

these, but that he should use the means which were necessary to preserve it. Calvinism does not possibly admit of such an objection as we are considering. When it is said that "the elect shall be saved, do what they will," a thing is supposed which is impossible, and can never take place. To suppose that any of the elect might lead an ungodly and immoral life to the last, and could persist in unbelief and impenitence till death, is to suppose an impossibility. Calvinism declares that the elect are chosen to faith and repentance, as well as to eternal glory—to the means, as well as to the end. It is as much one of its doctrines that they are chosen to faith and repentance, and perseverance in holiness in this life, as it is that they are chosen to eternal life hereafter; and that God in the execution of His gracious purpose confers on them faith and holiness here, as that He bestows on them glory in the world to come. The supposition, therefore, that they could be saved hereafter, even though they lead a godless and an immoral life here, is one which the Calvinistic doctrine of election declares to be impossible. And the same principles apply in the case of the reprobate. When it is said that according to Calvinism "the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can," a supposition is again made which Calvinism precludes; for, according to it, no man is carried headlong to destruction in spite of all his efforts to the contrary. We said already that all have the opportunity of being saved, and the wicked perish, not in spite of having done what they could, but because through their obstinate refusal to hear and consider and obey the truth of God, they harden their hearts. Their unbelief and impenitence are wilful. They despise offered mercy and grace, abusing their faculties, in place of employing them in the diligent use of the means of grace, and living in sin in opposition to the light of conscience, and the light they receive from the Word of God. When in place of detaching one part of Calvinism from the rest, and arguing from it by itself as if it constituted the whole, we take into view the entire doctrine, all the obligations lying on men to believe and repent and persevere in holiness, and to employ all the means necessary to these things, are left unaffected and unimpaired; nay more, the doctrine of Calvinism that there is an invariable connection between the means and the end shews most strongly the obligation to employ the proper means to attain the end. Thus it is that nothing can be more absurd than for any one to argue thus: "If I am elected, I shall and must be saved, whether I believe and repent and lead a holy life, or not." The conclusion that follows is: "If I am elected, I certainly shall believe and repent, and shall freely work out my own salvation; and if I do not now lead a holy life, I have no reason to believe that I am elected." And it is equally absurd for any one to say "if I am reprobated, I shall of necessity perish at last, even though I should return to God and leave my sins." The conclusion is, "if I am reprobated, I shall of my own wickedness, when I might and should have done otherwise, refuse to return to God, and shall willingly walk in the broad way that leadeth to destruction."* Nothing can be more false or absurd than to imagine that either the means or the ends of these decrees are independent of men's choice, and of their voluntary acts. The Arminian scheme of the divine decrees

* The same conclusions follow from Arminian election and reprobation