

Of the Beginning

THE PREMORTAL EXISTENCE

Nothing could be more gratifying to the ego or consoling to the afflicted spirit of mortals than the secret intimation of a glorious past and an exalted parentage. The exciting foster-parent illusion was exploited by the Gnostics for all it was worth, but the idea was no invention of theirs. It was the thought of his preexistent glory that was Job's real comfort—"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth. . . when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" is not a rhetorical question. For it was the recollection of that same creation hymn of joy and their part in that sustained the Sons of Light in the midst of terrible reverses. "If you could see your real image which came into being before you," says a logion of Jesus," then you would be willing to endure anything!" The author of the Thanksgiving Hymn is simply drunk with the idea of his own preexistent glory. Such glory, according to the Johannine writings, belongs not only to the Lord but to all who follow him.

"Treasures in the Heavens," *CWHN* 1:175

We recognize what is lovely because we have seen it somewhere else, and as we walk through the world, we are constantly on the watch for it with a kind of nostalgia, so that when we see an object or a person that pleases us, it is like recognizing an old friend; it hits us in the solar plexus, and we need no measuring or lecturing to tell us that it is indeed quite perfect. It is something we have long been looking for, something we have seen in another world, memories of how things should be.

"Goods of First and Second Intent," *CWHN* 9:528

ANCIENT TEACHINGS ABOUT THE CREATION

The creation process as described in the Pearl of Great Price is open-ended and ongoing, entailing careful planning based on vast experience, long consultations, models, tests, and even trial runs for a complicated system requiring a vast scale of participation by the creatures concerned. The whole operation is dominated by the overriding principle of love.

"Before Adam," *CWHN* 1:69

Pistis Sophia, continuing the Egyptian teachings, [gives us] the picture of a constant remixing going on in the universe in which old, worn-out, contaminated substances, the refuse of worn-out worlds and kingdoms, is first thrown out on the scrap-heap and returned to chaos as "dead" matter, then melted down in a dissolving fire for

many years, by which all the impurities are removed from it, and by which it is “improved,” and is ready to be “poured from one kind of body into another.”

This whole process by which souls as well as substances are “thrown back into the mixing” is under the supervision of Melchizedek, the great reprocessor, purifier, and preparer of worlds. He takes over the refuse of defunct worlds or souls, and under his supervision five great Archons process (literally “knead”) it, separating out its different components, each one specializing in particular elements which they thus recombine in unique and original combinations, so that no new world or soul is exactly like any other. . . .

With all its perfect unity and harmony, the system [of worlds] presents a scene not of monotonous uniformity but rather of endless and delightful variety: “They are all different one from the other, but He hath not made any one of them superfluous; the one exchangeth what is good [in it] with the other.” At a new creation there is a reshuffling of elements, like the rearranging of notes in the musical scale to make a new composition. . . .

Such a thing is possible because of a force that is primal and self-existent, having no dependence on other matter or its qualities. This is that “light-stream” that no power is able to hold down and no matter is able to control in any way. On the contrary, it is this light that imposes form and order on all else; it is the spark by which Melchizedek organizes new worlds; it is the light that purifies contaminated substances, and the light that enables dead matter to live. Reduced to its simplest form, creation is the action of light upon matter. Matter of itself has no power, being burnt-out energy, but light reactivates it. Matter is incapable of changing itself—it has no desire to, and so light forces into the recycling process where it can again work upon it—for light is the organizing principle.

If Melchizedek is in charge of organizing worlds, it is Michael and Gabriel who direct the outpouring of light to those parts of chaos where it is needed. As light emanates out into space in all directions it does not weaken but mysteriously increases more and more, not stopping as long as there is a space to fill. In each world is a gathering of light . . . and as each is the product of a drive towards expansion, each becomes a source of new expansion, “having its part in the expansion of the universe.”

“Treasures in the Heaven,” *CWHN* 1:182-84

The mere mechanics of the creation process as described in our “treasure” texts display truly remarkable scientific insight. For the making of a world the first requirements, we are told, are a segment of empty space, pure and unencumbered, and a supply of primordial matter to work with. Mere empty space and inert matter are, however, forbidding and profitless things in themselves, disturbing and even dangerous things for humans to be involved with. Contemplating them, the mind is seized with vertigo until some foothold is found in the void. The order and stability of a foundation are achieved through the operation of a “spark.” The spark is sometimes defined as “a small idea” that comes forth from God and makes all the difference between what lives and what does not: “Compared with it all the worlds are but as a shadow, since it is the spark whose light moves all (material) things.” It is the ultimate particle, the “*ennas* which came from the Father of those who are without beginning,” emanating from the treasure house of light from which all life and power is ultimately derived.

“Treasures in the Heavens,” *CWHN* 1:184-85

ADAM

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Let us consider our Adam. What kind of being is he? The same kind as ourselves—but what is that? He plays a surprising number of roles, each with a different persona, a different name, a different environment, a different office and calling:

1. He was a member of the presidency when the earth project was being discussed.

2. He was on the committee of inspection that came down from time to time to check up on the operation.

3. Then he changed his name and nature to live upon the earth, but it was a very different earth from any we know; it had to be a garden place specially prepared for him.

4. When he left that paradise, he changed his nature again and for the first time began to reckon the passing of time by our measurements, becoming a short-lived creature subject to death.

5. In this condition, he began to receive instructions from heavenly mentors on how to go about changing his condition and status, entering into a covenant that completely changed his mentality and way of life. “The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit,” when “that which is natural” became spiritual. (1 Corinthians 15:45-46.)

6. In time he died and became a spirit being, the head of all his spirit children in the waiting-place according to common Christian tradition as well as our own.

7. Then he became, after Christ, the firstfruits of the resurrection and returned triumphantly to his first and second estates

8. To go on to glory and eternal lives.

In these seven or eight Adams we have another fundamental teaching that sets Mormonism off from all contemporary religion and science. The one views man’s life on earth as a one-act drama: Adam fell, Christ redeemed us, and that is the story; before Adam there was nothing. Science tells us that the drama is pointless, because there is really nothing after it. We, on the other hand, see an ongoing epic of many episodes, each one a play in itself—a dispensation.

“Before Adam,” *CWHN* 1:77

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Mormons have a story to tell before Adam. But the scientists and other churchmen have none—absolutely none. They set the stage, but they have no play—only properties and props. Joseph Smith at least has given us a picture. With nothing going for him and everything going against him, he simply could not lose—he told us what the play is all about. . . . The fact is we never look at it closely, preferring to save a lot of trouble and take sides with the

traditional schools. And yet, Smith gave the world the only creation story that has real substance. . . . The four Adam stories, as found in the Bible, the book of Moses, the book of Abraham, and the LDS temples, are seen from different points of view and, like the four gospels, do not conflict if each is put into proper context. . . .

Before being introduced to his home planet, Abraham is given a view of the cosmos in which he is reminded again and again that distance, directions, and motions are all represented to him in a way relative to his point of view only. The Lord said, "Remember this is in relationship to you; it's not everything." Everything is to be comprehended not in its absolute condition; but only as it appears from one point. . . . Modern revelation teaches us to look at the genesis of Adam carefully. After the great cycle of creation . . . come the small cycles that bring Adam into the picture. And he's living after the Lord's time—not after our time. It was day and night from His point of view—not ours. When Adam was put out of the timeless, changeless paradise, he began to count the hours and the days. Until Adam underwent that change of habitat, body, chemistry, diet, and psyche that went with the fall, nothing is to be measured in our years.

"Candidates for the Search Society," 12-13

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Do not begrudge existence to creatures that looked like men long, long ago, nor deny them a place in God's affection or even a right to exaltation, for our scriptures allow them such. Nor am I overly concerned as to just when they might have lived, for their world is not our world. They have all gone away long before our people ever appeared. God assigned them their proper times and functions.

"Before Adam," *CWHN* 1:82