

that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," and thus avoid perdition. In the same connection (vs. 7) the apostle speaks of the "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," implying of course that all will not be saved. It is a plain doctrine of the Bible that God would gladly recognize all as heirs of eternal life, but only in his pre-ordained way of repentance and faith, not by compulsion. If the apostle had intended to imply an authoritative *will* he probably would have employed *βούλομαι* and not *θέλω*, just as Homer uses the former when we might expect the latter in relation to the gods. The mere desire of God is here brought to view. The limitations of this desire and the results are left in the background, as dependent upon prayer and its answer.

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#### ARTICLE IV.

##### EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW I. 1.

###### THE BOOK OF THE GENERATION OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON OF ABRAHAM.

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THE opening of the first book of the New Testament strikingly corresponds with the earlier chapters of the first book of the Old. Each is a book of genesis, of origins. The one describes the origin of creation, the other of redemption. This leads us to consider the relation between these two great events.

The doctrine of creation does not arise from a mere observation of the world and the things in it, leading to the speculation as to whether they are self-originated, or have never originated, or whether they have sprung from the fiat of an omnipotent being. Men who have not the sense of God might speculate forever on these points without coming to any conclusion. And through whatever steps the religious consciousness, the consciousness of God, may have unfolded,

it is certain that, once unfolded, it is supreme. To the religious man the idea of God controls and explains all others. Now, as the church from the beginning has never wavered in affirming, the idea of God is that of him in whom there is from eternity the fulness of being, and out of whom there is emptiness, except so far as he, from the promptings of self-moved love, communicates his fulness. The thought of a blind, weltering chaos, of an infinity of disorderly, conflicting atoms originating apart from the will of God is alike opposed to right reason and to Christian consciousness. The process of creation we cannot understand, for we are ourselves created. But there is a sufficient ground for it in the will and power of God, whereas of this blind tumult of self-originated or self-existent atoms we understand neither the process nor the ground. And the assumption of it is repugnant to the very thought of God as the eternal, all-comprehending fulness. Therefore we affirm with resolute steadfastness, as a matter not of idle speculation nor of indifference to faith, but fundamental, that we believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

Let us now consider the relation of creation and redemption. Creation is the lower stage, the platform on which redemption must rest. That which is not created cannot be redeemed. What is redemption? It may be defined as the setting right, by a second act of the Creator, of that which has swerved from the creative impulse, and is going astray. I need not add, hopelessly astray, for who but God can set the creature in the line of God's purpose, or restore it if it have varied? Indeed, what can any act of the creature be but an empty illusion unless it be the free appropriation and transmission of an act of the Creator within it? Receptivity is the highest freedom and the highest act of a created being. As God alone can create, so God alone can redeem. Redemption, indeed, is in some sort concurrent with creation. Deism is the error which denies this concurrence. The deist thinks, or may think, rightly concerning the being of

God and concerning his act of creation. But he imagines the world, once created, as standing mechanically apart from the Maker, and going right, like a clock, from the impulse given it at the start. But we may depend upon it that the purpose of God, even concerning the unconscious or irrational creation, is no such abstract and easily mastered thing as that it can be realized without his continual control. And a control to keep right that which was started right may, without any very violent stretch of terms, be called a concurrent redemption. But the common use of language confines the name of redemption to that second act of God which brings right what is going wrong, and especially which brings right those human souls, those rational beings, that have gone astray. And as Genesis in its earlier chapters is the chronicle of creation, so Matthew, and indeed the New Testament at large, is the book of redemption.

The need of redemption has been a common and gnawing consciousness in the nobler races of mankind from the beginning, and doubtless lurks obscurely behind the brutishness and stolidity of the lower races. But whether redemption can be secured, and whether it has been secured, are questions to which the most various and discordant answers have been given. Some, with Buddhism, tell us that the only redemption possible is deliverance out of the weary dream of existence. Others, with Brahminism, bid us hope that after innumerable transmigrations through every form of being we may, somewhere in the cycles of eternity, be found worthy of an inexplicable absorption into the ground of all things. Others, with a recklessness that covers the blackness of despair, say to us, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" Only in one line of succession is the assurance of a real and intelligible redemption unwaveringly present: in that line of succession which begins with Abraham, and reaches its culmination in Christ; which begins with the consciousness that God has redeemed a few, and ends in the knowledge that he is the Redeemer of all mankind; which begins with the sense of temporal redemption, and ends with the assurance of eternal redemption.

Now the correspondence in form between the opening of the first book of the Old and the first book of the New Testament is a token that creation and redemption are two stages of one great work. And it is a token, also, that he who creates is the same as he who redeems. Simple as this doctrine is, the church has come to rest in it only through generations of dangerous conflict. In the early ages great multitudes who were powerfully impressed by the excellence of the gospel and the fulness of redeeming goodness apparent in Christ, but who could not reconcile themselves to the belief that an equally perfect goodness appears in the painful and inexplicable course of nature and of history, devised the doctrine that, while redemption proceeds from the pure world of light and goodness, creation is the work, if not exactly of Satan, yet of a being so blind and weak and partial that his work, in comparison with that of Christ, may almost be called Satanic. Redemption, therefore, according to them, was not in agreement with creation, but in opposition to it, and Christ came not, as he says, to fulfil, but rather to destroy. Against this the New Testament, from first to last, is unwaveringly committed. It will not allow, with gnosticism, that redemption is the first true revelation of the Supreme God, and that its object is to erect a new world, opposed in all its principles to everything that has been before. It will not allow that the end of redemption is to wrench nature out of all her fastenings, and seat Christ upon the ruins of the throne of the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Therefore it tells us that Christ is the son of David, the son of Abraham. And in the beginning of the Gospel of John it assures us that he who, full of grace and truth, has revealed the Father to us, is he through whom all things were made. And in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians it tells us that in the Son were all things created, in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible. And in the closing book of the New Testament canon the Redeemer is emphatically denominated the beginning of the creation of God. One thought in creation and

redemption, one final purpose, one agent in both, such is the Christian doctrine.

Nor does the New Testament, with Unitarianism, or at least with some schools of it, make creation all, and allow Christ only the rank of a happy accident. It makes him and his work central. Through him and for him are all things created. Christ nowhere, like many sages and founders of religions, like the founder of Buddhism, for instance, speaks of himself as one that may possibly be surpassed by a better, or rivaled by an equal. His disciples, indeed, shall do even greater works than he, but only because he still dwells in them. His regal pre-eminence among the sons of men remains until the end, and he who redeems the world is he who at the last shall judge it.

Yet each of these two correlated doctrines, namely, that he who is the Redeemer is also the Creator, and, on the other hand, that redemption is as central as creation, has been, as might have been expected, far more thoroughly appropriated by the church in theory than realized in practice. Let us consider especially the first.

The doctrine that creation is good as well as redemption, the world as well as the specifically manifested kingdom of Christ, has been in practice inevitably subjected to severe restriction. After all, it is alone the redeemed world that is perfectly good; and the unredeemed world is evil in so far as it is more distant from redemption. Not until Christ has taken possession of the whole creation, regenerated it, supplied its defects, and redressed its disorders, will it be good in the full and final sense. Before that time of the restitution of all things, to commit ourselves fully and unreservedly to it would be fatal. And whether, as some say, the very nature of the creature, as empty of all good until it rests in God, cannot be revealed to itself except through a fall, or whether, as the prevailing doctrine is, the fall is an act of the same free will which in other orders of being has persevered in good, in either case it is certain that mankind has departed widely from its Creator, and that when the gospel

came this apostasy had reached its climax, and that under the power of the gospel mankind gradually, and only gradually, began to return to him from whom it had grievously revolted. The church, therefore, was forced to make her entrance into the world in an attitude of stern opposition to the world as it was. Everything had been so profoundly corrupted and distorted—literature, art, the state, the family, business, and pleasure—that at first the church was forced practically into a semi-gnostic alienation even from institutions whose essential holiness she warmly maintained. When we condemn monasticism, let us not forget that the Roman world was once so corrupted that to reform it without a dissolution and a reconstitution was impossible, and that monasticism, with all its exaggerations and austerities, was often the holy hearth on which a purer fire was prepared to illuminate and cleanse the family; and that the ages of clerical domination, lamentable as their renewal would be, were nevertheless a period during which higher ideas of duty and humaner principles of administration began to be infused into the state. When the work of regeneration and rectification is done, the instrument for doing it may well be broken, but it need not be dishonored or maligned. A scaffolding is an unsightly thing, and the sooner it is got out of the way after the house is built the better. But you cannot build a house without a scaffolding. Now the past ages of church history have been in large measure ages in which the scaffolding hid the house. Yet behind this unsightliness the house was going up. The warmth and freedom of Protestantism are rendered possible and safe by the austerities and abnegations of the preceding ages. And even Protestantism has not wholly overcome asceticism. Nor will the church wholly overcome it, nor should she expect wholly to overcome it, until her Lord returns. That Christianity is a religion tending somewhat to asceticism is one of the marks that it comes from God. For the principle of wholesome asceticism is expressed by Paul: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

But though the church may not expect ever, before the coming

of the Lord, to regenerate nature so completely as ever to be absolved from the duty of maintaining a certain cautiousness towards it, and though, indeed, the material world, it may be, is hardly capable of so entire a regeneration as to make it an absolutely safe abode for the spirit, yet that commission which was given to the natural man, to the first Adam, to subdue the world, first to his own uses, and thereby to the purpose of God, is, more emphatically still, and in a far higher sense, given to the spiritual man, the Second Adam, and to his spiritual progeny. If, therefore, the church contents herself, as she even in her reformed condition so largely does, with protesting and still protesting against the abuses of things conceded by her to be good and lawful in themselves, she marks her own imperfection, she shows that she still comes short of her proper work, which is to regenerate and appropriate to the purposes of God's kingdom everything in God's world which is not evil in itself. While, therefore, purity and prudence and a holy cautiousness are indefeasible characteristics of the church of God, a perpetual timorousness is no sign of spiritual health. As Frederick Robertson says, we are in our Father's house below as well as above, and ought to conduct ourselves with the freedom and confidence of children in their Father's house.

Still we must never forget that our Heavenly Father is the Infinite One, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, and that our confidence and affection must ever be mingled with and qualified by an awful and unspeakable reverence. Perfect love casts out fear, but does not cast out that depth of reverence, which may appear allied to fear, but which the supreme security of heaven itself will never remove, but only render more profound. And so far is this spirit of speechless adoration from being one with that excessive strictness and unreasonable rigor in the rules of life, which is often a weariness of the church, that we frequently find this latter in those who are sadly deficient in reverence, whose language to the throne of heaven shocks us by its extreme and presumptuous familiarity. In proportion as the redeeming

work of Christ advances in the church and through the church, rigor, of which there is none in Christ, declines; but reverence deepens, for it is an essential element in love to God, which abides eternally.

Rigor, therefore, strictness, sternness, exclusiveness, anxious connings of the problem how far what is lawful is expedient, a certain fear of over-joyousness and festivity, will always to some extent characterize the church, because these objects of her apprehension are hardest to regenerate. Yet her inability to appropriate and transform them should be regarded by her as a note of imperfection, not as something to be anxiously clung to as a matter of pride. Pietism and monasticism, therefore, may both or either be, in their place and age, things to be highly commended and warmly promoted. They may be signs that the work of redemption is going vigorously on, or that having been for a while at a stay it has gathered new strength. But they are also a sign that the church is yet far from having reproduced the serene image of that Redeemer in whose character there is no touch of either monasticism or pietism, who incurred, and was willing to incur, the reproach of religious looseness, of being a friend of publicans and sinners, who has taken his stand in the religious centre of mankind that from it he might bless and hallow the whole circumference and scope.

I have said that the opening of Genesis is the chronicle of creation, and that the New Testament is the book of redemption. What are we to say of the rest of the Old Testament? That it is the chronicle of the preparations for redemption. Not as though the redemptive activity of God was confined to Israel; but that there is its central channel. There alone is there an unintermitting consciousness in man that the purpose of God is to redeem. There alone are the thoughts of the better part fixed, with ever-increasing distinctness, on some great salvation of God soon to appear for Israel and for the world. Thus the Bible, like a three-stringed lyre, resounds to three notes, creation, redemption, and those tones which rising from the lower key go on gathering force

and sweetness until they merge into the noble joyousness of the higher one.

We are not, however, remanded to the Bible, in any part, for the knowledge of the fact that the purpose of God is to redeem. This central truth has become a part of the consciousness of Christendom. Indeed, this consciousness is what constitutes it Christendom. Christendom is to be defined as that part of mankind in which it is assumed, as the common ground to which all things are to be referred, that God is, that his purpose is to redeem men for both worlds, and that the supreme and central agent of this redemption is Jesus Christ. That there are many dissentients from this belief within the bounds of Christendom does not invalidate the name of Christendom any more, for instance, than the fact that there are many dissentients in England from the Protestant religion invalidates the claim of England to be regarded as a Protestant realm. Should any nation break away from this common basis and understanding that nation would cease to be a part of Christendom, but Christendom would not cease to be. Should Christendom shift its seat, as it has largely done before, and find its home in races that now are heathen, while the nations that now are called Christian relapsed into heathenism or hardened into atheism, Christendom would be where the rule of Christ is acknowledged, and there, and there alone, would be the proper centre of mankind. In the heathen Roman world it was bitterly charged against the Christian church that her members, by the fundamental principles of their religion, could bear no unreserved and hearty political allegiance to the heathen emperors. This charge was true; nor was it anything of which the church had need to be ashamed. A commonwealth of which the elements are so loosely aggregated that it is not a moral personality hardly deserves the name of a commonwealth. A commonwealth which is a moral personality, but a moral personality indifferent or adverse to Christ, cannot be, in any deep sense, the object of the allegiance of a Christian man. The ties of country have, indeed, an intrinsic

sacredness. It is God who has disposed men into nations, and the bonds that unite a Christian with his countrymen may not lawfully be severed by him on the ground of their alienation from Christ. He is bound, moreover, wherever he may dwell, to concur heartily in all endeavors for the securing of justice at home and for the repelling of encroachments from abroad. Nevertheless, when the moral personality of a commonwealth estranges itself incurably from Christ, and makes principles irreconcilable with the gospel the basis of its administration, the relation of a Christian man to it must, from the nature of things, become thereby something casual and external. The true citizenship of a man redeemed by Christ is in the kingdom of redemption; and if the land where he dwells refuses to be included in this he ceases to be, in the fullest sense, a citizen of it, and becomes rather a stranger and sojourner. Therefore it behoves us to put forth the most vigorous efforts to counteract the endeavors that are making to detach our country from the Christian basis, for should they be successful we lose our country. The hearty and unreserved allegiance which we have hitherto been able to pay it rests upon the fact that it is a part of Christendom. Should it cease to be this it could no longer be to us what it was before. Therefore let us guard its Christian character, for its most vital interests and ours and those of our remotest posterity are bound up in this.

We are in this country happy in this, that among us it is well understood that it is no part of the duty of a Christian state, in this century, to advance the interests of devotional piety, or to concern itself particularly about the workings of ecclesiastical machinery. The relative importance of merely ecclesiastical affairs diminishes with every advance of Christian morality within the state. Nor is it particularly important that there should be any formal acknowledgment of Christianity by the state. Nor can it be tolerated that there should be the faintest disposition to revert to the policy of the Middle Ages, and to make men's civil rights dependent

upon their religious profession. Let the children of this world have their full rights in the management of this world. But, on the other hand, a Christian who is not resolutely bent, in his quality of citizen, on working towards the regulation of all the public institutions of the state on Christian principles, such public matters as jurisprudence in general, the punishment and prevention of crime, the care of the infirm, education, marriage, political economy; a citizen who, calling himself a Christian, allows himself to be bluffed off from the resolute application of Christian rules of judgment and principles of proceeding to this whole range of subjects, who allows himself, as a Christian, to be contemptuously remanded to the church and Sunday-school and prayer-meeting, as if the Christian religion was merely a devotional rapture or sentimental frame, such a man has hardly learned what Christianity is.

This is a practical matter; for on every hand, in Europe and America, we hear of efforts making to bring Christendom back upon the basis of heathenism by the enactment of laws whose justification is only to be found in the heathen view of life. Thus, besides the shameful laxity of the laws of divorce, which disgraces almost every American state, and increases rather than diminishes, we even read bold justifications, or more covert defences, of cruelties and abominations of the ancient heathenism which long ages back were abolished by the advance of the gospel. One unsexed female physician, for instance, will insinuate her approbation of the heathen practice of exposing feeble and deformed infants. Another will defend that very polygamy which degrades her sex and disgraces our land. An eminent writer will sneer at the institutions for the care of the blind, the deaf, the lunatic, the feeble-minded, as the fruit of a maudlin benevolence, hurtful to posterity, and intolerably burdensome to the present, and uphold the restoration of the heathen hard-heartedness and cruelty towards these our afflicted brethren; as if the conduct of the brutes which, incapable of any proper sense of fellowship, follow a wisely-implanted instinct in

goring to death the weaker of the herd, were not a point from which Christian mankind had risen, but a height from which it had sunk, and to which it ought to climb back. Others tell us, and show plainly that they mean it, that society will never be rationally constituted until it is lifted off from the Christian theory of equal love of our neighbor, and re-organized on the avowed basis of supreme individual selfishness. Others tell us that atheistic communism is the legitimate child of the gospel, and insinuate that the only way to uproot it is to deny the obligation of society to care for the subsistence and the primary education of its poorer members. Their ideal is evidently to be found in those Asiatic realms, where thousands or millions may perish by famine while the nobles and the prince luxuriate in abundance without any thought of a common tie between the two. Others, in the name of brotherhood, would crush all individual rights and relations into one hideous conglomeration. But there is no end to those locusts of the pit which are overspreading the earth. and which, unless divinely restrained, bid fair to destroy every green thing. As a beloved teacher once said, they call themselves progressives, but their true name is destructives; and they have over them a king whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Now the centre around which we are to rally, as the various tides of hellishness sweep over the earth, is that holy communion in which our Lord and King, both God and man, the Revealer and Interpreter of the Father and of his redeeming purpose, sits enthroned. In Christ, as Pascal well says, all contradictions are reconciled. In the severe equipoise of that central personality all noble souls and righteous movements, after whatever aberrations, find their true centre of rest. And if, while we claim the right to govern our private affections and our personal conduct according to Christ, we allow ourselves, as respects matters of social and national concern, to be ashamed or frightened by taunts of illiberality or unprogressiveness or fanaticism out of the steady con-

fession that our purpose is to establish Christ as the centre and director of them, as well as of individual relations, we show ourselves to be of those concerning whom our Lord says, "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." It is ridiculous to talk of having to bear one's cross in the midst of the warm sympathy of Christian assemblies; here, in these fields of contest, with a gradually gathering intensity of opposition to the Son of man and his rule, is the cross really to be borne.

It is true that in the application of these principles of conduct there may be, as there has often been, a rash and heady fanaticism or a detestable intolerance. In the calmness and reasonableness of Christ there is neither fanaticism nor intolerance. The world may be dragooned into obsequiousness or hypocrisy, but it cannot be dragooned into a truly regenerate mind. The Christian position which we are bound to take, in public as in private affairs, respects not what we are to compel others to do, but what we are to do ourselves. And it is not those supramundane realities on which our activities rest that it concerns us to press into the foreground, but those moral perceptions out of which institutions rise, and which, under the elevating influence of the Christian church, come to be shared by many who will not enrol themselves within her communion. So far as they will work with us that word of Christ applies, "He that is not against us, is on our part." Where they will not accompany us we must take leave of them with regret, but without reproach. But it is plain that all institutions must, in the last analysis, rest upon some theory of life and of the universe, and that within Christendom this theory cannot, in the final issue, be simply unchristian, but must be either Christian or antichristian. It is certain that Jesus Christ claims unequivocal control over inward affections, over personal conduct, over society, over nations, and over all man-

kind. "All power," says he, "is given to me in heaven and earth." If we submit ourselves to this allegiance it must, expressly or impliedly, be with us at every point and in our treatment of every interest. We can acknowledge no enactment as binding and no authority as legitimate which contravenes it. God in Christ having supreme authority everywhere can alone give validity to authority anywhere. Fanatical, seditious, anarchical, this doctrine may be called, as it has often been called before. Fanatical, seditious, and anarchical in many of the forms of which it is capable it has often been, and may be again. But that the doctrine itself, independently of all alloy, is fundamentally involved in the claims of Christ I think few men, believers or unbelievers, can easily dispute. The doctrine of Peter before the sanhedrim is still the doctrine of all who are really in the communion of the apostles and of their Lord: "We ought to obey God rather than men." And he who imagines this declaration to have force only in reference to the preaching of the Messiahship of Jesus or the question of offering sacrifice to Jupiter has a strangely petty notion of the scope and application of the gospel of God.

We must recollect, moreover, that the kingdom of Christ, in its special sense, rests upon the general principles of justice and good government which commend themselves to the common sense of mankind independently, in a greater or less degree, of their religious development. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." "Truth," says a father of the church, "by whomsoever uttered," and we may equally say right-doing by whomsoever followed, "is of the Holy Ghost." Every effort, therefore, to improve and purify the course of civil administration; to mitigate the violence of party; to elevate the standard of character required in candidates for high office; to test patiently all legislation, and yield so far to the necessity of keeping it within practicable reach of the multitude as experience admonishes, — all such endeavors, whatever the religious position of those who are devoted to them, are directly in the line of the advance-

ment of Christ's kingdom ; for they broaden and strengthen those general foundations of justice and right reason on which that kingdom rests. And it is worthy of note that it is only within Christendom that efforts for civil reform are seriously made or have any reasonable prospect of success.

Take Russia, one of the corruptest of Christian states, and compare it with China, perhaps the best administered of heathen ones, in which it is computed that three-quarters of all the revenues cling to the fingers of those who gather them, and we see the difference; for I do not hear accusations of this monstrous peculation advanced against Russia. Now, are we to say that the efforts making to perfect and purify the channels of administration and to raise the tone of public life are not among the workings of God through men to redeem the world of his creation? Such efforts, indeed, react to ennoble every individual character within the commonwealth. Rectitude of principle and conduct, public or private, is not alien to the grace of God, but is its appropriate vehicle and receptacle.

We are, therefore, no sufficient instruments of God's redeeming work if we stop with a concern for individual and social religion and morality while we suffer the great fabric of our civil polity to be debauched, suffer cunning and low-minded politicians to build their foul nests of private gain upon the majestic pillars which uphold the order of our national life, and to turn to their own advantage even that sacred franchise by which freemen suppose themselves to be serving the good of their country, when yet they so often are only helping to fatten the vultures that prey upon it.

He, therefore, who before the altar vows his allegiance to Christ vows his allegiance to him as much in this respect as every other, nor can he be any more excused for allowing the shackles of slavish and unremonstrating partisanship than for allowing the shackles of drunkenness or debauchery to clog his limbs, or hamper his activity in dealing blows at evil wherever he may see it. The servant of Christ is to be equally the sworn foe of Satan wherever he may discern

him, in his heart, in his life, in his neighborhood, in the church, in the capitol, in the custom-house, in the polling-booth, in his native land, or, so far as his indirecter influence can reach, in London or Vienna or St. Petersburg, and from the equator to the pole. Public morality is helped by private rectitude, and strengthens it in turn. Both are powerfully assisted by religious faith, and react most strengtheningly and helpfully on it. And the more perfectly the relations and inter-dependencies of earth are regenerated according to the mind of God, the more completely will earth become the nursery of heaven. And behind all, working to this end, is the invisible and silent, but unceasing and effectual, activity of him into whose hand all nations are given, and who shall at the last bring them all into the confederation of a holy brotherhood, beginning below but continuing above, the son of David, the son of Abraham, but greater than David and greater than Abraham, the heavenly Melchisedec, first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that, and resulting from that, King of Salem, that is King of eternal peace.