left to the influence of his passion, needed but the exciting circumstance of seeing from “*the roof of the king’s house the woman washing herself*” to lead him on to that course which resulted in the consummation of his whole crime. David therefore instead of charging this act to God, was conscious that it was chargeable only to the depravity of his own heart, and therefore justly says to Nathan, “*I have sinned against the Lord.*” And yet there is no room left to suppose that this whole affair was not

embraced in the pre-determinate purpose of God, for it was a very important link in that chain by which Shiloh (The Lord Jesus) descended from Judah (Matthew 1:6).

2nd. That while the predestination of God extends to every event that takes place in the universe, it puts no other force upon the minds of sinful agents than that of **restraint**. God has predestinated that men shall ***not act out the depravity of their hearts any further than He for wise purposes has predestinated to let them go in sin.*** For producing this restraint, He employs various *instruments*, as education, public opinion, *etc.*, and also frequently causes the various passions of man to counteract the undue influence one of the another. In a word, the predestination of God secures, that so far as He has determined to leave any one to act out the depravity of his heart, so far attending circumstances shall be favorable thereto; as in the case of Pharaoh: “*Even for the same purpose have I raise thee up.*” (that is, by divine providence, to the throne of Egypt, that full opportunity may be given thee to show the haughtiness and cruelty of thy heart), “*that I might show My power in thee,*” (in causing thy arrogance and rage to work thy own destruction and My people’s deliverance.) So of Judas, the thirty pieces of silver are secured to him for a bait. On the other hand, wherein God has determined to **restrain the wrath of man**, or to put restraints upon his depravity, He places him in circumstances calculated to exert the necessary force upon his passions.

But from whence comes depravity and sin? Sin exists in the world **in the depravity of man**, and yet in its origin it was non-existent: not a creature, nor an eternal existence. God is but the *innocent cause*, if I may use the expression of its having an existence. Had not God brought intelligent creatures into existence sin could never have had a being; and if God had not created and placed those creatures under a law, and left them to the free exercise of their own wills whether to obey or not, sin would never have become an existence in the world; and yet not God but ***angels and men, each in his sphere, brought it into existence.***

The existence of sin in the world may be aptly illustrated by the existence of darkness. Darkness could never had had an existence had

not God made creatures needing the medium of material light, in order to the exercise of their organs of vision. For in God “*is no darkness at all.*” But when creatures were produced needing material light to enable them to see, the absence of that light is what we call darkness. In reference to the statement in Genesis 1:2, “*And darkness was upon the face of the deep,*” I understand it to be spoken in relation to the progress of creation, and to be an intimation that the material light suiting this material world was not then created, and that this darkness, or absence of light, was no more a direct production of God than was the *formless* state of matter in its original production. The one was the absence of that *order* which was afterwards given to the matter created. The other, the absence of that light which creatures would need to the use of sight. It is true God has given to material darkness a permanent being in relation to creatures on earth by “*dividing between the light and between the darkness,*” instead of giving to the light an entire sway over the earth.

So of sin, to go back no farther than its relation to man, God made “*man upright,*” but made him a *dependent* and an *accountable* creature and therefore laid him under obligations to “*be holy in heart and life*” unto God, or in other words, to be *entirely and voluntarily devoted* to the will of the Creator. And being thus created, God gave him a *command* as a test by which to prove his **voluntary subjection** to his Creator or his voluntary holiness, I say to prove whether he would be holy to God. (I know the general idea is, even among those whom we esteem sound, that God created man a holy being, but this is an idea I have not been able, perhaps from inferiority of intellect to comprehend), that is, to say in relation to heart holiness or voluntary devotion to God. I know that the word *holy* is sometimes used to denote mere freedom from impurity, in this sense I cheerfully give in to an idea that man was created holy, that he came from the hands of the Creator pure. Man being thus put to the test, he soon showed destitution of that **voluntary** holiness, that self-devotedness to God, which, his being a creature, laid him under obligation to exercise. This want of holiness was *sin*; it was a violation of his obligation and a transgression of the command under which he was placed. And I do not know but that Adam’s thus preferring his own

gratification to submission to the government of God was as much a natural or necessary consequence of his being left to choose for himself as is the succession of darkness to the withdrawal of light. I know that being thus left to his own choice, the very first occasion finds him choosing to set up for himself, for “*Adam was not deceived;*” and I know that God with *certainty* knew that this would be the course of the man; hence the setting up of Christ before the foundation of the world. The act was Adam’s own, it was not that Satan infused any evil principle **into** him. Satan was only an instrument in beguiling Eve, of exciting him to a choice upon the point. Man having made his choice to serve self rather than God; the penalty of the command took immediate effect, and depravity runs through the whole human family, and became from the choice of Adam, the reigning power over the human heart, reigning unto death; the penal requisition of the law giving it that power, “*for the strength of sin is the law.*” Hence man exits under “*the law of sin and death,*” from which he could be ransomed only by the blood of Christ; and delivered only by being brought into a new existence as a *new creature in Christ*, and that only by the power of God.

Do any ask what has predestination to do with this? I answer that it has this much to do with it; that God predestinated man to be, or pre-determined to make him just such a creature as he was, and to leave him to encounter the temptation in his own creature weakness, that he might act freely without the restraints of communicated holiness; with the certainty of his *falling* and becoming “*dead in trespasses and sins,*” and thus an occasion should be offered for bringing in the “*Sun of Righteousness.*” And here is the counterpart of the figure of darkness. If creatures had not been so formed as to need material light, there would have been no occasion for the sun; if man had not so fallen, as to need a Divine Savior, the Word had not been made flesh. Hence, says Christ, “*I come a light unto the world.*” And in the coming of Christ there is “*Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards man.*” If “*glory to God in the highest*” came through Christ, then predestination has assuredly secured a **greater good** by man’s being left to fall than could have come to the universe by his being supported and confirmed

by the power of God in his original state of happiness. Thus the *predestination of God*, instead of making God *the author of sin*, secured that all the glory of redemption should result from the malice of Satan and the native weakness of man.

Fairfax County, Virginia, July 7, 1834 *S. Trott.*

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

By

Samuel Trott, January 20, 1860

[Editor's note: Once again, late in life, Elder Trott answers the slanderous and false charges against the historical Baptist doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty. He rightly answers those suggestions, (similar to the Episcopalians' Thirty-Eight Articles of The Anglical Communion – see page 236), that the subject of Predestination ought not to be preached, because it will make men worse. The truth of the matter is that those congregations that followed that line of reason no longer exist as sound Christian churches. They have long since departed the purity of the Gospel as to no longer qualify as "Gospel Churches." Here, Elder Trott defends the consistent doctrine of the absoluteness of predestination over all things. This was his last article on this important subject.]

I, a few weeks since, received by letter a request from a brother out West that I should give through the *SIGNS OF THE TIMES* my views on the *Absolute Predestination of All things*. I judge from this letter that this brother is sound on the subject; but I also judge from his letters, as also from a copy of the Minutes of the Association with which he is probably connected, that he is surrounded by Baptists not sound on all points, and not upon the subject upon which he wishes my views. I feel,

therefore, disposed to yield to his request, if by any means I might say anything that would strengthen and confirm him in the truth, and instruct others who have hearts to understand. But I have in times past so fully discussed this subject through the *SIGNS OF THE TIMES*, and so frequently expressed my views on it, that I can hardly be expected to give anything new relating to it, yet it is a fruitful subject. One remark more: What I write on this subject *I write for Old School Baptists*. I do not expect others are prepared to receive what establishes the full sovereignty of God.

To come to the subject: Old School Baptists will admit concerning Him who is our GOD, that “*all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made*” (John 1:3); that all things were created by Him and *for Him* (Colossians 1:16); that “*the Lord made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*” (Proverbs 16:4). It is true the first two texts were written of Him who is the *only begotten of the Father, and His Son*, and of course the third applies to Him also; but the Son is the Savior, and the Savior of Israel is the *Lord Jehovah*, the God of Israel (See Isaiah 43:3). Hence it is written, “*For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead*” (Romans 1:20). Is it not, then, evident that **all things that are made were created FOR Himself**, that He had a use for them all, even for the “*small dust of the balance*” (Isaiah 40:15), and for “*the wicked*” (Proverb 16:4), and for the “*waster to destroy*” ? (Isaiah 40:15). If He created “*the wicked for the day of evil*,” and the “*waster to destroy*,” had He not, when He created them for such, pre-determined **the use He would make of them** ? God had use for the waster, Satan, to introduce sin into the world, and He certainly had use for sin in the world for carrying out the purpose which He had “*purposed in Christ Jesus*,” that of saving sinners, and “*bringing many sons unto glory*” (Hebrews 2:10). He had use for Nebuchadnezzar to waste Judah, Tyre and Egypt, &c. And He had use for all the *wasters* from Nebuchadnezzar down to the little insects that destroy one another, and can be discovered only by the microscope. If God “*made all these things*

for Himself,” He certainly has a right to them, and to govern and dispose of them. Can it be supposed with any reason, that when God had made man for Himself, that He permitted him by sinning to take himself away from under His control and government, so that man can in anything thwart the purpose of God? Or, that Satan has obtained a control of man above the control of God? But whatever men may suppose concerning this, God has said, and that settles the question, **“Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain”** (Psalm 76:10). Again, David says, **“Deliver my soul from the wicked which is Thy sword”** (Psalm 17:13). If the wicked is His sword, then He of course has use for them, *“in the day of evil”* which He will bring upon men. Thus God says of Nebuchadnezzar: **“O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand, is Mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation.”** (Isaiah 10:5,6; also verse 15).

Once more: We are told by inspiration of God that, **“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God,”** (Romans 8:28). In the first of the above texts, we have it in substance affirmed that whatever wrath man shall be allowed to act out, shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath He shall restrain. This must embrace the sinful actions of men in general (*“Thou shalt restrain”*). In reference to the restraining of wrath, we have one instance in the crucifixion of Christ. God had said, through the type of the paschal lamb, *“a bone of Him shall not be broken.”* Whilst the soldiers break the legs of those crucified with Him, yet when they saw that Jesus was dead already, they did not break his legs; yet they would vent their wrath on Him in some way, and one of them pierced His side with a spear. There they were restrained from doing that which God said should not be done (Exodus 12:46 & John 19:36) yet in acting out their wrath they did exactly that which was foretold should be done (John 19:32-37 and Psalm 22:16). Yet these Roman soldiers did not design nor know that they were doing the will of God.

In the quotation from Isaiah 18:5,6, we have one illustration of how God uses the wicked as a sword or staff to visit evil upon men. In the quotation *“that all things work together for good,”* &c., there must be

included in these *all things* all the trials from the reproaches and persecutions of men, from the temptations of Satan, and from the crosses and afflictions of life, that His people are subject to. In the quotations I have given it must, I think, be admitted that most of the wicked actions of men and devils are represented. And it is shown that God controls them, for His people, for accomplishing His purpose, and for the good of His people.

Old School Baptists will admit that God's foreknowledge is infinite, and therefore must have embraced from eternity every event, however minute. If God then foreknew all of the wrath of men that should praise Him, and all that He would restrain, and all the use He would make of the wicked, it must have been He purposed that wrath which should be acted out, and that use which He would make of the wicked, and the events He would accomplish by them. Hence He say, "*As I have purposed, so shall it stand*" (Isaiah 14:24-27).

What is God's purpose but His predestination? Men in all ages charged the predestination of God with destroying the accountability of the creature. Paul knew of the natural prevalence of this objection, hence he said, "*Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?*" The answer: "*Nay, but O man, who are thou that repliest **against God?***" (Romans 9:19-24).

And here perhaps it would be wisdom to leave that point where Paul has left it. I will, however, just add that the Scriptures nowhere represents that God's purposing or predestinating the actions and events produced by it, in any case, destroys the sinfulness of the actor.

God had purposed that Joseph should be sold into Egypt, but his brethren sinned in the transaction, doing it from wicked design. Hence Joseph said unto them, "*ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good*" (Genesis 50:20). So in the case of the Assyrian, while God foretold that He would use him as a rod and a staff in His hand against a hypocritical nation, &c.; yet He said, "*Howbeit he meaneth not so,*" and "*it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few*" (Isaiah 10:5-19). Also, in Acts 2:23, concerning the Jews in crucifying Christ, we see the work of God in these cases. We see His purpose carried out by the

wicked actions of wicked men and Satan, yet we cannot see Him **work**. We cannot comprehend His ways. Shall we deny His power? Deny that He does it, because *we cannot comprehend how He does it*, so as to have man a guilty transgressor and Himself pure and just? And shall we, therefore, ascribe the **controlling power** as well as the **resulting acts** to men and to devils? Every event prophesied of, both in the Old and New Testaments, concerning Israel, concerning the four great world empires of Nebuchadnezzar's image, of the division of the Greek Empire, of the division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, and of the rise of the seven headed Beast and of the two horned one – were and must have been predetermined of God, or it would not have been declared of God that they should take place. God said He would send Nebuchadnezzar or the Assyrian against Judah and Jerusalem, as has been seen from the 10th chapter of Isaiah. God named Cyrus as the man that should destroy Babylon and break the Assyrian Empire, and establish the second great empire, the Persian, and deliver the Jews – a hundred and thirty-eight years before Cyrus was born (see Isaiah 45:1-4). Yet He says of the Assyrian, that he meaneth not so, &c., and therefore that He will “*punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria*” (Isaiah 10:7-12). And He called Cyrus “*a ravenous bird, that He calleth from the East to execute His counsel, &c.*,” (Isaiah 46:11). It is evident, as is the case in the Assyrian above noticed, both from the Scripture account and from secular history, that Cyrus and all these kings and nations and people were acting by ambitious motives to exalt themselves: the one in the destruction of the other. Yet God says, in reference to these and preceding events, “*Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are **not yet done**, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure; calling a ravenous bird*” etc. – (Isaiah 46:9-12). What can be a more full and decided declaration of **absolute predestination** than this?

There are those in this section of the country who, though they consider themselves “Old School Baptists,” deny the absolute predestination of all things; yet they admit the predestination of those

events immediately connected with the coming and death of Christ, and the predestination of the elect unto salvation and to the adoption of children. And I suppose, my brother, you have the same class of “Baptists” around you. It may therefore be well to say something on this point.

If the coming of Christ in the flesh was predestinated **before** the foundation of the world, then **all events**, all things connected with His coming, were predestinated. He “*came into the world to save sinners;*” then it must have been predestinated that His people should be “*sinners,*” and therefore that Adam, by transgression, should bring sin into the world. Rahab must become a harlot, and have a house in a retired place on the walls, that she might receive and hide the spies sent by Joshua, and thus secure her own deliverance from the destruction of Jericho, and become the mother of Boaz (David’s grandfather) by Salmon, and thus secure the succession from whence Christ was to come after the flesh (Joshua 2 and 6:25; Matthew 1:5). Tamar must assume the garb of a harlot, that she might entice her father-in-law, Judah, that she might bear unto him an heir, that the succession from Judah to Christ might be preserved as prophesied (Genesis 38:12-30). So the birth of Solomon was preceded by adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. Those were all sinful acts and were intimate in securing the succession from Abraham down to Jesus. Satan had quite an important part to act in bringing this about; not only in entering into Judas and leading him to betray Jesus, but in exciting the Jews. Satan did not this with the design of furthering the purpose of God, but to frustrate it. He was acting out the enmity of **his own heart** against God. The act of Judas in betraying Jesus had been prophesied of by David, and therefore must have been predestinated, and of course, Satan’s entering into him was also foretold (Psalm 109). Even Jesus said unto Judas, after Satan had entered him, “*That thou doest do quickly.*” Yea, all this did not lessen his sinfulness in the act. If God can thus control and make use of Satan’s enmity in accomplishing His own purpose, and yet leave him a *devil*, He can with equal ease control the wrath and wicked acts of men, and yet leave them still the *sinners*. We discover from this that Satan

must be ignorant of the spirituality of the Scriptures, or he would have known that he was fulfilling them by tempting Judas. And he was equally ignorant of the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, or he would not have thought to crush it by procuring His death.

In reference to the predestinated salvation of His people, Christ says of His Father, "*As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him*" (John 17:2). What was the use of this power being given to Him over all flesh, if it was not necessary that He should have the control of all flesh, and their acts, in order to give eternal life to His people? It is as necessary that they should experience their first birth as their second; of course, He must have the control of every event that could effect their preservation in their ancestry to their being born, that there might be no frustration in that; and after their birth till called to the knowledge of the truth. This power over all flesh is declared by Christ to be, "*All power in heaven and earth*" (Matthew 28:18). If He has all power over all flesh, then there is none other that has any power over them to control their actions contrary to His purpose. I cannot think that any consistent Old School Baptist can think that God created or brought into existence any part of the human family merely to be damned; or in other words, that He had not use for in the world in carrying out the great purpose of creation, namely: the salvation and glorification of His people, either as channels through whom the elect are to descend from Adam, or through whom the wicked are to be brought into existence "*against the day of evil,*" or to compose the votaries of the false systems of religion which God has in all ages permitted to exist in the world, by which, through contrast with them, the glory and beauty of His truth may be made more manifest, and the riches of His grace more displayed in bringing His people to the knowledge of the truth, and in preserving them to glory. He must have the control of all these masses so as to secure their filling the places assigned them in the purpose of God. Indeed the term *flesh* in the expression "*all flesh,*" seems to be used to denote those who only are born of the flesh, in distinction from those who are born of the Spirit, as it reads, "*that which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the*

Spirit is spirit.”(John 3:3). It is true, this “*power over all flesh was given*” to Him as Son and Mediator – as God it could not be *given Him*, and that it is as Son that He reigns, and has reigned since His glorification or exaltation, and must reign until all enemies are put under His feet. (John 17:1-2, I Corinthians 15: 24,28). But it is not merely as the “begotten of the Father,” and having therefore only a *derivative* existence, and exercising only a given or delegated power, that He reigns. For although those around you may think that the character of the Redeemer is portrayed as truly sublime when He is represented as having no other Godhead than what was begotten and therefore *derived*, yet the Scriptures represent Him as absolutely Jehovah, the one self-existing God. Hence while as the Son He could say, “*My Father is greater than I,*” and “*I and, My Father are one.*” He is thus God, and the Son of God, in the same glorious personage as Mediator. Hence He said to Philip, “*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,*” If so He brings all the attributes of the Godhead into His work as Mediator, as He exercises His mediatorial powers. Being therefore, God, He **worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.** Hence in the exercise of His power “*over all flesh,*” He is so controlling all that they are made to subserve the very purpose for which they were created, and therefore that which had been predestinated concerning them before they were created in Adam. Certainly it cannot be supposed that God created men for a purpose and yet had not determined what that purpose should be. It is equally absurd to suppose that He created them without a purpose! Hence we may rest assured that notwithstanding the wrath of men they can do nothing but what will be found among the “*all things that work together for good to them that love God.*”

Some Baptists are opposed to the predestination of all things being *preached* or agitated in our papers. They say that it tends to make men worse. Whether such are Old School Baptists *in heart*, or not, it is not my province to say. It certainly is the case that there is nothing which so directly draws out the enmity of the human heart against God and His Sovereignty, as the doctrine of predestination. But if the doctrine of predestination is true, it is certain that men will act out no more wrath

than God will cause to praise Him, for the remainder of wrath He will restrain. And it is true, or there is no dependence in the prophecies of the Scriptures. They would be all *guess-work*, if God had not determined just how far men should act out their wrath, and wherein He would restrain it. On the other hand it is truly consoling to the child of grace to feel assured that his God, his Savior, has the sovereign and all-powerful control of every event, and has determined all for good. Our Savior says, “*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.*” Of course no shot can hit, no bird of prey can wound or kill a sparrow but as God pleases. Christ said to His disciples, “*Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows*” (Matthew 10:29-31).

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