

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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ARTICLE I.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DR. BLEDSOE.

The Sufferings and Salvation of Infants, and Reviewers Reviewed, being Dr. BLEDSOE'S rejoinder to the strictures of the SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW on his *Theodicy*. Southern Review, January, 1871.

History of Infant Baptism. Southern Review, April, 1874.

The Southern Review and Infant Baptism. Southern Review, July, 1874.

The Suffering and Salvation of Infants. Southern Review, January, 1875.

Infant Baptism and Salvation in the Calvinistic System. By C. P. KRAUTH, D. D.

Our Critics. Southern Review, October, 1875.

The Perseverance of the Elect. Southern Review, Jan., 1876.

We have a long score to settle with Dr. Bledsoe. Something more than twenty years have elapsed since we noticed, in two *critiques*, his great work, then newly published, "the *Theodicy*." This dogmatic and spirited book, as we then showed, has for its key-note the Pelagian doctrine, that, in consequence of the self-determination of the rational will, omnipotence itself cannot efficaciously control a soul without destroying its freedom. And the great "theodicy" or vindication of Dr. Bledsoe, for God's admission of sin into his universe is, that *he could not help it*. These strictures Dr. Bledsoe resents in his Review of January,

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1871: and he has followed this rejoinder up, in the succeeding numbers noticed, with attacks on Calvinism and applications of his philosophy to two or three other important points in theology. To understand these, a knowledge of his personal history is needed.

Dr. Albert Taylor Bledsoe, a native of Kentucky, and *alumnus* of the Military Academy of West Point, became a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church. But in a short time his bold and independent mind saw that the standards of that Church indisputably teach Calvinism and also baptismal regeneration, and the eternal damnation of unbaptized infants dying in infancy. Incapable of the mental chicanery which reconciles so many men to insincere or formal professions, he frankly demitted his clerical function and went into the practice of law, which he pursued with distinguished success at Springfield, Ill., for a few years. But seeking more congenial pursuits and associates, he then became a distinguished Professor of Mathematics, first in the University of Mississippi, and then in that of Virginia. Upon the formation of the Southern Confederacy, its need for military knowledge in its service prompted him to resign his chair and take the post of Assistant Secretary of War. Leaving this post he went to Europe, and devoted the remaining years of the war to the literary defence of Confederate principles, and to extended studies. After the return of peace, he founded, first in connection with another gentleman, the "Southern Review;" a well known quarterly which, like the starry sphere sustained upon the shoulders of Atlas, has been chiefly borne upon his sturdy arms. A few years ago Dr. Bledsoe, after having long held, under protest as to some of her doctrines, the attitude of a layman in the Protestant Episcopal Church, joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, and resumed his clerical function, though without assuming any pastoral relation. His Review was soon adopted by the General Conference of the Methodist Church South, as their literary organ, though not without dissent on the part of leading members. Since that adoption, Dr. Bledsoe has seemed to add to his former praiseworthy mission of defending sound opinions and faithful history in ethics and politics, the

more special one of exposing and correcting what he deems the enormities of Calvinism. His first onsets possessed all the zeal of a new recruit. Subsequent researches have shown him something to admire in some Calvinists; and he now announces it as his chosen task to discover the common ground which Wesley dimly groped after, upon which sincere Calvinist and Arminian may meet in a code of doctrines at once evangelical and soundly philosophical.

Convinced as we are, that this triumph is impossible for mortal man, we yet admit that the peculiar doctrinal code of Wesley and Watson is, in some important respects, a return towards the truth, from the worse extremes of early Arminianism. It is perhaps the very closest approximation to the truth which can be made by evangelical minds still unfortunately infected with the *πρώτον ψεύδος*, of the *equilibrium* of the rational will. To us it appears clear that the Wesleyan creed contains far more of God's truth than the New Haven theology. Wesleyanism teaches, indeed, that the bondage to native depravity is in part relieved under Christ, and that the sinner's will is now restored to such *equilibrium* as to be able to coöperate with God's grace in the spiritual acts of repentance and faith. But the Wesleyan admits that the depravity, as inherited from Adam, is total, until retrieved by "common sufficient grace." The semi-Pelagian of New England denies total depravity, and ascribes to man by nature, an ability of will to all spiritual good. The Wesleyan does indeed teach a universal atonement for the sins of all the race. But he holds to a true vicarious satisfaction for guilt; while the New Haven divine denies this vital truth, and invites us to rest our hope of pardon upon some Socinian device of an exemplary suffering by Jesus. The Wesleyan claims that, by virtue of "common sufficient grace," all sinners have ability of will to embrace Christ; but he teaches that it is a "grace," a redemptive purchase of Calvary, and not a natural endowment of fallen souls, which enables dead sinners to perform the living acts of faith and repentance. He holds against the Scriptures, that God was moved by an eternal foresight of believers' faith and holy obedience, to predestinate them to life: but he at least

holds that God has in this way a personal, infallible, and eternal predestination: which the New Haven divine refuses to accept. It is to us a pleasing thought, that multitudes of the adherents of Wesley grasp with a sanctifying faith these saving truths, while they quietly, and perhaps unconsciously, drop these unscriptural excrescences, which their great teacher attached to them in the vain hope of bending God's word to his unfortunate philosophy. And thus these excellent people really build their hopes upon grace, and grace alone. These rudiments of vital truth are practical to them; the excrescences fortunately remain unpractical.

Dr. Bledsoe is perspicacious enough to see the vital connexion between the theory of free agency and the doctrines of grace. Hence he tells us that he has made the great work of Edwards on the Will the study of years. One of his chief works has been an attempted refutation of Edwards's doctrine of the moral necessity, or certainty, of our volitions; and the opposite view of self-determination is continually asserted and expounded by Dr. Bledsoe, as the corner-stone of all his speculations. He is too shrewd to adopt the old Arminian *formula*, that the will determines itself to choose; or the modern form of the heresy, that volition is an uncaused event in the world of spirit. He admits the first principle, "Nothing arises without cause." But says he: The mind itself is simply the cause of its own volitions. Motives are indeed connected with volitions, as their necessary occasions, but not as their efficient. The action of intelligence and sensibility, the presence of motives in the mind, all these, he admits, are the conditions *sine qua non*, under which acts of choice take place; but still it is the mind itself, and that alone, which is the efficient or true cause of volition. And in this assertion he places the very being of our free agency and responsibility.

Now this is more adroit than the old scheme demolished by Edwards; for it evades the most terrible points of Edwards's refutation. As Dr. A. Alexander has admitted, there is a sense in which, while the will (in its specific sense as the faculty of choice) is not self-determined, we intuitively know that *the soul is self-determined*, and that therein is our free agency. But still the scheme of Dr. Bledsoe is the opposite of Dr. Alexander's,

and is but the same Arminian philosophy in a new dress. When Dr. Bledsoe says that the mind is the true cause of all its own volitions, he means that this mind causes them contingently, and may be absolutely *in equilibrio* while causing them; he means that the mind does not regularly follow its own strongest judgment of the preferable when acting deliberately and intelligently; he means to deny the efficient certainty of whatever in the mind produces volition; he means to apply his theory of the will to the very results in the theology most characteristic of the semi-Pelagianism, or even worse, of Pelagianism. It is to this philosophy he appeals to justify an omnipotent God in permitting sin, simply because he could not help any sinner's transgressing who chose to do so; to argue the necessity of synergism in regeneration; to deny the sinfulness of original concupiscence. ✓

This novelty of Dr. Bledsoe's statement of the old error does not require a re-statement of the impregnable argument by which the certain influence of the prevalent motive has been so often established. The well-informed Presbyterian reader will not need this repetition. For such a one, the whole plausibility of Dr. Bledsoe's argument is destroyed by simply pointing out two of its omissions. He speaks of the presence of motives in the mind as conditions *sine qua non*, of volition, and yet denies them causative efficiency. But he has failed to perceive the essential difference between sensibility and desire, between the passive and the conative powers of man's soul, and between the objective *inducement* and the subjective *motive*. For this confusion, as for the apparent weakness in our demonstration, he and we are indebted to the Sensualistic philosophers. Were Dr. Bledsoe reasoning with Hobbes or Locke, his refutation would be sound. Were it true that there is nothing in the mind but sensations and the reflex modifications or combinations thereof; that sense-impression is the $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$ of mental affections; that the presence of the object necessitates the nature of the impression, and the nature of this passive impression on the sensibility necessitates the nature of the reflex appetency, and this in turn necessitates the volition, then man would be a sentient machine, and his free agency would be gone. The sinful volition of the sheep-stealer,

for instance, would be as much the physical result of the sight of the sheep, as pain over the skull is the involuntary result of a blow with a bludgeon. But must Presbyterians forever advertise the Arminians, that Hobbes is not their philosopher? We now again notify Dr. Bledsoe, that we surrender that scheme of necessity to his devouring sword. Let him demolish it as fast as he pleases. Dr. Alexander has given him a proof much simpler and shorter than any of his own, that objective inducement is not the efficient of any deliberate and responsible volition. It is found in the obvious fact, that the same object, the same sheep, for instance, is the occasion of opposite volitions in the sheep-stealer and the honest man. But were the sheep *cause* of volition in each case, "like cause should have produced like effects." But let us pass now from objective inducement to subjective motive, from the passive impression on the sensibility to the conscious, active, spontaneous appetency; and it needs no argument other than our own consciousness to convince us that deliberate volition always does follow subjective motive: or that the choice will infallibly be according to the soul's own subjective, prevalent view and appetency. The stray sheep did not *cause* the thief to purloin, nor the honest neighbor to restore it to its owner's fold. But subjective concupiscence, whose action was *occasioned* by the sight of the animal, *caused* the one man to steal it; moral love for "our neighbor as ourself" *caused* the honest man to restore it. Let Dr. Bledsoe make full allowance for this distinction, and he will attain to what he has not yet reached, amidst all his studies: a clear understanding of the Calvinistic and Bible philosophy of the will. And here we can see in what sense Dr. Alexander could justly admit, that, while the faculty of will is not, the soul is, self-determining. Motive, which is the uniform efficient of rational volition, is subjective: it is as truly a function of self-hood as volition itself. It is not an impression superimposed on the spirit from without; it is the soul's own intellection and appetency emitted from within.

The reader is now, we trust, prepared for seeing how fatal is Dr. Bledsoe's second omission in his analysis of free agency. He has left out the grand fact of *permanent, subjective disposition*

(the *habitus*, not *consuetudo*) of the Reformed theology. When we appreciate the flood of light which this fundamental fact of rational nature, in that theology, throws upon the main questions of free agency and morals; and when we see how usually great philosophers, as Dr. Bledsoe, overlook it, we are often amazed. He may rest assured it is the "knot of the whole question." Let this simple view be taken. Grant that the soul of man is self-determining. *Where then are we to seek the regulative law of its self-action?* No agent in all God's creation works lawlessly. "Order is heaven's first law." Every power in the universe has its regulative principle: is mind, the crowning being of God's handiwork, lawless and chaotic in its working? This regulative law of man's free agency is found in his *disposition*, his moral nature. Though one being detects another's disposition *a posteriori*, by deducing it from his observed volitions, yet in each spirit, disposition is *a priori* to volition; for it is the original, regulative power which determines what subjective motives have place in the mind. These facts are so evident to the consciousness that to state them is to show their justness. How, then, are free acts of choice in the moral agent regulated? We reply, not by objective impressions; for then the man would not be free; but by the agent's own permanent disposition. There is the fullest, most efficient certainty, that the specific subjective motive will arise according to the man's own disposition, and that the volition will follow the prevalent motive. Does Dr. Bledsoe complain that then it is man's disposition which governs him? I reply: Yes: and nothing can be so appropriate, because his disposition is himself; it is the ultimate, the most original, most simple function of his self-hood.

From this truth it follows, that to control the disposition of a creature is to control his motives and actions. When Omnipotence, which first created, now creates a sinner's disposition, although we may not explore the mystery of that act, we see clearly enough that God thereby determines efficiently the new line of action. And yet free agency is not infringed; but the uniform law of connexion between disposition and subjective motive, and motive and act, so far from being tampered with, is reestablished

and ennobled. But on Dr. Bledsoe's philosophy, God possesses only a contingent, possible power of occasioning, not causing, some of the volitions he desires, by the ingenious and multiform play of his skill amidst those feelings and impressions in the sinner's soul, which are only the conditions of the creature's self-determination! Which of these is the Bible account of saving grace?

Amidst the many refutations which he claims to have made of Edwards's argument, we notice only one; because it will be found to bear upon our subsequent discussion. Edwards has argued the certainty of the acts of free agents, from the fact that God certainly foresees them. This unanswerable argument Dr. Bledsoe thinks he has neutralized. He admits the fact of God's foreknowledge of such acts. But he argues that, since this is the foreknowledge of an infinite mind, it is the most unwarrantable presumption in us to suppose that it implies such sort of causative connexion between the volitions and their antecedents as would enable our finite minds to foreknow future events. He rebukes the Calvinist with heat, because, from the fact of God's foreknowledge, he presumes to infer the mode of it. Dr. Bledsoe here travels precisely over the ground of the famous controversy about *scientia media*, and asserts the same sophism which the Jesuit and semi-Pelagian assertors of that error attempted to sustain. Admitting, against the Socinian, that God has foreknowledge of all the volitions of rational creatures, they supposed it to be a mediate and inferential knowledge. What did they suppose to be its *medium* or middle premise? God's knowledge of all the conditions under which any free-agent will act being an infinite omniscience, his insight into the disposition of each creature enables him to infer how that creature will act under those given conditions.' But Dr. Bledsoe ought to know how often the demolition of this scheme has been completed. For instance: this Jesuit theory makes this branch of God's foreknowledge derived or inferential; if we mistake not, Dr. Bledsoe, with all sound theologians, believes all God's knowledge to be immediate and intuitive. Again, every one who is able to put premises together must see that the middle term of this *scientia media* virtually assumes that efficient

connexion between the agent's (subjective) disposition and motives, and his volitions, which the Calvinist assumes and the semi-Pelagian denies. We ask: How does God's insight into that agent's disposition enable him *certainly* to infer the action. unless as God sees that this disposition certainly regulates the agent's free choice? Hence, when the Jesuit cries that we must not measure the method of God's omniscience by our knowledge, he is pretending to claim for God, as a mental perfection, a tendency to draw an inference after the sole and essential premise thereof is totally gone! Is this a compliment or an insult to the divine intelligence? To every right mind it will be clear, that, whether a mind be great or little, it would be its imperfection, and not its glory, to infer without a ground of inference.

But as Dr. Bledsoe does not seem to be aware that he is treading the oft-refuted path of the Molinist, so he does not seem to understand the true nature of the argument from God's foreknowledge to the certainty of the creature's will. We will expound it to him. He will not deny that the Bible says God made man's soul after his image, in his own likeness. While God's intelligence may, consistently with this fact, surpass man's infinitely, the two intelligences cannot, while acting aright, expressly contradict each other. Second, Dr. Bledsoe doubtless believes, with us, that the necessary intuition, "no effect without its adequate cause," is valid and correct. If this is the fundamental *norm* of the human reason, and was impressed on our minds by a truthful God, it must be because it was also, from eternity, a principle of the divine reason. Now then, if the divine mind foresees an event as certain in the future, he must foresee it as to be effectuated by *some* true cause; for *ex nihilo nihil* is also true to God's thinking. Again: if a mind infinitely correct foresees that a given event is certainly going to occur in the future, it must be certainly going to occur. Is not this so true as to be almost a truism? But unless those were *somewhere, some true cause efficient to produce* the certain occurrence of that event, its occurrence would not be certain. Here is a case, *e. g.*, where God certainly foresaw that Nebuchadnezzar would freely choose to sack Jerusalem. Then, the occurrence in the future

was certain. Then, there must have been, somewhere, a cause efficient to produce that choice. Where now will Dr. Bledsoe find that cause? In fate? Oh, fie! In God's compulsion of the Assyrian's freedom? This is as bad as the other! Or in the Devil's compulsion? This is worse yet! There is absolutely no place for Dr. Bledsoe to rest, save in our good, Calvinistic, Bible philosophy: that the efficient of Nebuchadnezzar's free volition was in the power of his own disposition and subjective motives over his own will. These lying open before God's omniscience, and indeed operating under his perpetual, providential guidance, he thus foresaw infallibly the free volition which he purposed to permit the wicked pagan to execute; foresaw, because he purposed to permit.

We are compelled, then, to return to the charge made in our pages in 1856, which he so much resents: that he has mistaken the nature of the creature's free agency; that he has infringed the omnipotence of God, and therefore that his "theodicy" is nothing worth. As he complains of injustice in our presentation of his views, we now give them in his own words (Theodicy, p. 192, etc.): "Almighty power itself, we may say with the most profound reverence, cannot create such a being ('an intelligent moral agent,') and place it beyond the possibility of sinning." "It is no limitation of the divine omnipotence to say that it cannot work contradictions." To suppose an agent to be created and placed beyond all liability of sin, is to suppose it to be what it is and not what it is, at the same time . . . which is a plain contradiction." His theodicy is, that in this sense God tolerates sin in his natural kingdom, because he cannot effectually exclude it without destroying the creature's free agency.

How can any just mind fail to see that here we have a total oversight and exclusion of that vital distinction, so well known in sound philosophy, between certainty and compulsion? Compulsion would overthrow free agency; certainty as to the nature of volitions does not. Deny this, and you cannot hold that God is indefectible, without uprooting his freedom. Deny this, as Dr. Bledsoe virtually does, and it becomes impossible for God to answer a prayer for grace with any certainty; or to regenerate

any sinner certainly; or to promise certain glory to any elect angel or to any redeemed man in heaven. Deny this, and it becomes impossible for Jesus Christ to give us, in the infallible holiness of his Person, a safe ground for our trust in him. We forewarn our Wesleyan brethren that this is but blank Pelagianism: it uproots all foundations of faith and believing prayer; and it flings a pall of doubt and fear over the assurance of angels and saints in glory. We beseech them again, to beware; and not to allow Dr. Bledsoe's zeal in assailing what they deem the errors of Calvinism, to seduce them to this fearful position, so destructive of redemption itself. Happily Dr. Bledsoe is too good a Christian to stand consistently to his own philosophy: he contradicts himself. On page 174 of his *Theodicy*, he states that "as every state of the human intelligence is necessitated," and "every state of the sensibility is a passive impression," a "necessitated phenomenon of the human mind," as the sensibility "*may be dead*," an almighty God may so act on this necessitated intelligence and sensibility as to create new light and a new heart, in the sinner. On this remarkable concession we make several remarks. First, Dr. Bledsoe here, in his misconception of the real doctrine of the Calvinist concerning the will, actually goes into the extreme of the ultra-necessitarian—he talks just like a follower of Hobbes or Spinoza. Second, he confirms our charge of a failure to distinguish between sensibility and conation, as two opposite capacities of the soul, and between mere objective inducement and subjective motive. In describing God's agency in creating the new heart, he omits what is the hinge of the whole change, fundamental disposition and its renewal. Hence, third, in quoting Dr. Dick as presenting a parallel theory of regeneration, he shows that he misconceives the whole matter, mistaking the semi-Pelagian conception of "moral suasion" for the Bible one of a quickening of the soul into spiritual life. His theory vibrates between semi-Pelagianism and Fatalism. Nothing is easier than to show, from his position, that the man thus renewed of God would act under a fatal necessity. If "states of intelligence are necessitated," and "states of sensibility are passive and necessitated," and God creates light and a new heart through a

necessary operation on these, then there is an end of the converted man's free agency—his gracious state will consist in his actions' being directed by the two necessitated powers of intellect and sensibility. That is too fatalistic for us Calvinists! Spontaneity is left out. Dr. McGuffey was evidently correct in his verdict upon this book: that its peculiarities arose from Dr. Bledsoe's not conceiving aright the true nature of the Reformed theology he supposed himself refuting.

But let us bring his conclusion to a test surer than any philosophy: the Word of God. He, speaking precisely of this department of his Providence, his rule over free agents, says: "My counsel shall stand, and I will *do all my pleasure.*" "He doeth his will among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of this earth: and *none can stay his hand*, or say unto him, what doest thou?" "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The 110th Psalm, glorifying the gracious influences of the Messiah's kingdom, says that "his people shall be willing in the day of his power." So, "his people never perish, and none is able to pluck them out of his hand." "They are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." But why multiply proofs? The effectual calling of every soul "dead in trespasses and sin" is a proof that God's omnipotence is able to renew every sinner. For the clear teaching of the Bible is, that, while there are differences of degree in the developments of native depravity, the deadness towards God is entire in every sinner, and "the carnal mind enmity against him." The whole activity of every natural man is put forth for self-will and against godliness. Hence, were not an efficient and invincible power put forth in the quickening of every believer, none would be quickened. This divine power which quickens one would be enough to quicken all the rest, had God purposed to attempt it. The uniform tenor of the gospel teaches us that we are all lost sinners; and that when one is saved instead of another, it is the divine mercy which has originated the difference, not the superior docility of the favored man. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

Does the caviller, then, harass Dr. Bledsoe with the question:

If God was as able to keep Satan in holiness, as Gabriel; if he was as able to redeem Judas, as Saul of Tarsus, why did he choose the everlasting crime and misery of his creatures, Satan and Judas? It will be better for him, instead of asserting God's benevolence at the expense of his omnipotence, to answer, with us: "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God." For the pretermission of Satan and Judas, our God doubtless saw, in his own omniscience, a valid reason. It was not capricious, nor cruel, nor unfair; nor did God find it in his own impotency. Had God seen fit to reveal that reason, every reverent mind would doubtless be satisfied with it. He has given us no knowledge of it. Yet one thing we know, that this unknown reason implied no stint of divine benevolence and infinite pity towards the unworthy, in God. That we know, at least, by the fact that God is so merciful as to give his only Son to die for his enemies. There we rest satisfied. "What he doeth we know not now, but we shall know hereafter." There our author and the caviller whom he vainly seeks to satisfy, had better rest, with us.

The second great task which Dr. Bledsoe proposes to himself, is the application of his philosophy of the will to the "suffering and salvation of infants." In four of the articles of his Review, cited at the head of this paper, he zealously impugns Calvinism, and especially the Calvinism of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as involving the damnation of dying infants. While we shall resist with all our might this indictment against the Presbyterian Church, justice requires us to say that in some of the positions of these articles Dr. Bledsoe is correct, and by his candor has earned the approbation of all. Among these praiseworthy places is his clear exposure of Lecky's Rationalism in Europe, for assailing early Christianity on this subject; when it is transparently manifest that he knew not whereof he affirmed. He has here convicted this defender of Rationalism of a pretentious sciolism. Another passage which deserves the earnest sympathy of the friends of truth is that in which he demonstrates that the Thirty-nine Articles, especially as expounded by the Homilies of the Protestant Episcopal Church, are sternly Calvinistic, and where

he exposes the miserable shufflings of her Arminian and pretended Low-Church clergy, around these doctrines and that of baptismal regeneration. He shows that the most offensive points, in the whole discussion upon the destiny of dead infants, have grown out of this wretched error of baptismal regeneration, with the kindred one of a "tactical succession;" and he convicts the original Lutheran, along with the Anglican Church, of being committed to the harsh doctrine of the eternal damnation of all unbaptized children. But when, with Dr. Krauth, he attempts to include the Presbyterian Church in the same charge, we must wholly demur. A part of their proof is, that Calvin and the supralapsarian divines use language implying that they believed there are infants in hell, whose eternal perdition began before they were old enough to commit overt sins; and they remind us that, among these extremists, was Dr. Wm. Twisse, the first Moderator of the Westminster Assembly. It is a sufficient reply that the Assembly *did not* endorse Dr. Twisse's supralapsarianism; that Presbyterians are responsible, not for the writings of any uninspired men called Presbyterians or Calvinists, nor even of Calvin himself, but only for the creed which they have expressly published as their own. If Dr. Bledsoe must judge of the complexion of that creed by the literature of that age, then, in fairness, he is bound to remember that our ablest and most esteemed divines of that age, as of this, like *Turretin*, do most expressly refute the ultraisms of *Gomarus* and *Twisse*. But he thinks, with Dr. Krauth, that when our Confession (Chap. X., §3) speaks of "elect infants dying in infancy" as being redeemed in some way by the blood and righteousness of Christ, the only antithesis implied is of "non-elect infants dying in infancy." To a mere surmise, a simple denial is a sufficient answer. We assert that the fair and natural implication is, of *elect infants who do not die in infancy*, but live to be adults. For, the subject of the previous proposition is the manner in which grace is applied to rational adults. It asserts that, in their case, it is by effectual calling. How then is grace applied to elect souls, *i. e.*, to elect infants called in the providence of God to die in infancy, who are not in a rational condition? This question the article in hand undertakes to answer. Though

these little souls be not in a condition to experience the rational part of effectual calling and to exercise conscious faith, the omnipotence of the Saviour can and does apply redemption to them also; and in like manner to dying idiots and lunatics. This is the blessed truth here stated, and it is the whole of it. The natural antithesis implied is that between the elect soul that dies in infancy and the elect soul that lives to be adult, and the different modes in which the same redemption is applied to each. Does the objector cry, "Why then did not the Confession speak out plainly and say whether it supposed there was any soul, not elect, which ever died in infancy?" We answer: Because on that question the Bible has not spoken clearly. Let Dr. Bledsoe show us the express place of scripture, if he can. Herein is the admirable wisdom and modesty of the Westminster Assembly, that, however great the temptation, they would not go beyond the clear teaching of Revelation. Where God is silent they lay their hands upon their mouths.

Our assailants also think they find clear traces of infant damnation in our Confession, (as in the 39 Articles,) where it asserts that original sin is, even in the infant, true sin, carrying guilt, and making the soul justly obnoxious to the moral indignation of God. Here they bring us, indeed, to the hinge of the whole question. Is "concupiscence" real sin? Or is it only an infirmity? Does it involve guilt, even apart from the overt transgression to which it naturally tends? If it does, then it indisputably follows that even the young infant is worthy of condemnation before God. But *it does not follow that any dead infant is actually in hell*: nor that we, who are convinced "concupiscence is sin," should dispute the application of Christ's blood to atone for that sin in every soul dying without actual transgression. This obvious distinction Dr. Bledsoe quietly leaves out; while he charges that, as we hold concupiscence by itself is really guilty, we must believe many infants are damned for it. He stoutly holds that it is no sin at all; and therein, as we shall show, commits himself to the baldest Pelagianism. And here again, in passing, we solemnly caution our Wesleyan brethren to take care how they permit this champion of theirs, under the appearance

of a zeal against a despised Calvinism, to betray them to an error which Wesley, Watson, and all their leaders reject. We testify to them, that this doctrine of the *Southern Review* is not Wesleyan: it is Pelagian; it is Socinian. It says (Jan., 1875, p. 97): "New born infants *deserve no punishment at all, much less God's wrath and damnation.*" P. 103: "The guilt of original sin" is only "supposed," "founded only on the sand of human opinion." P. 105: "Before the time of Augustine . . . natural depravity was looked upon by the Fathers of the Church not as 'truly a sin,' but *only as misfortune.*" April, 1874, p. 353: "The omnipotence of God himself cannot take away our sins, and turn us to himself, without our own voluntary consent and coöperation." Do not Wesley and Watson teach that there is an original sin derived by fallen man from Adam, which is so truly sin as to need and receive the propitiation of Christ's blood offered in a sacrifice of universal atonement "for every man?" Do they not teach that this original sin also necessitates the redemptive gift of "common, sufficient grace," purchased by Christ's blood, and inwrought by his Spirit, to relieve, in the common, unrenewed sinner, the bondage of the will, and lift him again to the power of self-determination for gospel acts? Surely this doctrine and Dr. Bledsoe's are at points! Again, according to him, a dying infant, not being a sinner, has no need of a Saviour in the gospel sense. It is not *redeemed* by Christ, but only helped in some such sense as a physician who eases its sufferings. It is not pardoned; for it has no "true sin" to be pardoned. It cannot be renewed; for according to Dr. Bledsoe it needs no renewal; and if it did, could in no possible way receive it, since "the omnipotence of God himself cannot turn it to itself without its own voluntary consent and coöperation." But the dying infant has not sense enough to give that *voluntary consent*. Hence, when ransomed parents reach heaven, their glorified little ones will have no part with them in the "song of Moses and the Lamb." When Christ blessed little children, claiming them as subjects of his "kingdom of heaven," he was mistaken; for that kingdom is the one which he purchased with his blood. No infant should be baptized. The water represents the blood and Spirit of Christ

cleansing *sinners* from guilt and corruption. But according to Dr. Bledsoe they are not real sinners, have no guilt, and instead of needing a renewal of their corruption, are only laboring under a "misfortune." Why he should hold to infant baptism it passes our wit to conceive. In one place he says he has a reason for baptizing them; but we have not been able to find the place where he has condescended to state it. Now, *for what does the Methodist Church baptize infants?* Does she do it, like Pelagius and the Papal priests, to deliver them only from a *limbus* of eternal natural blessedness; or to signify their deliverance from sin and wrath? Let its standards and ritual answer. Again we warn our Methodist brethren; they cannot afford to carry this doctrine: it is neither theirs nor Christ's.

We also justly complain of Dr. Bledsoe for certain passages in which he endeavors to involve Presbyterians in *odium* for this solemn and awful fact of original depravity, *which they did not invent*, but sorrowfully recognise as a great reality. His language is worthy of a cavilling Lecky, or of a Universalist. He speaks ironically of "innocent little babes" condemned by a God of love to cruel and everlasting torments, only because Adam chose, some thousands of years ago, to eat an apple. He should know that this is unfair; for no Calvinist ever ascribed any imputed guilt of Adam's first sin to any posterity of his which was innocent of all subjective depravity. Our Confession says that "original sin" is, in all, true sin, and carries true guilt. But it defines original sin as including not only the guilt of Adam's first sin, but always, inward corruption also. Dr. Bledsoe affects to draw a contrast between the earthly parent, though a sinner, loving and cherishing the smiling babe, and the Calvinist's God, though holy, hating and damning it. Does he not know that this is precisely the song of cavilling Universalists? He professes to believe that God will certainly punish our adult sinful children in hell, if they refuse to repent. But does not the Christian parent cherish and pity that adult impenitent child in any hour of his helplessness as he did the infant? To any one but a Universalist the solution is plain. Our children are bone of our bone. We are not the appointed judges and punishers of

ungodliness. God is that Judge. Hence, while he discloses towards our impenitent children, in ten thousand mercies, a pity far more watchful and tender than a parent's, yet when he assumes his rightful judicial function, he condemns each man according to his deserts. He is a Ruler "both of goodness and severity."

But to return. The Bible teaches that inherited depravity of nature is, apart from actual transgressions, truly sin, as such involving guilt, and therefore obnoxious to the righteous wrath of God, and to such penalty as his equity apportions to it. Dr. Bledsoe thinks that inherited depravity, apart from actual transgression, is not truly sin, involves no guilt, is only a "misfortune," and merits no wrath or punishment at all. This is precisely the issue between him and Calvinism. In giving it practical form and extent we have another distinction to present, which is of cardinal importance. It concerns that general proposition which Dr. Bledsoe would also contest: that every sin, being committed against an infinite God, is an infinite evil, and so, carries a desert of everlasting punishment. Let us, for illustration, discuss this proposition as to a specific sin of a rational adult. Many, in this instance, would deny it, because they are so in the habit of estimating transgression as the civil magistrate does, insulated from all its attendants and sequels. Does the court, for instance, indict a man for murder? That single act is considered by itself; and the court does not concern itself with antecedent character, or with consequences, except as they throw some light on the evidence. Now men continually deceive themselves by these examples, as though a heart-searching God could or would judge sins against himself in this partial and inadequate way. They seem to have before their imaginations some such case as this: Here is a man who has truly and literally committed only one, insulated sin against God; and God has this one act to judge, as expressive of no antecedent moral state, as destined to have no repetitions, as unconnected with any formation of evil habitudes in the agent's soul, and as carrying no consequence or influence upon his immortal character or on that of immortal fellow creatures. Has God said that this one act, thus

insulated, is by itself worthy of eternal penalty? We reply, we are ignorant of any revelation on that question. For, in fact, such a case never existed, and God will never have such an instance to judge. It is impossible that it should arise; were it possible, we do not profess to know what God would think of it. Every case which God has to judge is that, not of a sin by itself, but of a sinner; not of an act merely, but of an agent; and the infallible omniscient mind will, of course, look at each act as it truly occurs, in its whole connexions with character, destiny, and example to others. Here, for instance, a profane oath has been uttered. God sees that this oath is, first, an expression of certain prevenient sentiments of wilfulness, irreverence, carelessness, and enmity in the mind of the swearer. Then, secondly, it involves certain influences for evil on spectators and imitators, the evil tendency of which is to wide-spreading and everlasting mischiefs. Then, thirdly, it strengthens the profane temper and habit of swearing, thus involving the natural promise of a series of profanities continued forever. In a word, God, as an omniscient judge, has to weigh the sinner as a concrete whole, and to estimate each transgression as part, and index, and cause, as well as fruit, of a *disease of sin*, a spiritual eating cancer: which is an immense evil, because involving, unless grace intervene (and the sinner has no *claim of justice* to that remedy), an everlasting mischief and criminality. Thus judged, sin is manifestly an infinite evil; it manifestly deserves an endless penalty. One reason why a holy God punishes forever is, that the culprit sins forever. The everlasting series of sins is the fruit of the first rebellion. This is God's point of view. When we argue thus, ✓ we do not depreciate those aggravations which attach to any one particular sin, by reason of the majesty and holiness of the party offended, and the perfectness of his claim of right to our obedience. It was well said by the Puritans, "To have a little sin, one must have a little God."

Let us now apply this view to the case of a depraved infant, standing, as yet, before the divine inspection, without actual transgression. He has one sort of sin and guilt as yet, that of his original sin. If that is real sin and real guilt, as we shall

prove, then a righteous divine judge will, and ought to, disapprove it as such, and adjudge to it *whatever penalty is its fair equivalent*. How unanswerable is this? But the objector, when we proceed to the question, how extensive that penalty may justly become, preposterously argues as though this infant's sin and guilt were to have no natural sequel or increment. They seem to imagine that somehow God continues to view him as not growing up from a depraved infancy to a sinful manhood, and to an endless series of provocations. But in fact God views him as one who will grow into all that sin; for this career is simply the sure and natural outgrowth of his own corrupted free-agency. The objector, with a strange hallucination, seems to suppose that, if there should ever be, beyond the grave, a soul condemned for its infant depravity, (just as *we see* all infants this side the grave at present under condemnation for their infant depravity,) that first infant would be sinless of all save its initial depravity. But obviously, if there were such a case, that infant would develop precisely like the unconverted infants we see around us every day, and precisely like them *would continue a condemned soul because it continued a sinning and an increasingly sinful soul*. Let the man who cries out against the "monstrosity of infant damnation" drop these absurd scales from his eyes. Let him remember what it is that the Calvinist asserts. We do not assert that there is a single case of an eternally damned infant in the universe; for we know Christ redeems infants, and we hope he redeems all who die infants. But we assert that were not the infant guilt of depravity cleansed by Christ's blood in the case of those who die infants, it would be just in God to disapprove, judge, and condemn them, *precisely as we actually SEE HIM condemning the living ones in our own households*. Does not Dr. Bledsoe believe, sorrowfully, that the condemnation of some of these living ones may become everlasting? He says he does. But on what conditions? On the conditions of growth into adult sin and perseverance in impenitency. Well, were the grace of Christ not applied to the soul of the infant that dies, its condemnation would also turn out to be everlasting on precisely the same conditions. Does Dr. Bledsoe think the eternal doom of the adult unjust, who, begin-

ning a depraved infant, lived on in a life of voluntary depravity to a final impenitency? He does not. He regards it as solemn, fearful; yet worthy of a holy God. Why then this outcry, when the case of the non-elect dead infant, if there were such a case, would be precisely parallel? There is then no use in this vain attempt to cavil against God's condemnation of the guilt of original sin. It is precisely what we see every day in the living infants of our own families. We see it in their alienation from God, in their sicknesses, mortality, and community with us in the curse. We hear it in the express word of God, that they "are *all by nature* heirs of wrath, even as others;" that "all the world are become guilty before God; and that "the wrath of God abideth" on every son of Adam who has not believed.

But let us now return to the hinge of the whole debate. Is that *habitus* of soul which the depraved infant inherits, really sin, in such a sense as to carry guilt and to deserve penalty? Dr. Bledsoe is constrained by his erroneous philosophy to say, No: it is, so far, only an infirmity. We say his philosophy constrains this answer. For, first, if certainty in the influence of subjective disposition and motive over volition were absolutely inconsistent with free-agency and responsibility, there would be no real guilt in the actual transgressions which are the fruits of such *habitus*, and, of course, no guilt in the parent state of soul. Secondly, if self-determination and contingency are essential to free agency, in Dr. Bledsoe's sense; then no permanent and decisive state of soul can have moral quality. There remains nothing to which moral quality can be ascribed, save *acts of soul*. This conclusion, which is virtually Dr. Bledsoe's, should have opened his eyes to the error of his premises; for that "sin consists only in sinful acts of soul," has always been the key-note of the cry of ancient and modern Pelagians. Let us test the question whether a depraved disposition is truly sin, by sound reason and Scripture.

The stereotyped argument in the negative is, "that nothing can be sin which is involuntary; but the disposition cannot be voluntary, being, as the Calvinists themselves teach, *a priori* to all the volitions it regulates." This plausible sophism proceeds

simply upon an ambiguity in the word "involuntary." In one sense, an act or state is involuntary when the agent wills positively not to do it, but is forced against his will; as when one striving to cleave to his support is yet forced to fall. The result which is in that sense "involuntary" is, of course, devoid of moral quality, and blameless. The other sense is, when an act or state of soul is called involuntary because it did not result from any express volition. In this sense, that which is not the result of an intentional volition may have moral quality, and be criminal. An envious man may so think of his innocent enemy as to have envy excited, by reason of an involuntary train of association; yet that envy is criminal. Let the ambiguity be removed by employing the word spontaneous. Responsibility is coëxtensive with rational spontaneity. But the envy, in the case supposed, was spontaneous. The disposition to ungodliness is spontaneous. The sinner cannot say that it subsists in his breast contrary to his will. No power makes him entertain it against his wishes. It is as much a function of his selfhood, prompted from within, as any volition he ever executes. It may be, then, like the express volition, responsible and criminal.

We argue that native evil disposition is such, again, from the testimony of conscience. Every man blames himself, when he thinks dispassionately, for inclinations to evil not formed into purposes. He would blush to have them disclosed to his fellow men. Why this, except that his moral intuition tells him his fellow will rightfully disapprove it? If he perceives a mere inclination in his neighbor, to wrong him, he resents it, though it be formed into no purpose.

Many sins of omission prove the same thing. Here, for instance, is a well-dressed and self-indulgent man, walking beside a stream. A prattling child falls into the water, and while he is hesitating to infringe his bodily comfort and tarnish his goodly raiment by leaping after it, the child is drowned. Here is guilt, but there has been *no volition*: the lazy man can say with truth, that positively he had not made up his mind to neglect the drowning child. But he is guilty of breaking the sixth commandment. Now every one sees that it is to his selfish hesitancy

the guilt attaches. But hesitancy is a state, and not an act of soul. We blame it in this case, because it is the index of a selfish, cowardly disposition.

This suggests a stronger plea. Every practical mind gauges the moral quality of an act according to its intention. When, for instance, a just judge would ascertain the guilt or innocence of a homicide, he inquires into the intention. He knows that "all killing is not murder." It is the malicious intent, which stamps criminality upon the act. This is but stating, in another form, the admitted truth, that the subjective motive determines the moral quality of the act, as it decides its occurrence. But it is the natural disposition which regulates the subjective motive. Hence, it is so far from being true, that morality resides only in acts of soul—if it did not reside in the dispositions which regulate these acts and give them their quality, it would not be found in the acts at all: it would be banished from the earth. In fine, we appeal to that common-sense of mankind which persists in imputing moral merit or demerit to *character* as well as to actions. What is character? Wherein does the thievish character of the rogue reside, in the intervals when he is eating, or is asleep, or anyhow is not thinking of his thefts? The only answer is, it resides in his disposition and habitudes. We appeal to that common sense which always regards cause and effect, parent and child, as kindred. When we see concupiscence, in the words of the Apostle James, conceiving and bringing forth sin, we know that mother and daughter have a common nature.

This suggests to us the scriptural argument. Here we are on solid and impregnable ground. Job declares that none can bring "a clean thing out of an unclean." Does he not use the term "clean" in the same sense in the parent and the child? David confesses in the 51st Psalm that he "was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did his mother conceive him;" and this inborn sinfulness he makes, along with the crimes which were its fruit, subject of profound repentance. The 58th Psalm declares that infants go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies; their poison is as the poison of the adder, hereditary and natural. Our Saviour tells us "that which is born of the flesh is flesh,"

and on this he grounds the necessity of a new birth. He tells us, "Either make the tree good and the fruit good, or else the tree evil and the fruit evil." Does he not use the words "good" and "evil" consistently throughout, of the soul's dispositions and its acts? The great apostle tells us that we were all naturally "dead in trespasses and sins and were *by nature* children of wrath." Does anything that is not truly sin excite the "wrath" of a righteous God? Lastly, God prohibits concupiscence, saying, "Thou shalt not covet;" and in his own inspired definition, by the Apostle John, makes *discrepancy with his law* the characteristic of sin. Ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία. This must include not being, as well as not doing, what God's law requires.

Now a mind tinctured with unscriptural philosophy will suppose that it sees two stubborn objections to this Bible doctrine. He will exclaim, "The infant cannot reason. Intelligence is necessary as a condition of guilt. It is as unreasonable to regard this little creature in its cradle as criminal for a natural state of soul of which it comprehends nothing, as though it were a kitten." But we reply, It is not a kitten. It has what the kitten has not: a rudimental reason and conscience. Why should not this be enough to ground a rudimental responsibility? Let it be noted here, that we did not claim the responsibility for mere disposition to evil was as developed, or as heavily criminal, as that for intentional and overt rebellion; we claimed that it is a true moral responsibility. It may be added that, as a question of fact, there is nothing in mental science about which it is more perilous to dogmatize, than touching the state of the intelligence, and the degree of its development, in the human infant. All we know is, that it cannot exercise the communicative faculty of speech, and that its consciousnesses are not of such a quality as to be remembered to after years. He would be a rash man who would dare to assert, on these grounds, that the infant human has no more functions of rational consciousness than a mere animal. But aside from all this, we make our appeal again to common sense. Do we not morally disapprove the evil disposition of a bad adult, at such moments as it lies quiescent, and is not provoking his

own intelligent consciousness by acts of soul? Do we not despise the thief as a thief while he is asleep?

Ah but, exclaims our opponent, this is because the thievish disposition of this man is his own voluntary acquisition: he has created it, or induced it upon himself by a series of thievish acts, intelligently and freely performed before. No being can be worthy of praise or of blame for what he has not freely chosen. Here we have, in this final objection, the last stronghold of the Pelagian philosophy. It is easily demolished by the same distinction which separates the *spontaneous* from the *positively involuntary*. No man is blameworthy for a defect which afflicts himself *against his will*. Every man may be blameworthy for a moral state which is spontaneous. That our disposition is spontaneous, we have shown by a simple appeal to consciousness. We know that it is the most primary function of selfhood; we cherish and exercise it of our own motion, not compelled from without; it is the most subjective of all subjectivities. And now that its being coeval with our rational existence is no ground for disclaiming responsibility for it, we are able to prove by an adamant demonstration. If a being is neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy for his moral disposition, because it was native, and not taken to himself by a subsequent act of choice, then Adam could not have any holiness in Paradise, for God "created him upright." Then Gabriel can have no credit for his heavenly holiness, because it was original. Then the humanity of Jesus deserved not a particle of credit, because it was born of the virgin "a holy thing," by "the power of the Highest." And chiefly, the eternal God deserves no praise, because he has been eternally, naturally, immutably, necessarily holy. This proof we crown, by showing that the Pelagian theory of the rise of responsible character is a case of logical suicide. Say they: a man is justly responsible for his character, because he intelligently chose it for himself. Then, we argue, that act of choice must have been a responsible one. But the moral quality of every volition depends on that of its intention, *i. e.*, of its subjective motive. If the motive be non-moral, the act will be non-moral, and can conduce in no way to a moral habitude. Thus, on this absurd philosophy,

the disposition must act and become a cause before it is in existence. This result teaches us that when our analysis of moral actions has led us back to the ruling disposition, we have the ultimate moral fact. Beyond this we cannot go with our analysis. The *original disposition*, which, though not arising in an act of choice, is *spontaneous*, communicates the moral quality to all the volitions it regulates, *because it has moral quality in itself*.

Now then, if Dr. Bledsoe will admit the Bible doctrine, that a fallen infant is guilty for his sinful disposition, he will also admit with us, that a righteous God will hold him guilty therefor, in precisely such a penalty as is equitable. And hence, did the purpose of grace as to dying infants dictate God's leaving such a soul, beyond the grave, to bear that just penalty, and work out its own ulterior character and conduct, the result would be precisely what we see in this life: where a fallen infant, beginning its career a culprit, and adding, of its own free will, a life of sin and final impenitency, works out for itself an everlasting perdition. But *is it God's real purpose* to permit a single dying infant thus to remain without the grace of Christ? It is on this question that the fact wholly turns, whether there are any lost infants. And of this question, we presume Dr. Bledsoe knows precisely as little, and as much, as we do. Neither of us has a precise "Thus saith the Lord." We presume that the silence of God on this point of his gracious purpose is accounted for by this trait of his revelations: that they are always intensely practical; that he never turns aside to gratify mere curiosity; and so, as there are no instrumentalities for us to use in the redemption of dying infants, he has, in his usual practical fashion, remained silent. But in one thing we agree with Dr. Bledsoe: water-baptism is not an essential instrumentality for the applying of Christ's grace to a dying infant, nor is the lack of it decisive of its fate. To teach this is an odious, unscriptural Phariseism; and, being unwarranted by God, is a brutal cruelty to bereaved parents. We know that a multitude of dying infants are redeemed. To us it appears every way agreeable to the plan of redemption through grace, that, as dying infants never sanctioned Adam's rebellion in overt act, so, in the liberality of God, they all enjoy union

with the second Adam, without being required, like us adults, to sanction it by overt faith in this life. No man can prove from the Scriptures that any infant, even dying a pagan, is lost.

The next movement of Dr. Bledsoe's polemic, in the *Southern Review* of October, 1875, and January, 1876, is against his own Methodist brethren. Here we have, therefore, the more pleasing task of spectators, interested for fair play. One of the positions which he has found for the meeting point of Wesleyanism and Calvinism, of which he hopes to be the efficient, is his doctrine of "the perseverance of the elect." To Arminians the doctrine of the "perseverance of saints" has been very obnoxious. But Dr. Bledsoe distinguishes between "the elect" and "the saints." He avails himself of a modification of the doctrine of conditional decrees, fully sanctioned by the greatest Wesleyan divines, including the great founder himself and Watson. According to these, while all predestination in God is grounded in his foresight of men's free acts, there is a threefold division of the objects. Those who God foresaw would stubbornly reject his gospel, he for that reason determined to leave to their doom. Those who he foresaw would truly believe and repent, he for that reason determined to renew, justify, and adopt. The smaller number who he foresaw would persevere in that faith until death, he for that reason predestinated to everlasting glory. This view Dr. Bledsoe adopts. One consequence justly inferred from it is, that he thinks a man may be a saint, a true, renewed believer, without being one of the elect. Another is, that a man may be a true believer for a time, and be totally and finally apostate. A third is, that the elect must certainly and infallibly persevere in a state of grace to the end and be saved. Thus, while, with other Methodists, he denies the perseverance of the saints, he startles them by roundly asserting the infallible "perseverance of the elect." This conclusion is obviously implied in the Wesleyan positions, as Dr. Bledsoe argues with resistless logic. If God elects to eternal life only those who he foresees will persevere in faith and repentance until death, then their perseverance therein must be certain. That is, *if God's foreknowledge is certain.* This Dr.

Bledsoe is led, of course, and correctly, to assert in the fullest terms. When asked whether this is not virtually the Calvinist's doctrine of perseverance, he replies, No, because while he holds the fact, he utterly dissents from the grounds of the fact asserted by the Calvinist: he ascribes the perseverance of the elect to the foreseen determinations of their own free will; still holding fast to his Arminian *ποῦ στῶ*, that no degree of grace from without could limit this self-determination without destroying free-agency. But his speculation as to the "perseverance of the elect" leads him to other sound positions. He is led to see, as he consistently must, that we should ascribe to God a foresight of all things, including all free determinations of created wills, absolutely infinite, eternal, infallible, and immutable. Hence, he repudiates with contempt the feeble notion of Adam Clarke, that God forbears from foreseeing certain acts of men. Dr. Bledsoe also recognises the iron logic of the Calvinist, that if the believer's faith and repentance are fruits of regeneration, then these, as foreseen by God, cannot be the causal grounds of his purpose to regenerate; for this would represent the divine mind as making an effect the cause of its own cause. Hence he concedes that in the *act of regeneration* there can be no synergism; the coöperation of the human will begins thereupon, in the consequent process of *conversion*. Is the reader ready to exclaim, Then Dr. Bledsoe is a good Calvinist! So have some of his own brethren exclaimed. But stay: his escape is in claiming that God's regeneration produces no certainty of will in its subject as to gospel acts; it only lifts him, as to them, into an *equilibrium* of will! Here we are tempted to make three remarks. First: we thought Dr. Bledsoe, as an Arminian, was bound to hold that "*common sufficient grace*" had done that much for the gospel-sinner before regeneration. Secondly: how different is Dr. Bledsoe's regeneration from that of the Bible, which St. John assures is such that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and *he cannot sin*, because he is born of God." Thirdly: it seems as though, after all, the only barrier between Dr. Bledsoe and Calvinism is the *εἰςῶλον* of "self-determination."

The Doctor also asserts that he does not believe God gives

preventing grace to all men under the gospel. For God's foreknowledge being infinite and infallible, he foresees some cases in which preventing grace would be stubbornly resisted, and thus become the occasion (not *cause*) of an aggravated doom. Hence it is in mercy that God sometimes withholds it, that his kindly-intended grace may not become the occasion of the poor sinner's making his case worse than before. Here again we have two words. First: how much difference remains between this doctrine and that Calvinistic doctrine of *preterition*, which under the ugly name of "reprobation" Dr. Bledsoe so much abhors? Secondly: well does Dr. Granberry say of this, that it "*seems* to teach that God withholds the grace essential to conversion from *all* who he foresees would fall." It is hard for us to see how it teaches anything else. For has not God, according to Dr. Bledsoe, a complete foreknowledge of everything? Then he foreknows *every case* in which converting grace is destined to be slighted; and of course the same wisdom and mercy which cause him to withhold the useless gift in some cases, will withhold it in all. How does the reader imagine Dr. Bledsoe escapes? It is by saying (October, 1875, p. 479) that God may give prevenient grace in cases where he foreknows it will be despised, "in order to demonstrate the malignity of sin, and cause the universe to stand in awe of its deadening, destroying, and soul-damning influences." Really, it seems to us, that Dr. Bledsoe might just as well adopt, at once, the Calvinistic statement, that God gives or withholds grace "*for his own glory.*"

These teachings, and especially that of the "perseverance of the elect," awakened some of his brethren. Dr. Granberry, the excellent Professor of Practical Divinity in the new Vanderbilt University, objected strenuously, first in the *Christian Advocate*, and then in the Annual Conference of the Southern Virginia Methodists for 1875. Here the two met in oral debate, and Dr. Bledsoe has further defended his views in his Review for January, 1876. It is with good ground that the honest Methodist instincts of Dr. Granberry snuffed the taint of Calvinism in this doctrine. We have seen the corollaries, in part, to which it has already led Dr. Bledsoe. They do not contain the unsophisticated Arminian-

ism; they savor of the Westminster scheme. But further, the doctrine of the "perseverance of the elect" in itself virtually asserts the *perseverance of saints*, of some saints, (the hated dogma to the zealous Arminian,) for Dr. Bledsoe's elect are a certain species of "saints." Worse yet: both Dr. Bledsoe and Dr. Granberry agree in holding that there is *no essential difference of grace* in the saint who is, and the saint who is not, elect. They must hold thus, or else we truculent Calvinists will compel them to acknowledge our "sovereign distinguishing grace." The difference then, between the non-elect saint who falls, and the elect saint who cannot fall, is contingent and not essential. So that Dr. Bledsoe forces us to admit the perseverance of certain saints who are, virtually, like other saints. This is not old Methodism. But most of all, Dr. Bledsoe presents us, in every case of the "perseverance of the elect," with an instance utterly destructive of the Arminian philosophy. *The Arminian holds that certainty in volitions is inconsistent with freedom. That is his corner stone. But every persevering elect person is a case of certainty of volitions consistent with freedom.* Dr. Bledsoe has thus placed Dr. Granberry and himself helplessly between the jaws of the Calvinistic vise; and we design to turn the screw remorselessly. Let us see what premises he has given us. If God certainly foresees who will persevere and thereon elects them, they must be certain to persevere. Otherwise God's foreknowledge would be erroneous. But unless the volitions to cleave to the gospel were free, they would have no moral quality, and would be no steps or means towards holiness. Now any volition which is not foolish has a motive. If the gospel motives, in these cases, are certain to produce the continuance of gospel-volitions, there must be an efficient connexion between motive and volition here. Yet the agent is free. This is all the certainty, or "moral necessity", any intelligent Calvinist asks in his philosophy of the will. Dr. Bledsoe's doctrine has given us our case.

And lastly: we now find the application of our discussion on a previous page, of Edwards's argument from God's foreknowledge to the "moral necessity" (or as we prefer to say, certainty) of

the volitions foreknown. The key of the argument is in the great truth, that no effect is without a cause. We know that God knows this universal law, because he makes us know it intuitively. Now, then, no event could be certain to occur in the future unless there was to be also a cause efficient enough to make it certainly occur. If then, it is certain that any elect person is going to persevere in gospel volitions, *it can only be because there is, somewhere, a suitable cause efficient to produce them.* Now Drs. Bledsoe and Granberry do not believe that this certainly efficient cause is in the Christian's will; for they think that is contingent, else, they insist, it would not be free. The cause must then be in God's grace. This then is the blessed doctrine of "efficacious grace." *This is Calvinism.*

The question then remains in this attitude: Dr. Bledsoe says, and proves, that the Wesleyan doctrines include the inference of the "perseverance of the elect." Dr. Granberry says, and proves, that this inference is Calvinistic. They both conclude correctly; and *our* conclusion from the whole is, that the Wesleyan theology, like a generous but over-fresh must, should work itself clear by ripening into "the old wine well refined upon the lees" of the Westminster Confession. Our sincere prayer is that the venerable editor of the *Southern Review*, with all his younger brethren, may find in every hour of temptation, and in their last conflict, the priceless support and comfort of "efficacious grace." This intercession we offer with a comfortable assurance, "being (with Paul, Phil. i. 6) confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."