

Evolution
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Report of President Clawson made at the regular weekly meeting of the first Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, October 1.

The Council of the Twelve were in session on Tuesday, September 29, their quarterly meeting day.

I was requested to give rather a full report of our proceedings because of the importance already attached to Brother Falmagne's sermon which was referred to the Twelve for their opinion as to whether or not it should be published.

The whole day was given over to a consideration of this matter. Nearly all, if not all, the brethren spoke expressing their views with reference to various portions of the sermon which, in the view expressed, were quite fully analyzed.

Early in the discussion one of the brethren said he could not see an objectionable utterance in the sermon whatever, that, in his opinion, it is exactly what is needed to be placed in the hands of our young people who are charged with skepticism, to recite them to the teaching of the gospel. He reported that a number of copies of the sermon had been applied for to distribute among the young people of the Church.

Others of the brethren did not apparently entertain this view.

The consensus of opinion was, as I interpreted it, that if any portions might be given from the sermon, it published in its present form, that would lead to such discussion in the Church and possibly get into the minds of many people doubts in relation to the correctness of some matters, or doctrines, given to the Church by Divine Revelation. As for instance, it is well understood by the members of the Council to be a doctrine of the gospel, given to the Church by Divine Revelation, through Joseph Smith, the Prophet, that Adam was the first man (on the earth); that he was called the Father of the ~~human~~ family, and presides over the ~~human~~ family under Christ; that he is the Ancestor of Man, which in itself is a very significant title; that mortality and death upon the earth came through the fall in the Garden of Eden. I take it for granted that the members of this Council accept these doctrines fully and completely without reservation.

This was one phase of the question under discussion. Now, let me point out the other principal phase briefly, and as fairly as I am able to do.

The sermon in one paragraph sets forth the claim, (which to do justice to Brother Falgout, is given as the views of eminent scientific men) that there was life and death upon the earth in an endless succession of animals and plants running back into the ages and ages that are past, thus leaving one to infer that there was life and death upon the earth before Adam, or prior to the fall.

Moreover in the Church the discussion takes this phase our young people will be left to choose between Divine Revelation and the claims of science, which latter are often based on theory.

And again the scientific theory, or claim, is set forth in the sermon in the effect that man finally emerged, or was developed from and through a line of animal life reaching back, into numberless ages of the past, to the protoplasm. This of course is the doctrine of evolution and is as I understand it repugnant to the teachings of the Church of Christ.

Should this phase of the sermon be discussed among our people, many misleading inferences would be drawn, and questions like this might arise: If there was life and death and a race of men before the fall of Adam, then there must have been two Adams and two falls, also two fathers of the human family, all of which would lead to other questions.

Finally a motion was made and seconded to the effect that in the opinion of the Twelve the sermon should not be published. This motion, after some further discussion, was followed by a substitute motion to the effect that the sermon be returned to Brother Falgout and that he be requested to remodel it if possible by cutting out the objectionable features. Brother Falgout consented to do this.

The substitute motion was adopted. The matter will be further considered by the Twelve. I may be permitted to say that throughout the discussion good feelings were maintained by the brethren who agreed, notwithstanding difference of opinion, to desire to do the right thing.

Note: When this report was made to the Council some of the brethren took exception to the expression, "reaching back, into numberless ages of the past, to the protoplasm." I presume I should have said "reaching back, into numberless ages of the past, to the simple-celled protoplasm."