

December 15, 1830

President Heber J. Grant
and counselors,
Building.

1830

Dear Brethren:

I am writing you to ask if the article published in the Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine of October, 1930; under the title "Faith Leads to a Fulness of Truth and Righteousness," dealing mainly with the antiquity of the life and death upon the earth and treated as a discourse by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith on the 5th of April, 1930, is a treatise on that subject that was submitted to and approved by the Council of the First Presidency and perhaps the Quorum of the Twelve? And is it put forth as the official declaration of the Church on the subject treated? Or is it the unofficial and personal declaration of the opinion only of Elder Smith?

In the latter event then I feel that that fact should have been expressed in the discourse; or if it is an official pronouncement of the Church then that fact should have been avowed; for the strictly dogmatical and the pronounced finality of the discourse demand the suggested explanation in either case.

If the discourse of Elder Smith is merely his personal opinion, while not questioning his right to such opinions, and also the right to express them, when so avowed as his personal opinions, yet I object to the dogmatic and finality spirit of the pronouncement and the apparent official announcement of them, as if speaking with final authority.

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 subject; nor as an Apostle, as in that case he would be in conflict with 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—whos public discourse on the subject appears in the Journal of Discourses and was publicly endorsed by President Brigham Young, all which would have more weight in setting forth doctrine than this last dictum of Elder Smith.

My question is important as effecting, finally, the faith and status of a very large portion of the Priesthood and educated membership of the Church, I am sure; and I trust the matter will receive early consideration. All which is respectfully submitted.

Very truly your brother,
BHR