*of the angels of God.”* There, it is true,  
the Hebrew text has, as A. V., “according to the number of the children [more  
properly, *the sons*, in the stricter sense] of  
Israel.” Origen (or his translator) says,  
“According to the number of His angels,  
or, as we read in other copies, according to  
the number of the sons of Israel.” But  
the *doctrine* rests on passages about which  
there can be no such doubt. See Dan. x.  
13, 20, 21; xii. 1, for this commital of  
kingdoms to the superintendence of angels:  
Rev. ix. 11; xvi. 5, for the same as regards  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
the natural elements: Matt. xviii. 10, as  
regards the guardianship of individuals:  
Rev. i. 20 &c., for that of churches [for so, and not of chief bishops, is the name to be understood: see note there]. See also  
Dan. iv. 13. In the apocryphal and rabbinical writings we find the same idea  
asserted, and indeed carried out into minute  
details. So in Ecclus. xvii. 17, *“In the  
division of the nations of the whole earth  
he set a ruler over every people: but Israel  
is the Lord’s portion.”* The rabbinical  
authorities may be found in Bleck and  
Eisenmenger. See also a very elaborate  
article—“Engel”—by Böhme, in Herzog’s  
Encyclȯpädie: and testimonies to the view  
of the early church from Eusebius, Justin  
Martyr, Irenæus, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria, in Whitby’s note.  
The idea then of subjection of the world  
to angels was one with which the readers  
of this Epistle were familiar) **the world**  
**to come** (the reference of this expression  
has been variously given by expositors.  
1) Many imagine it to refer to the world which is, strictly speaking, *to come,* as distinguished from this present world. This meaning will hardly tally with the context here. Though it might be said that the  
future life, being the *completion* of the  
state of salvation by Christ, might very  
well here he spoken of as the subject of  
the present discourse. 2) Some have supposed a direct allusion to ch. i. 6. But certainly in this case the verb would have  
been past: “of which we *spoke;”* and  
besides, the addition of the epithet to come  
sufficiently distinguishes it from the mere  
inhabited world, in the other place. 3)  
Others again have thought of *heaven*,  
which is to us future, because we are not  
yet admitted to its joys, But this again  
would not agree with the context. 4) The most probable account to be given is that the phrase represents the Hebrew expression, *“the age to come”* [see note on ch. i. 1], and imports the whole new order of  
things brought in by Christ,—taking its  
rise in His life on earth, and having its  
completion in His reign in glory. This  
last-mentioned view is by far the best,  
agreeing as it does with the connexion, for  
he has been speaking of the gospel above,  
with the ordinary way of speaking, and  
with the whole subject of the Epistle.  
*All* reference to the future need not be  
excluded: we Christians are so eminently  
“prisoners of hope,” that the very mention of such a designation would naturally awaken a thought of the glories to come:  
but this reference must not be pressed as  
having any prominence), **of which we are  
speaking** (which forms the subject of our  
present argument: viz. that urged in  
vv. 1–4, The sense is strictly *present;*  
not past, nor future. Bleek has here some  
excellent remarks: “As regards the whole  
thought, the non-subjection of the new  
order of the world to angels, it respects  
partly what is already present, partly what   
we have yet to wait for. Certainly, here  
and there in the New Test. history angels  
are mentioned: but they come in only  
as transitory appearances, to announce or  
to execute some matter which is specially  
entrusted to them: they never appear as  
essential agents in the introduction of the  
kingdom of God, either in general, or in  
particular: they do not descend on earth  
as preaching repentance, or preparing men  
to be received into God’s kingdom. This  
is done by *men*, first and chiefly by Him  
who is Son of Man *par excellence*, and after  
Him by the disciples whom He prepared  
for the work. Even the miraculous conversion of Paul is brought about, not by  
angels, but by the appearing of the Lord  
Himself. Our author has indeed, in ch. i. 14, designated the angels as fellow-workers in the salvation of men: but only in a  
serving capacity, never as working or imparting salvation by independent agency, as does the Son of Man in the first place, and  
then in a certain degree His disciples also.  
So that we cannot speak with any truth of  
a subjection of this new order of things to  
the angels, Rather, even by what we see  
at present, does it appear to be subjected to  
the Redeemer Himself. And this will ever