

# PART FIRST

## THE RUDIMENTS OF THE WORLD

### CHAPTER VI

#### THE PRESENT WORLD IN RELATION TO THE WORLD TO COME.

God the builder of all things—Nothing elaborated by chance, but all things the result of divine premeditation—Whatever exists He created for His own pleasure and glory—The purpose of God in the work of creation and providence, revealed in the scriptures—The present order of things merely provisional—The economy of the fulness of appointed times the true “Intermediate State” of a thousand years duration—The tower of Babel builders, peace-men, and socialists—The principle upon which men attain to the angelic nature, and dignity, defined—God’s two-fold purpose in the foundation of the world stated—The means by which it is accomplishing—Dissertation on the Elohim.

AMONG the many and various titles of the Supreme Being in the scriptures of truth, is that of a Builder, or Architect; as it is written, “the BUILDER of all things is God”. Pursuing this suggestion, I remark, that “a wise master builder” never begins to build without a *design*. He draughts this after a scale of so much to the foot. This is the extension, or *time*, so to speak, of the building, or edifice, to be erected. Having well considered the whole, he concludes that it is the best possible plan that can be devised in harmony with the rules and principles of architecture. The plan then becomes his “purpose”, his “fore-ordination”, “predestination”, or design. All subsequent arrangements are made to conform to this recorded purpose, because it is the very best his most deliberate wisdom and ingenuity could devise; and no extraneous suggestions, or considerations, will cause him to diverge in the smallest iota from his predestination.

The next thing the Builder does is to collect together all the necessary materials, whether of brick, stone, lime, sand, wood, or aught else that may be needed. If a spectator desired to know what all these crude matters were heaped up together in one place for, the architect would reveal to him “*the mystery of his will which he had purposed in himself*”, by submitting the draught of his plan, in all its lines, circles, angles, etc.; and he would describe to him such an arrangement of the materials as would impress the spectator’s mind with an image of the edifice, though it would fall infinitely short of the reality when perfected.

If we suppose the edifice, call it temple, or palace, to be now finished, the architect would next order the rubbish, or materials which were left as unfit to work into the building, and therefor worthless, such as broken brick, splinters, shavings, sand, and so forth, to be cast out to be trodden

under foot, to burn, etc. Thus the edifice is built out of the accumulated materials, according to the outline of the draught, or purpose of the Builder; and the work is done.

Now, as the scripture saith, the Great Builder of the heavens and earth is God. “His hand hath laid the foundations of the earth, and his right hand hath spanned the heavens.” The Builder of all things either left the elements of the world to a random and accidental aggroupment, or, He “ordered them in all things”. Where is the man among “philosophers” who will stultify, or idiotize himself by saying that the Creator permitted chance to elaborate the terrestrial system? The thing is absurd. Chance is defined to be the *cause* of fortuitous, or accidental events. What is that cause? The fool says in his heart it is not God. Why does he say so? Because he would make the cause of all things, a mere physical disposition in matter, destitute of all intellectual and moral attributes, *in order that he may get rid of all responsibility to such a Being*. He hates truth, righteousness, and holiness, and therefore he vainly strives to persuade himself that there is no God of a truthful, righteous, and holy character.

But no man of any pretensions to sound mind would affirm this. Nothing has been elaborated by chance. The scriptures declare that everything was measured, meted out, and weighed; and that the Spirit of the Lord executed His work without any to counsel or instruct Him. As it is written, “He has *measured* the waters in the hollow of his hand, and *meted out* heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth *in a measure*, and *weighed* the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?”

God, then, had in His own mind a pattern, or design, of all the work that was before him, before He uttered a word, or His spirit began to move. This design, or archetype, which placed the beginning and the end of all things before Him in one panoramic view, was constructed in harmony with the principles—the eternal principles of His vast, unbounded realm; which coincide with the immutable attributes of His character. The work He was about to execute was for His own pleasure; as, saith the scripture, “Thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are, and were created”. But, when the work is finished, which, for His own pleasure, God labours to elaborate, *what will it consist in?*

This inquiry we make as the spectators of the wonders of creation, providence, and redemption. We behold the materials of these departments of Eternal Wisdom, and we ask to what are all things tending? What temple, or edifice, is the Divine Architect raising for His own pleasure and glory? If we turn our thoughts within us, there is no voice there which unfolds the philosophy of His doing; if we soar into the heavens, or descend into the sea; if we search through the high places of the earth—we find no answer; for “Who hath known the mind of the Lord, who hath been his counsellor, or who hath instructed him?” If we would ascertain what God designs to elaborate out of the past, the present, and the future, we must be content to assume the attitude of listeners, that He may reveal to us from His own lips what He intends to evolve in the consummation of His plans.

God, then, has caused a book to be written for our information as to His design—His ultimate purpose in the works of creation, providence, and redemption, which are the three grand divisions of His labour; and which are all tending to the development of one great and glorious consummation. This Book, so graciously bestowed, and so inimitably written, is vernacularly styled THE BIBLE (ὁ βιβλος); or, scripturally, THE WRITINGS (αἱ γραφαί) and sometimes THE HOLY WRITINGS. These are divided into two parts, popularly styled the Old and New Testaments. The appeals made by Jesus and his apostles to the writings were to what is now termed the Old Testament; for there were no other

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writings acknowledged then. The New Testament was not written in the beginning of the apostolic era. Indeed it was not so much needed then; for the apostles taught orally the things, which afterwards they in part committed to writing. The breathings of the spirit, enunciated through the spiritual men of the churches, supplied the place which the New Testament now occupies. The writings of the prophets, which are the root and foundation of the New Testament, and without the understanding of which the latter is unintelligible aright, are divided into “the law and the testimony”; or “the law, the prophets, and the psalms”; altogether they are styled THE WORD. This, with “the testimony for Jesus” left on record by the apostles, makes the “*word of the Lord*” to us, which lives and abides for ever.

All writers and speakers must be unceremoniously tried by this; for, God hath said, that “if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”. It matters not who the sinner may be; pope, cardinal, archbishop, bishop, minister, or their admirers; or, even one of the saints of God, or an angel himself; nothing he may say, or write, must be received unless in strict conformity to this word; and of this the people must judge for themselves upon their own responsibility; and in the face of their eternal weal, or rejection from the Kingdom of God. To this Book, then, we appeal for light—for information concerning the things which shall be hereafter.

If we take up an ordinary book, how could we proceed to ascertain the end the author had in writing his book? We should read it through carefully, and thus having made ourselves acquainted with its contents, we should be prepared to answer the question intelligently and accurately. *Why do men not do so with the Bible?* God is admitted by all sensible persons to be the author; Moses, the apostles, and the prophets, are but His amanuenses to whom He dictated what to write. If then the questions be put, what end had God in view in the six day’s work of the creation? in His subsequent providential arrangements in relation to men and nations? and in the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lamb of God?—we proceed in the same way with the Bible in which He tells His own story; and answer according to the light we may have acquired.

Now the Book of God is peculiar in this—it narrates the past, the present, and the *future* all in one volume. We learn from the accuracy of its details in relation to the past and the present, to put unbounded confidence in its declaration concerning the future. In ascertaining, therefore, the ultimate design of eternal wisdom in the creation of all things, we turn to the end of the Bible to see what God hath said *shall be* as the consummation of what has gone before; for what He has said *shall be the permanent constitution of things, must be the end which He originally designed before ever the foundation of the earth was laid.*

Turn we then, to the last two chapters of the Book of God. What do we learn from these? We learn from them, that there is to be a great physical and moral renovation of the earth. That every curse is to cease from off the globe; and that it is to be peopled with men who will be deathless, and free from all evil. That they will all then be the sons of God, a community of glorious, honourable, incorruptible, and living beings; who will constitute the abode of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, the glory of whose presence will evolve a brilliancy surpassing the splendour of the sun. *The globe a glorious dwelling place, and its inhabitants an immortal and glorious people, with the indwelling presence of the Eternal Himself*—is the consummation which God reveals as the answer to the question concerning His ultimate design. The following testimonies will prove it:

“The inheritance of the saints in light”. “An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven”—“I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth, and *there was no more sea.* And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part First Chapter 6. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them, their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things (or the “heaven and earth” in which they existed) are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new, And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done; I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son”; “and there shall be no more curse”.

Now, *the creating of all things new* implies that the constitution of things which precedes the new creation was *an old system*, that had answered the end for which it was arranged in the first instance. This old system, styled by John “the former heaven and earth”, is manifestly the system of the world based upon the six days’ creation; for “the former things” which had passed away in the vision were the sea, death, sorrow, sin, the curse, and all their correlates. This old creation, with its temporary mediatorial constitution, then, is but a grand system of means, elementary of a still grander and inconceivably more magnificent creation, which will be of an unchangeable and eternal constitution. The old Mosaic physical heavens and earth are to the new creation as the accumulated materials of a building are to the edifice about to be built: and hold the same relation to the new heavens, as the natural system does to the spiritual. We repeat, then, that the creation of the six days, which we have termed Mosaic, because Moses records their generations, was not a finality; but simply the beginning, or ground-work of things, when God commenced the execution of His purpose which He had arranged; the *ultimatum* of which was, to elaborate BY TRUTH AND JUDGMENT, as His instrumentality, a world of intelligent beings, who should become the glorious and immortal population of the globe, under an immutable and eternal constitution of things.

Such is the superlative of the matter. The physical creation of the six days is positive; there was *an ulterior*, however, as well as *an ultimate* purpose in the work. The ulterior is the comparative; the ultimate, the transcendent excellency of the design. The Almighty Builder of all things intended not to translate the whole human race from a state of sin and death at once into a state of unmingled good and glory. He foresaw that the living race would never be fit for this; but that they must be previously disciplined and prepared for the transition. Hence, he proposed to develop an INTERMEDIATE STATE *upon the earth*, and among the nations of mortal men contemporary with it; in which, good and evil would still be commingled, but differing from the preceding state (the present) in this, that, though evil would continue to be, sin should not have dominion over the world, but be dethroned by righteousness. We have styled this state *intermediate*, because it is designed to occupy *a middle place between* the present times of the Gentiles, and the unchangeable constitution of the globe, when there will be “no more sea”, and all men will be immortal.

This ulterior, but not ultimate, constitution of things is alluded to in these words: “God *hath made known* unto us the Mystery of his will, which he hath purposed in himself according to his good pleasure: that in the dispensation of the fulness of the times appointed (εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν χαρισμάτων) he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in the heavens, and the things upon the earth, in him” This elliptical allusion to the revelation of God’s will, or purpose, is strikingly interpreted by the following passages from the word. “The Iron Kingdom (the Roman) shall be divided into ten kingdoms. And in their days shall the God of heaven set up A KINGDOM, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it

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shall break in pieces and consume all these, kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” They shall become “like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the tempest shall carry them away, that no place shall be found for them: and the stone (or power) that shall smite them shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth”.

“There shall be given to the Son of Man dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, may serve him; his dominion is an EVERLASTING DOMINION which shall not pass away, and his kingdom shall not be destroyed, and all dominions, or rulers, shall serve and obey him.”

“The Lord,” Jesus, “shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his Name one.”

“The Lord of Hosts,” Jesus, “shall reign on Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” “I, Jesus, was born that I might be a King.”

“The righteous dead shall live again:

A thousand years with Christ to reign.”

“The nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into scythes: nation shall not hit up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

From these testimonies, it is manifest to all minds, unspoiled by a “vain and deceitful philosophy”, that, in the Economy of the Future Age, all kingdoms, states, and empires; and all people, nations, and languages, are to be gathered together into one dominion under Jesus Christ. These are the “things in the heavens”, and the “things on the earth”, which, grouped together into one imperial dominion, will constitute an economy of things that will be wonderful and glorious. We see, then, what God hath declared *shall be*—an IMPERIO-REGAL HIERARCHY OF IMMORTALS, *which, UNDER ONE CHIEF, shall possess all power and authority over subject nations in the flesh.* By such a constitution of things as this upon the globe for 1,000 years, the human race will have furnished from the foundation of the world a sufficient multitude of righteous men to people the earth when there shall be “no more sea”. Till this economy begins, the previous 6,000 years will have furnished scope sufficient to obtain an adequate number of kings and priests from Israel and the nations for the kingdom of the Future Age.

After this exhibition who will lack the ability to answer the question—Why hath God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth; and determined the previously-appointed times; and the bounds of their habitation? The answer is, He created a human pair and subjected them to the law of procreation, that they might so multiply as to refill the earth; He divided their posterity into nations by the confusion of tongues; determined the times of their self-dominion; and set limits to their territorial extension—that, in the fulness of time, the materials of A KINGDOM AND EMPIRE OF NATIONS might exist, which He would confer upon a king, and such other regal associates as in His own good and sovereign pleasure He should think proper to appoint.

The segregation of mankind into nations, then, is not accidental, or the result of mere human policy. It is a divine appointment. Human wisdom was opposed to it in the beginning; and if Socialists, Peace Societies, and such like, could carry out their schemes, they would commingle the

nations into one indiscriminate “universal brotherhood”, and abolish all times and bounds of habitation.

The projectors of the city and tower of Babel announced in their programme that the enterprise was intended to secure to the patrons of the scheme “*a Name*”; and to prevent them from being “scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth”. They were opposed to nationalization; they preferred a *fraternal communism*, and proceeded to build a temple of social fraternity for all mankind. But God and His purposes were in none of their thoughts. They were concocting schemes utterly subversive of them; therefore He interfered, saying, “Behold, the *people is one*, and they have all one language; and this they *begin* to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon all the face of the earth: and they left off to build the city”.

The development of this imperio-regal constitution of nations is the one grand idea of the divine writings. It is the subject matter of the gospel of the kingdom and peace of God. All other divine arrangements centre in this as the great focal truth of human redemption and terrestrial regeneration. The needle is not more true to the pole, nor planetary attraction to the sun’s centre, than are the things of the prophets and apostles to this idea of an Israelitish kingdom and empire of nations. To lose sight of this is to remain in hopeless ignorance of the faith and hope, which God has graciously set before us in His word; and to lay ourselves open to every species of delusion that the carnal mind, so fertile of evil fruits, may enunciate in opposition to the “mystery of the divine will”.

Enlightened by the scriptures of truth, we are enabled to discern that the present system of the world is but the aggregate of the means through which God purposes to accomplish *two grand developments*—the one *near*; and the other a *thousand years more remote*. The creation of the six days, and the peopling of the earth with nations of mortal men, is the mere preparation and collection together of the raw materials for a great, glorious, and magnificent display of wonders upon the earth. Hitherto, these materials have been shaped, or reduced, from chaos into form, by the *modifying influence of truth and divine judgment*. But for these agencies “a universal brotherhood” of savages, such as we behold in the vast howling wilderness of Africa and America, would have shared the globe with the nobler beasts of the forest; unmitigated socialism after this type would have effectually super-sealed all ecclesiastical and civil association; or, if this extreme had given place to another, the world would have groaned under the ferocious despotism of a “brother of the sun and moon”, a Nero, or of a Pope Alexander VI.

But truth and the sword of God have been thrown into the scale of human events. Multitudes have embraced that truth in whole or part; vastly more, however, in part than as a saving whole. According to their apprehensions of it, they have resolved themselves into party groups. A minority—a great minority, so great as to be styled “*a few*”, have seized upon it in letter and spirit. These contend against everything opposed to it without regard to fame, property, or life; they contend, however, not with the sword of the flesh, but with “the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God”. Not so, however, they who embrace it in part, corrupt it by admixture with human tradition, or reject it altogether. They fight for their opinions, as their means enable them. They who corrupt or reject it endeavour to suppress it *vi et armis*, by force, not of argument, but by clamour, misrepresentation, and proscriptive laws; and where they can find no scope, by imprisonment, war, and murder.

But there are others who understand the theory of the truth to a considerable extent, but have only that spirit of liberty and sense of justice in them which the truth inspires; without that disposition to suffer patiently and unresistingly for it, which it inculcates. Men of this class take the sword for liberty and the rights of men; and contend against all who would destroy them with a courage which strikes terror into their enemies. By such agency as this, by action and re-action, by agitating the truth revealed, and the warlike conflict it produces among the nations, things have been shaped into the civil, ecclesiastical, and social constitution of things, which prevails upon the earth in the present age; and which, having waxed old, is ready to vanish away.

In view of these things we come upon a very interesting, and indeed, immensely important enquiry, namely: “Upon what principle, or principles, did the God of heaven propose to carry out His purposes in relation to the developing of rulers for the kingdom and empire of nations; and for the peopling of the globe under its eternal and incorruptible constitution?” Was it upon a purely intellectual, or a purely moral, or a purely physical and mechanical, principle; or was it upon all these conjoined? For example, He peopled the present world by first creating a human pair, and then placing them under the natural, or physical, laws. Will he provide kings and priests for His kingdom, and afterwards people the globe in its perfect constitution, by natural generation, and physical regeneration; or, upon some other principle revealed in His word? Will He bestow the honour, glory, and dignity of His kingdom and empire upon men, because they are men; or because they are descended by natural birth from righteous ancestors? Or, will men inhabit the globe for ever, because they are flesh, and the offspring of His creative power?

It will doubtless be admitted, that upon whatever principle God might determine to operate, it would certainly be such a one as would redound most to the glory of His wisdom, justice, and sovereign power. This being conceded, we would enquire, would it have been to the glory of God, if He had made man a mere machine?—had He made *inexorable necessity* the law of his nature, which he must yield to as the tides to the moon, or the earth to the sun? No reasonable man would affirm this. The principle laid down in the scripture is that MAN HONOURS GOD IN BELIEVING HIS WORD AND OBEYING HIS LAWS. There is no other way in which men can honour their Creator. This honour, however, consists not in a mechanical obedience; in mere action without intelligence and volition, such as matter yields to the natural laws; but in an enlightened, hearty, and voluntary obedience, while the individual possesses the power not to obey if he think best. There is no honour, or glory, to God as a moral being, in the falling of a stone towards the earth’s centre. The stone obeys the law of gravitation *involuntarily*. The obedience of man would have been similar had God created and placed him under a physical law, which should have necessitated his movements, as gravitation doth the stone.

Does a man feel honoured, or glorified, by the compulsory obedience of a slave? Certainly not; and for the simple reason, that it is involuntary, or forced. But, let a man by his excellencies command the willing services of free men—of men who can do their own will and pleasure; yet voluntarily obey him, and, if he required it, are prepared to sacrifice their lives, fortunes, and estates, and all for the love they bear him; would not such a man esteem himself honoured, and glorified, in the highest degree by such signal conformity to his will? Unquestionably; and such is the honour and glory which God requires of men. Had He required a necessitated obedience, He would have secured His purpose effectually by at once filling the earth with a population of adults, so intellectually organized as to be incapable of a will adverse to His own—who should have obeyed Him as wheels do the piston rod and steam by which they are moved—the mere automata of a miraculous creation.

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But, saith an objector, this principle of the *enlightened voluntary obedience of a free agent* is incompatible with benevolence; it would have prevented all the misery and suffering which have afflicted the world, if the globe had been filled at once with a sufficient number of inhabitants, who should all of them have been created perfect.

If the character of the All-wise were constituted of one attribute only, this might have been the case. But God is the sovereign of the universe, as well as kind and merciful; and all His intelligent creatures are bound to be in harmony with His name. He might have operated on the objector's principle had it pleased Him; but it did not; for He has pursued the directly opposite course. Instead of creating a human pair, He could, indeed, have filled the earth with mortals, and left them blessed for ever. But then they would have been without character, neither virtuous nor vicious; and, like themselves, their world would have been without a history. God is not merely an intellectual, He is also a moral, being. "The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God"; yet "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of *them that hate me*; and showing mercy unto thousands of *them that love me, and keep my commandments*".

Such is the name, or character, of God; hence, as all His works must glorify Him, they must redound to His praise as a merciful and gracious, a just, holy, and truthful, being. The sun at noon-day, the moon walking in brightness, and the stars in their courses, illustrate His eternal power and superhumanity; but it is only His relations with intellectual and morally constituted creatures—the image and likeness of Himself—that can illustrate His moral glory, and redound to the honour of His name.

Seeing that God had rejected the principle of *stern necessity and immediate physical perfection*, there remained but one other, according to which He could officer His kingdom and empire; and at length fill the globe with an order of beings "equal to the angels". Upon this principle He has worked from the foundation of the world to this day. He made man a reasonable creature, and capable of being acted on by motive, either for weal or woe. He placed him under a law, which required *belief of God's word and obedience*. He could obey, or disobey, as he pleased; he was "free to stand and free to fall". He disbelieved God's word; he believed a he, and sinned. Here was voluntary disobedience; hence, the opposite to this is made the principle of life namely, belief of *whatsoever* God saith, and voluntary obedience to His law. This is the principle to which the world is reprobate; and to a conformity with which all men are invited, and urged by the motives presented in the scriptures; even all who would inherit the kingdom of God, and afterwards inhabit the earth for ever, on an equal footing with the angels of the universe.

The following testimonies will elucidate the principle of the divine economy. "I will give *unto him that is athirst* of the fountain of the water of life freely; and *he that overcometh* shall inherit all things;"—"Blessed are they that *do his commandments* that they *may have right* to the Tree of Life, and that they may enter through the gates into the city";—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God";—"He shall not be hurt by the second death";—"To him that overcometh and *keepeth my works to the end*, I will give POWER OVER ALL NATIONS: and he shall RULE THEM with a rod of iron";—"If thou doest well thou shalt be accepted";—"These things are written that ye may believe, and that *believing* ye may have LIFE *through his name*";—"As many as received Jesus, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *to them that believe on his name*, which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but which are born of God";—"Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot

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enter into the kingdom of God”;—“He that believes the gospel and is baptized shall be saved”;—“God will render to every man *according to his deeds*; to them, who *by patient continuance in well doing* SEEK FOR glory, honour, and immortality—ETERNAL LIFE”.

But of testimonies there is no end. The law of the Lord is perfect, and *without a single exception*. There are no “perhapses”, or “maybes”; it is not “yea and nay, but Amen in Christ Jesus”. The only way to the kingdom of God, and to a participation in the eternal constitution of the world, is in the path of a faithful obedience to the law of God.

Now from these testimonies it is plain, that to attain the rank of the sons of God in the eternal world—where, indeed, all are sons without exception—human beings, without respect to age, sex, or condition, must *believe and obey the truth*; for “without faith it is impossible to please God”. This rule provides for no exceptions; but declares the principle without qualification. If faith then be required, it is manifest that God designed to move men *by motive*, not by necessity—but *by intellectual and moral considerations*.

Now the carrying out of this principle necessarily involves great loss of human, or animal life; for if virtue be the subject of reward, vice must also be of punishment. Because, if vice were unrestrained, it would gain the ascendancy; eradicate virtue from among men as before the flood; and defeat the principle upon which it is proposed to effectuate the work, and thus destroy the original design.

The mere fact of dust, by the power of God expressed in creation and the physical laws, assuming the form of men, does not, therefore, entitle them to the glory of the Future Ages; or expose them to the alternative of damnation in eternal death. These are doctrines predicated upon a *moral*, not a physical constitution of things. The destiny of the animal world, and that of men, is physically the same; they are all under God’s physical laws, and consequently have “no pre-eminence” the one over the other. Man differs from other animals, as these differ from one another; and if his *race* attain to the angelic nature, which God designs it shall, it will not be because it is human, but because it is *voluntarily obedient to His laws*.

The peopling of the Future World upon this principle we have proved from the Word. It is a principle which annihilates all human sophisms and traditions about “the salvation of all mankind”; the “predestination of some to salvation, and of others to damnation by a stern, inexorable necessity”; “physical regeneration before death”; “the disembodied existence of immortal souls in heaven or hell for ages before the resurrection”; the “damnation and salvation of infants, idiots, and pagans”; “purification by death and resurrection without previous remission”—and much more unscriptural, irrational, and absurd jargon of the schools and systems of the age.

Universalism, a wide-spreading upas in the world, which teaches that all human beings, of whatever age or character, shall dwell with God eternally, is based upon a mistaken notion of God’s purpose in the formation of the animal world. It is assumed by that shallow system of speculative theology that His intention was “the greatest possible good to the whole creation”. This certainly was not His design; for the principle I have demonstrated is utterly subversive of it. The *voluntary obedience of free men* implies the possibility, as well as the probability, of their *voluntary disobedience* predicted upon the known capriciousness of human nature. Now, as the very existence of God upon His throne depends upon the suppression, and therefore punishment, of sin (which is sorrow and pain so long as life lasts), the greatest possible good to *all* men, in the universal sense of the word, was no part of His design, being incompatible with the principle and end in view. “The

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greatest possible good of the whole creation”, then, being no part of His purpose, it is a mere conceit, the idea that God wills the immortalization and glorification of every member of the human family. He has purposed no such thing. His design requires only *the separation from the nations of a sufficient number of men and women to occupy the globe when constituted on an eternal basis, without sea, be that many or few.*

“What a paltry, contemptible few”, exclaims one, “compared with the immense mass of human flesh and blood which will have existed on the earth for 7,000 years!” Granted; but what is needed more than a sufficient population for the renovated earth? If this immense mass of corruption and sin, living and dead, had listened to the voice of reason, if it would have believed God and obeyed Him, an adequate provision would have been made for them; but they would not, and the consequences inevitably follow. The principle is an eternal one. It is persistent as God Himself; a principle without an exception, and as uncompromising as the truth.

The case of the thief on the cross only establishes the rule. He believed in the kingdom of God, and acknowledged Jesus while in his lowest estate as “King of the Jews”, and therefore future monarch of the nation. He was *by constitution* one of “the children of the kingdom, though he had proved himself a very disreputable citizen. It was only necessary in his case that his faith and change of mind and disposition should be counted to him for repentance and remission of sins; for without this he could not enter the kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus, who then alone upon the earth had power to forgive sins, granted his petition, and so constituted him an heir of the righteousness which is by faith in the gospel of the kingdom. The case of the thief was unique, and one to which there has been none like, before or since.

It is proved, that the revealed mystery of God’s will, which He has purposed in His own mind, is first *to found a kingdom and empire of nations, which He will bestow on the crucified and resurrected King of the Jews, and upon all those who believe the doctrine, or word, concerning it, and become obedient to the faith;* and secondly, at the end of 7,000 years from the foundation of the world, *to renovate the globe, and to people it with immortal men “equal to the angels”, who shall all have attained to the eternal state and to the possession of all its transcendent glories, on the principle of believing His “exceeding great and precious promises”, and of lovingly and voluntarily obeying His laws.*

Behold, then, the conclusion of the matter. There are two systems, or worlds—the one the animal and natural; the other the spiritual and incorruptible; and between these a mixed state, being partly animal and partly spiritual, which may be termed *the transition state.* Out of the natural system, as the materials and scaffolding of the building, God purposes to elaborate “the ages of the ages” with all that shall pertain to them. Thus constituted, the globe will become a glorious province of the universe, and a new imperial abode of the Divine Majesty. It will then be a sealess and luminous sphere, and peopled with myriads of inhabitants of equal rank and station with the angels of God.

The means by which, from the beginning, He determined to accomplish this magnificent work, were, first, by His creative energy to lay the foundation; secondly, by constitutional arrangement and angelic oversight, which men term “providence”, to shape and overrule all things, so as to work out the end proposed; thirdly, by the moral force of truth, argued and attested; fourthly, by judicial interference in human affairs; and lastly, by re-creative energy in the renovation of the earth. When the gigantic work is perfected, the edifice will be complete; and the top stone imposed with joyous acclamations, saying, “Grace! grace unto it!”

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## DISSERTATION ON THE ELOHIM.

The principles of universal grammar require in general that a “*verb agree with its nominative in number and person*”; as, the spirit moves, the waters roar. Here *the spirit* is of the singular number, and third person; and so is the verb *moves*; hence they agree in number and person: “the waters” is of the third person plural, and so is *roar*; hence they also agree. But in the first chapter of Genesis, this rule appears to be disregarded by the spirit, under whose guidance Moses wrote. In the first verse it reads, *Berayshith bara Elohim, i.e., in the beginning Elohim created*. In this sentence *bara* is the verb in the third person singular, and *Elohim* a noun in the third person plural; so that they do not agree according to the rule. For an agreement to ensure, either the noun should be *Eloah*, or *El*, in the singular, or it should remain as it is in the plural, and the verb should be changed to *barau*; as *barau ELOHIM (they) created*. But it does not stand thus; it reads literally (the) Elohim (he) created.

Speaking of Elohim, Dr. Wilson says “That this noun, which is not unintentionally here joined with the singular verb *bara*, is nevertheless really plural, appears not merely from its termination *im*, but by its being frequently joined with adjectives, pronouns, and verbs in the plural. *Vayyomer Elohim nashah adam betzalmainu, i.e., Elohim said, ‘Let us make man in our image’.*” Mr Parkhurst, in his lexicon under the word *alah*, cites many passages where Elohim is associated with other plurals. Upon close examination there will be found no good reason to question the conclusion, that Elohim is a noun plural, and signifies “*gods*”.

But why the plural Elohim, gods, should have been associated with a singular verb in this chapter, Hebraists have been much perplexed to answer satisfactorily to themselves or others. Grammar failing, they have had recourse to dogmatism to explain the difficulty. Dr. Wilson truly remarks, that “Elohim is not unintentionally here joined with the singular verb”; though in my opinion Messrs. Wilson and Parkhurst have widely mistaken the intention. They imagine that it was intended to reveal a trinity of *persons* in one *essence*, or, as some express it, “society in God”. Dr. Wilson observes that “*Let us make man* is an expression of consultation, and marks a difference in man’s creation from that of other creatures in point of importance. ‘Let us make *man*’ regards the animal nature; ‘in our *image*’, denotes his spiritual nature, which alone could resemble the Deity. ‘Let us make’, *etc.*, ‘in our image, after our likeness.’ Here is the plurality three times expressed, and that in the first person: a manifest agreement with, and proof of, the scriptural doctrine of a *plurality of the Deity*, to which, as God is one in essence, we give the name of *persons*”.

Elohim, “a name”, says Parkhurst, “usually given in the Hebrew scriptures to the ever-blessed Trinity”. He wrote a pamphlet against Dr. Priestley and Mr. Wakefield to prove a plurality of Elohim in Jehovah! If the reader understand who the Elohim are, this will appear an extraordinary instance of learned ignorance and folly. It is equal to undertaking to prove, that there are three princes in one king; or three angels in an archangel. In one thing, however, I agree with him entirely, namely, that a *plurality of agents* is denoted in the Mosaic history of the terrestrial creation. By faith we understand that the spirit, or word, operated in, by, and through them, in the formation of all things terrestrial; but that all these agents were in the divine essence, constituting “society in God”, is too great a camel for my power of deglutition.

A first principle with me in all reasonings upon this subject is, that “There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all” His spiritual family. Another axiom is, that “He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of Lords; who ONLY hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, nor can see”. And Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part First Chapter 6. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

again, “God is spirit”; and He is “incorruptible”. THE INCORRUPTIBLE SPIRIT DWELLING IN LIGHT is the scripture revelation of the undefinable essence of the self-existent Eternal One, who is from everlasting to everlasting, God. What His essence consists in, He has not revealed; He has made known to us His name, or character, which is enough for men to know; but to say that, because He is a spirit, He is therefore “immaterial”, is to speak arrant nonsense; for immateriality is nothingness; a quality, if we may so speak, alien to the universe of God.

“No man”, says Jesus, “hath seen God *at any time*”; but Adam, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, saw the Elohim and their Lord; therefore Elohim does not necessarily mean the Everlasting Father Himself.

Elohim is a name bestowed on *angels* and *orders of men*. It is written, “Worship him, all Elohim”. This is quoted by Paul in the first chapter of Hebrews, as a command of the Everlasting Father to the angels, that they should do homage to the Lord Jesus as His Son, when He shall introduce him into the world again at the opening of the Future Age. It is also written concerning him, “Thou hast made him a little lower than the Elohim” Paul applies this to Jesus, saying, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels”. He continued inferior to them a little upwards of thirty years, from the birth of the flesh to his resurrection; when he was exalted far above them in rank and dignity, even to the “right hand of power”, which is enthroned in light, where dwells the Majesty in the heavens.

Those to whom the word of God came through Moses are styled Elohim, as it is written, “I have said, Ye are Elohim; and all of you children of the Most High; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes”. “Thou shalt not revile the Elohim, nor curse the Ruler of thy people”; that is, thou shalt not revile the magistrates, nor curse the high priest, or king.

Furthermore, it is a well established principle of the sacred writings, that *what the Everlasting Father* does by His agents, He is considered as doing Himself. There is a maxim in law similar to this, which runs somehow thus, *qui facit per alios, facit per se*, what one doth by, or through, others, he does of himself. If this be borne in mind, many seeming incongruities will be harmonized. Thus, *the Lord* is said to have appeared to Abraham, as he sat in his tent-door; but when he first caught sight of the visitant, he did not see the Lord but “three men”, or Elohim, of whom one was the chief. Read the whole chapter and to verse twenty-nine of the next, and it will be seen that the Everlasting God talks and acts by, or through, these Elohim, but chiefly through one of them, styled the Lord God.

In another place, God is said to appear to Jacob, and, in the eleventh verse, to say to him, “I am God Almighty”; and in the thirteenth, “God went up from him in the place where he talked with him”. He was then at Bethel, where formerly “the Elohim were revealed unto him”. On that occasion he dreamed that he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, “the Lord standing above it, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it”. These angels were the Elohim, or “ministering Spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation”. On one occasion, they declared to Jacob the promises made to his father and grandfather in the name of the “Invisible God”; he wrestled with God in wrestling with one of them, etc. Hence, they speak in the first person as personators of the Invisible and Incorruptible Substance, or Spirit, who is the real author of all they say and do.

On a certain occasion, the Invisible God spake to Job out of the whirlwind, and said, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. *Who* hath laid the measures thereof? Declare, if thou knowest. Or, who hath stretched the line upon it? Or, who laid the corner stone thereof: when *the Morning Stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*”

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Job could not answer these questions. He knew, doubtless, what the Elohim had done; but “touching the Almighty”, by whose spirit they operated, “we cannot”, said Elihu, “find him out”. The Elohim were these Morning Stars and Sons of God. Jesus is styled “the Bright and the Morning Star”, “the Day Star”, and the Son of God. To say, therefore, that the Elohim are Morning Stars and Sons of God, is to speak in the language of scripture.

The relation of the Elohim to Him that dwelleth in the Light in the work of creation and providence may better appear by the following illustration. Experimental philosophers can form water, air, and earths; they can bring down lightning from the expanse; they can weigh, or rather calculate the weight of, the sun, moon, and stars; they can speak by electricity; paint by sunlight; and outstrip the wind by fire. These are wonderful combinations of their genius. But what have these they did not receive? And from whom did they receive it? They subject certain substances to certain conditions. They do not originate a single principle. The elements and the laws to which all simple and compound bodies are subject, are independent of the experimenters. They may say, “Let water be formed”; and by passing the electric spark through the gaseous mixture, water will be formed; but it is the power of God that doth it, and not theirs.

After a like manner, the Elohim gave the word; they brought the latent elements of the globe into play; they gave direction and application to power; and the Spirit of the Invisible God accomplished all they were commanded to arrange. The *Spirit* of the Incorruptible God through the Elohim *created* the heavens and the earth. *They* said, “Let there be light”; *they* saw that it was good; *He* made the expanse: *they* called it heaven:—He did it all through them; and they executed by His power what He enjoined. This power, or Spirit, being committed to them, it became “*the Spirit of the Elohim*”. Hence, in the beginning, *the Spirit of the Elohim* created; which being plainly indicated in the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis, needed not afterwards to be repeated; so that throughout the chapter, “Elohim” is written instead of “*the Spirit of the Elohim*”, and is found in connection with a singular verb, not as its nominative, but as the governed word of the nominative singular, *ruach*, Spirit, understood. This is the solution I offer of this grammatical enigma.

It is a part of the “strong delusion” which has supplanted the truth, to suppose that the Invisible God left the throne of the universe on a visit to this region of immensity, where, like a mechanic building a house, He worked in creating the earth and all things therein. After this fashion He is supposed to have made man; and when His mechanism was complete, to have applied His mouth to his nostrils, and “breathed into him a particle of His own divine essence, by which he became a living and immortal soul”.

Such a procedure on the part of the “Only Potentate”, whose abode is in the light, and whose servants, the Elohim, are innumerable, would have been unfitting His dignity and underived exaltation. He has revealed Himself to us as a Potentate, a King, a Lord, etc.; now, they who fill these stations commit to others the service of executing their will and pleasure. And thus it is with the Invisible and Eternal Potentate. His kingdom ruleth over all. His angels, or Elohim, mighty in strength, do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His words. They are His hosts; His ministers, that do His pleasure.

In the light of this revelation I understand the Mosaic record of the creation. It pleased the King Eternal nearly six thousand years ago to add a new habitable province to His dominion; not by an original creation of a globe, but by the re-constitution of one already existing as one of the solar planets. He commanded His angels to go and execute the work according to the order detailed by Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part First Chapter 6. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

Moses. They hearkened unto the voice of His word; and in six days finished all they were commanded to do. But without His power they could have effected nothing: therefore, in the history all things are referred to Him. He willed; the Elohim executed by His Spirit.

All the lower animals are more or less observant; but the Serpent was the most so of all the Lord of the Elohim had made. It noted the objects around it, and among these observed the “*gods*”, or “Morning Stars and Sons of God”, to whom it told Eve she should be like if she ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. In the Hebrew the word rendered “gods” is Elohim, the same as occurs throughout the first chapter. From what other source but the sight of its eyes, unless by divine inspiration, could the serpent have derived information about the “gods”? It spoke of what it had seen and heard. But the animals were still without a king; therefore, said the Chief of the Elohim, “Let *us* make man in *our* image”. There was none like the Elohim of all the creatures they had made; therefore, they determined to make an animal after their *form*. They shaped him with head, limbs and body like their own; so that he stood before them the earthly image of the celestial Elohim. As much their image as Seth was the image of his father Adam.

We have not said that man’s *likeness* to the Elohim consisted in his being “very good”; but that the Spirit of God formed him “very good” in the same sense that it formed all other animals so. They were without character; so was he: his goodness was physical, not moral; that of the Elohim was both.

Yet, in a certain sense, man was formed in the likeness of the Elohim. This likeness, we have already shown, but may repeat here, consisted in the man’s *ability to manifest mental phenomena like theirs; and in his susceptibility of an exaltation to their nature and rank, upon the same principles as they had attained thereto*. By this similitude he was distinguished from all the other animals they had formed. He was constituted like to the Elohim, though of inferior nature. He could manifest intellect and disposition even as they, and he could know evil as they had done.

Dr. Wilson observes that the phrase “‘Let us make man’ is an expression of consultation, and marks a difference in man’s creation from that of other creatures *in point of importance*.” To this I have no objection, and I believe that the “subtle serpent” overheard the consultation, and was, therefore, able to tell Eve that there was a particular in which she should be like the Elohim, *ka-elohim*, by eating the fruit, in which she could not resemble them unless she did eat—viz., in “knowing good *and* EVIL”. In this point, man was unlike the Elohim when pronounced “very good”. Nor was this item of the temptation a falsehood, for the Lord of the Elohim said to His celestial companions, “Behold, the man *hath become AS one of us*, to know good and evil”. In this, then, the man became still more like the Elohim, and in this likeness he hath continued ever since. But thanks to the Invisible God and Father of the saints, man is placed under a law of progression. His prototype has gone before. He was himself made “a little lower than the Elohim”, for he took not upon him *their nature*, but assumed that of the seed of Abraham. His nature, however, is now like theirs, being *spiritual*, that is INCORRUPTIBLE AND IMMORTAL. “We shall be like him”, says John; hence, also, “equal to the angels”, as Jesus hath himself affirmed.

The Arch-Elohim said that the man had become LIKE *one* of themselves in the matter of knowing good and evil. This also is an argument for his likeness to a plurality of persons; and it further shows that the Elohim were once in a condition similar to man after he had transgressed. The Lord of the Elohim himself declares that they also had been *experimentally sensible* of evil, for this is the idea expressed by the Hebrew word YADA, *to know*. In short, it is credible that none of the Elohim of the only Potentate’s dominion were created immortal; but earthly, or animal, like Adam. The eternal King

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is the only being who is originally immortal in any sense, hence it is written that “He *only* hath immortality”. The immortality of all other intelligences is derived from Him as a reward for the “obedience of faith”. Just men at the resurrection of the First Fruits will be equal to Elohim.

Shall we say that these “Morning Stars and Sons of God” did not attain to the spiritual nature by a progression similar to man; seeing that he “who was made so much better than they”, even Jesus, the “Bright and the Morning Star”, was “made perfect through sufferings”? Have they had no trials to endure; no probation to pass through for the refining of their faith as gold is tried? It is credible, rather, that they were once animal men of other spheres; that in a former state, they were “made subject to vanity not willingly”; that while in the flesh they believed and obeyed God with the self sacrificing disposition afterwards evinced by Abraham; that their faith was counted to them for righteousness; that they succumbed to death as mortal men; that they rose from the dead, and so attained to incorruptibility and immortality as the Elohim of the Invisible God.

Our mundane system is but the pattern of things in other worlds, which may ere this have attained to that perfection which awaits the earth; and probably an illustration of what may even now obtain in other planets where the inhabitants have not yet progressed beyond the animal and probationary era of their history. *Our* angels, or Elohim, those I mean of the heavenly hosts, to whose superintendence terrestrial affairs are consigned, until the Lord Jesus shall assume the reins of government; not all the Elohim, but those of them related to us “always behold the face of God”, and minister His will towards the sons of men. This is their glory—a part of their reward. He sent them to form and fill the earth with living souls. They executed their commission according to His purpose.

BEHOLD THEN THE CONSUMMATION! Mortal and corruptible beings like ourselves become Elohim, mighty in strength, and framers of new worlds, of which the planet we inhabit, even in its present state, is a grand and glorious specimen. “Behold”, says Jesus, once an infant at the breast, powerless in death, but now endued with all power, “*I make all things new.*” He will educe from the things which exist, a new and magnificent world, as a fit and appropriate habitation for his companions, redeemed by his blood from the sons of men. This is the destiny set before those who shall become “equal to the angels” by a resurrection to eternal life.