

foundation of the world. What he *does* in time, he, from all eternity, *intended to do*. What he *permits* to be done, in time, by moral and accountable agents, he, from all eternity, *intended to permit*. What he, in time, overrules for good, he equally, from all eternity, intended to overrule for good. Otherwise his omniscience is not perfect—his attributes are not unchangeable. His doings in providence and his purpose from eternity are co-extensive—or rather, if our faculties would permit us to rise above the limitations of time and conceive of an eternal NOW, they are identical. If, then, it be a customary usage of language to ascribe even the evil actions of men to the divine *agency*, the same usage will also sanction a similar ascription of them to the divine *foreordination*. If Jesus is said to *do* what he includes within his plan of saving operations, as carried on in the households to which he comes—affords occasion of doing, permits to be done, and overrules for good;—then surely God may, in like manner, be said to *determine beforehand*, or foreordain, what he includes within his plan of providential government—affords occasion of doing, permits to be done, and overrules for good.

In modern times there is a sensitiveness with reference to the use of such language as may even *seem* to cast an imputation on the moral purity of the Holy One, which does not appear to have troubled holy men of old, when, moved by the Holy Ghost, they spake of the divine sovereignty over all the affairs of men. The feeling is right enough, in itself; though liable, like many other amiable feelings, to become morbid by excess. How far we are indebted for it to the influence of the Arminian and kindred controversies, we do not stay to inquire. But we are not at all disposed to think that it indicates any deeper reverence for the divine majesty than the unfastidious simplicity, or, if you will, rudeness of speech, which devoutly ascribes all things to the will of the Supreme, without concerning itself with metaphysical abstractions, or ever once suspecting that the name of God could be dishonoured by what was meant to be his highest praise. The fact, however, is, that such a feeling is now generally prevalent; and that Christian men would rather avoid saying that God hardens men's hearts or that Jesus sets the members of a household at variance with one another; or, if they cannot escape such phrases, would prefer to qualify them by some accompanying explanation, to prevent their being misunderstood. In spite, however, of this tendency, examples may occasionally be met with of the spontaneous employment of expressions of this kind. We met with an instance, in reading a newspaper, the other day. The *Scottish Guardian* of 30th March contains a report of an excellent speech by the Earl of Dalhousie (late Lord Panmure) on the Cardross case, made at a public meeting in Brechin. Towards the close he expresses a hope that the contest would issue in the establishment and recognition of the right of Churches to govern themselves in spiritual matters. In anticipation of that result he goes on to say, "I think that if we establish that in this case, we ought to be grateful to the great Head of the Church for *putting it into Mr. McMillan's mind* to stir this case, and so giving us an opportunity of finally settling the point." If asked his precise meaning in using the phrase here ascribed to him, it is possible that he might be disposed, on reflection, to withdraw the expression; but it is at least as probable that he would maintain its correctness—scarcely, however, on the ground that the Head of the Church had sent his Spirit to suggest to Mr. McMillan that his only hope of success was to violate his ordination vow and appeal to the Court of Session. The expression admits of being vindicated on the broad ground that the whole course of providence, as it affects the Church, is under the sovereign control of the Church's Head; but it belongs to a class of expressions such as few Christian men of