

not perish by remaining merely in the condition in which the gospel found them, but by wilfully resisting and opposing a gracious influence that accompanies it.

We have not space to enter on the question of the consistency of God's purposes with His universal calls and invitations to sinners in the gospel. We shall merely say that God's decrees of election and of reprobation according to the Arminian scheme are as eternal and as immutably certain as in the Calvinistic; and that if there were any strength in the reasoning by which Arminians often assail Calvinism on this subject, it would equally, according to their own scheme, impeach the sincerity of God, and shew all his sayings and dealings with the lost to be pretended and hypocritical. We may add that the whole discussion with Arminians on these decrees of God turns on the question whether the grace which produces faith and repentance is special and effectual, or not,—a question which, we apprehend, few who are willing to defer to the authority of the Word of God will have any difficulty in determining in the affirmative.

The favourite method with Arminians of attacking the Calvinistic doctrine of election has not been to meet directly the scriptural evidence in its support, as they were bound to do, but the indirect and oblique one of misrepresenting and distorting the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation so as to make it as jarring and repulsive to the feelings of men as possible, and then inferring that election, inasmuch as it involves this, cannot be contained in the Word of God. We shall, however, merely quote on this subject the following passage from Dr. Whately, the present Archbishop of Dublin, himself an Arminian. (Essays on difficulties in the writings of Paul, pp. 84-86):

"Before I dismiss the consideration of this subject, I would suggest one caution relative to a class of objections frequently urged against the Calvinistic scheme—those drawn from the conclusions of what is called Natural religion, respecting the moral attributes of the Deity; which, it is contended, rendered the reprobation of a large portion of mankind an absolute impossibility. That such objections do reduce the predestinarian to a great strait is undemable; and not seldom are they urged with exulting scorn, with bitter invective, and almost with anathema. But we should be very cautious how we employ such weapons as may recoil upon ourselves. Arguments of this kind have often been adduced, such as, I fear, will crush beneath the ruins of the hostile structure the blind assailant who seeks to overthrow it. It is a frightful but an undeniable truth, that multitudes, even in Christian countries, are born and brought up under such circumstances as afford them no probable, often no possible, chance of obtaining a knowledge of religious truths, or a habit of moral conduct, but are even trained from infancy in superstitious error and gross depravity. Why this should be permitted, neither Calvinist nor Arminian can explain; nay, why the Almighty does not cause to die in its cradle every infant whose future wickedness and misery, if suffered to grow up, He foresees, is what no system of religion, natural or revealed, will enable us satisfactorily to account for.

"In truth these are merely branches of the *one* great difficulty, *the existence of evil*, which may almost be called the *only* difficulty in theology. It assumes,