

partial love,—it has been quoted to prove that Christ was an absolute necessitarian,—it has been quoted to prove that man has no power to believe the Gospel when he hears it, and that he cannot, without the irresistible influence of the Spirit, learn, though God himself is in the very act of teaching.*

But such views are condemned by the plainest portions of the word of God, as well as by every dictate of reason, consciousness, and conscience. No exposition, or interpretation of one passage of the word of God, which flatly contradicts many other portions of scripture can in the nature of things, be correct. And it is surely better to put no meaning at all upon difficult or obscure texts, than to burden them with a meaning which fills the enquiring anxious soul with perplexing darkness, and represents even God himself as a cruel, unjust, austere, and hard task-master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strawed. What does the Saviour mean when he says *no man can come to me*, except the Father which hath sent me draw him? Is the *cannot*, in the passage before us, expressive of strong aversion and unwillingness? Or does it express *impossibility*? Many suppose that the *cannot* here is just the intensified form of *will not*. Such passages as the following are quoted to support this interpretation. Jer. xiii 23. "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.*" Gen. xxxix, 9. "*How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*" The virtue of the young Hebrew lay in his moral inability, or rather we should say, in his unwillingness

*For example, the Editor of *Calvin's Institutes with brief and sound answers to the objections of adversaries*, by Master William Lowne, translated into English by Christopher Fetherstone, 1586, quotes this passage in his preface, to prove that Christ was an absolute necessitarian. His words are, "Necessity on both sides! until drawn, none can come; and, when drawn none can stay away." Surely the Calvinistic Editor of this Calvinistic work, was not necessitated to write about this *double necessity*!

Another writer of the same school in a work called, "*The Set Time*," says, "As a creature, you do indeed owe to God a debt of perfect obedience; but as a ruined creature, you are unable to discharge one jot or tittle of your duty. You are disabled by the fall, and it is ignorant presumption to imagine that you can render to God anything that he requires." Page 66. Again he says, "The most terrible aspect of God's sovereignty is in the law—'Pay me that thou owest.' The full tale of bricks is demanded, although there is no straw to make them. An impossibility is required." Page 71. Is it to be wondered at that some men become infidels?