

January 21, 1931

President Heber J. Grant & Counselors.

Dear Brethren:

We, the Council of the Twelve, to whom was referred the letter of Elder B.H. Roberts addressed to the First Presidency, a criticism of a certain discourse delivered by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith and published in the Genealogical Magazine, October, 1930, beg leave to report that we have given the time of three rather lengthy meetings to this matter.

At the first meeting Elder Roberts read and submitted a paper embodying his views at some length on the theory of pre-Adamic races, based on scientific investigation - a theory, we understand, which Elder Roberts has promulgated in some of his public utterances among the Latter-day Saints.

At the third meeting Elder Joseph Fielding Smith read and submitted a paper in which he defended the claim he made in the sermon published in the Genealogical Magazine above referred to, viz.; that pre-Adamic races on the earth is simply a theory and not a Church doctrine, and is not true. This he sought to prove by quoting Joseph Smith, the Prophet, Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, John Taylor and other high Church Authorities, particularly the late First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund.

He also quoted a number of passages from the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants and Pearl of Great Price, pointing to the facts, as he construed them, that there were no pre-Adamic races of man on the earth, neither was there death upon the earth prior to the time of Adam.

We quote a sentence from Elder Roberts' letter: 'If Elder Smith is merely putting forth his own opinions I call in question his competency to utter such dogmatism either as a scholar or as an Apostle. I am sure he is not competent to speak in such manner from general learning or special research work on the plain implication at least of the scriptures, both ancient and modern, and with the teaching of a more experienced and learned and earlier Apostle than himself, and a contemporary of the Prophet Joseph Smith.'

This reference and language we regard as very offensive on the part of Elder Roberts, who fails to show the deference due from one brother to another brother of higher rank in the Priesthood. However, it may be said that these brethren affirmed at the close of the meeting that they entertained no ill feeling, one toward the other.

Elder Roberts' letter is herewith returned, and the two papers alluded to are now submitted to the Presidency. The Twelve await your further instructions relative to this matter, if you have any to give.

Sincerely your brethren,

The Council of the Twelve

By (signed) Rudger Clawson, Pres."