

here. The disciples walked with Jesus, and were instructed by him; they had many opportunities to learn the truth, and when they asked the Master, "Who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind," they plainly showed their belief in the probability of this man sinning before he was born, and Jesus did not correct them, but merely said: "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." If the disciples believed it possible that the man could sin before he was born, they believed in pre-existence, in common with the followers of Jesus. If they were in error, is it not remarkable that He did not correct them, as it was surely necessary that the disciples and teachers of divine truth should be properly instructed.

As further truth that the spirit lived before the world was formed, I direct your attention to the words of Jesus in John's Gospel 17:5.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Our Presbyterian friends believe that Jesus was an exception, He being, as they teach, the only begotten Son in the spirit, as having a prior existence. I quote as above, however, to emphasize the fact that if our elder brother Jesus—the Son of the same Father—lived with God before the foundations of the earth were laid, is it not reasonable to believe that the younger members of the same family existed there also?

Our friends, as I have told you, say Jesus is the only begotten Son of God in the spirit, and Mr. Boyd offers in his letter as proof in favor of that statement certain passages of Scripture which I quoted from his letter and which we will now examine. The first is found in John 1:14.

And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father) full of grace, and truth.

The "word" here signifies Jesus, who was made flesh (and dwelt among us), and is afterwards referred to as the only begotten of the Father,—in the flesh of course, which we believe. It is quite plain and a proof in favor of the Latter-day Saints doctrine.

The 18th verse of the chapter is another of Mr. Boyd's supposed proofs. Here it is:

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him.

Now what evidence is there in the above quotation that Jesus was the only begotten in spirit, and not in the flesh? None whatever.

Now turn to the third chapter of the same book (16 and 18 verses) for the third reference of Mr. Boyd to the Scriptures, as a drowning man catches at a straw for help and comfort to sustain a venerable error.

For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Also,

He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Still nothing in this to show that the Savior was the only begotten in the spirit, or in the flesh either, for that matter.

Another quotation made by Mr. Boyd of about the same value as the last two will be found in I John 4:9:

In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him.

Inspired words, containing an assurance of God's love for His children, but containing no evidence as to how Christ was the only begotten Son. Mr. Boyd has done the best he could under the circumstances in selecting proof which is an utter failure so far as sustaining an unscriptural tradition. His first quotation is valuable in this controversy, as it directly sustains the truth as taught by the Latter-day Saints, viz: that Christ was the only begotten in the flesh.

It is certainly true that Jesus, who "was made flesh," was the only person sent into this world to save sinners, or as the last quotation has it, "that we might live through him." It is also true He had no earthly father, but was divinely begotten (according to the divine record) and therefore the "only begotten Son of God" in the flesh, "for Mary had known no man."

To doubt the truth of the sacred record on this subject would be a reflection on Mary which we could not for a moment entertain. Jesus was the first born of every creature in the Spirit, and the only begotten in the flesh.

Mr. Boyd does not believe in pre-existence, except in the case of Jesus, but his mistake will become apparent under the light of truth. We all are the children of God, and were created in spirit before the world began, as made known in the Scriptures.

I will now introduce a few direct proofs. Paul in writing to the Ephesians (1st chapter and 4th verse), says:

According as he has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

When did he choose us? Before the foundation of the world. So all those to whom these words were applicable lived before the world was organized, or in other words, they pre-existed. See also 2 Timothy, 1:9.

Jeremiah informs us that the Lord spake to him as follows:

Then the word of the Lord came unto me saying: Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

There cannot be any objection to this quotation. It needs no explanation, as it explains itself. Jeremiah lived in spirit before he was conceived in the flesh, therefore, pre-existed. The inference made here to the mortal body should be read with the understanding of a general supervision which God has over all His works.

We will next turn to Romans 8:29.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.

Or, placing this fact in another way, those whom He did predestinate He did foreknow, as in the case of Jeremiah whom He ordained, as the result of His fore-knowledge of him, and also of Jesus Himself, for we are told by the Apostle Paul in Heb. 1:8 and 9, that "Thou (speaking of Jesus) hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God,

even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

It appears that the Savior was anointed above his fellows, because of His exceeding righteousness, and that Jeremiah was ordained a prophet before he was born; doubtless also meriting that distinction by his previous righteousness.

All whom God did predestinate He did foreknow; therefore, the Presbyterians if they were consistent and scriptural in their faith, would accept the doctrine of pre-existence as they are strong believers in "predestination."

Without discussing at present as to how many, or of what class were predestinated, we will quote the faith of Mr. Boyd on this subject (See "Confession of Faith," page 27):

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and some angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and the number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

According to the number of the fortunate will be rigidly maintained;—with as much truth the exact number might have been given. The point, we wish to make, however, is that all those predestinated, whether many or few, were foreknown and therefore pre-existed.

I am inclined to think that the Presbyterians will contend that it is not necessary to "pre-exist" for God to know the quality (it in their opinion quality be an object at all) of His offspring, as He knows all things before they come to pass. We will not discuss what He knows, but on the authority of the Scriptures we know that His knowledge will never interfere with the free agency of man, which he (man) will always have an opportunity of manifesting before he is either punished or rewarded, as we will all have justice done us, and will be rewarded according to our works, "whether they be good, or whether they be evil." Another reference may be superfluous, but as it so fully, in a general way, confirms our personal examples previously quoted, will give it. Job, thirty-eighth chapter, beginning at the first verse:

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words, without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. All the sons of God were present and rejoiced when the foundations of the earth were laid; they were all there, which is also an argument against the idea of simultaneous creation of spirit and body. There is no room for doubt that God and all His sons were present in spirit on that momentous occasion—created, organized, and waiting until the earth was prepared for their habitation. They knew that it was necessary to come here to pass through this probation, and their demonstrations of joy were doubtless because of the preparations that were being made for them.

Finally, there can be no predestina-