

Blanding, Utah.
May 26th 1948.

Elder John A. Widtsoe,
Salt Lake City.

Dear Brother Widtsoe:

Your article, "Were There Pre-Adamites?" in the May number of Improvement Era, borders on a problem which has been put up to me by young people and skeptics, and I would appreciate what you have time and patience to say about the kind of answer I have made.

The evidences of the Cro-Magnon, Neanderthal and other races living from fifteen to sixty thousand years ago, or even earlier is such that I do not challenge it, and in admitting that there may have been such ancient races, I do not admit that I am compromising in the least our belief that Adam was, "the first fles upon the earth, the first man also." Moses 3: 7.

Also, if I concede that geologists have some reason for saying this earth may be two billion years old, I am still not yielding any doctrine of the scriptures as I understand them.

Men may have been here long before Adam came out of the garden of Eden, but as "the first flesh on earth", Adam, "The Ancient of Days," and one of the Creators of the earth, was here even before the introduction of the most primitive form of life which we find in the Cambrian layer. I know of no scripture indicating how long it has been since the introduction of that life in the Cambrian layer, or wherever it was that the first life was introduced.

That introduction of life on this earth was after the six creative periods spoken of in the accounts of the creation. When I contemplate the ponderous depth of strata from the bottom of Grand Canyon to what was the top of the mountains over the Bryce's Canyon country, it seems to prove a very great lapse of time, yet all of that was laid down after the end of the six creative periods, following the introduction of life on earth.

The "garden eastward in Eden", would have, of course to be something of comparatively recent geologic times. The record of the ice ages, as interpreted by many geological researchers, is quite in agreement with what we are told about the garden as its river parted into four heads.

My chief reason in wanting to be right on these matters, is that I might make a safe answer and defense of the scripture such as I wanted very much to have some one make for me fifty years ago when I was troubled about the seeming contradiction between things as they appear and that which is written.

So I have the right slant on it. An increasing number of people come to me for explanations of matters seeming to conflict with the revealed word, and while there are many things I do not have to answer, and am not able to answer, I want to be prepared to give safe answers about matters which can and should be answered.

Your endorsement or your corrections will be daily appreciated.

Yours very sincerely,

+ R. Lyman

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS
The Council of the Twelve
47 E. South Temple Street
Salt Lake City, Utah
June 14, 1948

Mr. Albert R. Lyman
Blanding, Utah

My dear Brother Lyman:

Your interesting letter of May 20th really does not require any answer beyond my saying that in my thinking I follow yours as your letter states it. Further, as I say in my little article on Pre-Adamites, the Lord make the earth and in the making He may have done many things not according to my particular opinion, but whatever He did He had a right to do. If He chose to place man-like beings upon the earth before the days of Adam, I really have no right to find fault with that any more than with the placing on the earth of the great variety of life which we know lived there. There is nothing definite in the scriptures or in modern revelation as to the age of the earth. Personally, I take discoveries relative to that subject at face value, and set aside for later consideration the theories of men. Often there are contradictory theories in men's interpretations of facts.

I have often said, as you say in your letter, that Adam was no doubt upon this earth long before it had reached the condition to permit a Garden of Eden to be planted, for he was one of those who, under God's command, organized the earth. Neither am I upset over the statement that Adam's was the first flesh upon the earth, because it seems from the context and from common sense, for that matter, that that means the first flesh of Adam's kind. There is so much connected with these matters that we do not understand that I am willing to take what little we know of a factual nature without offering any interpretations that may mislead others. Apparently, in your discussion of the subjects in your letter, you have followed almost precisely the method I have followed. I am glad of that, of course.

Leaving that subject, may I ask when are you going to write another book for the benefit of the Saints? Are you at work on something now, or is your present work so consuming that you have no time left for anything else?

Thank you for your letter. Let me have another.

All good wishes to you.

Cordially yours,

John A. Widtsoe

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