

**DOES THE
DOCTRINE OF THE
ABSOLUTE
PREDESTINATION
MAKE GOD
TO BE THE AUTHOR
OF SIN?**

by Pastor Herb Hatfield

This question has been the source of much controversy and division for years among Christians. Those who believe that God is sovereign and has foreordained in eternity all things that come to pass in time have been accused of believing this error. God's absolute sovereignty and His foreordination can be easily shown from the scriptures. There are many scripture verses that could be quoted as proof, but just a few of them would be:

Psalms 115:3, "But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased."

Isaiah 14:24, 27 "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass: and as I have purposed, so shall it stand...For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? Psalms 48:1-14 "Great is Jehovah, and praised greatly, In the city of our God—His holy hill. Beautiful for elevation, A joy of all the land, is Mount Zion, The sides of the north, the city of a

great king. God in her high places is known for a tower. For, lo, the kings met, they passed by together, they have seen—so they have marvelled, They have been troubled, they were hastened away. Trembling hath seized them there, Pain, as of a travailing woman. By an east wind Thou shiverest ships of Tarshish. As we have heard, so we have seen, In the city of Jehovah of hosts, In the city of our God, God doth establish her—to the age. Selah. We have thought, O God, of Thy kindness, In the midst of Thy temple, As is Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise, Over the ends of the earth, Righteousness hath filled Thy right hand. Rejoice doth Mount Zion, The daughters of Judah are joyful, For the sake of Thy judgments. Compass Zion, and go round her, count her towers, Set your heart to her bulwark, Consider her high places, So that ye recount to a later generation, That this God is our God—To the age and for ever, He—he doth lead us over death! And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"

Daniel 4:35 "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and 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?'"

Ephesians 1:11 "...being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

In light of these scriptures and their truths, some have tried to allege that if one believes God is the absolute sovereign ruler of the universe, then you must also believe that He is the author of sin. Our Baptist forefathers very ably dealt with this issue in chapters three of both the Baptist Confession of Faith of 1646 and the London Confession of Faith of 1689 in which they said: "God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein;..."

Is God the Author of Sin? There is no more obscene or profane thought then to imply or suggest that the thrice Holy God would in any manner be accredited as the author of sin. The very idea is scandalous blasphemy and is most repugnant and repulsive to all moral minds. Yet, it is the very charge that some make against the teaching of the absolute sovereignty of God and His omnipotent control over all events in time.

This is no novel device by the enemies of truth. They attempt to set forth a completely absurd premise and then try to pass it off as the alleged teaching of others. This is the common, but dishonest means by which charges have always been brought against truth and it is the same today. The enemies of truth draw a false inference themselves, or suppose that the doctrine leads to such an inference, and then charge it as what others actually hold and teach. There is one maxim which should never be departed from among Christians: "A person is not to be held liable for the inferences which others may draw from his doctrine; and he is never to be represented as holding and teaching that which others suppose follows from his doctrine. He is answerable and liable only for what he avows."

What is the source and cause of sin in the world and what is God's relationship to sin? One of the references the framers of the Confession of Faith gave as a proof-text is James 1:13, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."

First, we must make a distinction between, evil and sin. A simple distinction is that "sin" is the behavior of man in his relation to God. It is the transgression of the Law of God. It is an expression of man's enmity against God. While it may involve our conduct towards others (murder, robbery) it is the product of the wickedness in our hearts. So David in the confession of his sin of adultery and murder said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight..." (Psa.51:4) and he prays that God would "Create

in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."
(v.10)

Sin is the evil that man commits as the results of a sinful heart. Evil is the product and consequences of sin. It is what happens among humans. It involves sickness, death, sorrows, calamities, earthquakes and hurricanes. God warned Adam, "for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen.2:17) All evil is the product and consequences of Adam's sin.

In Isaiah 45:7, God says, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." The Hebrew word "ra" translated "evil" is in other places translated "sorrow," "wretchedness," "calamities, but never sin. God is not the author of sin. God is the source and cause of evil as an act of judgment against sin. The evil that God brings forth may not be His punishment for sin that the individual has committed, as in the case of Job and the blind man in John, chapter nine, or of the innocent who die in storms, earthquakes or wars, but it is always the product or consequences of sin.

In Amos 3:6, we have the question, "Shall there be evil in a city and God hath not done it?" Arthur Custance says in his THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GRACE, that "the Hebrew word "asah" rendered "done" in this passage is a word which may mean "doing" or "making" (nearly two thousand times), or it may mean "appointing." The former is by far the more frequent rendering in the King James Version."(Page 268)

If we understand the distinction between sin and evil, we will have a better understanding of this verse. Man, of his own initiative, never brings about judgment for sin. It is a manifestation of God's holiness that produces His judgments as a consequence for man's sin. The death of Jesus Christ was therefore both a wicked thing and an evil thing. It was an expression of the wickedness of men. It was an evil thing in that Sinless Christ suffered on the cross when

He was made to be sin for us. The Holiness of God caused His wrath to fall on Christ and He died for sin.

The source of all sin can be laid on Satan. Our Lord said, that Satan "was a murderer from the beginning...a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44) It certainly is clear that Satan is the one that tempted Eve and Adam to sin. It is through Adam that sin "entered into the world, and death by sin;"(Rom.5:12) It is also very clear that Adam's sin did not take God by surprise. We are told in 1 Peter 1:20, that Christ was ordained to be the sacrificial Lamb of God for sin "before the foundation of the world." Here then is the source of the problem in the minds of some, "If God ordained that sin should enter into the world by Adam, does this not make God to be the author of sin?"

The solution to the problem is to be found in the distinction between God's secret will and His revealed will. Not that God has two wills, but rather that He has a will that has been revealed to man by His Word and another part of His will which has not been revealed. This is clear from the words of God in Deuteronomy 29:29, "The SECRET things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are REVEALED belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of His law." Man is responsible to God to keep His revealed law. This is the basis of all judgment. The writer of Ecclesiastes summarizes this in chapter 12 and verse thirteen, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

All men, in every place and in every age are responsible to God, to fear Him (reverence Him) and to "keep His commandments." This is the bases on which God judges all people in every age and from all walks of life. Even those who have not a written copy of the Law of God, have both the witness of creation and "the Law of God written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one

another;" ...so that they are without excuse... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. (Rom 1:20; 2:15, 16) "Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31)

Then every mouth will be "stopped' and "the whole world' will be made to acknowledge that it is "guilty before God." (Rom.3:19) All people are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph.1:2) and since "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Rom.3:11, 12)

How then does God deal with sinful man in order to accomplish His predetermined will? It has been expressed that there are four different ways in which God accomplishes His Holy will among the wicked.

1. God exerts upon the wicked a RESTRAINING influence by which they are prevented from doing what they are naturally inclined to do. The Palmist says in chapter seventy-six and verse ten, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the reminder of wrath shall thou restrain." It is important to note that it is "the wrath of men." The case of Abraham and Abimelech, king of Gerar is an example. "And God said unto him (King Abimelech) in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against Me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her (Sarah)" (Gen.20:6)

The case of Joseph and his brethren is a similar proof case. His brethren had indeed meant to do him much evil, even conspiring to kill him. However, his half-brother Reuben intervened to spare Joseph's life-with the intention of returning him to his father. They then cast him into a pit and sat down to eat bread, at that very

moment, "they lifted up their eyes and looked and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels...going to Egypt." It was then that Judah, his brother, was able to intercede for him and say, "Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not 'our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content."(Gen. 37:10-27) Thus God restrained their evil passions. Later when Joseph revealed himself to his brethren, he told them "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."(Gen. 50:20)

The death of Christ is another proof of this rule. When the soldiers came to break the legs of the three crucified people, they broke the legs of the first and of the other malefactor, however "When they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water...For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, 'They shall look on him whom they pierced.' (John 19:3337) Those soldiers had no interest in doing the will of God, but were restrained by God to accomplish His predetermined will.

2. God exerts upon the wicked a SOFTENING influence disposing them to act contrary to their natural inclinations to do that which will promote His cause. When Israel was but few in number, "When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes,' (Psa.105:13,14).

Again the case of Joseph's experience in the land of Egypt illustrates this. While Joseph was in the house of Potiphar, "The Lord was with Joseph and his master saw the Lord was with him," and as a result, "Joseph found favour in his sight and he made him over-seer over his house." (Gen. 39:3,4)

Later, when Joseph was unjustly cast into prison by Potiphar, even then, "The Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." (Gen. 39:21)

So it was when Moses' mother had hid him in the flags by the river where Pharaoh's daughter would bathe, that God moved on the baby Moses that he should cry out just as Pharaoh's daughter opened the little basket. It was God that touched the heart of this heathen woman so that she was moved by compassion to take the little Israelite boy baby and rear him as her own son. (Ex. 2:1-10)

The same is in the case of Esther, when it was the will of God that she should become the queen to Ahasuerus, king of the Persian Empire. When she was given to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women, she "pleased him, and obtained kindness of him...and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women." So when she went unto the king that "the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins..." (Esther 2:9,17)

Later, when Esther must go to the King to intercede in behalf of the Jewish people, she went in contrary to the law of the King, expecting to perish, but we read, in chapter five and verse two that "She obtained favor in his sight and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter." Thus demonstrating that "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." (Prov. 21:1)

A remarkable demonstration of God's sovereign omnipotent power over the hearts of kings is seen in the case of Cyrus, the heathen king of Persia. Israel had been in Babylonian captivity for seventy years, but the prophesied end of their captivity was about to be fulfilled. God, by the prophet Isaiah, had told over 150 years previous how that Cyrus would be His anointed servant to allow Israel to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.(/sa. 44:28) The amazing story of how God worked in the hearts of Cyrus and

the Jewish people is recorded in the Book of Ezra. "Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." (Ezra 1:1,2) Ezra writes later, "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem." (7:27)

3. God exerts on the wicked an **OVER-RULING** influence so that good is made to result from their evil intentions.

Again, the case of Joseph demonstrates this point. His brethren acted from envy and hatred towards Joseph and sold him to the Ishmaelites. To them, they were getting rid of a problem and making a financial gain. But see the hand of God working out His secret will overruling their wicked actions. Divine providence had sent the Ishmaelites by at the right moment for the brethren to sell Joseph to them and prevent him from being murdered. It was by the means of the Ishmaelites that Joseph was delivered to Egypt which was the very country where God had purposed for Joseph to be, in that he might save his father's household when the great famine came later. Joseph pointed all this out to his brethren when he told them, "God sent me before you to preserve your posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance... it was not you that sent me hither, but God..." (Gen. 45:7, 8)

We see this in the case of the Israelites in Egypt land. In Psalms chapter one hundred and five we are told in verses twenty-four and twenty-five that "He (God) increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies. He (God) turned their (the Egyptians) heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants." Now all this was because it was time for Israel to be

delivered from their Egyptian bondage. "The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." (Ex.1:7) The Egyptians feared the Israelites would join in a rebellion against them, so they dealt cruelly with them. "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour." (Ex.1:12, 13) All of this was by the hand of the Lord that "the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage."(Ex. 2:23)

When Samson saw the Philistine woman and desired her for a wife, his parents were displeased that he should want a Gentile woman for wife, because they "knew not that it was of the Lord, that he (the Lord) sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel." (Judges 14:4)

It was because of a wicked and evil action on the part of King Ahasuerus that Esther became his queen. But it was by the will of God that she might be the instrument of God to save the Jews from destruction. It was for an evil and wicked purpose that two of the king's chamberlains sought to kill King Ahasuerus. But it was a means whereby Mordecai learned of the plot and revealed it to Esther, and she won the favor of the king. (Esth. 2:21-23) It was because of a wicked and evil purpose that Haman plotted to have all the Jews in the empire on a certain day. But God over-ruled and on that very day the Jews were able to slay "of their foes seventy and five thousand' and reverse the day of dread "and made it a day of feasting and gladness." (Esth. 9:16, 17) "And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them."(Esth. 8:17)

Of course the greatest demonstration of the control and directing influence of God over the wicked actions of men is seen in the trial and death of Jesus Christ. It must be that He would be hung on a

tree (Deut.21:23; John 3:14) that He should "be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." (Matt.20:18-19) Later, Peter would say, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23)

4. God HARDENS the hearts of the wicked and BLINDS their minds to truth so they act in accordance to His predetermined will.

The hardening of the heart does not make the heart wicked or any more wicked, it only confirms the predisposition of the heart. All are born sinners because of our lineage to Adam and we all act in accordance to our sinful natures. Hardening merely sets a heart or conscience so that it is not affected by external influences. Spiritual blindness is a judicial action on the part of God whereby the wicked are set in error and sealed to its falsehood in spite of eternal influences.

Before Moses ever went before Pharaoh, God had told him, "I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go."(Ex. 4:21) If it be questioned why God hardened Pharaoh's heart, the answer is given by the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter nine; "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." (Rom. 9:17-18) Not only did God harden the heart of Pharaoh so that he only stubbornly let the children of Israel go, but when they had actually left Egypt, God told Moses, "And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get Me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten Me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." (Ex.14:17, 18)

Pharaoh's heart is not the only one that we are told God hardened. He hardened the heart of Sihon, king of Heshbon, so that he would not let the children of Israel pass through his land, "that He (God) might deliver him in to thy hand." (Deut. 2:30) Also when Israel entered into the land of Canaan, none of the inhabitants there made peace with them except the Hivites, "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses." (Jos.11:20)

Nor is this judgment left to people in the Old Testament era alone. In the Gospel of John we read in chapter twelve and verse forty, "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

Paul speaks of this judicial action by God in Romans chapter eleven and verse seven, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded." They were warned by the Old Testament prophets, by Christ and by the New Testament apostles, yet in spite of those warnings and the judgments of God, the miracles wrought by Christ and the apostles, they believed not because some were hardened and blinded by God.

This is the same action by God that Paul describes in II Thessalonians, chapter two and verses eleven and twelve, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

This hardening and blindness by God is a sealing to judgment upon the wicked. It is seen in Revelation chapter nine where we are told that in spite of the judgment plagues sent by God upon the wicked

world they, "repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold.... Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." (Verses 20, 21)

Thus God exerts a restraining, softening, over-ruling and hardening influence over the wicked according to the dictates of His own eternal and secret purpose. God's will and purpose is accomplished in spite of the wicked actions and enmity of wicked men. What He has ordained will come to pass. Man is bound in his own wickedness by God, but he acts totally and freely of his own volition so that he is account and responsible for his actions.

"How can this be," some ask? The answer lies in understanding the difference between man's **natural ABILITY**, and his moral or **spiritual INABILITY**. The sovereign will of God does not destroy the sinner's accountability or responsibility, because he acts freely within the bounds of his own nature. Jeremiah says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." (13:23)

Wicked men do wickedness, because it is their nature, not because of any compulsion from God. They act freely within the bounds of their depraved nature. I believe I can do no better than to quote here from Arthur Pink's **THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**, pages 155-157. Pink asked this rhetorical question:

"How is it possible for God to DECREE that men **SHOULD** commit certain sins, hold them **RESPONSIBLE** in the committal of them, and adjudge them **GUILTY** because they committed them?"

"Let us now consider the extreme case of Judas. We are hold that it is clear from Scripture that God decreed from all eternity that Judas should betray the Lord Jesus Christ. If anyone should challenge this statement we refer him to the prophecy of Zechariah, through whom God declared that His Son should be sold for "Thirty pieces

of silver" (Zech.11:12). As we have said earlier, in prophecy God makes known what will be, and in making known what will be, He is but revealing to us what He has ordained shall be. That Judas was the one through whom the prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled needs not to be argued. But now the question we have to face is, Was Judas a responsible agent in fulfilling this decree of God? We reply that he was. Responsibility attaches mainly to the motive and intention of the one committing the act. This is recognized on every hand. Human law distinguishes between a blow inflicted by accident (without evil design), and a blow delivered with 'malice aforethought.'

"Apply then this same principle to the case of Judas. What was the design of his heart when he bargained with the priests? Manifestly he had no conscious desire to fulfill any decree of God; though unknown to himself he was actually doing so. On the contrary, his intention was evil only, and therefore, though God had decreed and directed his act, nevertheless, his own evil intention rendered him justly guilty as he afterwards acknowledged himself-'I have betrayed innocent blood."

"It was the same with the Crucifixion of Christ. Scripture plainly declares that He was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"(Acts 2:23), and that though "the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ" yet, notwithstanding, it was but "for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done"(Acts 4:26, 28); which verses teach very much more than a bare permission by God, declaring, as they do, that the Crucifixion and all its details had been decreed by God. Yet, nevertheless, it was by "wicked hands," not merely "human hands", that our Lord was "crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). "Wicked" because the intention of His crucifiers was only evil."

"But it might be objected that, if God had decreed that Judas should betray Christ, and that the Jews and the Gentiles should crucify

Him, they could not do otherwise, and therefore, they are not responsible for their intentions. The answer is, God had decreed that they should perform the acts they did, but in the actual perpetration of these deeds they were justly guilty, because their own purposes in the doing of them was evil only. Let it emphatically be said that God does not produce the sinful dispositions of any of His creatures, though He does restrain and direct them to the accomplishing of His own purposes. Hence He is neither the Author nor the Approver of sin. This distinction was expressed thus by Augustine: 'That men sin proceeds from themselves; that in sinning they perform this or that action, is from the power of God who divideth the darkness according to His pleasure.'

"Thus it is written, 'A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.'(Prov.16:9) What we would here insist upon is that God's decrees are not the necessitating cause of the sins of men, but the foredetermined and prescribed boundings and directings of men's sinful acts. In connection with the betrayal of Christ, God did not decree that He should be sold by one of His creatures and then take up a good man, instill an evil desire into his heart and thus force him to perform the terrible deed in order to execute His decree. No; not so do the Scriptures represent it. Instead, God decreed the act and selected the one who was to perform the act, but He did not make him evil in order that he should perform the deed; on the contrary, the betrayer was a 'devil' at the time the Lord Jesus chose him as one of the twelve (John 6:70), and in the exercise and manifestation of his own devilry God simply directed his actions, actions which were perfectly agreeable to his own vile heart, and performed with the most wicked intentions. Thus it was with the Crucifixion."

The Bible teaches that "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."(Psa. 76:10) It is thus perfectly clear to the honest student of the Bible that God, who is Holy, Omnipotent and Sovereign, is in no way the author of sin. He

is the sovereign ruler of the universe, directing and restraining the actions of all His creatures and the powers of darkness to accomplish His Holy will. It should thus be understood that predestination of all things does not make God to be the cause of the sin that wicked men do, but rather the restrainer of evil so that they can do no more or less than what He has predetermined for His own Glory and the eternal good of His saints.(Rom. 8:28)

**THE LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSTION OF FAITH OF
1689,**
Chapter Three, part 1:

"God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree."

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