

All from 1931: (= vol. 29)

Jan. 2, Fri. - Attended a 9:30 a.m. meeting of the Council of the Twelve, held in President Rudger Clawson's office. The purpose of this gathering was to consider a protest made by Elder Brigham H. Roberts, senior president of the First Council of the Seventy, against a discourse delivered by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith of the Council of the Twelve at a genealogical conference held in April last. The main point at issue is the affirmation by Elder Smith that prior to the Fall there was no death of either plants or animals upon the earth. At today's meeting Elder Roberts responded to an invitation and made an oral and extemporaneous address, supporting his protest. It should be said that what is herein called a "protest" was simply a letter addressed to the First Presidency, later referred by them to the Twelve, asking whether the utterances of Elder Smith were to be considered as expressions of personal opinion or as authoritative statements sustained by the First Presidency and Twelve. By common consent and agreement Brother Roberts is to present his views in writing. (29:

Jan. 7, Wed. - Attended a meeting of the Council of the Twelve, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Elder B. H. Roberts read a carefully prepared and lengthy paper on the subject of the Antiquity of Man, summarizing much geological evidence, and arguing for the existence of pre-Adamites. The paper, covering fifty typewritten pages, was taken under advisement by the Council. (29:

Jan. 14, Wed. - ... Had a somewhat extended conference with Presidents Heber J. Grant and Anthony W. Ivins on the question of the Antiquity of Man, these brethren having invited me to give my opinion on certain points. (29:

Jan. 21, Wed. - Sat with the Council of the Twelve, which convened at 1:30 p.m., and listened with interest and profit to a lengthy paper read by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, in reply to the paper presented by Elder B. H. Roberts, regarding the Antiquity of Man, and, as Elder Smith affirmed, the utter absence of death in any form upon the earth before the time of Adam's fall. Like the paper of Elder Roberts, this was taken under advisement. (29:

Apr. 7, Tues. - Attended a called meeting of the General Authorities of the Church, all present, beginning at 9 a.m. and lasting until nearly 1 p.m. The principal subject was the consideration of a subject brought to the front by Elder B. H. Roberts, who addressed a letter to the First Presidency asking whether certain utterances by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, made at a meeting under Genealogical Society auspices last October, were to be accepted as an expression of personal opinion or as an authoritative pronouncement. Involved in this question is that of the beginning of life upon the earth, and as to whether there was death either of animal or plant before the fall of Adam, on which proposition Elder Smith was very pronounced in denial and Elder Roberts equally forceful in the affirmative. As to whether Preadamite races existed upon the earth there has been much discussion among some of our people of late. The decision reached by the First Presidency, and announced to this morning's assembly, was in answer to a specific question (29:

that obviously the doctrine of the existence of races of human beings upon the earth prior to the fall of Adam was not a doctrine of the Church; and, further, that the conception embodied in the belief of many to the effect that there were no such Ireadamite races, and that there was no death upon the earth prior to Adam's fall is likewise declared to be no doctrine of the Church. I think the decision of the First Presidency is a wise one in the premises. This is one of the many things upon which we cannot preach with assurance and dogmatic assertions on either side are likely to do harm rather than good.

Aug. 9, Sun. - I was the speaker at the afternoon services in the Tabernacle, (29: taking the subject "The Earth and Man."

Nov. 5, Thur. - I attended Council meetings as usual. President Heber J. Grant was absent in California. At both the 9 o' clock meeting of the Council of the Twelve and the 10 o' clock meeting of the combined Councils (29: the subject of my address delivered on August 9 was again considered, the question being as to whether it is wise to publish that address. As there is a difference of opinion among brethren of the Twelve, President A. W. Ivins took the matter back into the hands of the Presidency today.

Nov. 16, Mon. - I was called into brief consultation by the First Presidency (29: on the subject of my Tabernacle address of August 9.

Nov. 17, Tues. - According to appointment made yesterday the First Presidency gave special attention to the matter of my Tabernacle address before referred to, going over it with considerable care, though it was apparent to me that the brethren had before considered it among themselves and had reached (29: their decision. This they announced to me by way of instruction to send back the copy which I had recalled from the printer, and to have the address published in the Deseret News of next Saturday evening, and further to have it printed in pamphlet form. I shall make further comment when the address is actually in print.

Nov. 21, Sat. - The address of August 9 appears in the Church section of this day's Deseret News, and the delivery of the pamphlets carrying the address was made to us today. The cause of the long delay in publishing this address, and some incidental points of interest, should perhaps be noted here. The subject is "THE EARTH AND MAN." A copy of the complete pamphlet will be bound in with this Journal. See entry herein for Tuesday, April 7, 1931. (29:

On April 5, 1930, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith of the Council of the Twelve made an address at the Genealogical conference, which was published in "The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine" of October, 1930. This address was entitled "Faith Leads to a Fulness of Truth and Righteousness."

The following is taken from page 148 of the magazine referred to:

"No Death on the Earth Before Adam"

"As I have read, the Lord pronounced the earth good when it was finished. Everything upon its face was called good. There was no death in the earth before the fall of Adam. I do not care what the scientists say in regard to dinosaurs and other creatures upon the earth millions of years ago that lived and

died and fought and struggled for existence. When the earth was created and was declared good peace was upon its face among all its creatures. Strife and wickedness were not found here, neither was there any corruption. I do not know how long the earth was in course of preparation. I do not care. That has nothing to do with the plan of salvation. It is sufficient for me to know that after some lengthy period of time, or times, called days, the earth was finished and pronounced good by its Creator. All life in the sea, the air, on the earth, was without death. Animals were not dying. Things were not changing as we find them changing in this mortal existence, for mortality had not come. Today we are living in a world of change because we are living under very different conditions from those which prevailed in the beginning and before the fall of man."

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Elder B. H. Roberts, Senior President of the First Council of Seventy, inquired by letter addressed to the First Presidency as to whether these utterances of Elder Smith were to be construed as an expression of his personal opinion or as a doctrine of the Church. The Twelve considered the matter in several sessions and reported to the First Presidency, whose action is noted herein under date of April 7 last. Many of our students have inferred from Elder Smith's address that the Church refuses to recognize the findings of science if there be a word in scriptural record in our interpretation of which we find even a seeming conflict with scientific discoveries or deductions, and that therefore the "policy" of the Church is in effect opposed to scientific research.

In speaking at the Tabernacle on August 9 last I had not forgotten that in the pronouncement of the First Presidency mentioned under date of April 7 last it was advised and really required that the General Authorities of the Church refrain from discussing in public, that is preaching, the debatable subject of the existence of human kind upon the earth prior to the beginning of Adamic history as recorded in scripture; but, I had been present at a consultation in the course of which the First Presidency had commented somewhat favorably upon the suggestion that sometime, somewhere, something should be said by one or more of us to make plain that the Church does not refuse to recognize the discoveries and demonstrations of science, especially in relation to the subject at issue. President Anthony W. Ivins, of the First Presidency, presided at the Tabernacle meeting, and three members of the Council of the Twelve were present -- Elders George F. Richards, Joseph Fielding Smith and Richard R. Lyman. Of course, Elder Smith, and in fact all of us, recognize that my address was in some important respects opposed to his published remarks, but the other brethren named, including President Ivins, expressed their tentative approval of what I had said.

I am very grateful that my address has come under a very thorough consideration, and I may say investigation, by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. The discussions throughout as relating to the matter have been forceful but in every respect friendly, and the majority of the Twelve have been in favor of the publication of the address from the time they first took it under consideration. I have hoped and fervently prayed that the brethren would be rightly guided in reaching a decision, and, as the Lord knows my heart, I have had no personal desire for triumph or

Nov. 21, Sat. (cont'd)

victory in the matter, but have hoped that the address would be published or suppressed as would be for the best. The issue is now closed; the address is in print.

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