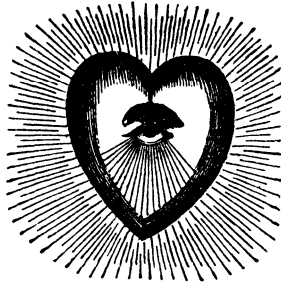


THE



SEER.

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, See Ye, when He
lifteth up an Ensign on the Mountains.—*Isaiah* xviii, 3.

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THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF MAN.

1. Man in this life consists of a body of flesh and bones quickened and animated by a living intelligent spirit. It has been supposed that spirit begins to exist within the mortal tabernacle while it is yet in embryo, and that prior to the organization of the body, the spirit had no existence. These are the views of modern christendom. We shall endeavor to prove that this view of the subject is incorrect.

2. There is not anything unreasonable in the pre-existence of spirits. If spirits can exist after death in a state of happiness or misery, is there any reason, why they can not exist prior to the organization of the body? If they can think, and will, and move after they leave the body, why can they not exercise these functions before they take possession of the body? If the destruction of the body is not the death of the spirit, then it must be admitted that the spirit is in no way dependant on the body for its existence, and, therefore, it can exist prior to the body, as well as after it. The disorganization of the body does not deprive the spirit of life, neither does the organization of the body give to the spirit life: it possesses life in itself. Life and intelligence are not the result of organization, but they are the cause; and, therefore, they must exist before the effects can follow. Our bodies are formed from the dust of the earth, but are our spirits

made from the same materials? If they were, then they would, at death, return to dust; but as they are not reduced to dust, like the body, they must be formed of materials far superior to those of the earth. Where did those materials come from? They came from God. Solomon, when speaking upon the subject of death, says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall RETURN unto God who gave it." (*Eccles.* 12: 7.) According to this passage, the spirit has, not an earthly origin, but a heavenly one: it came from God—it returns to God. "God who gave it," also receives it back into His presence.

3. Could the spirit return to God, if it never were in His presence? Could we return to a place where we never were before? If, then, the spirits of men existed with God, and came from Him to animate mortal bodies, they must either be created in Heaven at the time the infant tabernacles are being formed, or else they existed before. If the spirit is formed in Heaven at the time the earthly house is being prepared for its reception, then God must have been engaged in the work of creating spirits at the rate of about ten millions per year, or about twenty spirits per minute, which is the average number born into our world in the same time. Now we read that God

made all things, pertaining to our earth in six days, and rested on the seventh. Can we suppose, for one moment, that God neglected the formation of spirits in the grand work of creation? Can we suppose that he has been engaged in creating human spirits for this earth, at the rate of one every three seconds, ever since He pronounced the Heavens and the earth and all things therein finished and very good? Such an idea is inconsistent and unscriptural.

4. Again, would a good and wise Being create spirits, and before they had time to prove themselves by obeying or disobeying His laws, thrust them out of His presence,—banish them from His glorious kingdom,—shut them up in earthly tabernacles, hide His face from them, and subject them to temptation, wretchedness, and misery? Now, if we suppose that the spirit is formed in Heaven, while the embryo tabernacle is being formed upon the earth, then it has no time to gain experience in the presence of its Creator; it has no time to act upon its agency; it has no time to obey or disobey; but as soon as it is formed, it is, according to this supposition, banished into dreary exile from the presence of its Father, and from the glory of Heaven, to linger out a life of sorrow in an earthly tabernacle. Such a supposition is absurd, and at war with the attributes of goodness, justice, and mercy which appertain to the Deity.

5. Inasmuch as Scripture informs us that the spirit of man existed with God, and came from Him, and returns to Him, it is reasonable to believe that its formation took place at a period anterior to the organization of the body. This period of pre-existence must have been sufficiently long to have educated and instructed the spirit in the laws and order of government, pertaining to the spiritual world; to have rendered itself approved or disapproved by those laws; to have been tried in all points, according to its capacities and knowledge, and the free agency which always accompanies and forms a part

of the nature of intelligent beings; in fine, the period of pre-existence must have been sufficiently long to have constituted a probationary state, or the "*First Estate*" wherein the spirits are on trial, and may fall, and be reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

6. The pre-existence of man is a doctrine which was believed by the ancients. The disciples of Jesus, when observing a man who had been blind from his birth, put the following question to their Master: "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9: 2.) It is evident, from the nature of this question, that the disciples considered it possible for a man to sin before he was born; and that in consequence of such sin, he might be "*born blind.*" This passage shows most clearly, that the disciples, not only believed in the pre-existence of man, but believed that he was an intelligent agent, governed by laws which he was capable of obeying or disobeying, and that his sins in his former state might be the cause of his being born blind, and that his condition in his present state was affected by his acts in the former state. The Saviour, in replying to this question, says, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (verse 3.) Now, if the pre-existence of man were not a true doctrine, why did not our Saviour take this opportunity to correct the ideas of his disciples, by telling them that the blind man could not sin before he was born? Why did he merely tell them that his blindness was not the effects of the sins of himself or parents? Why did he still leave the impression upon their minds that the blind man had a pre-existence?

7. Jesus, himself, believed in pre-existence: for he said, "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." And, again, he said, "Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8: 42, 58.) Jesus prays thus: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine

own self with the glory which I had with thee *before* the world was." (John 17 : 5.) From these sayings, we perceive that the spiritual body of Jesus existed "before the world was."

8. Having proved that the pre-existence of man is reasonable and scriptural, we shall next prove that this pre-existence can be traced back to a period before the foundation of the world. The Lord asked a question of Job in relation to this matter: He inquires, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38 : 4, 6, 7.) If Job had no prior existence, he could have easily answered the Lord's first question. He could have replied, that, when "*the foundations of the earth*" were laid, I, Job, did not exist. The very question implies that Job was in existence at the time of the organization of the globe, but that he had not sufficient understanding, as to the place where he existed, to correctly answer the question put to him. Neither could he remember, "Who laid the corner stone thereof;" neither could he recollect, the song of the morning stars; neither could he call to mind, the shout of joy which was uttered by the vast assembly of "ALL THE SONS OF GOD."

9. Jesus calls himself, "*The bright and morning star*." (Rev. 22 : 15.) And in another place, He represents Himself, "*The Beginning of the Creation of God*." (Rev. 3 : 14.) Paul says, that Jesus "is the image of the invisible God—the FIRST BORN of every creature." (Col. 1 : 15.) As Jesus is the First Born Son of God, it is evident, that all the other Sons of God would be His younger brethren, begotten by the same Father. Therefore, Paul represents him as "*the First Born among many brethren*." (Romans 8 : 29.) And in another place, he says, "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of

One : for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. 2 : 11.) That the brethren, here spoken of, are the sons of God, begotten by the same Father that Jesus was, is evident from another saying of the Apostle, "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence : shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live?" (Heb. 12 : 9.) Our earthly fathers are called, the "*fathers of our flesh*," while God is called, "*The Father of Spirits*." Earthly fathers have no power to beget spirits; they beget only the bodies of flesh, or the tabernacles; while our Heavenly Father begets the spirits, or the living beings which come from Him to inhabit the tabernacles.

10. "The First Born" of all this great family of Spirits, holds, by virtue of His birthright, a pre-eminence in all things; hence it is written, "When he bringeth in the *First Begotten* into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." (Heb. 1 : 6.) The oldest spirits or the First Begotten hold the keys of Salvation towards all the rest of the family of spirits. "The First Born" Spirit is called "*The Morning Star*," because He was born in the morning of Creation, or in other words, because He was "The Beginning of the Creation of God." His younger brethren were called "*morning stars*," because they were also born in the morning of creation, being the next in succession in the order of the spiritual creation.

11. "The Father of Spirits," having filled one of the celestial kingdoms with his own Sons and Daughters—the fruit of his own loins, gave commandment unto His "First Born" to organize, out of the eternal elements, another world. In obedience to this great commandment, "The First Begotten," accompanied by all His younger brethren who had kept their "*First Estate*," proceeded to lay "the foundations of the earth," and "the corner stones thereof." And upon this grand occasion, "The

Morning Stars sang together." The Lord does not reveal to Job the sentiments contained in this song. It was probably a song, composed by one of the wisest poets in the vast kingdom of spirits, there assembled. It, no doubt, contained sentiments suitable to the majesty, greatness, and magnificence of the work which they had commenced. The foundations of a mighty world were being laid—the corner stones were placed in their appropriate position. Upon these, or around these, as a central nucleus, was to be erected a magnificent globe, arrayed in all the gorgeous splendor of celestial workmanship. Above, below, and around these eternal elements, hovered thousands of millions of the sons of God which were the spirits of men. By the spirit of prophecy, they looked upon the vast field of unorganized materials which lay stretched out almost to infinity in the boundless ocean of space which surrounded them. They saw that these materials were to be formed and fashioned into a ponderous globe, prepared and adorned for their future residence; where they should exist, and live, and move in earthly tabernacles; where they should sway the sceptre of dominion over all the lower orders of creation; where they should become fathers of fleshly bodies, in like manner, as God was the Father of the spirits. They saw the fall, redemption, and eternal exaltation of the sons of God, and the glorification of the earth which they were forming, which should become their abiding place forever. In the contemplation of the magnificent sceneries which rolled in awful grandeur before them, their bosoms swelled with indescribable joy; they gave utterance to their feelings in rapturous strains of melodious music which reverberated from world to world, filling all the heavens with the praises of God, while eternity itself trembled with joy.

12. They not only had singing to celebrate the beginning of the organization of this earth, but "all the sons of God shouted for joy." Who can

contemplate this grand event without being almost overpowered with the ideas of greatness and magnificence which force themselves upon the mind? All the generations of men that have ever lived, or that ever will live upon the earth, were assembled upon that occasion. They were the sons of God: they were the ones who shouted for joy. Their united voices must have been, as the voice of many waters, driven by fierce tempests whose mountain waves, rolling, plunging, dashing, break with awful majesty upon the rocky bound coast. A shout of joy, breaking forth simultaneously from a vast world of spirits, must have been as the rolling of ten thousand thunders, reverberating from mountain to mountain, till the whole earth trembles under the power thereof.

13. There is something grand and sublime in the contemplation of our pre-existence. How wonderful and interesting it is for us to know, that the beings whom we call ourselves, that now dwell in these earthly tabernacles—existed thousands of years ago—that we were present, when the foundations of the earth were laid—that we then sang and shouted for joy—that we were engaged with our oldest brother, the First Born, in organizing this world—that we dwelt for ages in our Father's presence in a celestial or glorified world—that we there beheld His face, and rejoiced in His glory—that we there were instructed in the wisdom and knowledge of God, till the intelligence which radiated from our persons, shone like the morning light.

14. Objections have been raised against the pre-existence of man upon the ground that we do not remember such existence, or any event connected therewith. It is true, we do not remember any thing prior to our present state, but this does not prove that we had no prior existence. We do not remember our existence or anything else, during the first six months of our infancy, does this prove that we did not exist during that time? No. If, then, we could exist six