

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

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WE are pleased with the communications of our esteemed brother Trott, on this all-important subject; and we do hope that our readers will faithfully examine all his numbers, comparing them with the infallible standard, the bible, with unbiased minds, open for the reception of truth. These numbers we are fully persuaded will bear examination; and certainly the importance of the subject should be a sufficient incentive to lead us to weigh them in the balance of the sanctuary.

Among others, we doubt not, some well-meaning brethren have started at the position assumed by brother T., that the predestination of God extends to the wicked actions of men and devils. But is there not a cause, why they are so fearful? Few, very few of our pulpits have rung with this doctrine for the last ten or fifteen years. Arminians and New School Baptists have and do hate it; while some, who are compelled to acknowledge the truth of it, have thought they were doing God service by suppressing the publication of it; and of that class, not a few who have seemed unconscious of the presumptuous stand which they occupy, while they are virtually attempting to dictate to the all-wise God what portion of his truth will do to publish, and what should be kept back. It is sufficient for us to know that God has revealed this doctrine in the bible; it is our privilege to publish it, and leave the result with him.

This subject evidently involves the consideration of the extent of God's government. If we say that God cannot, without attaching impurity to his nature or motives, govern or overrule the wicked actions of men and

devils, we say in substance, that he cannot maintain his holiness unless he resigns his universal government.

The examples given by our brother, from the sacred volume, of the overruling providence of God in regard to some, and the express declaration of his foreknowledge and predestination of the wicked actions of others, are in point; nor can they be easily surmounted by those who protest against the universal government of God. The bible is full of testimony on this subject. God has declared the end from the beginning; and he says his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. Prophets and apostles have corroborated this testimony. Balaam was forced to acknowledge that he could not go (though a wicked prophet,) beyond the word (or decree,) of the Lord; and Satan himself if he could speak truth, would tell us that he could not drown a swine without the permission of God.

But leaving all other witness, we would be perfectly safe in resting the whole subject on three of the scripture references offered in brother Trott's numbers, viz: Acts ii.23, iv.27, and the history of Joseph. In the first two passages, in relation to the crucifixion of our Lord by wicked hands, we have an example of the extent of God's government, in perfect harmony with the responsibility of man for his conduct; and in this transaction we have placed before us the grand center of all human events; this is the most important of all; all others, past, present and to come, stand connected with this. The model then which displays the government of God ever the wicked hands which acted in the murder of the Holy Child Jesus, is suited to every event that ever has or ever can come to pass.

In the case of Joseph, we are taught that notwithstanding the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God, which bounds the rage and wickedness of all beings that exist, men and devils act voluntarily in sin, without the least regard to the purpose or decree of God; of whose purpose or decree they are totally unconscious. Of this truth, what a striking example is given in the case of Joseph's brethren. Read the words of Joseph to them, Gen. 1.20. "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 men and devils act from wicked motives, with wicked hands, God means it for good; overrules even their wicked acts and murderous designs for his glory, and the good of all such as are the called according to his purpose. Amidst all our trials and conflicts, opposition and persecution, be this our consolation:

**“That death and hell can do no more
Than what our Father please.”**