

October 8, 1955

Dear Miss Perry:

It was with feelings of regret that I received your letter of October 5, 1955, in which you declare most emphatically your belief in the theory of organic evolution. I take it that you are a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints--at least nominally, and a student at the Brigham Young University.

It is true that the Lord has given us reason which he expects us to use; but he has offered us something, if we are willing to receive it, which is far superior to reason. That is faith in his abiding and eternal TRUTH. Truth that is found through obedience to the divine principles of the Gospel and in the revelation of the Lord. In order to obtain this it is necessary to obtain humility and to put our trust in Him. Reason will lead us to destruction, if it is not coupled with faith in the fundamental principles on which the kingdom of God is built. You seem to think that the teachings of the organic evolutionists have been clearly and definitely proved, that their theories are so well established that they are beyond reasonable contradiction. If so, than the revelations of the Lord, as proclaimed in the history of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price and Doctrine and Covenants, are not revelations, not accurate history, and are not to be believed. You may answer that you find no conflict between the evolutionary theories and the revelations in these books. If so, that I must question your wonderful powers of reason, beyond the gift that "makes man more than the beast of the earth," from which according to your theory he has descended. You admit frankly that you "cannot believe in both evolution and the L.D.S. teachings on the subject." That being the case it may be futile for me to say anything more. Your mind is closed against the revealed word of the Lord. This, I am sure, is most regrettable. The book which I wrote for the purpose of helping our young people to understand the light and have faith in the revealed Gospel, and in the divine mission of Jesus Christ, falls on deaf ears and you come from a good family, perhaps with ancestors who have fought for and maybe laid down their lives in the cause of the restored Gospel, and every soul is precious in the eyes of our Eternal Father. Therefore grant me the privilege of presenting a few fundamental principles as I understand them which come to us through the revelations of Jesus Christ. IF organic evolution be true, than these principles fall to the ground and Jesus Christ is NOT the Savior of the fallen world, and the Redeemer of all who repent and receive his Gospel. This would be, to my mind, the greatest calamity that ever befell the world!

1. Adam was the first man on earth. This is taught in the Bible, Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price and Doctrine and Covenants. "And I the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the FIRST FLESH upon the earth, the FIRST MAN also; nevertheless, all things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word."--Hoses 3:7. "And of Enoch, and of Seth, and of Adam, who was formed of God, and the first man on the earth."--Luke 3:35 I.T. "And from Enoch to Abel, who was slain by the conspiracy of his brother, who received the priesthood by the commandments of God, by the hand of his father Adam, who was the first man." D. & C. 84:16.

Those who accept evolution of necessity reject this doctrine!

2. The scriptures teach that Adam was the first flesh on the earth. This has reference to the Fall. Evolution contradicts this doctrine, for evolution denies completely the Fall.

3. The scriptures teach that Adam was not subject to the mortal and spiritual death before the Fall and that the Fall brought these deaths into the world. This doctrine is emphatically denied by evolution.

4. These Scriptures teach that Jesus came into the world to atone for Adam's transgression and through his death redeemed Adam and all mankind from the effects of the Fall. Thus restoring ALL mankind to immortal life through the resurrection of the dead. Evolution denies all of this in its claim that death was always here and therefore there was NO life to which mankind could be restored.

5. The doctrines of these Scriptures and the revelations to the Church teach that death is to be destroyed, being the last enemy to be destroyed. (1 Cor. 15:26; D. & C. 29:26; John 5:25-29; Revelations 20:12-14.) All of this evolution contradicts.

6. These Scriptures teach that this earth is passing through seven days of temporal existence of one thousand years of our days, and that it was not temporal before the Fall. This is clearly stated in the Bible, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price, but all of this is definitely and positively denied by organic evolutionists.

7. These divine records promise us that the earth on which we dwell will be renewed and restored to its primitive beauty for one thousand years, the last mortal day, and be cleansed of all its iniquity, and then will die, for it is a living mortal body, subject to the FALL, and REDEEMED by Jesus Christ. It will then receive the resurrection and become a celestial earth and the abiding place of the righteous. Evolution contradicts all of this.

Moreover, the Gospel teaches that MAN is the offspring of God! That He is our Eternal Father--the Father of our Spirits that our spirits are eternal and so likewise the spirits of every other living creature. Evolution denies this!

The Gospel teaches us that our Father has created "Earths without number" as habitations for HIS children, and as one earth passes away to its exaltation after its resurrection another comes and there is no end to his works nor to his words. The Lord has revealed to us that the inhabitants of these other worlds are his begotten children, and that they have been transplanted to these worlds when they have been prepared for them. There is no beauty, no reason, no justice in Organic Evolution.

"Organic Evolution ridicules religion. It denies the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Jesus Christ. It places man as the natural kin of the animal, a descendant of a bab, a worm and an amoeba. Those who like it may have this doctrine, but they have no right to attempt to drag their fellow men, who are 'begotten sons and daughters unto God,' down to their level." Man: page 187.

Organic Evolution begins with an hypothesis and ends with one.

This may be sufficient for the time.

Very sincerely

Joseph Fielding Smith

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Nov. 3, 1955

Dear Miss Perry:

I have your letter of October 31, 1955. My suspicions are confirmed in relation to the discourse by Dr. James E. Talmage, which was delivered in the Tabernacle August 9, 1951. There was [143] no time at the stake conference in Provo for me to follow this matter through, but I was sure it was that discourse. Now let me tell you something of its history.

This discourse was delivered and when it was brought to the attention of the brethren of the First Presidency and the Apostles action was taken that it should not be published. A great many complaints came into the office of the First Presidency criticizing this discourse. The matter was placed in the hands of the Council of the Twelve for consideration, and they reported adversely, saying that it should not be published. However it was taken out of their hands and without their consent or approval was published and also issued in pamphlet form. No doubt it is a sweet morsel to the evolutionists who are keeping it alive, but it never has received the sanction, or approval, of the First Presidency and the Apostles. Those who are using it have no business to do so and make it appear that it went out with the sanction of the authorities of the Church. I have all the information here in this office confirming what I am telling you.

Regarding the lime or other fossils, they forget that some sixteen hundred years passed between the Fall of Adam and the flood, when the whole face of the earth was changed. You will discover if you only ask the question that these evolutionists do not believe in the fall, or in the flood, especially the flood. Both of these doctrines are contrary to their theories. I hope you will read carefully the chapter on the flood in the book Man: His Origin and Destiny.

It is true we need not believe every word spoken by the general authorities. It is true that they do not always speak by the inspiration of the Lord. President Joseph F. Smith has called attention to this in Gospel Doctrine, p. 73.

Very Sincerely your brother,

Joseph Fielding Smith

