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Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

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Did B. H. Roberts Lose Faith in the Book of Mormon?

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PART I

DID B. H. ROBERTS LOSE FAITH IN THE BOOK OF MORMON?

John W. Welch

(Pages 35-38 revised as of June 30, 1986)

Many of B. H. Roberts' efforts to defend the Book of Mormon, as well as to collect arguments against it, were pioneering explorations. B. H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon (Univ. of Ill., 1985) gives a partial picture of those efforts.

That book prints, for the first time, three papers written by Roberts, who served from 1888 to 1933 in the First Council of Seventy. In these particular papers, Roberts lists all the arguments he could muster against the Book of Mormon. Here he makes no real effort to articulate answers, only to ask questions.

Different readers of this collection will have different reactions. To some, it will be reassuring and impressive to know that Roberts was able to believe in the Book of Mormon despite his great disappointment in not being able to answer certain questions about its origins. To some, the mere fact that Roberts asked tough questions about the Book of Mormon will be seen as evidence that he lost faith in the book. To others, it will be irrelevant what Roberts believed.

For those who care what Roberts believed, historical accuracy is important. If one is going to claim responsibly that Roberts had specific doubts or uncertainties about the Book of Mormon, one must look closely at all the historical evidence. To the extent Roberts did not actually have profound doubts, it is not truthful to make him into a struggling hero of dissent or instantiation of irrational faith.

The intriguing Roberts papers are servicably printed in this recent volume. That publication is welcome and will perhaps be the first in several other volumes of Roberts' collected works.

These papers, however, do not speak for themselves. They are unusual. They were not intended or prepared for publication. Such papers always call for a careful and accurate presentation. These in particular need to be read in the context of the valiant but sometimes stormy character of B. H. Roberts. The editors apparently agreed that the papers did not speak for themselves, since they provided two lengthy introductory essays and one bibliographical essay.

For those who want accurate and comprehensive historical information upon which to understand and judge these writings, they will have to look outside the present volume. For these omissions and errors, Brigham D. Madsen, professor emeritus of history at the University of Utah, and his collaborators owe their readers an explanation, if not an apology. By his own admission, having an accurate introduction was not considered very important. The editors of these papers have been some careless errors and have been selective. They have not sought diligently to report a complete picture. This may have been the result of benign ignorance or of a lulling bias. Whatever the cause, the facts behind this indictment are clear. The case is open and shut.

I recognize that these are strong words. They are not, however, intended to convey anything personal. But strong words are necessary to set the record straight, for those to whom having an accurate record is important. I consider this more unfortunate than reprehensible, but inexcusable nonetheless, particularly in senior scholars. Brigham Madsen himself remarked to me on the phone, "I should have been more inquisitive. I should have been a little more careful. You're probably right about this." George Smith, one of the collaborators, figured there had apparently been an "omission." Madsen also volunteered that he does not ordinarily work or write in the area of Mormon history, as is generally well known, and that he relied too much on Everett Cooley, recently retired as Special Collections Librarian at the University of Utah, who edited the Roberts papers for this publication. Smith, however, thought that Madsen

was responsible for the editing. Yet Cooley gives a lot of the credit to Smith, saying that "no one was more enthusiastic in his determination to see Roberts's studies published . . . who has special competence as a student of Roberts and his writings." (p. viii).

The linchpin of Brigham Madsen's Introduction to these B. H. Roberts papers is the idea that Roberts wrote the "Book of Mormon Study" while serving as President of the LDS Church's Eastern States Mission. Many statements in the Introduction lead up to this important point. The point is important, because the later in life he wrote the Study, the greater the likelihood that it represents his final and honest opinion about the Book of Mormon. Madsen communicates to the reader the belief that Roberts was deeply troubled by the Book of Mormon problems raised in the Study--that the Study was a serious research project which lasted over several years and which raised doubts that long festered in Roberts' mind and soul--that Roberts returned to it often, energetically and surreptitiously. Madsen, it should be noted, never says precisely when he thinks the Study was written. But when he wrote the Introduction, he clearly figured the Study was written in New York. Smith told me that he supposes it was written in 1923. Madsen has now agreed that the Study was written in the Spring of 1922, but it remains to be seen whether he will correct his Introduction as a result.

I believe, however, that a significantly different picture emerges since it can be shown that Roberts had completed the Study before leaving to serve as mission president about May 30, 1922 and that he returned to it only briefly to write the "Parallel" after his return to Salt Lake City in October, 1927. This shows that Roberts wrote the "Study" all in a short period of time (in the first part of 1922), that he did this as an outgrowth of a Church committee assignment to study "Book of Mormon difficulties" posed by Mr. Couch, that he basically put it behind him when he went off to New York (aside for a few hours in some New York libraries), and that we should determine his personal assessment of this work by looking at his writings and

behavior over the last 11 and a half years of his life (April 1922–September 1933), not over his last six years, as Madsen proposes (p. 29).

Fortunately the documentary record which Roberts left us is clear and convincing. It proves beyond any reasonable doubt that he wrote the Study before leaving for New York. This paper first presents the direct evidence proving that important point. Most of this evidence comes right from documents held by the Marriott Library at the University of Utah. These critical bits of evidence were uniformly ignored by the editors and not reflected in the printed text of Roberts' Study. It is hard to justify these omissions. Second, Brigham Madsen's Introduction will be reexamined, point by point, in light of the facts. Third, all the known statements of B. H. Roberts about the Book of Mormon during the last 11 and a half years of his life will be scanned, demonstrating abundant, forthright statements by Roberts in support of the Book of Mormon. Finally, the evidence that Roberts lost faith in the Book of Mormon will be examined and will be found unpersuasive.

The editors considered several of these tasks beyond the scope of their volume. I present this information to take the discussion of Roberts writings one step further and to allow the reader to evaluate these interesting papers in light of a more complete collection of facts.

1) When did B. H. Roberts write the "Book of Mormon Study"?

The original typescript of the Study is held in the University of Utah Special Collection, Box 4, Folders 6–25 (each folder is a separate chapter). It is apparent that the entire collection was typed at the same time, on the same typewriter, with the same margins, on the same kind of paper. Thus if we can date a part of it, we can date the whole of it. This we can do, eight ways.

(a) The first page of the first chapter in this typescript dates the document. It originally read: "A number of years ago--thirteen years ago, to be exact--in my treatises [sic]

on the Book of Mormon under the general title A New Witnesses for God [sic], I discussed" A copy of this typescript page is attached hereto as Exhibit 1. The full three-volume New Witnesses was published in 1909. Thirteen years later is 1922. This is not an estimate, for Roberts says, "thirteen years ago, to be exact." It was in 1922 that Roberts had his secretary type the Study--the entire Study.

The version of the Study printed in 1985, however, omits this crucial phrase. It reads, "A number of years ago in my treatise [sic] on the Book of Mormon under the general title New Witnesses for God, I discussed" (p. 151). The editors omit the phrase which so clearly dates the Study, because as Roberts proofread some of its pages, he made a few changes. One of those changes was to draw a line through "thirteen years ago, to be exact." He apparently thought the point irrelevant or dated.

Nevertheless, the editor surely should have put these extremely important words "thirteen years ago, to be exact" into the printed text with a dotted line drawn through to indicate what Roberts had done. That is how significant historical documents are generally printed. Not only here but throughout the document, the editor should have indicated where he made his own corrections of typos. Cleaning up this document makes it appear more of a finished product than the rough draft it was. He should have indicated with brackets where Roberts and even others made their few handwritten corrections, for indeed some of the corrections are not in Roberts' hand and are expressly dated to after Roberts' death. They should have shown where and what Roberts had crossed out, especially where this information has a direct bearing on the dating of the typescript. These are conscious, deliberate editorial decisions. Yet they are not adequately explained or noted, let alone was the information used in the editor's historical analysis.

(b) The 1922 dating is corroborated and pin-pointed further by the fact that at the time Roberts dictated the original typescript he did not know the date of the first edition of Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews. At least four things prove

this. First, Roberts refers in the Study only to pages in the second edition. Second, at time he wrote the Study he could only speculate (as he does on the first page of Chapter II) that the first edition must have been published shortly before 1825. He arrived at this conclusion only because the second edition said that the first had sold out quickly. Roberts surmised that the first edition must have been published around 1820. Third, he left a dated comment at the back of the copy of View of the Hebrews he was using in Salt Lake City in 1922; the note reads, "Buildings described near City of Mexico pp. 202-3 (recent revival of interest (1921-22))." This was a copy of the second edition. Fourth, among the few handwritten changes made by Roberts on the typescript of the Study (his proofreading was uncharacteristically light) are five singular changes in the first four chapters: On page 3 of Chapter I he added in handwriting "(first edition 1823)." On page 5 he changed "1820" to "1823." In Chapter II he crossed out most of the whole paragraph speculating about the publication date of the first edition and substitute instead the brief line "The first edition was published 1823; the second edition in 1825." A page later he made a similar addition: "first and second editions respectively--seven and five years"--i.e. before 1830. On the first page of Chapter IV he added the handwritten note: "The first edition was published in 1823." See Exhibit 2. These handwritten changes are printed as the text in the published version of the Study, pp. 151, 155 and 170, without any clarification of the fact that they were handwritten changes, without an explanation of what was deleted, and without anything to set these items apart from the uncorrected portions of the typescript.

Yet here is a vital clue: We can date the writing of the typescript beyond any doubt to a time before Roberts knew the date of the first edition of View of the Hebrews. This also explains why all page references to View of the Hebrews in the Study are to the second edition, a point not noted by the editor.

When, then, did Roberts learn the date of the first edition of View of the Hebrews? Upon his arrival in New York, one of the first things Roberts did was go to some libraries. It appears he had two very specific objectives in mind, namely to find copies of books referred to in View of the Hebrews (which he had not yet seen), and to find the date of Ethan Smith's first edition. He found Jedediah Morse's book on June 7, 1922 in Rochester; he also found Elias Boudinot's book. These are referred to in View of the Hebrews. He found three other editions of Morse in the New York City Library, along with Priest's Wonders of Nature, which in 1824 quoted Ethan Smith (Roberts, apparently still looking for the date on the first edition, remarked "Evidently 1st Edition"). There he also finally found Ethan Smith's first edition. He took brief notes on these books. All the notes appear to have been typed at the same time--at least on the same New York typewriter (and a different typewriter than the one on which the Study was typed). These five books, mentioned by Madsen (p. 25), appear to constitute the only such notes made by Roberts back East and the only books Roberts looked at in New York on this issue. The notes are in box 16, folder 7 at the University of Utah, attached hereto as Exhibit 3. Since Roberts was at the Rochester Library on June 7, 1922 (he lectured in Buffalo on June 3), and since his notes in Exhibit 3 all seem to be of the same vintage, it appears that Roberts found these books in the first month of his mission.

If Roberts did not know the date of the first edition of Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews until June or July, 1922, then it necessarily follows that he must have written the Study sometime before. Thus we can now further conclude that he wrote the Study, not only in 1922, but in the Spring of 1922, before he made his visit to the New York City Library. None of this squares with Madsen's idea that Roberts made an exhaustive study back East before writing the Study.

(c) Further corroboration of the Spring 1922 date comes from the fact that Chapter IX of the Study (pp. 207, 209) refers specifically to the 1838 printing of Priest's American

Antiquities. This was a book which Roberts had long before studied; he acquired his own copy of it in 1903 and referred to it in Volume 3 of his 1909 New Witnesses (pp. 68-73, 495-96). The fact that Roberts tells us in the study that he is using the 1838 printing of American Antiquities is significant, for he also happened to write down the publication date of the edition of Priest's American Antiquities which he saw in the Rochester Library June 7, 1922. It was the 1841 printing of the fifth edition. See Exhibit 3. Therefore, that trip to the Rochester Library did not produce any information used by Roberts in the Study. Brigham Madsen knew which edition Roberts saw in Rochester (he mentions it on p. 25); he also knew which edition Roberts cites in Chapter IX, yet he ignored this significant difference.

(d) Moreover, it is singular that none of the five books seen by Roberts in New York was used by Roberts in the Study. There is no evidence that Roberts gathered any new information there except the date of the first edition of View of the Hebrews (which he refers to by date but never quotes from or cites). Jedediah Morse is not mentioned in the Study. Elias Boudinot is cited in the Study (p. 157) but only as a book mentioned in View of the Hebrews. Roberts learned when he read Star in the West that Boudinot had used the same passage from Esdras about the travels of the Ten Tribes as did Ethan Smith; the Esdras passage is a main point for Roberts in the Study, yet Boudinot's use of it is not mentioned there. As seen above, Priest's American Antiquities was not new to Roberts. Likewise, Priest's Wonders of Nature and Providence is mentioned only briefly at the beginning of Chapter I of the Study (pp. 152-53). There Roberts explains that this book was not known to him in 1909, but that thirteen years later--in 1922 before going to New York--he already knows of it. All this also is inconsistent with the idea that Roberts wrote the Study after reaching New York.

(e) The folders in which the "Book of Mormon Difficulties" and the "Book of Mormon Study" were kept also offers a clue that they were both produced at the same time. The

first study, said to be 141 pages long (actually there are 145 sheets), was generated to state the issues raised by a Mr. Couch. This "lengthy but valuable report" was submitted to and considered by the Quorum of the Twelve on January 4-5, 1922. Roberts kept it in a folder with a label attached to it. The label reads: "First Series on B of M Studies Submitted to 1st Pres., XII Apostles, & LXX Jan 1922 ["21" being changed here to "22"]. Copy to be left with Madge." (A second copy of the same was marked "First Series ["Series" is a change from "Studies"] in the B of M Studies already submitted to First Pres. XII Apostles & 1st C. of LXX. For file in BHR's Office Ch. Hist. Off.") Significantly, the Study was kept in an identical folder with the same kind of label and the same handwriting attached to it. The label reads "Second Series of the(?) Studies in B of M.--not yet submitted to authorities--this copy left with Madge." Copies of these labels are attached hereto as Exhibit 4, from box 4, folder 5, of the University of Utah Special Collections. This is corroborating evidence that the two papers were written close to the same time, that the labels were written at the same time, and that a copy of the Study was left with Madge, probably when Roberts went to New York. It is unclear who Madge was.

(f) A sixth point by itself is not conclusive, but in light of the foregoing is supportive. A few of the pages in the Study are typed on the back of official stationery. It is letterhead for the First Council of the Seventy, showing Seymour B. Young as the senior member of the Council. See Exhibit 5. Since Seymour Young died December 15, 1924, this paper would have been in Roberts' office in 1922, while it is unlikely that it would have been in his office in 1927, although that is remotely possible. It should be noted that Roberts' unsigned cover letter that was never sent, hand-dated March 15, 1923, was typed without date on the same letterhead.

(g) The letter which Roberts wrote on October 24, 1927, to Apostle Richard R. Lyman also dates the Study to the spring of 1922, as can now be better understood. It also offers direct evidence that the Study was written before Roberts left for New

York. In it Roberts says that after the meetings he had with the Apostles to discuss the "Book of Mormon Difficulties" in January, 1922, "came my call to the Eastern States [April 1922] and the matter was dropped, but my report [this has to have been the Study, not the Difficulties, since Roberts next says that this report was not considered] was drawn up nevertheless together with a letter that I had intended should accompany it, but in the hurry of getting away [Roberts was set apart on May 29, 1922] and the impossibility at that time of having my report considered [he planned to submit it], I dropped the matter, and have not yet decided whether I shall present that report to the First Presidency or not." This letter is reprinted by Brigham Madsen on p. 59 of his book.

Several important things can now be concluded from this letter:

1. Roberts wrote the letter which he later dated March 15, 1923, at the same time he finished his Study (a copy of this letter is attached hereto as Exhibit 6);
2. Roberts had that letter typed (and the typewriter was the same as the machine on which the Study was typed) in a hurry just before he left Salt Lake City in the spring of 1922 (hence the Salt Lake stationery--the same as is used in the typing of parts of the Study);
3. Roberts took the letter and a copy of the Study to New York, where he made a few changes after he learned the date of the first edition of View of the Hebrews, and on March 15, 1923. (perhaps in preparation for his return to Salt Lake City for April Conference 1923 at which he spoke on the "Message of the Book of Mormon") he was again entertaining the idea of submitting his Study to the Church authorities in Salt Lake City. Neither the letter nor the Study, however, was ever submitted.

(h) Finally, on March 14, 1932, Roberts wrote a letter to Elizabeth Skolfield, his former secretary, in which he says:

I am forwarding you with this mail an introductory chapter to a work of mine which is in typewritten form under the title of "Book of Mormon Study" it makes 450 pp. of typewritten matter. It was from research work I did before going to take charge of the Eastern States Mission. I had written it for

presentation to the Twelve and the Presidency, not for publication, but I suspended the submission of it until I returned home, but have not yet succeeded in making the presentation of it, although the letter of submission to President Grant was made previous to leaving the E.S.M. I have made one feeble effort to get it before them since returning home, but they are not in a studious mood. (emphasis added).

A copy of this letter is attached as Exhibit 8. It is important, first-hand evidence of Roberts' assessment of the Study only a year and a half before his death. One can only wonder why Madsen did not make any effort to obtain and print this letter along with the other "Correspondence Related to the Book of Mormon Essays," especially since he knew of the letter--he discusses it in part on p. 346.

The foregoing eight points show beyond any reasonable doubt that Roberts wrote the Study in the spring of 1922 and that many evidences of this fact were either consciously or negligently eliminated from the printed version of this paper.

2) Specific Comments on Brigham D. Madsen's Introduction.

In light of the foregoing, the following statements in Madsen's Introduction must be rewritten.

(a) Madsen says that Roberts' New Witnesses for God, "as will be seen, remained his chief defense of the Book of Mormon until his further investigations in the early 1920s." (p. 3, emphasis added). This unsupportably implies that New Witnesses did not remain his chief defense afterwards. In 1927, Roberts still described New Witnesses as one which "many regard as [my] greates[t] contribution to the literature of the church." "Autobiography," p. 210, also cited by Madsen, p. 11. While he was Mission President in New York, Roberts edited and apparently approved the text of a missionary slide show called "The Book of Mormon and American Archeology," by Gustive O. Larson (copy held in the James H. Moyle Collection, Box 15, folder 3 in the Church Historians Office). This slide show presents arguments similar to those in New Witnesses and quotes Roberts, Bancroft, Humboldt and Brinton with approval.

(b) Next, Madsen says that Roberts' "personal belief in [the Book of Mormon's] authenticity was apparently unshaken in 1905" (p. 12), unnecessarily implying that his faith was later shaken.

(c) Brigham Madsen says that while Roberts knew very little about American antiquities in 1909, he "was to spend several years in study to rectify that omission" (p. 15). In fact, he spent about six months or less.

(d) Madsen says that "as soon as he was located in New York and as he traveled around the mission, he began researching and gathering materials to satisfy himself about the origins of the Church and especially the Book of Mormon" (pp. 24-25). As seen above, Roberts apparently went to the Rochester and New York libraries only. His trip to the Rochester Library on June 7, 1922 was during the first few days that he was in New York and he was in the area for other speaking obligations. He was looking for the date of the first edition of Ethan Smith's book and other specific items. He was not out to "do research." He was neither desperately looking for support nor perniciously nor perfidiously digging up dirt.

One should also correct Madsen's assertion that Roberts began serving in New York in April, 1922 (p. 60 n.1); otherwise it would have been impossible for Roberts to attend a meeting at the Salt Lake home of James H. Moyle on May 25, 1922 to discuss Book of Mormon external evidences, as Madsen reports he did (p. 22). Roberts was honored in Salt Lake City by the YMMIA general board on May 24, 1922. See R. Malan, B. H. Roberts, A Biography (Deseret, 1966), p. 115.

(e) Brigham Madsen says Roberts "copied" books during his travels (p. 25). No such copies exist in Roberts' papers and Roberts would not have hand-copied entire books. He wrote down the information off a few title pages and a few quotes (see Exhibit 3).

(f) "Among them" were five books, says Madsen (p. 25). There is no evidence that there were any others. Nor did Roberts "acquire" these books (at least they are not found in the Roberts Memorial Library).

(g) In what can be read as an insidious statement, Madsen says: "We thus have a picture of Roberts publicly trimming and nurturing an eastern branch of the tree of Mormonism while privately digging away at its roots trying to determine from whence they came" (p. 25). That he was "digging away" is without factual basis. There is no evidence that he was sneaking out and doing things behind the backs of his Church colleagues or missionaries. The implicit suggestion here that Roberts was two-faced about his mission presidency is unsupportable.

(h) Madsen implies that Roberts selected New York as his mission field so that he could do this research (p. 24). He was, of course, attracted to the area in which the Church was restored, but he selected New York also because it was the "most populous" mission in the Church. (See "Autobiography," p. 217.) He wanted the chance to preach to as many people as possible, a motive ignored in the editor's version of this material. As for the suggestion that the Church sent Roberts away because he was "an errant buzz saw" raising too many problems over this "Book of Mormon confrontation" (p. 24)--this theory seems implausible when the Church at the same time offered Roberts the editorship of the Deseret News.

(i) We should understand that the Roberts letter hand-dated "March, 15th 1923," Exhibit 6, was written very shortly before Roberts left Salt Lake City, around June 1, 1922 but was not dated by Roberts until the following year, as discussed above. Thus it appears that while the letter was not written on March 15, 1923, still it was accurately hand-dated at that time. The letter was not likely written exactly on March 15, 1922, as Madsen suggests (p. 26), but probably around that time.

Brigham Madsen is correct that the stationery on which this letter was written indicates that the letter was typed in Salt Lake City (p. 33, n. 65). He overlooks the fact that this also confirms further that the entire Study was written there at that same time as well.

Madsen also misreads, though harmlessly, Roberts' suggestion that the Committee (Elders Ivins, Talmage, and

Widtsoe) with whom he had been assigned to work on these problems should continue to work and report on this Study. Roberts requested "that they report on the same." (Letter, March 15, 1923, printed on p. 58.) Madsen erroneously thinks it impossible that Roberts would send such a letter in 1923, since he could not meet with such a group in Salt Lake City while he was in New York; but it is apparent that Roberts is not suggesting at all that he meet with them.

(j) The editor says: "Now, back from the Eastern States Mission, he indicated to Lyman that he had come upon an 'embarrassing' theory about the Book of Mormon." (p. 26). Again, it is wrong to suppose that he had come upon any new theory while back in New York. Furthermore, Roberts did not think the theory "embarrassing." Roberts says "in the hands of a skillful opponent [it] could be made, in my judgment, very embarrassing." (p. 59, emphasis added).

(k) Brigham Madsen says that Roberts "seized the opportunities presented by his mission presidency in New England to examine early literature that could have been available to Joseph Smith. . . . He bolsters [his research] by reference to the latest scientific investigations available to him during the years 1922-27" (p. 149). There is no evidence of any such "bolstering" or "latest scientific investigations." There is considerable evidence to the contrary. Roberts does not "seize" any such opportunities. The Study itself does not contain a single reference to any source dated after 1921. Of the 62 books on Ancient America in the Roberts Memorial Library (which Madsen mentions on p. 20), the only post-1922 works among them are Grant's Pictorial Ancient America (1927), Matthew's Evolution of a Horse (1927), Osborn's The Hall of the Age of Man (1929), a 1932 pamphlet, and various pamphlets and leaflets from the Smithsonian (1916-1926). See Exhibit 7. This does not represent much of an effort to scour the East Coast for the latest scientific investigations. Almost all the rest of Roberts' holdings were pre-1903 publications, and many bear acquisition dates of 1902 and 1903, the time when Roberts was working on the

first version of New Witnesses. It is true that Roberts remained in New York from April, 1927, to October, 1927, where he had "access to the large libraries, and where he [could] devote his time to the writing of another book." (Truman Madsen, Defender of the Faith (Bookcraft, 1980), p. 337.) But that all-consuming book was the greatest doctrinal effort of Roberts' life, The Truth, the Way, the Life.

(1) Madsen says Roberts completed "his final study of the Book of Mormon by the time he left New York City" (p. 29). Again, it was virtually completed before he even arrived in New York City. Moreover, the fact that the Study was only lightly proofread shows that Roberts never considered this study "completed." When he was serious about his writing, he proofread and edited heavily. (See Truman Madsen, Defender of the Faith, p. 358 ["He was incapable of reading a page of copy without revising."])

What little proofreading there is offers evidence that he had completed most of the proofreading before leaving for New York. There were three copies of the Study (a ribbon copy and two carbons). Roberts marked "proofread R" on the chapters he proofread. The last half of the Study shows little and sometimes no evidence of proofreading. Roberts proofread one copy (sometimes two) making changes with pencil. Another person later conformed the other copies to the corrected copy. That person wrote a note on the bottom of page 2 of Chapter III in Part II (Box 15, folder 21) reading "verified Dec. 6, 1933 Occasionally the word 'thereof' and 'howbeit' is omitted in the later editions. E.C." This tells us that this corrector was a person with the initials "E.C." and that his or her conforming work was done after Roberts' death. Furthermore, since one of the three copies does not have the changes reflecting Roberts' discovery of the date of Ethan Smith's first edition but does contain all the other proofreading changes, one can conclude that this copy was the set "left with Madge" when Roberts went to New York and that virtually all of Roberts' proofreading was completed before he left Salt Lake City, May 29, 1922. At some time he had Chapter I

of Part I retyped, but no other chapters. These points are evidence that Roberts never considered the Study completed and that he wrote the Study in 1922 as an outgrowth of his assigned committee work but then was able to let it be.

In sum, one is tempted to say, "No, Sir, that's just not history."

Madsen says that we may never know whether Roberts retained his belief in the Book of Mormon, because the record "during the last six years of his life" is "mixed" (pp. 29-30). Realizing now that we should look at Roberts' last 11 and a half years, and not just his last six years, and inasmuch as Madsen's treatment has not scratched the surface even of those last six years, I now turn to an examination of Roberts' statements about the Book of Mormon from 1922 to 1933.

3) B. H. Roberts: His Final Decade.

Below are listed (with emphasis added) the every significant known place in which Roberts made any statement about the Book of Mormon after the time he encountered Mr. Couch and wrote the "Difficulties" and "Study." The full texts of these talks and articles are available from F.A.R.M.S., Reprint ROB-33, as expanded October 1985.

It is obvious from this list that Roberts voluntarily, frequently, definitely, unambiguously and unequivocally referred to and averred, without exception, the truthfulness and historicity of the Book of Mormon. No one assigned Roberts to speak on certain topics. If he felt uncomfortable about the Book of Mormon, he could have easily selected other topics. He does not do this. He was almost incapable, it seems, of talking or writing, without making powerful reference to the Book of Mormon. This is not the profile one would expect of a man harboring serious inner doubts or profound spiritual reservations about the Book of Mormon or about the Church.

Did his studies of the Book of Mormon "bother" Brother Roberts? Intellectually of course, his studies were challenging and provoking. But if these studies had any impact whatsoever on

Roberts' spirituality or on his commitment to the Church and to the Book of Mormon, the evidence of any such "wrestling" or "pained and troubled doubts," as Madsen writes (p. 22) or of any disassociation from the Book's "adherents" (p. 1) or from his "early belief in the Book of Mormon" (p. 1) is imperceptible. And one suspects that these many statements are only representative of many others that went unrecorded.

"Why Mormonism?" Tract No. 4, May 1922: "The existence of this American Volume of Scripture was revealed to Joseph Smith Joseph Smith's own account of this book, how he came in possession of it--translated it--and what it is, must always be of first importance with reference to its origin and character." pp. 43-44.

"How splendid all this, IF TRUE! . . . But is it true? . . . All that can be done here is to set forth the tremendous truth in statement form, and leave the Reader to pursue his inquiry through our larger works on the authenticity and credibility of the Book of Mormon." pp. 60-61.

"This promise is given to you, O Reader, no less than to those who have already sought by this means the Truth and found it. . . . You Reader may know by the power of the Holy Ghost that this Witness to the Deity of the Christ is true, if you will seek that testimony in the way prescribed" p. 63.

General Conference Talk, April 1923: The Book of Mormon is a needed witness of the divinity of Jesus Christ. "Yet, notwithstanding all these testimonies of the New Testament scriptures, God brings forth a new volume of scripture, the Book of Mormon, which we are learning to call the American scripture, the word of God to the ancient inhabitants of this land of America." p. 64.

General Conference Talk, October 1923: Roberts reported on the work of the Eastern States Mission, the Conference at Cumorah, held on September 1923, and spoke on the messages of the Book of Mormon. "The great outstanding thing in the Book of Mormon is the fact of the visit of the Redeemer to the inhabitants of this western world, and the message of life and salvation delivered here These things being true, makes the advent of the Book of Mormon into the world the greatest literary event of the world, . . . for the Book of Mormon is supplemental to all this, the necessary part of a consistent whole which manifests the mercy and justice of God in providing these great things of the gospel for the men of the Western world, as well as to men in the Eastern world." p. 91.

"The Book of Mormon . . . constitute[s] the sublimest message ever delivered to the world." p. 92.

"Christ in the Book of Mormon," Improvement Era, January 1924: "Thus the risen Christ visited the Western world, made

known himself unto them; made known to them God's plan for man's salvation; taught them the fulness of the gospel; organized his Church among them; and gave them the same moral and spiritual laws that he had given to the people of the Eastern lands . . . " p. 191.

"By this revelation of what God did for the people of the Western world--making known the truth to them; making known the gospel to them--the covenant of everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began; sending the risen Christ to them, that they might hear his voice and be brought to a knowledge of God, and led into the one fold of Christ . . . " p. 191-192.

"Destruction of Ancient Nations in America," Improvement Era, 1924: "Two nations, with two distinct civilizations, occupied America in ancient times, and both had been destroyed before the arrival of the Europeans who came toward the close of the fifteenth century." p. 288.

General Conference Talk, April 1924: "Unto Nephi, the first Nephi, were given some very great visions concerning the life and the mission of the Christ, before he came in the flesh Hence the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints holds in its hands, and is commissioned to use these other holy scriptures brought forth in this chosen land, speaking from the dust of 'Cumorah's lonely hill,' for the sleeping nations of the American continent; . . . they are here to affirm, with all the strength that comes from these volumes of witnesses,--this cloud of witnesses--that Jesus is indeed the Christ For he has provided the means of maintaining faith in Him as Creator, as Sustaining Power of the universe." p. 79

A New Outlook Upon Mormonism, 1924 (Radio address given while President of the Eastern States Mission): "Following its bold and unique initiative, 'Mormonism' announced a revelation respecting America and her ancient inhabitants that was equally astounding and appealing. Who were these people of the western world discovered with their continent four hundred years ago? Were they children of the Most High? And if so had God left himself without witnesses among them? To this question men could give no answer. But 'Mormonism' did by producing an American volume of scripture written and compiled by their prophets, proclaiming not only an Israelitish origin for the people, but giving an account of the resurrected Christ's personal visit to them, after his departure from Judea." p. 3-4.

"To the Latter-day Saint this is what the Book of Mormon is, a New Witness for God, and for the fundamental truths of the old Christian faith. This is what it does for him: strengthens his faith, by increasing the evidence on which that faith rests; makes brighter his star of hope of the life everlasting; his church, rising out of all this, and guided by continuous revelation,--abiding in touch with God--becomes for him a present temple of God, built up of living stones wherein is no darkness or doubt." p. 4.

General Conference Talk, October 1925: "The third contribution comes from our Book of Mormon, and is the contribution of sleeping nations once inhabiting the American continents, a message through their prophet leader to the modern world, and a contribution to the modern world for its enlightenment. How splendid all that is!" p. 148.

Mutual Improvement Association Conference, June 7, 1925: "We stand for absolute faith in the Eternal God, revealed in Jesus Christ.' That comes from our Book of Mormon, and is part of the preface of that ancient record, but it has always been published upon the title page of the translated work. That preface explains that this record has been brought forth and preserved, that it might lead to the convincing of 'the Jews and Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.' This is the primary purpose of this American volume of sacred scripture, the Book of Mormon, not to testify merely to the divinity of Christ. That is quite generally conceded, speaking now of Christendom. Being divine is one thing, but being Deity, the Eternal God, is something more than being divine."

General Conference Talk, October 1926: "And, of course, under that inspiration, not only to translate the Book of Mormon, but also to send it forth into the world." p. 121.

"In my interview with David Whitmer, in 1884, as he went over this ground, led by my questions, when we came to this part of it he said to me that in the progress of turning the leaves, or having them turned by Moroni, and looking upon the engravings, Moroni looked directly at him and said: 'David, blessed is he that endureth to the end.'" p. 126.

Improvement Era, 1926, p. 234: "The third contribution comes from our Book of Mormon, and is the contribution of sleeping nations once inhabiting the American continents, as message through their prophet leader to the modern world, and a contribution to the modern world for its enlightenment. How splendid all that is!"

Rasha--The Jew, 1926: "A new Witness to these truths has been brought forth. The testimony of the ancient peoples of the western world is brought to you, 'Rasha,' the Jew, and to all Jews. The prophets and apostles of ancient America, your kinsmen, 'Rasha,' speak to you through this 'American Volume of Scripture.' Their testimony unites with the testimony of the 'Twelve Apostles of the Lamb'--the Apostles and Witnesses of the New Testament. The Lord has spoken, 'Rasha,' declaring new things and reaffirming old truths. This is my testimony: A New Dispensation of the old gospel is proclaimed. The Church of the Living God is again organized among men. Divine authority is here." p. 155.

New Witnesses for God, Second Edition, 1926: In 1926, Roberts republished Volume II of New Witnesses, dealing with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, "practically uniform with the first edition."

General Conference Talk, April 1927: "The outstanding feature of our Book of Mormon scriptures is, that the book shall be a witness to the Gentiles and especially to Jews, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the very Eternal God, manifesting himself to all nations. That is found, as you all know, on the title page of the Book of Mormon, which the Prophet Joseph Smith declared was not his composition. He found it engraven on the title page of the gold plates." p. 35.

"I cannot but regard the opening that has come to us in the Eastern States to furnish material by which we may approach our cousin Judah with the message of the Book of Mormon, as an opening of the way by the inspiration and power of the Spirit of the Lord." p. 38.

General Conference Talk, October 1927: "Only three weeks ago, about now, I had the pleasure of standing upon the summit of the Hill Cumorah in company with President Grant. Being there upon the height of land, which so splendidly commands a view of the whole surrounding country, I could not refrain from recalling the time when Moroni stood upon the crown of that hill with the evidence of the ruins of the civilization of his people about him." p. 22-23.

The Deseret News, December 24, 1927: "A message from God through a prophet of the Nephites brought to light by the revelations of God in these last days, and sent out to the world to help them to learn the truth at this sore hour of their need."

The Deseret News, December 24, 1927: "This volume of scripture called the Book of Mormon, after the principal compiler of it, an ancient prophet living in the fourth century A.D."

New Witnesses for God, Third Edition, 1927: In 1927, Roberts published the third edition of Volume II of New Witnesses with only about a dozen typographical corrections from the 1909 first edition.

The Deseret News, March 3, 1928: "The recent purchase of the Hill Cumorah by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints awakens wide spread interest in this sacred depository of the record called the Book of Mormon, engraven upon gold plates by the Prophet Mormon, who might well be considered the chief historian and compiler of historical records of the ancient Nephite people descendants of the tribes of the house of Israel inhabiting America."

General Conference Talk, April 1928: "And the world would have lost this if it had not been for the Book of Mormon coming forth, and there is a hundred more such glorious things that have come to the world in that book to enlighten the children of men, all of which would have been lost had this American volume of scripture not been brought forth." p. 112.

"And also, Father, we thank thee for the flood of knowledge that has come into the world, the testimonies from the Nephite scriptures, as well as those which have come from the Jewish scripture." p. 112.

"And now, O Lord Jesus, if thou couldst but come into the consciousness of our souls this day, as thou didst come into the vision of the ancient Nephites in the Land of Bountiful, we would join their great song of praise and worship, saying--'Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God!' And we, like them, would fall down at the feet of Jesus and worship him this Easter day! Amen." p. 113.

"Master Stroke of Philosophy in the Book of Mormon," The Deseret News, June 16, 1928: "If the point of approach to account for this Book of Mormon passage is to deny the validity of the Book of Mormon account of its origin, and repudiate it as an utterance of an ancient American prophet, and hold it to be the awkward presentation of the idea by Joseph Smith while writing the Book of Mormon (most likely the view of my questioner), then the wonder of its presence in the Nephite record is not decreased. For either it must be said that Joseph Smith by innate, untaught philosophy reached these great and sublime heights of abstract thought (and that they are such heights of thought we shall see before the close of this article), or else it must be shown that such thoughts and conclusions upon the problems of opposite existences and the puzzle of moral evil were matters of such common knowledge and general discussion in the time when the vicinity of Joseph Smith when the Book of Mormon was undergoing production, that it was possible for him to gather up from such common knowledge and general discussion such ideas and put them into the mouth of this prophet Lehi of the fifth century B.C. Is it possible that this could be the solution? Emphatically no."

The Deseret News, July 7, 1928: "And here, as in Lehi's doctrine of opposite existences, it will be seen that the Mormon Book registers another master stroke of philosophy."

The Deseret News, September 15, 1928: "A like scene happened in America, when the risen Christ appeared to the Nephites, he gave them the same privilege that he granted to Thomas, and raised up a multitude of witnesses who had touched the wounds of the risen Christ, and we have their testimony to present to the world to make stronger the testimony of the Judean evangelists."

Liahona The Elders' Journal, February 5, 1929: "Three years subsequent to this first revelation [the First Vision], this same young man received the visitation of an angel, who said that he was one of the ancient prophets that lived among the ancient inhabitants of America. He had been resurrected from the dead, and was now sent to him to reveal the existence of a record of the ancient inhabitants of the American Continent But let us see if 'Mormonism' fulfills the Doctor's conditions: First, then, the story is miraculous. It deals with direct revelations from God, the visitation of angels, the translation of an ancient record by the inspiration of God; receiving authority from heavenly messengers to preach the Gospel, which is to be attended by all the gifts and graces ever enjoyed by the saints." p. 392.

General Conference Talk, April 1929: "The Book of Doctrine and Covenants stands unquestioned as to its authorship, and I wish to express a belief that there is evidence of inspiration in it equal to that of the Book of Mormon." p. 119.

"Perhaps I might call your attention to the fourth book of scripture which the Church accepts officially and by which it is willing to be judged--The Pearl of Great Price. The Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price are prized by us above all other books." p. 120.

"This book of Scripture, the Book of Moses, as well as the Book of Mormon, then, brings light and truth into the world for the salvation of men. God grant that this light and truth may be extended among the nations, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen." p. 121.

Liahona the Elders' Journal, July 9, 1929: "The all-important matter connected with the Book of Mormon is the fact that it gives an account of the visit of the resurrected Christ to the ancient inhabitants of the western world. . . . This book, so strong a witness for the divinity of Jesus Christ, is equally as strong as a witness for the Gospel . . ." p. 48.

General Conference Talk, October 1929: "I happened to be reminded today that next April it will be fifty years since I commenced my public ministry in the Church. . . . I am mentioning some of these things in order that my profession of faith that I have made here today may be supported by the evidence of steady, persistent effort on my part to develop and to advocate and to establish this great work of God." p. 90.

"But this is my object, and my object alone; that after bearing testimony to the fundamental things of this work, and my confidence in it, I hope that if anywhere along the line I have caused any of you to doubt my faith in this work, then let this testimony and my indicated life's work be a correction of it. I make reference to these personal things in fifty years of service so that you may know that my testimony has some sanctions for it in the life of service I have given to the cause." p. 91.

General Conference Talk, April 1930: "My work in connection with it has been given in the ordinary service of my regular work in the Church, prompted and sustained through all the years by my deep love of the subject, and my desire to leave on record one sermon on the New Dispensation of the Gospel." p. 42.

"The Record of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim, the Book of Mormon, has been revealed and translated by the power of God, and supplies the world with a new witness for the Christ, and the truth and the fulness of the Gospel." p. 47.

Comprehensive History of the Church 1930: Eight chapters in Volume I deal with the Book of Mormon (pp. 69-175). Regarding the internal evidences of the book's authenticity he says on p. 175: "There is both unity and diversity of style, that where abridgments occur they have the characteristics of abridgments and that where original documents are involved they are so given," and that references to "the custom of Hebrew peoples are

authentic." He makes the point that "the governments it describes are in harmony with the political principles of the age in which those governments are said to have existed." Finally, he says, "it has an atmosphere about it, a spirit, that bears witness of its truth."

Minutes from his Stake Conference Talk, Los Angeles Stake, May 24-25, 1930: "Spoke of his experience with the Jewish 'Rasha.'"

The Deseret News, October 11, 1930: "The second step in the unfolding of the New Dispensation was the revelation which made known that this other 'fold' of the Christ, who were to hear his voice, were no other than the branch of Israel in America. Hence came Moroni, an ancient prophet among that people, now an angel of God, to make known the visit of the Christ to them, that their testimony of the Christ might be added to the witness of those of the eastern continents for evidence for the enlargement of faith."

The Deseret News, October 18, 1930: "And hence the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the record of God's hand dealings with the ancient inhabitants of America, chiefly a branch of the house of Israel, descendants of Joseph, son of Jacob."

The Deseret News, October 25, 1930: "The heart of the Book of Mormon--the American Volume of Scripture--is its testimony for the Christ. The record gives the account of the fulfillment of the signs promised to the Nephite people of the birth and death of the Christ."

The Deseret News, November 1, 1930: "Next to, but higher in importance than the voice broadcasted through the Book of Mormon in witness of the Christ, is the direct, personal testimony of the Christ himself, when after his resurrection he appeared to the Nephites."

The Deseret News, November 15, 1930: Showing ways in which the Book of Mormon prophesied correctly, Roberts wrote: "That [prophecy about America] was prophesied in the book published in 1830, when the possessions of our country were small, as between then and now; and at a time when democracy was very limited in the world."

The Deseret News, November 22, 1930: "Surer recognition of Jesus being God may not be found in sacred writ [than in the Book of Mormon]."

Liahona The Elders' Journal, November 25, 1930: "Alma, in his inspired utterance in the Book of Mormon, fixes that, saying that after the resurrection there is no dissolution that takes place, but spirit and body become inseparably united into one spiritual personage, spirit predominating, and that is why the revelations say, 'Man is spirit.'" p. 274.

The Deseret News, December 6, 1930: "It is to be found so many times phrased in the Book of Mormon that it may be said to be peculiar to the Nephite Scriptures, for it is repeated in that form by Mosiah, Alma, Nephi, and also by Moroni in the Book of Ether, and always in connection with the idea that Jesus is the Creator."

The Deseret News, December 13, 1930: "And now the Book of Mormon: 'The Messiah cometh * * * that He may redeem the children of men from the fall.'"

The Deseret News, December 20, 1930: "The terms 'Redeemer' and 'Savior' as applied to Jesus the Christ may reasonably be placed in apposition; so closely alike are they in meaning as to be near synonyms. And yet in our New Dispensation revelations one may feel rather than see distinctly, perhaps, a difference in the mingled use of the words"

Minutes from Stake Conference Talk, Alpine Stake, January 11, 1931: He spoke of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and analyzed the sacramental prayers [i.e. in Moroni 3-4, showing them to be evidence of the divine origin of the Book of Mormon--see Stake Conference, April 23-24, 1932]. Spoke on his visit to David Whitmer and David Whitmer's testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon."

The Deseret News, January 17, 1931: "'If ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, It(He) will show unto you all things what ye shall do.' (Book of Mormon, II Nephi xxxii:15)."

Stake Conference Talk, Palmyra Stake, January 23-24, 1931: "He then directed his remarks to the trials met within the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon. He explained the beautiful thoughts in the sacramental blessings."

The Deseret News, January 31, 1931: "With this the BOOK OF MORMON--a new dispensation scripture--is in strict accord."

The Deseret News, March 7, 1931: "'Men are that they might have joy' (Book of Mormon, II Nephi, 11:25). Such is the declaration of the Prophet Lehi to his sons; and the statement is followed by the prophetic utterance respecting the mission of the Christ. I say 'prophetically uttered' because Lehi lived some hundreds of years before the Christbirth."

Stake Conference Talk, Juab Stake, March 7-8, 1931: "Discussed the subjects of the sacrament [again probably his talk about the sacrament prayers as evidence of the divine origin of the Book of Mormon], tithing, and prayer."

The Deseret News, March 14, 1931: "The 'joy' contemplated in our Book of Mormon passage is to arise from something more than mere innocence. The 'joy' contemplated there is to arise through knowing misery, sorrow, pain, and suffering; through seeing good

and evil locked in awful conflict; through a consciousness of choosing in that conflict the better part, the good; and not only in having chosen it, but in having wedded it by eternal compact; made it his by right of conquest over evil."

Liahona The Elders' Journal, April 2, 1931: "The doctrine of free agency of man could scarcely be more strongly set forth than it is in these passages [in the Book of Mormon]."

Liahona The Elders' Journal, April 28, 1931: "The logical step to be taken in the development of that New Dispensation after God had raised up his first Witness, Joseph Smith, was to increase the evidence for the supreme religious truths; and hence the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the record of God's handdealings with the ancient inhabitants of America, chiefly a branch of the house of Israel, descendants of Joseph, son of Jacob. . . . This book is virtually a new volume of scripture, the voice of the inhabitants of the Western continent, testifying that they were not neglected of God in the matter of making known to them the supreme truths of his revelation to man--the existence of God, that Jesus Christ was his Son, and the Savior of the world. Bringing forth this book may be said to double the divine evidence for these truths, and it must follow that those who accept it greatly enlarge their Faith by reason of thus increasing the volume of evidence for Faith." p. 543.

Minutes from Stake Conference Talk, Pioneer Stake, January 24, 1932: "Quoting a distinguished scientist in the electrical world, President Roberts said that so long as the fundamentals of Mormonism continued true, this work would grow and advance.

"The speaker referred to the testimony of David Whitmer concerning the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. And it [revelation] must be taken into account when the theories of men seemed to conflict with the word of the Lord.

" . . . With such a mission, followers of Christ could not do other than resist the theory, scientific though it might be, that the universe was coursing its way to complete and perfect annihilation.

"Elder Roberts, in concluding, reaffirmed his allegiance to the work of the Lord and pledged the remaining days of his life to advancing the interests of God's Kingdom upon the earth."

General Conference Talk, April 1932: "Then another mighty stride forward was made, when God revealed the scriptures of the American continent, and brought them to the knowledge of men. He raised up witnesses to bear special testimony to that great event. . . . Must the same consequences follow the testimony of these witnesses in the new dispensation as those in the time of the Christ? Yea, verily!" p. 97.

Minutes from Stake Conference Talk, San Francisco Stake, April 23-24, 1932: "He discoursed on the works of Joseph the Prophet, using as a text the words of Christ to the Jews, 'If ye believe me not, then believe the works that I do.' He recounted the many things accomplished by the young prophet, the hallmarks

of a man inspired of God, which gave powerful refutation to the charges made against him by his enemies. . . .

"He analyzed the "prayer perfect," the sacramental blessing as given in the Book of Mormon. Proof of its divine origin is found that not a word can be added or taken from it without destroying or lessening its power. This was not the work of an unlettered youth, declared the speaker, but evidence of divine inspiration. When this prayer is thoughtfully considered, it gives great weight to claims of the modern prophet."

Minutes from Stake Conference Talk, Nebo Stake, March 19, 1933: Roberts "read and commented upon the Book of Mormon prophecies relating to and predicting the proud destiny of this great American nation."

"What College Did to My Religion," Improvement Era, March 1933: "To begin with the New Dispensation Church has not bound itself to limits inconveniently narrow by denying revelation . . . We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God . . . This was stated so in 1842, and it is still our faith."

General Conference Talk, April 1933: "Especially do I believe that because I think that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints occupies a certain 'pride of place' in connection with a knowledge of the terms upon which the prosperity and the redemption of his nation rest. I remember to have read in the Book of Mormon certain passages that bear upon this thought. We are told in that precious volume of scripture that when the floods receded from this land it became a very choice land unto the Lord, a land that, through this word of the Lord from the Nephite race, receives its most precious descriptive name." p. 116.

"The promises of the Lord in respect to these things are very wonderful and make the Book of Mormon one of the most valuable books that has ever been preserved, even as holy scripture. . . . Now, of course, perhaps the world will not admit that this was a prophecy uttered some six hundred years before the coming of the Christ upon this land; but it must be inevitably conceded that these words are prophetic, because they were uttered in 1830, when the Book of Mormon was published." p. 117.

"I see a beautiful unity in these things found in the Book of Mormon and the testimonies to which we have listened during this conference. I think we have the right to lift up the drooping hand, and to speak the word of encouragement to the people of the United States, and chiefly for this reason, that neither the government of the United States, in its achievements and in its character of great leadership, nor the Church, has yet reached the climax of those things for which they were established." p. 120.

Last Tabernacle discourse delivered Sunday, June 18, 1933: Roberts closed as follows: "God said to Joseph Smith he gave unto him commandments which inspired him, and gave him power from on high to translate the Book of Mormon and thence followed all

which brought forth the new and last dispensation. . . . All this and numerous revelations to the Prophet which brought forth a development of the truth, that surpasses all revealed truth of former dispensations." See Discourses of B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948), pp. 104-5.

Statement made on August 7, 1933, to Wesley Lloyd: See Exhibit 10 below for full text, and see discussion in Section 4(c) below.

Statement made about September 1, 1933, to Jack Christensen (interviewed by Truman G. Madsen, April 25, 1979): "Ethan Smith played no part in the formation of the Book of Mormon. You accept Joseph Smith and all the scriptures."

The Seventies Correspondence School, February and May 1934 (written shortly before Roberts' death on September 27 and published posthumously by J. Golden Kimball on behalf of the Roberts estate): "Joseph Smith, Translator . . . and gave him power from on high." February, p. 9.

"Of Treating Difficulties: Your spirit should rise to the height of your difficulties. Be undefeated. 'It is in themselves that men are thus, or thus.' Resolve that you will succeed. Resolution is intense desire backed by the will to do, the will to succeed." May, p. 14.

To summarize the foregoing would be to restate the obvious. In his last decade, as previously, Roberts scarcely writes or talks without quoting from the Book of Mormon, praising the Book of Mormon, affirming the antiquity of the Book of Mormon, and testifying of the divinity of the Book of Mormon. He stands by the things of the spirit even when the prevailing opinion of science is apparently to the contrary. He focused almost without exception on the messages of the Book of Mormon. It is interesting, in light of the present claims that Roberts harbored doubts about the Church or about the Book of Mormon, that he explicitly bore strong testimony of his commitment to the kingdom to the very end (January 24, 1932) and apologized in case he had ever said anything that might somehow unintentionally lead a person away from the Church (General Conference Talk, October, 1929).

4) The Evidence to the Contrary.

Against the foregoing, what evidence is there that the record is "mixed" or that Roberts gave up faith in the Book of Mormon? After looking at all the talks, all the notes, all the letters, all the files I have been able to find, I find only the following.

(a) First is the fact that Roberts wrote the Study and kept it to himself. Why, one may ask, would Roberts have written this paper, pointing out all the Book of Mormon weaknesses he could think of (and he knew them well), unless he "had lost faith" in the Book of Mormon? The answer I believe become clear when several factors about the nature of this Study and Roberts' attitudes toward it are understood.

(1) It is clear that Roberts did not want the Study published. It was a private working study. In his letter to his daughter Elizabeth, dated March 14, 1932, attached as Exhibit 8, after commenting on the need to tell President Grant that he should not argue that pre-Columbian "cement" was unknown in 1829 (since it was), he says of the Study:

I have written it for presentation to the Twelve and the Presidency, not for publication, but I suspended the submission of it until I returned home, but have not yet succeeded in making the presentation of it, although the letter of submission to President Grant was made previous to leaving the E.S.M. I have made one feeble effort to get it before them since returning home, but they are not in a studious mood.

I may say it is an "awful" book, but it contains a collection of facts which ought to be known by [the Twelve and the Presidency]. . . . I must ask you to be very careful of it and return the Mss. to me after you have made such use of it in your study as will meet your requirements. (emphasis added).

From this letter there can be little doubt of Roberts' desire that this Study go to the Twelve and First Presidency. He was not hiding the documents, but the right time to present them had not yet come along. Roberts clearly did not intend the Study for publication (Grant Ivins' letter notwithstanding, as is discussed below).

(2) Roberts wrote the Study for legitimate reasons to record and collect his own thinking on the problems and by way

of committee assignment. (See generally, Truman Madsen, "B. H. Roberts After Fifty Years, Still Witnessing for the Book of Mormon," Ensign [January, 1983], pp. 11-19, which with the exception of a couple erroneous details--Madsen assumed the Study was submitted to President Grant, and is wrong on the date of the second edition of Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews but not on the date of the first edition--is an accurate article.)

When Roberts left for New York, he commented to his brethren, "Wise men prepare." Roberts did not want to be surprised by arguments he was unaware of; he did not want the Church to be making arguments that would not stand up. In his undelivered coverletter of March 15, 1923, he says that he wrote the Study so that "those who ought to know" have everything pro and con about the Book of Mormon before them. Here he is only giving the con.

Roberts always stood by his faith that "the Book of Mormon must submit to every test, literary criticism with the rest." Improvement Era 14 (1911), p. 667. "I am taking the position that our faith is not only unshaken but unshakable in the Book of Mormon, and therefore we can look without fear upon all that can be said against it," Roberts said in the March 15, 1923 letter, after he had completed the Study. Whenever the opinions of science happened to stand contrary to the Gospel, Roberts had no trouble, to the end, siding with the Gospel. See Minutes from Stake Conference, Pioneer Stake, January 24, 1932, above.

Roberts was also concerned that other Church leaders were not as concerned as he with these issues. The others were not in a "studious mood." Roberts expressed his disappointment that the committee of Ivins, Talmage, and Widtsoe did not come up with more (although Widtsoe would later find in Hugh Nibley some very pertinent answers). By writing the Study, filled with provocative questions, Roberts appears to be goading his colleagues toward a higher sense of the importance which Roberts placed on the need to deal with these issues.

It is also significant that he was asked to work on these problems by way of committee assignment. The responses which he and the committee had come up with to Mr. Couch were not satisfactory to Roberts. The committee continued to meet to discuss the problems, but time and historical resources were lacking to do much more with them. Roberts thought that the Study would go to this committee (he recommended this action in his undelivered March 15, 1923 letter). He hoped they would help him in coming up with better answers. He hoped that his work would be "to the advantage of our future defenders of the faith." Letter to Richard R. Lyman, October 24, 1927.

If Roberts was going to offer an answer to a problem, he needed to state the problem as clearly as possible. There can be no question that he does this in the Study. He is tough. But one should not overlook the fact that his purpose is only to state the questions, as will be seen next.

(3) To understand the Study, one needs to look carefully at what Roberts actually says in it. Observe the following:

(i) He ends most sections with questions. To be sure, they are challenging questions. Rarely, however, does he state a specific "conclusion." Never does he draw a general conclusion. He wrote in his unsent letter to Heber J. Grant that these were not his "conclusions"; his conclusions were "undrawn."

Typical questions are: "What shall our answer be then?" (p. 115). "What is to be our general standing before the enlightened opinion of mankind?" (p. 143). "Did the author of the Book of Mormon innocently follow Ethan Smith . . . ?" (p. 201). "Can such numerous and startling points of resemblance and suggestive contact be merely coincidence?" (p. 242). "In light of this evidence, . . . it could with reason be urged" that it was "possible for [Joseph Smith] to create a book such as the Book of Mormon is." (p. 250). "Does it not carry with it the proof that it is the work of a pious youth dealing with the very common place stock arguments clumsily put together . . . ?" (p. 271). The evidence I sorrowfully admit, points to Joseph Smith

as their creator. It is difficult to believe that they are the product of history" (p. 271). "I think it cannot be questioned but where there is sufficient resemblance . . . to justify the thought that the latter might well have suggested the former." (p. 308, emphasis added). He ends the "Parallel" noting that the similarities raise a "legitimate query." (pp. 335, 344, emphasis added in each case).

It was shown above that the editor eliminated important information by not printing the words crossed out by Roberts in his proofreading. On at least one occasion the editor failed to include one of Roberts' handwritten notes, even though he claims to be printing these studies with those handwritten changes. On page 5 of Chapter III in Part II (Box 15, Folder 21), the editor does not include a handwritten note with which Roberts softened the "conclusiveness" of one of his statements by adding the disclaimer "evidently it might be urged." This, however, does not appear in the printed text (it should come just before the phrase "the work of a boy of undeveloped mind" on p. 266).

(ii) Roberts raised many arguments which he had answered before. He had not rejected his earlier arguments. For example, he had already in 1909 adequately answered the question (raised in the Study on pp. 259-61) about how a small group of Nephites could build a temple like Solomon's. See New Witnesses III, p. 523. Likewise, he had no trouble in 1909 attributing "petty errors in grammar and the faulty use of words" to Joseph Smith and not to God. "The Origin of the Book of Mormon," American Historical Magazine 4 (1909), p. 196 (cited by Brigham Madsen, p. 31, n. 27).

(iii) Roberts raises arguments that he continues to answer later. The Study of the Book of Mormon was an on-going inquiry for Roberts, not a settled issue. For example, regarding the question of whether Joseph Smith's powers of imagination and creativity were sufficient to have written the Book of Mormon, Roberts regularly preaches in the 1930s that the inspired and perfect sacramental prayers are evidence that the Book was not

written by Joseph Smith. See Stake Conference Talk, April 23-24, 1932. On the problem of Nephite government (p. 224), Roberts continues to present, in his Comprehensive History (1930), Vol. I, p. 175, the case that Nephite government was at home in antiquity. On the suggestion that the doctrine of "opposition in all things" came from View of the Hebrews p. 185, see his June 16, 1928, article in the Deseret News, quoted above, discussing this as a "master stroke of philosophy." In that article Roberts says "emphatically no!" to the idea that Joseph Smith got this idea from his New York information environment. On the matter of Joseph Smith taking from Ethan Smith the idea that the United States would become a great Gentile nation (Study, chapter 5), see Roberts' many statements about how such prophecies in the Book of Mormon prove its divinity; see, e.g., Deseret News, November 15, 1930.

(iv) He throws in arguments that need no answer. For example, the specious argument that Joseph Smith got the name "Ether" from the name "Ethan Smith" is included in the Study (p. 187), with the comment, "Do not take the idea too seriously, however, it is merely a passing suggestion of a bare possibility." In other words, Roberts was throwing in every argument he knew about, strong or weak, not just those he might personally consider meritorious. This type of "psychological" argument is not of Roberts' origination; it comes from Walter Prince, "Psychological Tests for the Authorship of the Book of Mormon," American Journal of Psychology 28 (1917), 373-89. If Roberts knew this literature, he would also have known that Prince's theory was soundly rejected by Theodore Schroeder, "Authorship of the Book of Mormon," American Journal of Psychology 30 (1919), 66-72. Still he tosses it in.

(v) In addition, Roberts put in arguments for which he had no ready satisfactory answer. The extent to which those questions can be answered today is the subject of my paper "Finding Answers to B. H. Roberts' Questions, and An Unparallel," F.A.R.M.S. Preliminary Report (1985).

In sum, the Study is a collection of questions, strong ones and weak ones, answered ones and unanswered ones. It was a question book, not an answer book. Roberts was not dissuaded by his lack of answers, as one can see by the fact that he continues after writing the Study to make assertions squarely contrary to questions which he potentially phrased in the Study.

(4) It is clear that Roberts never finished the Study. Many of the sections were scarcely proofread. Footnotes were left unfinished (for example, the note on p. 310--this footnote in the typescript ends with a comma, not a period). Chapters were left untitled. We also know that he wanted more time to work on these issues. In a letter dated December 23, 1973, Heber M. Holt wrote to Grant Ivins about Roberts' Book of Mormon research:

I also received a letter from A. C. Lambert. He along with many others have wondered about the larger study. B. H. Roberts was an honest courageous scholar. He said one time he wished to God he had 20 more years to correct some of his mistakes from lack of full information in many subjects.

Our assessment of this work, therefore, should reflect the fact that it remained, at the date of his death, unfinished and not to be published.

(5) Finally, no one should assume that Roberts, even in his younger years, believed that anyone could prove the Book of Mormon as an ancient record, although he figured that in time more evidence would be forthcoming. In New Witnesses for God, III, p. 406, he says:

So long as the truth respecting [the Book of Mormon] is unbelieved, [it] will remain to the world an enigma, a veritable literary Sphinx, challenging the inquiry and speculations of the learned. But to those who in simple faith will accept it for what it is, a revelation from God, it will minister spiritual consolation, and by its plainness and truth draw men into closer communion with God.

Secondary evidences were important for Roberts, but not controlling: "Our chief reliance for evidence to the truth of the Book of Mormon must ever be the witness of the Holy Spirit."

New Witnesses for God, II, p. viii (cited by Brigham Madsen, p. 13). Thus, one can take exception to Brigham Madsen's claim that the "dogmatic assertions" of the younger Roberts were replaced in the Study "by pained and troubled doubts" (p. 22).

(b) The second bit of evidence that Roberts lost faith in the Book of Mormon is said to be the fact that he had his secretary type the "Parallel" in 1927. Here too, however, no such inference is warranted.

Roberts did not write the "Parallel" for distribution. The copy of the "Parallel" given to Richard R. Lyman in 1927 carried the handwritten imperative: "This is copy made for Richard R. Lyman--Please do not copy it!" (See Exhibit 8, from box 16, folders 3-4.) Although the editor generally included the notes or corrections Roberts wrote on the Study and on the Parallel, he does not print this note. This omission contradicts his claim that "handwritten additions and corrections [on the "Parallel" are] included in this volume." (p. 27).

The writing of the "Parallel" was not a time consuming task. No new information appears in the "Parallel." Of his 18 points, three list only the place, title and date of publication of View of the Hebrews and of the Book of Mormon. Seven (including specific page references) come off the back page of Roberts' copy of View of the Hebrews, where he wrote 21 short notes. The other eight are summaries of Chapters 4-5 and 7-9 of the Study. This tabloid is not the result of extensive research from 1922-1927, as Brigham Madsen suggests (p. 149). Rather, Truman Madsen reports the existence of a memo listing these 18 points "which Roberts wrote in the New York Public Library" in 1922. Roberts' secretary recalled that Roberts dictated the Parallels in 1927 while she typed them out.

Finally, Brigham Madsen's characterization of Roberts' letter to Richard Lyman on October 24, 1927, should not stand. Madsen says: "Now, back from the Eastern States Mission, he indicated to Lyman that he had come upon an 'embarrassing' theory about the Book of Mormon . . .," as if to say that Roberts had come upon this theory while in New York. The letter

says something much different. Roberts is not reporting to Lyman something he had just "come upon" or something which he considered embarrassing. The letter makes it clear that the Study had been written long before, and that this was something which "in the hands of a skillful opponent could be made, in my judgment, very embarrassing." (p. 59, emphasis added).

(c) The only other evidence, as far as I am aware, offered to support the claim that Roberts lost his faith in the Book of Mormon comes from the Wesley Lloyd Journal, quoted at length, but only the last part, by Madsen, pp. 23-24. A copy of the xerox pages from this journal held in the Brigham Young University library is attached as Exhibit 10. The original copy of the journal apparently cannot be located.

The question here is whether one should conclude from this journal account that Roberts lost his faith in the Book of Mormon. I conclude that one should not. The negative inferences which one might draw from the report of this conversation, which Roberts had with the young Wesley Lloyd on Monday, August 7, 1933, can be understood, if not wholly mitigated, by the following factors:

(1) The conversation with Jack Christensen, September 1, 1933, listed above. In this conversation, Roberts affirms his faith in the Book of Mormon and denies that Ethan Smith had anything to do with the Book of Mormon. This conversation was a few weeks after the conversation with Lloyd.

(2) All historical evidence, even contemporary diary entries, is subject to evaluation. One question that can be asked about any such entry is how accurate the account is. By asking this question, I do not intend to impugn the character of the writer. Wesley Lloyd was a man of impeccable character and integrity. He was a man of faith and balance and scholarship, later rising to high levels of achievement in the academic world and rendering years of loyal service to the Church and to Brigham Young University. Nevertheless, there are minor details which are in error in this account. They may be attributable to several things. They may be attributable to the fact that

Roberts was old and ill and that he may not have been entirely concerned about detailed accuracy himself at that time. The minor errors in this journal account may also be a reflection of the fact that this account was written after Wesley Lloyd had returned to Provo. He was at Jack's until 8:30 p.m. that evening, then came home and took Chlar (?), Eva and Lillie downtown for a ride, so it was either very late that night or on another day before this entry was finished. He would have reported, as accurately as anyone could, what he recalled from his conversation with Roberts, but one should not expect any such report to be a verbatim transcript of Roberts' remarks.

Furthermore, Gary Lloyd, son of Wesley Lloyd, identifies the handwriting on these pages as that of Wesley Lloyd's wife, and since the original journal apparently cannot be located, it is hard to tell exactly when and how these pages were written, although one assumes they were written close to the time of the event and reflect the essence of what transpired. No doubt, any such account would get a few of the little details wrong under similar circumstances.

The facts that are wrong in this journal entry include the following: The Ritter question came in 1921, not after Roberts went to New York. The Study was done during 1922, not later, as reported here. Apostle Lyman asked if the research would "increase our difficulties," not "help our prestige." The Study was 450 pages, not 400. The Study was, as far as anyone can tell, never sent to President Grant, as indicated here. The Church has never had a copy, all of the copies remained in the hands of the Roberts family until they were donated to the University of Utah.

Thus, one might impersonally infer that, where several identifiable details such as these in such an account are not precise, other words or phrases may not be precisely reflected in the account either. It is possible, therefore, that this account is not an exact verbatim report of Roberts' comments or precise statement of Roberts' position. Lloyd allows for this possibility, when he begins this diary entry saying, "This

account of it is as near as I can remember." The blank page at the end of the entry may also indicate that he left several pages blank and came back with his wife to complete this entry sometime after August 7.

Another question one can ask is whether Roberts said, in so many words, exactly what appears in this account. For example, the journal account says that Roberts "shifted his base." Did Roberts say, in these words, "I have shifted my base," or was this Wesley Lloyd's conscientious effort to describe what he thought Roberts said or meant? We cannot know the answer to this question, but if the latter were the case, then we would like to know, before concluding anything about a shift in Roberts' faith, more precisely what he said or meant. Similarly, as to the statement that Roberts, in the Study, "swings to a psychological explanation of the Book of Mormon and shows that the plates were not objective but subjective with Joseph Smith," we can imagine the kind of thing Roberts might have said, but we cannot be sure. Since there is no explicit "swinging" in the Study or "showing" (let alone discussion) of what might be meant by the "subjectivity" of the plates, one might assume that this is not necessarily a precise or complete statement by Roberts or Lloyd of Roberts' full position, especially since as late as 1932 in Rasha the Jew, Roberts spoke of the angel Moroni delivering the plates and in 1932 repeated fervently his interview with David Whitmer who testified that he had seen the plates.

(3) We must also look thoughtfully at what this account says. What is meant by the words that Roberts "shifted his base on the Book of Mormon"? Shifting bases does not mean abandoning. It appears that Roberts shifted away from the external evidences, on which he had relied earlier, to the doctrinal approach typified in The Truth, the Way, the Life, which he found more satisfying in his later years. (See Letter of Mark Allen, July 20, 1983.) Roberts was profoundly impressed with the "master strokes" of philosophy he found in the Book of Mormon, and he found these more impressive than the

archaeological record, which was ambiguous to him. Shifting from an archaeological approach to a doctrinal or spiritual one, however, is not "losing faith in the Book of Mormon." The distinction in Roberts' mind between intellect and spirit is also visible in Lloyd's report that Roberts said the Study is "far too strong for the average church member but for the intellectual group he considers it a contribution to assist in explaining Mormonism."

(4) Lloyd says that Roberts thought that the Book of Mormon was in need of "the more [sic?] bolstering. His greatest claim for the divinity of the Prophet Joseph lies in the Doctrine and Covenants." Needing "more" bolstering was always Roberts' position. (It is unclear from the handwriting whether Mrs. Lloyd wrote "most" or "more.") As for Roberts' attitude toward the Doctrine and Covenants, perhaps what Roberts said to Lloyd was more along the lines of what he said in his conference address, April, 1929, than what these few words reflect. In that address, Roberts said "The Book of Doctrine and Covenants stands unquestioned as to its authorship, and I wish to express a belief that there is evidence of inspiration in it equal to that of the Book of Mormon" (emphasis added). Since the authorship of the Doctrine and Covenants is not questioned, it is easier to comprehend and defend than the Book of Mormon.

It is doubtful, therefore, that one should conclude from this account that Roberts lost his faith in the Book of Mormon.

Although the foregoing points are sufficient to explain Roberts' conversation with Lloyd for our present purposes, it is also well to remember that, all his life, Roberts was abrasive and argumentative. His temperament may have been somewhat aggravated during his last months of life due to his physical state. He had lost a foot, spent several months near death's door in hospitals, and suffered from the advanced stages of the diabetes that would kill him a few weeks later. "By early summer [1933] he sometimes mentioned as explanation for his tottering and bumping into things that he was having 'bouts with dizziness.'" (Truman Madsen, Defender of the Faith, p. 376.)

One can also assume that Roberts felt a great loss due to the death and funeral of James Talmage on July 27, 1933, only a week before this conversation with Wesley Lloyd.

Roberts' mood on August 7, 1933, may possibly be measured, although we cannot know for sure, in this context. It is obvious that Roberts expressed some complaints that day, as he discussed questions asked of him by Wesley Lloyd. Roberts remarked that his book The Way, the Truth, the Life had been subjected to "severe criticism" and rejected, and that an article by Joseph Fielding Smith had been published in the Utah Genealogy Magazine as a "veiled attack" on Roberts' unpublished work. He was upset enough that he offered to resign (this was not the first time Roberts had made such a threat). In response to the question of what he thought about the current Church missionary system, Roberts took issue with a new policy of not sending missionaries out without financial backing. He also commented that Brigham Young had made the Church into an "authoratative [sic] dictatorship" and warned that historians would expose Brigham Young someday. Finally he turned to the Book of Mormon, complaining that back in 1922 a "crisis had arisen where revelation was necessary" but that no answer had been forthcoming.

In the light of Roberts' temperament, his complaints to Wesley Lloyd were not uncharacteristic. Equally characteristic was Roberts ultimate position of faith above it all. As a result of this conversation, Roberts did not resign his position. He did not cease working on his Missionary Correspondence Course. He did not give up on the Church or cancel his August speaking appointments in Chicago. Nor did he (or Wesley Lloyd) give up on the Book of Mormon.

(d) In addition, there is Grant Ivins' letter dated 26 December 1967, cited by George Smith in "Is There Any Way to Escape These Difficulties": The Book of Mormon Studies of B. H. Roberts," Dialogue (Summer, 1984), p. 101. It offers weak and late information in claiming that Roberts "wanted to publish this comparison" but had been prevented from doing so by the Church

authorities. Ivins' information is not likely first-hand. His 1967 claim is also inconsistent with the weight of the contemporary evidence that Roberts did not intend the Book of Mormon studies for publication. It seems more likely that Ivins is confused. The authorities did not prevent Roberts from publishing the Study or the Parallel, but they did decline to publish The Truth, the Way, the Life as an official Church publication.

There is also Mark K. Allen's statement in 1981, according to whom Roberts said "We're not through with the Book of Mormon. We've got problems. I could do Volume III of New Witnesses for God the other way and be just as convincing." Smith, p. 108. Look closely at Roberts' words. "We're not through." Roberts is still on board. "Not through." Roberts viewed the book of knowledge as a continually open book; he expected old theories to be revised. See New Witnesses, vol. 3, p. 504. "We've got problems." Questions to work on. "The other way." Roberts could debate either side. "And be equally convincing." Volume III was still as good as the opposition.

Roberts' instruction to certain missionaries to use the Bible "to approach converts in their own language and to avoid criticism" does not betray a lack of faith, as Smith infers, p. 108. To the contrary, Roberts used the Book of Mormon as the backbone of his missionary programs and Hill Cumorah conferences

from 1922 to 1933. See Truman Madsen's materials in Part III below. In addition, it often makes good sense to use biblical scriptures when proselyting to those who believe in the Bible.

Beside the foregoing "evidence," however, there appears to be no other serious evidence that Roberts "lost his faith in the Book of Mormon." Perhaps there is some; perhaps other information will turn up. But based on the evidence now at hand, a negative assessment of Roberts' faith is unhistorical.

Roberts had hoped that his questions would do some good for the Church. In at least one way they did. Just as Roberts was able to admit that we do not have all the answers, Anthony W. Ivins (a close associate of Roberts), speaking in April 1929, stated: "There has never been anything yet set forth that definitely settles that question [of Book of Mormon geography]. So the Church says we are just waiting until we discover the truth." (Conference Reports, p. 16). Roberts' influence, as well as one's continued faith in spite of the lack of definite answers, is visible here.

In conclusion, it seems plain that the evidence is neither "enigmatic" nor "mixed." Rather, it is quite overwhelming. Meanwhile, writers who have relied on Madsen's views ought to be more cautious. For example, John Dart of the Los Angeles Times would do well to correct his characterization of Roberts as having "late-in-life doubts" (October 5, 1985). Questions, yes; but doubts?

While some anti-Mormons have gleefully latched onto B. H. Roberts as a supposed ally in a high place, and while some dissenters have sought to create out of the dust of Roberts' history a version of Roberts after their own image and likeness, these tactics do not withstand scrutiny. There is no significant evidence that Roberts lost faith in the Book of Mormon. Those who deal in the sacred memory of any man who has given his entire life to his Church and to his God should know better than to deal lightly, carelessly and inaccurately with his reputation and memory. His own Conference words in October 1929 are the best

valedictory: "I hope that if anywhere along the line I have caused any of you to doubt my faith in this work, then let this testimony and my indicated life's work be a correction of it." So let it be.

PART II

DID B. H. ROBERTS LOSE FAITH IN THE BOOK OF MORMON?

Truman G. Madsen

(Revised as of June 30, 1986)

Did B. H. Roberts, honest historian and man of integrity that he was, give up, or almost give up, on the Book of Mormon at the end of his life? (Roberts died in 1933). For several years, the anti-Mormon press has circulated portions of documents that have given rise to this question. Now these documents have been re-issued by a university press.¹ The papers are introduced by an updated essay McMurrin wrote twenty years ago on Roberts as Mormonism's most effective historian and theologian. Four new pages have been added about Roberts' "Study" (pp. xv-xviii). There is also patient introduction and bibliography by Brigham Madsen; they are distinguished both by what they stress and what they omit.

This volume leaves in doubt the question of Roberts' faith in the Book of Mormon. While McMurrin asserts that "without question" Roberts "continued to profess his belief in the Book of Mormon" (p. xviii), Professor Madsen says, instead, that the record is "enigmatic" (p. 29) and "mixed." He asks, "During the last six years of his life is there any evidence that Roberts still retained his faith in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, despite his critical examination of the origin of the book?" (p. 29 emphasis added). He offers as evidence that Roberts sounded rather enigmatic in an April 1929 sermon when he said, "I rejoice at the prominence given the Book of Mormon in this conference. It is however, only one of many means of letting God's work be known to the world." He concludes:

¹ B. H. Roberts' Studies of the Book of Mormon, edited with an Introduction by Brigham D. Madsen and a Biographical Essay by Sterling M. McMurrin (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

"Whether or not Roberts retained his belief in the Book of Mormon may never be known." (p. 62).

Since this question deserves further consideration, this essay focuses on that very question. I offer the following evidence that Roberts did not lose faith in the Book of Mormon.

Roberts' Declarations about his 1922 Studies

McMurrin writes that one "should not neglect" the statements affirming Roberts' belief in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon that appear in the letters" (p. xvii). Here are excerpts from Roberts' letters. In March 1932, one year before his death, Roberts wrote:

I am forwarding you with this mail an introductory chapter to a work of mine which is in typewritten form under the title of "Book of Mormon Study." It makes 450 pp. of typewritten matter. It was from research work I did before going to take charge of the Eastern States Mission. I had written it for presentation to the Twelve and the Presidency, not for publication

I may say that it is an "awful" book, but it contains a collection of facts which ought to be known by them.

Roberts specifically says "not for publication." McMurrin, however, apparently neglecting this statement, says Roberts "apparently" did not prepare the volume for publication (p. xviii). Roberts also says the Study was "from research work done before going to take charge of the Eastern States Mission" [that was May 29, 1922, DF, p. 315]. Professor Madsen suggests much of the Study was after.

Roberts' letter says it is an "awful" book. These writers seem to hail it as one of his best, representing his true assessment of the book. Here, they say; Roberts approached the Book of Mormon "critically and forthrightly rather than defensively" (p. xvii) as though he had not approached it critically and forthrightly before and did not approach it defensively after.

In a second letter Roberts declared his intent clearly. Published on pages 57-58 in the recent text, these explanatory sentences concern the Study:

Let me say once and for all, so as to avoid what might otherwise call for repeated explanation that what is herein set forth does not represent any conclusions of mine.

The report herewith submitted is what it purports to be, namely a "study of Book of Mormon origins," for the information of those who ought to know everything about it pro et con as well that which has been produced against it.. I do not say my conclusions for they are undrawn.

It may be of very great importance since it represents what may be used by some opponent in criticism of the Book of Mormon.

I am taking the position that our faith in the Book of Mormon is not only unshaken but unshakable, and therefore we can look without fear upon all that can be said against it (emphasis added).

Roberts' letter is a statement of fact--what he was doing; and a declaration of intent--what he hoped to achieve. It is also a statement of negation--the study "does not represent any conclusions of mine."

Roberts' letter says his Study "represents what may be used by some opponent of the Book of Mormon." From this, one should not conclude that he was an opponent (p. 22).

Roberts' letter says that he is eager to avoid what might otherwise call for "repeated explanation," that "his faith in the Book of Mormon is unshaken and unshakable," and that he (we) "may look without fear upon all that can be said against it." McMurrin does not seem to acknowledge this. Instead, for him the Study "raises the interesting question of what Roberts did, in fact, believe about the Book of Mormon in his latest years" (p. xviii). More, McMurrin says, one should note the "many crucial statements in Roberts' study that appear to a typical reader to throw serious doubt on the authenticity of the Book of Mormon or, at least, on Roberts' belief in its authenticity." (p. xviii).

But here, as elsewhere, I think Roberts says what he intends. He insists the Study has not shaken his objective assurances let alone his faith in the Book of Mormon message. What it has done is troubled his sense of adequacy in finding answers to the questions raised and increased his concern that, as Wesley Lloyd recalls, the Book of Mormon needs "bolstering" (p. 24). It has also led him to abandon some supporting arguments he had used earlier. The cement business, the Le Plongen alphabet, and some of his own points, but not all, he now sees as questionable.

But if Roberts did not have what he himself considered adequate scientific data to fully answer these objections, would he, a man of integrity, hold onto the Book of Mormon? Roberts' approach is summed up in his objection to one view of verification. He wrote: "It does not follow that since it is not within our power to verify all our true ideas that therefore we must account them false" (written in his copy of Pragmatism, New York: Longmans Green Co., p. 201.)

Further elaboration of Roberts' intent is in five other documents which have come down through the Roberts family. I examined these materials several years ago in the office of Roberts' son, Brigham.

1. A note from Brigham Roberts indicating that his father, B. H., attempted in 1922 to make further presentations on the Book of Mormon in person to his church brethren. He was disappointed. The brethren, pressed for time, encouraged him to submit further material in writing.
2. A comment to his brethren of the Seventy two months before departing for New York in 1922. He spoke of his Book of Mormon studies, the importance of them, and said, "Wise men anticipate difficulties and prepare for them."
3. A memo to President Heber J. Grant dated May, 1922 in which he says he will take his "manuscript," which he had "carried to the last analysis" to the Mission field. There he hopes to look for answers to the difficulties and queries posed in the Study, although his heavy ecclesiastical duties seem to have reduced such efforts to a bare minimum.
4. A memo listing the eighteen numbered segments of "the Parallels." This is an organized memo which Roberts hand-wrote in the New York Public Library in 1922.

5. A note appended by Roberts' secretary to the original copy of the Parallels. She writes that it "resulted from a conversation had by Richard R. Lyman and B. H. Roberts," that she was "present at the time of the conversation," and that she "typed it as the dictation of President Roberts who had before him the two books [the Book of Mormon and View of the Hebrews]."

These statements indicate that Roberts went to the Eastern States "seeking answers." He hoped in the meantime for the help of his colleagues. Some help came. But he lamented in 1929 that "the helpers were very few."

The Manuscript Itself

Was Roberts playing the role of "devil's advocate" when he wrote these manuscripts? Can one adduce evidence for the Devil's Advocate theory from the manuscript itself? Let us turn to the manuscript.

On page 182, Roberts says: "All this, it could be said by one disposed to criticize the Book of Mormon" Similar comments elsewhere show Roberts is stating what he expects the critics of the Book of Mormon to argue. This appears to be evidence of the "devil's advocate theory" within the manuscript.

In Part I of the "Difficulties," Roberts sums up: "I shall be most earnestly alert upon the subject of Book of Mormon difficulties, hoping for the development of new knowledge, and for new light to fall upon what has already been learned, to the vindication of what God has revealed in the Book of Mormon." He says he will "await the vindication of revealed truth." He also asks that "a most earnest appeal should be made to that source of wisdom and knowledge [God] and with the faith and persistence that will admit of no denial." He asks repeatedly, "What can we answer?" "What are to be our answers to the questions asked on these subjects?" "These questions are put by me . . . not for self-embarrassment, surely, nor for the embarrassment of others, but to bring to the consciousness of myself and my brethren that we face grave difficulties in all these matters, and if there is any way by which we may 'find wisdom and great treasures of

knowledge even hidden treasures' . . . then a most earnest appeal should be made to that source of wisdom and knowledge, and with a faith and persistence that will admit no denial." (p. 115). Again on page 142, "How shall we answer the questions that arise from these considerations of American archaeology? If we cannot, what is to be the effect of it all upon the minds of our youth?" And then he says, "Most humbly but also most anxiously, I await the further development of knowledge that will make it possible for us to give a reasonable answer to those who question us concerning the matter herein discussed." (p. 143). He asks questions. The questions go on and on. He was dissatisfied with answers, including some of his own. But not with the book.

On Theophany versus Book

McMurrin draws a sharp distinction between "theophanies" (say, for example, visions) which are "private, subjective, and inevitably elusive," and a book which can be seen, held, read, shelved (p. xvi). If this move is intended to imply that Roberts placed more weight on empirical evidence about the Book of Mormon than on "theophanies," then it misstates both Roberts' and Mormonism's theories of knowledge.

In the end, God, angels, spirits, and all the theological realm are for Mormonism no less (nor more) confirmable in principle than are chairs, tables, or books, although the latter are directly transferable items of experience. Mormonism reenthrones the senses as legitimate avenues of religious experience.

For Roberts, both the origin events of the Book of Mormon and the book itself--and much of Mormon theology--rest on ocular, auditory and tactile evidence. That is not the only kind. But it is the kind a thorough-going empiricist cannot consistently ignore.

For example it is often said that angels are unverifiable entities. Yet Roberts had a direct and revelatory encounter with an angelic personage and made it a matter of record six months before his death. (See his Biographical Notes.)

Regarding the experience of the Three Witnesses, Roberts met, interviewed, and respectfully cross-examined David Whitmer in Richmond, Missouri, because he was one of those Witnesses. Roberts reiterated Whitmer's conclusions which he considered unimpeachable on at least seven occasions during the last five years of his life.

Concerning his views on the objectivity of the plates, Roberts visited the Hill Cumorah often in solemn assemblies (the last time in 1930) and recorded in his own 1927 Book of Mormon Notebook (Roberts' scriptural notebook) a series of affidavits on the discovery and disposition of the plates.

On translation aided by a Urim and Thummim, Roberts handled Joseph Smith's Seer Stone, and wrote in his Comprehensive History, not as a skeptic that it was in possession of the Church in 1930. (Vol. 6, p. 231).

On Roberts' Style

But it may be asked: How can Roberts have assumed the role of a belligerent critic and still have been sincere in accounting the book a "sacred treasure in the Gospel"? How could a man who spoke with such conviction of the documents and doctrines of his religion be so articulate in bringing up objections? Because he thought the Book of Mormon fragile? No. Because he thought it impregnable. He had said in 1905, "I do not believe the Book of Mormon can be assailed and overcome." (Improvement Era, 8, August 1905, p. 384). He said it again in his unsent letter to Heber J. Grant. He said it again and again to his missionaries.

Roberts, as McMurrin says, "liked nothing better than a good fight. If there were no debate in sight he would produce a battle by monologue" (p. xxi). So he would. And his Book of Mormon Study is "Exhibit A." One of his deliberate efforts was to present the case of his opponent to the full satisfaction of the opponent. Only then would he reply. This was part of his personality and of his method. He often went on Saturdays from the Brooklyn Mission Home dressed in rough clothes and at Times

Square sought verbal swordplay with whomever, to debate on whatever. All this to sharpen his wits. Against the general Church policy of avoiding disputations, he encouraged his missionaries to have confrontations with argumentative religionists, of whatever persuasion. "You will have a good experience. And you will learn," he would say. He enjoyed street meetings and involved his missionaries in them precisely because in such settings hecklers with their counterthrust punctuated every sentence. "Let them bring forth their strong reasons!" he said, quoting the Doctrine and Covenants. As a result, he was almost as competent in the alternatives to his philosophy and religion as he was in his own. "I would rather debate anyone on the planet than B. H. Roberts," Hugh B. Brown once said admiringly. "He was a master." It was uncharacteristic of him to "tone down" the force of objections raised. He preferred to magnify them, then bring to bear on them his own critical abilities.

Evidence from Roberts' Mission School

What about the records of his five-year Mission Presidency (1922-27)? Let us focus on the five consecutive, month-long "mission schools" Roberts held in the Brooklyn Mission Home. They indicate an unwavering faith in the Book of Mormon.

"We had one-hour sessions daily from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sometimes we had evening sessions beginning at 7:30 when President Roberts would clarify questions or explain passages from the standard works, with emphasis on the Book of Mormon from which he quoted often. We literally drank from his wisdom. With notebooks open we wrote and listened to a great teacher." (Journal of Lavon Bates Clark.)

In a conversation with a nonmember, Roberts reported to his class he heard the old charge "there is nothing in the Book of Mormon of value." Roberts replied with Alma 41:10 "Wickedness never was happiness" and asked if he had ever heard such an expression before. The man acknowledged he had not. "That one

sentence alone proves the Book of Mormon is a great book and is of great value to men." (Journal of John C. Allen.)

"How does one come to know the truth of the book?" Roberts pressed his missionary colleagues. He answered there were two ways: (1) exhaustive study, (2) thorough prayer. (Conversation with Milo Marsden, July 22, 1983.) As for Roberts' own assurance, he told missionaries that Moroni's words were "the greatest promise ever made to mankind."

In the mission home after a new lady missionary delivered a talk about the flyleaf of the Book of Mormon, Roberts exclaimed, "Excellent." And added that "the Book of Mormon was the only volume on earth that had the flyleaf dictated by God, and how profound and important were the things that were contained in it." (Journals of Zina Tate Cox and Job Hemsley.)

Roberts confidently spoke to his missionaries, Mark Allen recalls, of problems with the Book of Mormon. He quoted the many parallels between the new scriptures and the Bible, and also he discussed the strenuous process of translating and the possibility of errors in vernacular expressions. Says Allen, "His faith in the divinity of the book was strong, but he agonized over the intellectual problems in justifying it. His fervent expression was, 'O Brother Allen, we have many serious problems with the Book of Mormon.'" These conversations occurred in 1927-28 after Roberts had remained in Manhattan to write The Truth, the Way, the Life, his comprehensive doctrinal treatise, as a result of which Allen adds that Roberts wished he could call in his volume three of New Witnesses: "He was uneasy with attempts to build a case out of trivial coincidence and gratuitous parallels." A more fruitful approach he came to believe lay in "searching out the deeper spiritual and moral meaning and showing their logical consistency with the body of accepted religious truth of the Church." (Letter of Mark Allen, July 20, 1983.)

In Private and In Prayer

Roberts had seven secretaries during his Mission Presidency (1922-27): Elizabeth Hinckley, Ora Knecht, Elsie Cook (who took his dictation for the six months he stayed in New York after his release), Leroi C. Snow, John L. Emmet, G. Stanley McCallister, and Henry D. Taylor. Each kept notes and exchanged letters with their mentor down to the time of his death. Each attended one or more of the mission schools, the intensive one-month study-train-practice sessions held in the Brooklyn Mission Home. Each was present in many conferences, sermons, and street meetings. Each heard him pray and watched him participate in the morning devotionals in the home. Their judgment is uniformly clear: the Book of Mormon was his linchpin and his sacred text.

Henry Taylor's account is typical: A session on the top of "Patriarch Hill" above Joseph Smith Memorial Monument in Vermont. Roberts knelt in the soft soil and delivered, as was his custom, an 'epic prayer.' He reviewed the manifestations or theophanies of God on mountain tops, and proceeded to pray in thanksgiving for each of the major events of the restoration beginning with the first vision, continuing with the discovery of the plates, the translation of the Book of Mormon, the calling of witnesses, and conferral of Divine authority, and so on. As he prayed, the tears streamed down his cheeks. The date? Just before his release in 1927.

Acts

We have sketched what Roberts said and wrote in the period after 1922, after the Book of Mormon Study was written. In addition, there were other official acts which reflect his commitment to the Book. In this same period, for example, (1) he planned, organized, and conducted a mission-wide Cumorah conference, inviting President Heber J. Grant, and other General Authorities. This was the centennial of Joseph Smith's first

viewing of the plates, September 1923. Over 5,000 attended. He repeated the celebration the next year, 1924. On the first occasion he prepared five major discourses on the Book of Mormon, three of which were later published: Christ in America; Book of Mormon Warnings to America; and the Book of Mormon as Witness of the Restoration. (2) He kept two "special ambassadors" presenting lectures on early American antiquities traveling throughout the Eastern Seaboard. (3) He helped procure for the Church the Hill Cumorah, the Joseph Smith farm, and the Peter Whitmer farm. (4) He arranged for the establishing of a monument to the Angel Moroni atop the Hill Cumorah. (5) He gathered missionaries on the west side of the Hill Cumorah to review the recovery of the plates and came again in 1930 to repeat his conviction and to say, "See what God hath wrought." (6) He recommended in 1929 that a chapel be built at the base of the Hill Cumorah to honor the Church's centennial. (7) He suggested a full-length film on the story of the Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses.

On "The Truth, the Way and the Life"

This doctrinal manuscript offers further significant evidence that Roberts retained his faith in the Book of Mormon, for it is implausible that a Book of Mormon doubter would have written that work.

Roberts undertook the writing of this lengthy manuscript immediately after his release as President of the Eastern States Mission (April 1927). He kept at it intensively for six months in New York and then on and off until 1932, the year before his death. Eight chapters of it are rooted in detailed exposition of the Book of Mormon: the atonement as revealed--as harmonic with the reign of law; as related to the attributes of God; as indispensable; as broader in scope than satisfaction for Adam's sin; as efficacious though vicarious. Roberts considered the Book of Mormon the finest statement in print on the balance of justice and mercy. The later chapters concern the ethical

teachings of the "intensification" of the Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi. Of the section of his treatise on the atonement he concluded: "Knowledge of the whole will be necessary to the complete understanding of the parts." (TWL, vol. II, Chapters XL-XL). The whole and the parts are derived from the Book of Mormon.

Roberts describes the result as "the most important work that I have yet contributed to the Church, the six-volumed Comprehensive History of the Church not omitted" (Letter to President Heber J. Grant and Counselors, February 9, 1931). He added, "Life at my years with an incurable ailment is very precarious and I should dislike very much to pass on without completing and publishing this work." One should not ignore this work in assessing Roberts' continuing faith in the Book of Mormon.

Before and After 1922

Both writers imply that if one dealt with Roberts' post-"Book of Mormon Study" sources, a different Roberts would emerge. See Sterling McMurrin on p. xvii, and Brigham Madsen on p. 22. It is true that Roberts tended to shift his approach on the Book of Mormon from "evidences" to "doctrine," as seen above. But there is no evidence of a diminishing belief in the divinity of the Book of Mormon. In eight categories Roberts continued active in Book of Mormon advocacy in his final decade, as he had been active before:

1. Books. After 1922, he wrote three new manuscripts that were intertwined with or updatings of earlier research:

- (i) Rasha the Jew, a three-part account of the Book of Mormon, written in the mode of personal manifesto and testimony. Over a million copies of the article were circulated. The articles were copyrighted and published by Roberts in 1932.
- (ii) The six-volume Comprehensive History of the Church. Nine chapters deal with the origin, witnessing, publication, and impact of the Book of Mormon.

Except for footnotes, this was completed by May 1930.

- (iii) The Truth, the Way and the Life, Roberts' doctrinal treatise. It was substantially finished by 1928, ready for publication in 1932. He delivered up to 200 sermons related to material in this treatise; these remain unpublished except that Liahona, the Elders Journal, mentions and gives synopses of them. More than a third revolved around the Book of Mormon.
- 2. Tracts. After 1922, he wrote thirteen tracts, five of them on the Book of Mormon. They speak of the great value of the "Fifth Gospel," how it is needed by the world, how it was "revealed to Joseph Smith," and how it removes "the rubbish of theological speculations." (BYU Special Collections MOR, N230, AL, No. 282a-d.)
- 3. Conference Addresses. After 1922, Roberts had nineteen opportunities to speak in Conference. He chose to devote eleven of these discourses to the Book of Mormon.
- 4. Improvement Era Articles. After 1922, Roberts wrote three Era articles dealing with Christ in America.
- 5. Church News Contributions. After 1922, Roberts introduced a series called "New Dispensation Thoughts." Several of these deal with the Book of Mormon.
- 6. Addresses on radio and special occasions. After 1922, for example, he spoke on modern revelation, the Easter vision of 3 Nephi, the challenge of the Book of Mormon to American lawlessness, and America will not fail.
- 7. Stake Conference addresses. About half of his stake conference speaking assignments were filled with messages drawn from the Book of Mormon, his interview with David Whitmer, and his profound admiration for the "perfection" of the sacramental prayers in the Book of Mormon as evidence of the divine origin of the Book of Mormon.

But this is mere statistical anatomy. To understand the flesh on these public pronouncements, we must be specific. The fuller list has been published by F.A.R.M.S.; excerpts are given by John Welch in Part I above.

From these statements, it is evident that Roberts believed in the Church--to the end. In April 1930, bringing his recently

completed multi-volume Comprehensive History to the pulpit of the Tabernacle "as to an altar," he said the Book of Mormon was "revealed and translated by the power of God," and that it "supplies the world with a new witness for the Christ, and the truth and the fulness of the Gospel." He dedicated this monumental work in prayer to God "unto thee and thy cause." Since for Roberts, belief in the truthfulness of the Church turned on belief in the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, it logically follows that Roberts believed in the Book of Mormon, both before and after 1922.

On Science

McMurrin points out that Roberts was sometimes engaged in a campaign to instill greater rationality and scientific respectability into the Church--a struggle "against the anti-scientific bias of some of his ecclesiastical colleagues." (p. xx). But Roberts also campaigned against the lure of excessive scientism.

In his October 1930 Conference address, he pleaded with the youth to recognize revolutionary changes in the trends of scientific thought and cited admonitions given the earliest gathering of schools and learning in the Church for "obtaining wisdom both by faith and also by research and experimentation, and by becoming familiar with the great truths that are taught in the best books." (p. 21). But witnessing to spiritual experience, he said, was more revealing than scientific research.

In October, 1932, he gave a follow-up discourse on witnessing. He had just consumed a "thoughtful and splendid" volume of essays, Has Science Discovered God (Millikan, Eddington, Einstein, Huxley, Jeans, Lodge). His assessment:

I doubt if science ever will "discover God." I know how raw, perhaps, that sounds to your ears and you will credit much of it to assumption. Well, be that as it may. I, nevertheless, do not believe that science will discover God. That, as I understand it, is not the work assigned to science. Scientists may do much in confirming from their discoveries the existence and the power and the glory of

God; but it will be God who will reveal God; men will not find him "unto perfection" by their searching. It is the work of God to reveal himself and absolutely necessary that he should do so in order that we may have religion at all.

Not only will science not discover God, but not even religion discovers him. It is not the order of facts for religion to discover God. The order of facts is God must reveal God. (p. 94)

He remained of this persuasion to the end. Having survived a hospital ordeal, an amputation, and the verdict of the doctors that his days were numbered because of diabetes, he confided to his son that he wanted to "witness again." Ceremonially, he lifted the torch again in a 1932 stake gathering, reiterating his testimony ". . . not from scientific knowledge or book learning but from the knowledge that comes through faith."

The Contradiction

Both McMurrin and Madsen leave the reader ambivalent. They want to re-raise "the interesting question of what Roberts did in fact believe about the Book of Mormon in his late years." McMurrin concludes that the fact that Roberts "continued to profess his faith in the authenticity of the book seems to be without question," but sees a possible conflict in "the strong arguments and statements in his study that would appear to explicitly express a conviction that it is not authentic." (p. xviii). And while Brigham Madsen says that the resolution of this question "may never be known," (p. 30), he praises Roberts highly:

As for Roberts himself, one can appreciate his fierce independence, his forthright honesty, his deeply embedded integrity, and above all, his fearless willingness to follow wherever his reason led him. He could be abrasive in his defense of stubbornly held beliefs, but he had the capacity to change his views when confronted with new and persuasive evidence. (p. 30).

But then, given Roberts' public statements in defense of the Book of Mormon to the end of his life, we have a dilemma. How can one appreciate Roberts' "fierce independence," his "forthright honesty," his "deeply embedded integrity," and above all, his "fearless willingness to follow wherever his reason led him," if he had a privately-held, contemptuous or skeptical position on the Book of Mormon and, therefore, in his last eleven years, lived a flagrant and foolish lie?

Conclusion

These writers applaud Roberts for seeing both sides. They praise his desire to be objective and his sincere effort to be honest and open with his readers. If the historical question of Roberts' faith in the Book of Mormon is approached in the same manner, the foregoing evidence seems conclusive on several grounds: neither as a result of his 1922 studies nor otherwise did B.H. Roberts lose faith in the Book of Mormon.

upon her as something of a pillar in one of their churches, heard with alarm the fact that she was reading the Book of Mormon, and called upon her to persuade her to give up her perusal of it; and gave her the stereotyped idea used by opponents of the book at that time, and brought to her pamphlets and articles from periodicals to show that the Book of Mormon was fiction and originated in the Spaulding Romance. They urged her to read this testimony against the book, and she promised them she would do so. In the course of a week or two they returned to her to inquire the progress she was making, and she answered them in substance in this way: "I am somewhat confused in relation to this Book of Mormon. The Mormon elders tell one story of its origin and you tell another, and I must confess I am somewhat perplexed about it; but," said she, "here is another book that the Mormon elders have presented to me and which I have read. They call it the Doctrine and Covenants. It purports to contain a number of revelations to Joseph Smith which he is said to have received. It is nearly equal in volume to the Book of Mormon, and there is no question at all in relation to the authorship of this book. None of you questions, that Joseph Smith wrote it. He is the author of it, and claims everything in it to be inspired of God; and I wish to state to you," said she, "that this book,—the revelations that are in it—contains as much evidence, and even more evidence, than the man who produced it was inspired of God than does the Book of Mormon that it was written by inspiration. Now what have you to say to that, and how will you explain away that?" Of course they had no explanation. The Book of Doctrine and Covenants stands unquestioned as to its authorship, and I wish to express a belief that there is evidence of inspiration in it equal to that of the Book of Mormon.

Let me just hurriedly call your attention to a few of the prominent revelations of the Book. If I had time I would read some of them but that is out of the question. A number of men came to the Prophet Joseph while he was yet engaged in translating the Book of Mormon, and asked him to use the sacred instruments to inquire of the Lord for them. Most of them wanted to know what was to be their lot and part in this great institution that they saw coming into existence. The answer to those inquiries is contained in some eight or ten of the early revelations received as I have described; and in every case they were told that those who were inspired of the Lord with desires to help in bringing forth this work, must proceed upon the lines of faith, and hope and charity, with an eye single to the glory of God, and with an honest desire and purpose to bring to pass the salvation of the souls of men; and that humility united with these other qualifications equipped them for this great and wonderful work that God was about to bring forth. In no single instance were they promised the honors of men or the reward of personal prosperity and fame. That, to me, is one of the clearest evidences that the Prophet was inspired of God.

Following through the Doctrine and Covenants you will come to the wonderful revelation in the 20th Section, in which is outlined the

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ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

Of the First Council of Seventy

"We believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe that he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." (Article of Faith No. 9.)

One of the things that has greatly delighted me in this conference has been the prominence given to the Book of Mormon and to the importance of it as a means of acquainting the world with that system of truth for which we stand. But the passage from our articles of faith just repeated reminds me that the Book of Mormon is only one out of very many things that may aid us in this work of making God's message known to the world.

We seldom hear the Doctrine and Covenants spoken of as a volume of scripture and important as a help in convincing the world of the truth of our message. Perhaps I can present the thought I hold in my mind upon that subject by relating a circumstance that happened very many years ago in the Southern States. On one of the branch streams of the Tennessee river in one of our conference districts, there lived a woman of some considerable local fame, I may say, noted for her strong character, her intelligence and her religious sincerity. It so happened that she invited us to her home on one of our visits to induce her to read the Book of Mormon and to pay attention to the doctrines we had explained. Several of the local ministers who rather depended

doctrine, and being, and character of God; the ordinances of the Gospel; the moral law in part, together with the arrangement for the first simple step in the organization of the quorums of the holy priesthood; and the exact terms of the ordinances of the Gospel, including that most masterful prayer which consecrates the holy sacrament. In the first part of it is the great and eternal doctrine of our faith in God, the Eternal Father, and in Jesus Christ his Son; and these emblems associated with the prayer bear witness of their being the symbols of man's salvation. In the second part is named the covenants which man makes with God, bringing about that union with God by which man may participate in the enjoyment of his Spirit and always have it to be with him. Then I might mention the section read by President Nibley this morning, Section 50, containing the beautiful doctrine which he expounded. Section 68, laying the foundation for the inspiration and real force of the priesthood within the Church. Section 84, with its doctrine of God's assurance that he will be with his servants. Section 89, the health law of the Church as given by the Lord in the Word of Wisdom. Section 88, the revelation in which the "imminence of God," in the universe; the Spirit that proceeds forth from him, bearing upon it all the attributes and powers of God, creative power, world-sustaining power, vital force, intelligence-inspiring power, the love-manifesting power through Jesus Christ, and harmonizing as no other revelations harmonize, the great universe of God and the union of our world with that universe. Section 107 should not be omitted, which is the doctrine of the priesthood and which portrays the relationship and operations of the several quorums of the priesthood. All these things are set forth, and it is the record of the living voice of God as it has been manifested in bringing forth this great Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and bears the impress of God's inspiration upon it.

Perhaps I might call your attention to the fourth book of scripture which the Church accepts officially and by which it is willing to be judged, —The Pearl of Great Price. The Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price are prized by us above all other books. If the world but had the Pearl of Great Price, and the knowledge it conveys, it would shed a penetrating light upon all the scriptures that our Christian friends acknowledge, and make known the truth of God; how, from the beginning, instead of dealing with mere fragments and hints at the plan of salvation, it would set forth the whole plan clearly. About all the world has in the Old Testament about the Gospel is the statement in Genesis that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—wound him in a vital part, overcome him; and the implication that is to be seen in the offering of Abel, and the rejection of the offering by Cain; with here and there an indication of information that underlain the testimony of those patriarchs that they had some knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But from the book of Moses and in the book of Abraham, in the Pearl of Great Price, we get revelation of the plan of salvation that was ed in heaven among the spirits that were the children of God

and an explanation of the earth life of man that is truly enlightening. Patriarchs from Adam to Noah have been some of the mightiest servants of God and the greatest prophets. They knew very much more than the fragmentary knowledge that has come to the world in our day.

For instance, how helpful it would be if the Christian religious world of today could have such a summary of the Gospel as it was known among the ancients, according to the Book of Moses, and that rather mysterious and unknown character, Enoch, who represents God as giving the following revelation to Adam:

An Ancient Discourse on the Gospel—

"And now, behold, I say unto you: This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time.

"And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me.

"And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water.

"And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.

"And he heard a voice, out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever;

"And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity."

"Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons." (Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moses, 6:62-68.)

This is an outline of the Gospel which Adam knew, which Enoch preached, which Noah plead with the people to accept in his day; and it proves that the patriarchal ages were not as blind to the things of God as the world imagines them to have been.

Permit me to say that the Book of Moses from which I have read, was brought forth by the Prophet Joseph Smith—who received it as a revelation from God—beginning as early as June, 1830, about three months after he completed the Book of Mormon; and by the close of December of that year the whole book as we know it was completed. If the world would only accept the knowledge of the Gospel as it was in ancient times among the inhabitants of the earth, we would find the matter of convincing them of our truth very much improved.

This book of Scripture, the Book of Moses, as well as the Book of Mormon, then, brings light and truth into the world for the salvation of men. God grant that this light and truth may be extended among the nations, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. amen.

AFTERWORD

From 1985 to 1990, this preliminary report included a number of other items that are now probably irrelevant to most readers. In 1986, a brief satire asking rhetorical questions was dropped, the short essay by Truman Madsen was edited, and the essence of the 1985 inquiries about B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon was summarized and published in the Ensign (see attached; reprinted in A Sure Foundation: Answers to Difficult Gospel Questions, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988, pp. 60-74). These developments probably make the contemporaneous replies and correspondence that initially followed the publication of Studies of little consequence to most readers. Copies of those items are available on request from F.A.R.M.S.

Reviews of Studies of the Book of Mormon have appeared in the Church News (1985), Pacific Historical Review (1986), Sunstone (1987), and Western Historical Quarterly (1987).

"legitimate queries." He says they would be powerful weapons "in the hands of a skillful opponent," and aimed to blunt them by paying attention to them.

Did Elder Roberts worry that people would misunderstand his Study? Yes. He wrote, "Let me say once for all, so as to avoid what might otherwise call for repeated explanation, that what is herein set forth does not represent any conclusions of mine."

Why in his study does Elder Roberts not suggest any answers to the problems he is raising? The Study is not an answer book. It is a question book. Many of the questions he had answered before and others he would answer in the future. For example, he raises the objection that the small party of Nephites could not possibly have constructed a temple like the large and opulent temple of Solomon. Brother Roberts had already answered that question in 1909.¹¹

As another example, he poses the question of whether Joseph Smith's powers of imagination were sufficient to have written the Book of Mormon. Elder Roberts regularly preached in the 1930s that the "perfect" sacrament prayers in Moroni 4-5 are evidence that the Book of Mormon was not written by Joseph Smith.

Some of the questions require no answer, such as the bogus suggestion that Joseph Smith got the name "Ether" from the name "Ethan Smith." Elder Roberts himself says in the Study, "Do not take the idea too seriously."

How careful was B. H. Roberts in this research? Not very. This particular research shows signs of haste and remained unfinished. In fact, the Study is written inside of a few months. Much of it consists of long quotes from other sources, given with little analysis. Even Elder Roberts' reading of the Book of Mormon was not always as careful as it could have been. Several of his problems arise because of assumptions he has made about the Book of Mormon. For example, Brother Roberts assumed that the lands of the Book of Mormon were all relatively flat. He apparently overlooked many contrary statements, such as Alma 47:9, which speaks of a large mountain and valley.

Would B. H. Roberts feel embarrassed to know that some of his research was incomplete or flawed? Absolutely not. He wrote that "the generations who succeed us in unfolding in a larger way some of the yet unlearned truths of the Gospel, will find that we have had some misconceptions and made some wrong deductions in our day and time. The book of knowledge is never a sealed book. It is never 'completed and forever closed;' rather it is an eternally open book, in which one may go on constantly discovering new truths and modifying our knowledge of old ones."¹² This observation pertains equally today to our continuing efforts to know the Book of Mormon better, both through study and also by faith.

Did the Study change Elder Roberts' use of the Book of Mormon? No. Before and after the Study he had the Book of Mormon as the focus of his mission-

ary programs. He voluntarily chose to speak on Book of Mormon subjects again and again in conferences and in the media.¹³ Over fifty-six major talks or statements were made by B. H. Roberts after the Study in which he affirms his faith in the Book of Mormon.¹⁴ After the Study, Elder Roberts may have taken less interest in archaeology and placed more emphasis on the doctrinal and philosophical strengths of the Book of Mormon, but in no way did he ever doubt or reject the historicity of this "ancient American volume of scripture," as he called it on many occasions.

Did Elder Roberts, perhaps knowing that his Study would be troublesome to people, affirm his testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon after he wrote the Study? He wrote in May 1922 of "the tremendous truth" of the Book of Mormon. He said in 1924 that the Saints should build upon the Book of Mormon "wherein is no darkness or doubt." He spoke at general conference in April 1928 of the "hundred more such glorious things that have come to the world in that book to enlighten the children of men." He speaks repeatedly of the historicity of the Book.¹⁵

Nevertheless, Brother Roberts knew that he had been abrasive and challenging at times during his many years of service to the Church. At October general conference, 1929, Elder Roberts may have had the Book of Mormon Study in mind when he remarked: "I happened to be reminded today that next April it will be fifty years since I commenced my public ministry in the Church. . . . I am mentioning some of these things in order that my profession of faith that I have made here today may be supported by the evidence of steady, persistent effort on my part to develop and to advocate and to establish this great work of God."

"But this is my object, and my object alone; that after bearing testimony to the fundamental things of this work, and my confidence in it, I hope that if anywhere along the line I have caused any of you to doubt my faith in this work, then let this testimony and my indicated life's work be a correction of it. I make reference to these personal things in fifty years of service so that you may know that my testimony has some sanctions for it in the life of service I have given to the cause."¹⁶

Is it possible that B. H. Roberts had a faithful facade which he wore in public but in private was a skeptical doubter? If Elder Roberts was anything, he was outspoken and honest. It is extremely difficult to believe that he was two-faced. In his April 1928 general conference talk, Elder Roberts emotionally spoke of the Book of Mormon and of the appearance of the resurrected Jesus Christ among the Nephites gathered at the temple in Bountiful. He said: "And now, O Lord Jesus, if thou couldst but come into the consciousness of our souls this day, as thou didst come into the vision of the ancient Nephites in the Land of Bountiful, we would join their great song of praise and worship, saying—Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And we, like

them, would fall down at the feet of Jesus and worship him this Easter day! Amen." In powerful statements like this one, Elder Roberts revealed his deep-felt faith in the Book of Mormon.

Did B. H. Roberts ever say anything after 1922 that could lead someone to think that he had lost faith in the Book of Mormon? Yes, on one known occasion. Elder Roberts had a conversation with Wesley Lloyd, one of his former missionaries, in Salt Lake on 7 August 1933, six weeks before his death. He began this conversation, if reported correctly by Brother Lloyd, complaining that his unpublished book *The Way, The Truth, The Life* had been subjected to "severe criticism" and rejected by the Brethren. He thought he had been personally attacked. He then took issue with a new Church policy of not sending missionaries into the field without financial backing.¹⁷ He next complained about Brigham Young. Finally, he turned to the Book of Mormon, complaining that back in 1922 a "crisis had arisen where revelation was necessary" but that no answer had been forthcoming.

No doubt, Brother Roberts voiced some complaints that day. The important thing is that he did not resign his Church position as he said he might do. He did not cease working on his missionary correspondence course. He did not give up on the Church. And he did not give up on the Book of Mormon. These supposed complaints are not representative of his more fundamental attitudes and beliefs.

In actual fact, the Wesley Lloyd journal is inaccurate and not reliable in many factual respects.¹⁸ Brother Lloyd says that Roberts "shifted his base on the Book of Mormon." Shifting bases, however, does not mean abandoning. In reality, we know how Elder Roberts shifted: in his later years, B. H. Roberts found his doctrinal approach of the Book of Mormon's divinity more satisfying.¹⁹ Brother Lloyd says that Elder Roberts thought that the Book of Mormon was in need of "the more bolstering." Needing "more" bolstering was always B. H. Roberts' position.

It may also be relevant that Elder Roberts, at seventy-six, was in ill health. He had lost a foot, spent several months near death's door in hospitals, and suffered from the advanced stages of the diabetes that would kill him a few weeks later.²⁰ Undoubtedly, Elder Roberts also felt a great loss due to the death of Elder James Talmage on 27 July 1933, about a week before this conversation with Lloyd.

These facts help place in context what the old fighter was feeling that day as he conversed with his young friend. After that conversation, Elder Roberts went to Chicago to represent the Church at a world conference of religious leaders. He also told Jack Christensen (another of his missionaries), sometime around 1 September 1933, "Ethan Smith played no part in the formation of the Book of Mormon. You accept Joseph Smith and all the scriptures!"²¹

Is it necessary for members of the Church today

to read B. H. Roberts' Study to be up to date on Book of Mormon studies? No. In fact, the Study is now to a considerable extent out of date. Most of his questions have since found answers.

The Study marks a beginning stage in the history of Book of Mormon studies. With Roberts, students of the Book of Mormon began to think more deeply about shallow and inadequate archaeological explanations or "proofs" of the Book of Mormon. With Roberts, scholars like Elder John A. Widtsoe, and a few years later Hugh Nibley²² and Sidney Sperry, began to expand our approaches to the study of the Book of Mormon.

What were Elder Roberts' main questions? Elder Roberts raised questions in five areas.

1. He found that the prevailing theory in the 1920s about the origin of the American Indian was that they all came long ago over the Bering Strait, not across the sea.

2. He pointed out the apparent absence of a credible relationship of the Book of Mormon account to the archaeology of the 1920s.

On these first two matters, we, along with science, still await definitive answers. As President Anthony W. Ivins, a counselor to President Heber J. Grant, said in general conference, April, 1929, "Where was the City of Zarahemla? . . . It does not make any difference to us. There has never been anything yet set forth that definitely settles that question. So the Church says we are just waiting until we discover the truth. All kinds of theories have been advanced."²³ Plausible answers, however, have recently been developed. One such scientific and scholarly theory recently advanced is John L. Sorenson's *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*.²⁴ For example, in B. H. Roberts' day there was no evidence of pre-Columbian domesticated barley in the Americas; today there is.

3. Elder Roberts pointed out certain seemingly absurd or erroneous passages in the Book of Mormon.

4. He suggested similarities between Book of Mormon conversion stories and early nineteenth-century spiritual experiences.

Today, many of these alleged absurdities, on closer examination, turn out to be strengths rather than weaknesses. For example, Alma 46 says that Captain Moroni waved the "rent" of his coat in the air. This seems impossible in English, since one cannot wave the "tear." But in Hebrew the expression is a natural one.²⁵ The similarity between the Nephites falling down during King Benjamin's speech and Methodists falling down at revival meetings in Joseph Smith's day is superficial. More extensive are the similarities between King Benjamin's speech and ancient Israelite festival and coronation celebrations.²⁶

5. B. H. Roberts displayed a list of twenty-six purported "parallels" between the Book of Mormon and a book written in 1823 (second edition 1825). That book, *View of the Hebrews* (VH), argues that the American Indians were descendants of the lost ten

tribes of Israel (a theory which Elder Roberts rightly wrote in 1932 is not the theory of the Book of Mormon). Since the alleged points of contact between *VH* and the Book of Mormon are scattered throughout *VH* and in some cases are supposedly quite specific, the hypothesis that Joseph Smith directly relied on *VH* becomes plausible only if one assumes that Joseph Smith knew *VH* quite well and accepted it as correct. If this were so, then he should have followed it—or at least not contradicted it—on its major points. But this does not turn out to be the case. Consider the following “unparallels”:

a. *VH* begins with a chapter on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. It has nothing to say, however, about the much earlier destruction of Jerusalem in Lehi's day by the Babylonians.

b. Chapter 3 comprises most of *VH*. It produces numerous “distinguished Hebraisms” as “proof” that the American Indians are Israelites. But few of these points are found in the Book of Mormon, as one would expect if Joseph Smith were using *VH* or trying to make his book persuasive. For example: *VH* asserts repeatedly that the Ten Tribes came to America via the Bering Strait, which they crossed on “dry land.” According to *VH*, this opinion is unquestionable, supported by all the authorities. From there *VH* documents that the Israelites spread from north to east and then to the south at a very late date. These are critical points for *VH*, in whose view

os 8:11–12 prophesies that the *Indians* would go from the north to the east. Significant population migrations in the Book of Mormon, however, follow a crossing of the ocean and then always move from south to north.

c. *VH* reports that the Indians are Israelites because they use the word *Hallelujah*. Here is one of *VH*'s favorite proofs, a dead give-away that the Indians are Israelites. Yet this word is not used in the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, a table showing thirty-four Indian words or sentence fragments with claimed Hebrew equivalents appears in *VH* (2d ed., pp. 90–91). No reader of the book could have easily missed this chart. If Joseph Smith had wanted to make up names to use in the Book of Mormon which would substantiate his claim that he had found some authentic Western Hemisphere Hebrew words, he would have looked hard at such a ready-made list. Yet none of these thirty-four Hebrew/Indian words (Keah, Lari, Uwoh, Phale, Kurbet, etc.) resemble any of the 175 words which appear for the first time in the Book of Mormon.

d. *VH* says that the Indians are Israelites because they carry small boxes with them into battle. These are to protect them against injury. In *VH*, they are considered sure signs that the Indians' ancestors knew of the Ark of the Covenant. If Joseph Smith were depending on *VH*, he would not likely have

passed up such a distinguished and oft-attested “Hebraism” as this. Yet in all Book of Mormon battle scenes, there is no such ark, box, or bag serving as a military fetish.

e. The Indians are Israelites because the Mohawk tribe, a tribe held in great reverence by all the others, was paid tribute. To *VH*, the conclusion was that the Mohawks are the vestiges of the tribe of Levi, Israel's tribe of priests. If Joseph Smith were relying on such a belief, one might think that he would have provided something about Levites in the Book of Mormon, but he did not.

f. *VH* claims that the righteous Indians quickly lost knowledge that they were all from the same family, were active “for a long time” well into recent times, and that their destruction occurred about A.D. 1400, as evidenced by tree ring counts near some of the fortifications of these people. The Book of Mormon rejects these notions, reporting that tribal affiliations were maintained for almost a thousand years and that the destruction of the Nephites occurred in the fourth century A.D.

g. *VH* argues that the Indians are Israelites



We may never have all the answers to questions about the Book of Mormon. But in the last sixty years since B. H. Roberts made his study, many things which he thought someone might say were weak or odd about the Book of Mormon have turned out to strengthen its credibility.

because they knew the legends of Quetzalcoatl. But the surprise here is that *VH* argues that Quetzalcoatl was none other than—not Jesus—but Moses! “Who could this be but Moses, the ancient legislator in Israel?” (*VH*, 2d. ed., p. 206; emphasis in original.) He was white, gave laws, required penance (strict obedience), had a serpent with green plumage (brazen, fiery-flying serpent in the wilderness), appeased God's wrath (by sacrifices), was associated with a great famine (in Egypt), spoke from a volcano (Sinai), walked barefoot (removed his shoes), and opened a golden age (seven years of plenty in Egypt—which has nothing to do with Moses, by the way). If *VH* provided inspiration for the Book of Mormon, it did not provide much. Besides the fact that *VH* sees Quetzalcoatl as Moses, none of these hallmark details associated with Quetzalcoatl are incorporated into the account of Christ's visit to Bountiful in 3 Nephi.

The foregoing seven points can be multiplied literally twelve times over.²⁷ In the face of such differences, the few similarities pale. Both works speak of long migrations for religious reasons; both report wars; both say the people knew how to write

and work with metals; and both praise generosity and denounce pride; VH speaks of Indian lore that they left a "lost book" back in Palestine and buried other records with their chiefs. B. H. Roberts asks the question: "Can such numerous and startling points of resemblance and suggestive contact be merely coincidence?" One can answer "yes," for the differences outweigh the similarities and most of the similarities lose force upon examination. If Joseph Smith had given VH basic credence, he would not have contradicted and ignored it in so many ways.²⁸

Do we have all the answers to Book of Mormon questions? No. We may never have all the answers to questions about the Book of Mormon. But in the last sixty years since B. H. Roberts made his study, many things which he thought someone might say were weak or odd about the Book of Mormon have turned out to strengthen its credibility.

The Lord apparently does not intend the Book of Mormon to be an open-and-shut case intellectually, either pro or con. If he had intended this, he would have left more concrete evidences. Instead, the Lord has given us the opportunity to address the Book of Mormon as a matter of faith, as a modern-day miracle, a product of divine revelation. As such, it serves, through revelation, as a keystone of the Restoration and as a sacred testimony of Jesus Christ. Like B. H. Roberts, all readers of the Book of Mormon should take the Holy Ghost—not a list of preconceived, self-limiting issues—as their guide.

Few have sensed the will of the Lord in this regard more keenly than B. H. Roberts, who for many years was the "lightning rod" among the General Authorities to absorb the strikes against the Book of Mormon and supply answers whenever he could. Often he had good replies, but sometimes he had none. He never expected or claimed to have all the answers.

Today, while we have better answers, we still do not have all the answers; we should not expect or demand to have. But this does not mean that we lose faith in the Book of Mormon.

Elder Roberts, in fact, is an inspiring example of one who kept the faith in the face of serious questions for which he did not have the answers. If in his works we find some things that on the surface seem confusing, we should remember his words in October 1929: "If anywhere along the line I have caused any of you to doubt my faith in this work, then let this testimony and my indicated life's work be a correction of it." So it be. □

²⁸ W. Welch, a professor at BYU's J. Reuben Clark Law School, serves as bishop of the BYU Thirty-sixth Ward.

4. Stake Conference Minutes, San Francisco Stake, April 23-24, 1932.

5. Elder Roberts wrote this in 1921 in a paper entitled "Book of Mormon Difficulties," which he submitted to the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

6. Most recently these papers have appeared in *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brigham D. Madsen, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985.

7. B. H. Roberts' letter to Elder Richard R. Lyman, 24 October 1927.

8. Documentation dating the Study is presented in a report by John W. Welch and Truman G. Madsen, "Did B. H. Roberts Lose Faith in the Book of Mormon?" (FARMS Preliminary Report 1985, P. O. Box 7113 University Station, Provo, UT 84602.)

9. This corrects, with Madsen's concurrence, the statement in the *ENSIGN*, December 1983, p. 15. See B. H. Roberts' letter to Elder Richard R. Lyman, 24 October 1927, stating that he had not yet decided to submit the Study to the First Presidency.

10. Truman G. Madsen, *ENSIGN*, Dec. 1983, p. 15.

11. *New Witnesses for God*, 3:523.

12. *New Witnesses for God*, 3:503-4.

13. See Truman G. Madsen, "B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 19 (Summer 1979), pp. 427-45.

14. These are all collected in "B. H. Roberts: His Final Decade—Statements about the Book of Mormon (1922-1933)," available as a FARMS Reprint ROB-33.

15. For a lengthy listing of these statements see Welch and Madsen, "Did B. H. Roberts Lose Faith in the Book of Mormon?"

16. In Conference Report, pp. 89-91.

17. This was in the middle of the Great Depression.

18. The Study was done during 1922, not later, as Lloyd states. Elder Lyman asked if the research would "increase our difficulties," not "help our prestige." The Study was 450 pages, not 400, and was never sent to President Grant, as Lloyd claims. Lloyd says that Roberts, in the Study, "swings to a psychological explanation of the Book of Mormon and shows that the plates were not objective but subjective with Joseph Smith." But there is no such "swinging" or "showing" in the Study.

19. See letter of Mark Allen, one of Elder Roberts' missionaries, written 20 July 1983, in possession of Truman G. Madsen.

20. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*, p. 376.

21. Jack Christensen was interviewed by Truman Madsen, 25 April 1979.

22. For a discussion of Hugh Nibley's contributions to Book of Mormon studies, see *ENSIGN*, April 1985, p. 50.

23. In Conference Report, pp. 15-16.

24. Deseret Book Co., 1985. See also *ENSIGN*, Sept. 1984, pp. 26-37, and Oct., 1984, pp. 12-23.

25. See John A. Tvedtnes, "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon: A Preliminary Survey," *BYU Studies* 11 (Autumn 1970), p. 51. Readers interested in an expanded treatment of Elder Roberts' questions are referred to "Finding Answers to B. H. Roberts' Questions, and 'An Unparallel,'" (FARMS Preliminary Report 1985).

26. This is demonstrated in a recently compiled report entitled "King Benjamin's Speech in the Context of Ancient Israelite Festivals," (FARMS Preliminary Report 1985).

27. John Welch discusses eighty-four such distinctions in "Finding Answers to B. H. Roberts Questions, and 'An Unparallel.'" "

28. Further discussions of dissimilarities are available in Spencer J. Palmer and William L. Knecht, "View of the Hebrews: Substitute for Inspiration?" *BYU Studies*, 5, (Winter 1964), pp. 105-113; Hugh Nibley, "The Comparative Method," *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1959, pp. 744-759 and Nov. 1959, pp. 848, 854, 856; Hugh Nibley, *No Man's Land That's Not History* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946); and Bruce Blumell, *ENSIGN*, Sept. 1976, pp. 84-87, each available as reprints from FARMS. See also Ariel L. Crowley, "Analysis of Ethan Smith's 'View of the Hebrews': A Comparison with the Book of Mormon," in *About the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961); William Riley, "A Comparison of Passages from Isaiah and Other Old Testament Prophets in Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon" (M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1971).

NOTES

1. See Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980).

2. B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 2:vi-vii.

3. Deseret News, June 16, 1928.

A BOOK OF MORMON STUDY

Introductory:

I.

LITERATURE AVAILABLE TO JOSEPH SMITH AS A GROUND-PLAN FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON.

A number of years ago ~~thirteen years ago, to be~~
~~exact~~ in my treatise on the Book of Mormon under the general
title ^{"a} "New Witnesses for God", I discussed the subject
"Did the Book of Mormon antedate works in English on
American antiquities, accessible to Joseph Smith and his
associates". The object in considering the question at that
time was to ascertain whether or not the alleged historical
incidents of the Book of Mormon and its subject matter
generally, were derived from speculations regarding the
origin, migrations, customs, religion, language, or other
lore of the American race, published previous to the coming
forth of the Book of Mormon; or if the Book of Mormon
truly indicated the source of those American Indian tra-
ditions and antiquities. Of course the discussion recognized
the fact that such publications must not only exist before
the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, but must also be
accessible to Joseph Smith or his associates, in order
to be of any force in the supposition that such publications
might have furnished the material from which the Book
of Mormon was constructed, or its general outlines suggested.

Smith, that either by reading it, or hearing it read and its contents frequently discussed, Joseph Smith became acquainted with its contents. The date of the publication of the

second edition would even make this possible. *For from the Smith family left the state of Vermont* ~~if it should~~

~~be insisted upon that the Smith family/the state of Vermont~~

before the publication of the "View of the Hebrews" ~~at~~

~~least of the second edition~~ such was the universal interest

in the subject, and being published in a locality near which

for so long the family had resided-in the adjoining county-

the Smiths would most likely have interest enough in the book

to obtain it in their new home. The book then, was in

~~existence from eight to ten years before the publication~~ *- first and second editions respectively - seven and five years*

of the Book of Mormon, and was written and published by a

man residing in a county adjoining that in which the Smith

family lived-not more than fifty miles from Sharon, as the

crow flies. It had a wide circulation in New England and

in New York, running through two editions in a few years.

Contact with it, and knowledge of its contents, by the Smiths,

is in every way a great probability. And even if that were

not so, as to this particular book- if the Smiths never

owned the book, never read it, or saw it, still its contents-

the materials of which it was composed- would be, under all

the circumstances, matter of "common knowledge" throughout

the whole region where the Smiths lived from the birth of

Joseph Smith in 1805, to the publication of the Book of

Mormon in 1829-30.

*"View of the Hebrews
or the Tribes of Israel in
America",*

Second, the little book by Ethan Smith, published in Vermont, ^(first edition 1823), second edition in 1825, which I pass for the present without comment, and reserve it for special consideration later.

Third, "The History of the American Indians", by James Adair, published in England 1775, and much quoted in America. Mr. Adair confines the scope of his work to the North American Indians among whom he was a trader for many years.

Fourth, the translation of some parts of Baron Von Humboldt's works on "New Spain", published first in America and England, between the years 1806 and 1809; and later *John* Black's Enlarged translation of it in New York, 1811. It was a work frequently quoted by American writers, both before and immediately following the publication of the Book of Mormon.

The writer at the time being considered did not take sufficiently into account the work of Josiah Priest *on* "American Antiquities", since it was not published-the first edition of it-until 1833, several years after the publication of the Book of Mormon. It should then have been observed, however, that the material of Priest's book was much in evidence throughout New England and in New York before it *American "Antiquities"* was crystalized in his publication. For years such materials as were then found and discussed, theories as to the origin

Title Pages to Dr. Jedidiah Morse's Geography.

"Geography Made Easy"

being an

Abridgement of the American Universal Geography

Containing

Astronomical, Geography, Discovery and General Description of
America.

General View of the United States.

Particular Accounts of the United States of America and of all
the Known Kingdoms, States and Republics of the Known World.

In Regard to their Boundaries, extent, Rivers, Lakes, Mountains,
Productions, Population, Character, Governments, Trade, Manufact-
ures, Curiosities, History, etc., to Which is added An Improved
Chronological Table of Remarkable Events, from the Creation to
the Present Time.

Illustrated with Maps of the Countries described.

Calculated particularly for the Use and Improvement of Schools
and Academies in the United States of America.

By Jedidiah Morse D. D.

Fifth Edition corrected by the Author.

Published according to Act of Congress.

Printed at Boston. May 1796.

Above book in Municipal Museum of Rochester, copies by B. H.
Roberts, June 7, 1922.

In the New York City Library there are three Editions of this
Work. 1st Edition, New Haven, Conn. 1784. 2nd Edition,
abridged by the Author, Boston 1791. 3rd Edition, Boston 1791.

II.

ETHAN SMITH'S BOOK, "VIEW OF THE HEBREWS", AS STRUCTURAL
MATERIAL FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON: UNITY OF THE AMERICAN
RACE: AMERICAN LANGUAGE FROM ONE SOURCE-THE HEBREW.

It is now time to consider the book, "View of the
Hebrews": or "The Tribes of Israel in America", *by Ethan Smith.*

This book was published ~~and printed~~ by Smith and
~~in the adjoining county to the one in~~
Shute, Poultney, Vermont ~~1825~~. This, however, was the
~~which the Prophet Joseph Smith was born and lived~~
~~date of the second edition. I have not been able, so far,~~
~~with his parents, until he was about ten years of~~
~~to ascertain the date of the first edition, but certainly it~~
~~was published 1823; the second~~
~~edition in 1825.~~
~~the second, as interest in the subject was keen, and the~~
~~author in the preface to the second edition refers to "the~~
~~Speedy sale of the first edition". Certainly then, we must~~
~~assume that the first edition was published not above five~~
~~years before the publication of the second. That would be~~
~~in or about 1820.~~

Mr. Ethan Smith was a pastor of a church in Poult-
ney, Rutland County, Vermont; in the county adjoining on
the west the county of Windsor, in which the Prophet Joseph
was born, and in which he lived with his parents until he
was about ten years of age, when the family removed to the
State of New York and settled at Palmyra, and a little later
in the township of Manchester.

This study supposes that it is more than likely
that the Smith family possessed a copy of this book by Ethan

The Title Page of Star in The West

A Star in the West

or

A Humble attempt to discover the long lost Ten tribes of Israel.
Preparatory to their return to their beloved City, Jerusalem. By
Elias Boudinot L. L. D.

"Who is wise, & he shall understand these things? Prudent and he
shall know them. For all the ways of the Lord are right, & the just
shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein." Hosea.

"And the Lord answered me & said, write the vision & make it plain,
upon a (writing) table that he may know who readeth it-; for the
vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak
& not lie; tho it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come.
It will tarry not." Habbak

Trenton, N. J. Published by D. Fenton S. Hutchinson and J. Dun-
ham. George Sherman, Printer-1786- 312 pages in above work.

Quotations from Boudinot--

"We are driven back " said an old Warrior "until we can go no fur-
ther-our hatchets are broken-our bows are snapped-our fired are
nearly extinguished-a little longer and the white man will cease to
persecute us for we will cease to exist".

Boudinot St. of the West,
Preface PXXI

Boudinot states in his Ten Lost Tribes Theory from same (lines
as Ethan Smith but he in 1816) viz. Esdras 11. 13th Ch. Supposed
as an Apochryphal book to have been written about 100 A.D. Introdu-
ction P.28.

Authors quoted by Boudinot: "Colden, Brainerd, Edwards, Jun. (this
would be Jonathan) in the languages of the Mohegans (this also

Important to the Title of the Book
2. Volume of the Collection, Publication of
Title Page of Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews. 1st Edition.

View of the Hebrews;

Exhibiting

The Destruction of Jerusalem

The Certain Restoration of Judah and Israel:

and

The address of the Prophet Isaiah Relative to their Restoration.

By Ethan Smith, Pastor of a Church in Poultney, Vermont.

"There be the days of Vengeance". Christ.

Yet a Remnant shall Return. Isaiah.

Poultney (Vermont) Printed & Published by Smith & Wente.

Copied by B. H. Roberts from copy in 1st Edition, New York City

Library.

The second Edition (1825) is about one third larger than the first.

the information of the Rev. Dr. Beasley Bartram and others of
their personal observations of the Indians. Introduction PP 30-31

Moses Du Pratz

Author of

History of Louisiana, written about 1730.

Star of the West P133.

Natchez named for tribe of Indians of that name.

Boutinot makes much of "O-E-A" or Yo-he-vah (as does Ethan
Smith) see Star of the West P 178 et sq.

"Much is to be done who when the signal is set up among the
nations; and these children of God's watch, free providence,
shall be manifestly discovered, i e lost tribes they are to be
converted to the faith of Christ, & instructed in their re-
ligious prerogatives, and prepared and assisted to return to
their own land & their ancient city, even the city of Zion,
which shall become a praise to all the earth.....Who knows

but God has raised up these U. S. in these last days for the
very purpose of accomplishing his will in bringing his beloved
people to their own land".

Star of the West P.297.

Josiah Priests' Wonders of Nature and Providence.

*Little
Page*

The Wonders of Nature and Providence, compiled From Authentic Sources, Both Ancient and Modern; giving an Account of Various Strange Phenomena Existing in Nature, of Travels, Adventures Singular Providence etc.

"Harken,--Stand still and consider the Wonderous Works of Godv Job.

Albany---Published by Josiah Priest, E & E. Hosford Printers, 1836.

Copied from the copy in New York Public Library. The above book bears copyright date of June 2, 1824; preface dated Albany, Aug. 1825.

¶ Important passages from Wonders of Nature and Providence indicated.

From the Preface; The Storms, Tempests and Earthquakes might have suggested Cataclysms in Book of Mormon America. *as taking place in* P. 47-et sq-

¶ An account of the commencement of the Kingdoms of Mexico, also some account of Montezuma the 11 & 9th King of Mexico. Visions of Mont's

sisters etc. PP. 173-186, An account of festivals in honor of Idols among the Ancient Mexicans is given. PP. 253-261. Extract from History of Mexico--Customs in Idol Worship--Order of Quetzal coatl Priests, etc. PP. 372-407. Excerpts from Ethan Smith's

View of the Hebrews. (Evidently 1st Edition) "Proofs that the Indians of North America are literally descendants of the Ancient Hebrews. He quotes 35 pages in his own work *on same subject* of Ethan Smith's matter (more than Ethan Smith's pages) so that he gets about all the evidence and argument from Ethan Smith's book that sustains the contention that the Indians are descendants of the Hebrews.

Priest in his "Wonders" (as later in his Antiquities) approves of Ethan Smith's contention that the Indians are of Hebrew descent, and answers some objections based on the fact of the Indians being darke skinned and ends up by saying;

Notes from Morses' Geography Made Easy--(Ed. of 1791)

Describing Aborigines:-

"They many times torture their prisoners in the most shocking & cruel manner; generally scalp them, & some times broil & eat them. A great part of the aborigines of America are gross idolaters and worship the sun, moon & stars.

Of Israel
It is the opinion of many learned men, supported by several well established facts that the Indians of America are the remains of the Ten Tribes of Israel, and that they came to this continent in the manner hereafter mentioned." (page 31)

That is, they came from the North East parts of Asia (see Id. p. 33). From these and other circumstances (the nearness of the continents of the New World and the Old at Behring's Strait) it is rendered highly probable that America was people d from the North East parts of Asia. (Id. p. 33)

Title Page of Josiah Priests Work 1841.

Copied by B. H. Roberts, June 7, 1922, in Reynolds Library,
Rochester, N.Y.

American Antiquities

and

Discoveries in the West

Being an exhibition of the Evidence that an Ancient Population
of partially civilized nations differing entirely from those
of the present Indians, peopled America many centuries before
its discovery by Columbus, and inquiries into their origin

With a Copeous Description

of many of their stupendous work now in ruins.

With

Conjectures concerning what may have become of them.

Compiled from Travels, Authentic sources and the Researches of
Antiquarian Societies. By Josiah Priest, Fifth Edition ,

22000 volumes of this work have been published for subscribers
only. Printed by J. Mansel State St. 1841.

"These facts(certain facts mentioned), it is believed, are sufficient to remove all doubts arising from the circumstance of the natives being swarthy, and prepares the mind to recognize the wandering tribes of the western, northern, and southern regions as literally descended from the royal house of Abraham." (p 408)

77 int. Review
one Boy M. Studios
Submitted to 1st Pres.
XII - Agnew, * LXX

June 1928

copy to the Lyle
with Max Jr.



"Nearleather"

EXPANSIBLE FILE POCKET

Letter - No. 5011

Size 9 1/4 x 11 1/4 1 1/4 inch Expansion

W.C. cap / Paul

Second demand

Mr. C. C. C. C. C.

B. G. M. - not yet sent with

to / to C. C. C. C. C.

Mr. C. C. C. C. C.

W. C. C. C. C.

W. C. C. C. C.

Tuesday Aug 8, 1933.

Met Mother at Louis went
out to look at horses in the
morning. Took the carpet and
a ^{carriage} ~~carriage~~ thing up to Jack's.
Met Lillie and Chae and
went down town shopping.
Went over to Louis. Sherrin
Came from Logan. Saved
us a trip to Logan.

because in that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled (the very people of the ancient covenant in manifest descriptions repeatedly given) to the place of the name of the Lord of Hosts, the Mount Zion.....Should it be proved a fact, that the aborigines of our [the American] continent are the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel, it would heighten the probability to a moral certainty, that we are the people especially addressed, and called upon to restore them; or bring them to the knowledge of the Gospel, and to do with them whatever the God of Abraham designs shall be done. The great and generous Christian people, who occupy so much of the land of those natives, ^(the aborigines) and who are on the ground of their continent, and hence are the best prepared to meliorate their condition, and bring them to the knowledge and order of the God of Israel, must be the people to whom this work is assigned".

First Council of the Seventy

201 Church Office Building
Salt Lake City, Utah

J. G. KIMBALL
Secretary and Treasurer

Members of First Council

Seymour B. Young
B. H. Roberts
J. Golden Kimball
Rulon S. Wells
Joseph W. McMurry
Charles H. Ha
Levi E. Yo

Salt Lake City, Utah,

Exh. 5 (back)

First Council of the Seventy

201 L. D. S. Church Offices
Salt Lake City, Utah

Members of First Council

Seymour B. Young
B. H. Roberts
J. Golden Kimball
Rulon S. Wells
Joseph W. McMurrin
Charles H. Hart
Levi E. Young

Salt Lake City, Utah.

President Heber J. Grant and Council
and Quorum of Twelve Apostles
Salt Lake City, Utah

March 15th 1923

Dear Brethren:

You will perhaps remember that during the hearing on "Problems of the Book of Mormon" reported to your Council January, 1922, I stated in my remarks that there were other problems which I thought should be considered in addition to those submitted in my report. Brother Richard R. Lyman asked if they would help solve the problems already presented, or if they would increase our difficulties. My answer was that they would very greatly increase our difficulties, on which he replied, "Then I do not know why we should consider them." My answer was, however, that it was my intention to go on with the consideration to the last analysis. Accordingly, since the matter was already so far under my hand, I continued my studies, and submit herewith the record of them. I do not say my conclusions, for they are undrawn.

In writing out this my report to you of those studies, I have written it from the viewpoint of an open mind, investigating the facts of the Book of Mormon origin and authorship. Let me say once for all, so as to avoid what might otherwise call for repeated explanation, that what is herein set forth does not represent any conclusions of mine. This report herewith submitted is what it purports to be, namely a "study of Book of Mormon

origins", for the information of those who ought to know everything about it pro et con, as well that which has been produced against it, and that which may be produced against it. I am taking the position that our faith is not only unshaken but unshakable in the Book of Mormon, and therefore we can look without fear upon all that can be said against it.

While searching for the answers to the questions of Mr. Couch, submitted through Mr. William E. Riter, I came in contact with the material here used, and concluded that while the subject was fresh in my mind to make it of record for those who should be its students and know on what ground ^{*the Book of Mormon*} it may be questioned, as well as that which supports its authenticity and its truth.

If it is impossible for the General Authorities to consider this whole matter together, then, I submit that it might be referred to the committee you appointed to consider with me the answers to be given Mr. Couch, namely, Elders Ivins, Talmadge, and Widtsoe, with a request that they report on the same. I am very sure that you will find the material herewith submitted of intense interest, and it may be of very great importance since it represents what may be used by some opponent in criticism of the Book of Mormon.

It is not necessary for me to suggest that maintenance of the truth of the Book of Mormon is absolutely essential to the integrity of the whole Mormon movement, for it is inconceivable that the Book of Mormon should be untrue in its origin or character and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints be a true Church.

All which is respectfully submitted.

Very truly your brother,

- # 578 Draper, John W. The Intellectual Development of Europe,
Vol. 2.
Contains extensive annotations.
- # 579 Froude, James Anthony. Short Studies on Great Subjects.
Contains annotations.
- # 580 Froude, James Anthony. Caesar, A Sketch.
- # 581 Hallam, Henry. Introduction to the Literature of Europe,
Vol. 1.
- # 582 Hallam, Henry. Introduction to the Literature of Europe,
Vol. 2.
- # 583 Guizot, F. The History of Civilization, Vol. 1, 2.
Contains annotations.
- # 584 Guizot, F. The History of Civilization, Vol. 3, 4.
- # 585 Guizot, F. The History of Civilization in Europe.
- # 586 McCarthy, Justin. History of Our Own Times, Vol. 1.
- # 587 McCarthy, Justin. History of Our Own Times, Vol. 2.
- # 588 McCarthy, Justin. History of Our Own Times, Vol. 3.
- # 589 Mueller, Max. Chips from a German Workshop, Vol. 1.
- # 590 Mueller, Max. Chips from a German Workshop, Vol. 2.
Contains annotations.
- # 591 Pritchard, J. V. The Spirit of Laws, Vol. 1.
Contains annotations.
- # 592 Pritchard, J. V. The Spirit of Laws, Vol. 2.
Contains annotations.
- # 593 Robinson, James Harvey. Development of Modern Europe.
- # 594 Lodge, Richard. History of Modern Europe.
Contains annotations.
- # 595 Merrivale, Charles. General History of Rome.
- # 596 Smith, William. History of Greece.
- Items 597-658 AMERICAN ANTIQUITY
- # 597 Allen, A. E. The Prehistoric World. c. 1885.
Contains annotations and inserted material.
- # 598 Annual Report of the American Historical Association,
1903.

- # 599 Baldwin, John D. Ancient America. 1878
Contains extensive annotations.
- # 600 Baldwin, John D. Prehistoric Nations. c. 1867
Contains annotations.
- # 601 Bradden and Kelly Debate.
Contains moderate annotations.
- # 602 Brinton, Daniel C. The American Race. c. 1891
Contains annotations.
- # 603 Connelley, William E. Doniphan's Expedition.
Contains annotations and inserted material.
- # 604 Curtin, Jeremiah. Creation Myths of Primitive America. 1903
- # 605 Dellenbaugh, Frederick S. The North Americans of Yesterday. 1906
Contains annotations.
- # 606 Donnelley, Ignatius. Atlantis. c. 1882
- # 607 De Roo, P. The History of America Before Columbus,
Vol. 1. 1900
Contains extensive annotations and inserted material.
- # 608 De Roo, P. The History of America Before Columbus,
Vol. 2. 1900
- # 609 Grant, J. S. Pictorial Ancient America. 1927
- # 610 Hilprecht, H. V. Exploration in Bible Lands During the 19th Century. c. 1903
Includes inserted material.
- # 611 Irving, Washington. Astoria.
- # 612 Irving, Washington. The Adventures of Captain Bonneville.
Contains annotations. c. 1868
- # 613 Matthew, W. D. Evolution of a Horse. 1927
- # 614 Priest, Josiah. American Antiquities. 1838 ed. acquired 1903
- # 615 Prescott, William H. History of the Conquest of Mexico,
Vol. 1.
Contains moderate annotations.
- # 616 Prescott, William H. History of the Conquest of Mexico,
Vol. 2.
- # 617 Prescott, William H. The Conquest of Peru, Vol. 1.
Contains annotations. Acquired 1903

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- # 618 Prescott, William H. The Conquest of Peru, Vol. 2.
- # 619 Plongeon, August Le. Queen Moo and the Egyptian Sphinx.
Item missing.
- # 620 Markwick and Smith. The World and Its People. 1901
- # 621 Rawlinson, George. History of Ancient Egypt, Vol. 1. 1882
- # 622 Rawlinson, George. History of Ancient Egypt, Vol. 2.
Contains annotations. 1892
- # 623 Shook, Charles A. Cumora Revisited. 1910 Acquired March 1911
- # 624 Stephens, John L. Yucatan, Vol. 1. 1847
Contains annotations.
- # 625 Stephens, John L. Yucatan, Vol. 2.
Contains annotations. 1843
- # 626 Stephens, John L. Central America, Vol. 1.
Contains annotations. 1841
- # 627 Stephens, John L. Central America, Vol. 2.
Contains annotations. 1841 Acquired 1902
- # 628 Squier, E. George. Peru.
Contains annotations. 1878
- # 629 Von Tschudi, John James. Peruvian Antiquities.
Contains annotations. 1855 Acquired 1902
- # 630 Wissler, Clark. Indians of the Plains. 1920 Acquired August 1922
- # 631 Wright, Carroll D. New Century Book of Facts. c. 1909
- # 632-648 Miscellaneous articles pertaining to the "Antiquity of
Mao"
- # 632 Improvement Era, Apr 1916.
- # 633 Improvement Era, Aug 1919.
- # 634 Improvement Era, Sep 1919.
- # 635 Improvement Era, Oct 1919.
- # 636 Improvement Era, Nov 1919.
- # 637 Improvement Era, Dec 1919.
- # 638 Improvement Era, Apr 1920.
- # 639 Improvement Era, Jun 1920.

- # 640 Improvement Era, Jul 1920.
- # 641 Improvement Era, Oct 1920.
- # 642 Improvement Era, Nov 1920.
- # 643 Improvement Era, Dec 1920.
- # 644 Improvement Era, Sep 1920.
- # 645 Improvement Era, Jan 1921.
- # 646 Improvement Era, Feb 1921.
- # 647 Improvement Era, Mar 1921.
- # 648 Improvement Era, May 1921.

- # 649 Osborn, Henry Fairfield. The Hall of the Age of Man. 1929
- # 650 Strevell, Charles N. Dinosauropodes (Pamphlet). *reprint of 1932 Christmas Desert News.*
- # 651 Museum of History Science and Art - Notes on the Pleistocene Fossils. 1918
- # 652 Talmage, James E. The Earth and Man. 1931
- # 653 Stephens, Solomon C. Philosophy of the Earth - Man.
Item missing.
- # 654 The Spirit of Missions - Alaska (Pamphlet) 1912
- # 655 Government Reports on Indians (Folder of Manuscript) Administration.
See subject files, fd 414. 1921-1923
- # 656 Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History - New York.
See subject files, fd 276. 1919
- # 657 Pamphlets and Leaflets from Smithsonian Institute on American Archeology, etc. (Book of Mormon)
Item missing. 1916-1926 (various publications)
- # 658 Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology 1885-6.
Contains annotations. 1891 *Received Nov. 1921*

- Items 659-683 GEOLOGY

- # 659 Lyell, Charles, Sir. A Manual of Elementary Geology.
- # 660 Lyell, Charles, Sir. Principles of Geology.
- # 661 Le Conte, Joseph. A Compend of Geology.

B. H. Roberts
Salt Lake City, Utah

March
14,
1932

My Dear Daughter Elizabeth:

I have your letter of March 8th to hand and was made happy to hear from you so promptly. By the way, your letter led to what has turned out to be very happy results. I have long wanted to have the opportunity of writing to President Grant, calling his attention to his mistake about referring "cement" as not being known in modern times that the ancient people of America knew of it and used it, until after the publication of the fact in the Book of Mormon. I referred to your meeting and to the young man who had called attention to the fact that it was previous to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon that it was quite commonly known and I gave him the citations I had both to Humbolt's reference to it in 1809 in his French work, which was afterwards translated into the English and published in America in 1814 and also the reference to it in Morse's Geography, etc. In writing his reply he thanked me kindly for calling his attention to these references and remarked quite pleasantly that he would have to change his argument, which, of course, means that he will have to abandon it.

Also I made it kind of a reminder to him of an opportunity to discuss some important matters about the Seventies and I had a day's innings with the Presidency and the Twelve, and some of those important matters in which at least we moved forward a little, and they are to be still carried further.

Now in relation to that reference to the America Indians being of Israelitish descent as stated by Boudinot in "The Star of the West" for 1816. I am forwarding you with this mail an introductory chapter to a work of mine which is in typewritten form under the title of "Book of Mormon Study" it makes 450 pp. of typewritten matter. It was from research work I did before going to take charge of the Eastern States Mission. I had written it for presentation to the Twelve and the Presidency, not for publication, but I suspended the submission of it until I returned home, but have not yet succeeded in making the presentation of it, although the letter of submission to President Grant was made previous to leaving the E.S.M. I have made one feeble effort to get it before them since returning home, but they are not in a studious mood.

B. H. Roberts
Salt Lake City, Utah

- 2.

I may say it is an "awful" book, but it contains a collection of facts which ought to be known by them. In the first chapter it discusses this very issue, the pre-Book of Mormon publication of theories of the Hebrew extraction of the American race. You will catch the spirit of it by reading this chapter, and it cites authorities on the subject. I must ask you to be very careful of it and return the Mss. to me after you have made such use of it in your study as will meet your requirements. I am asking its return because I want to replace it in the Mss. to which it belongs.

Trusting that you will continue to enjoy good health, great peace and joy in your life, I am

as always,

Lovingly
Father

P. S. . . I refer you also to my New Witnesses Vol. III the chapter on "Hebrew Origin" and passim. There is no reference I can give you from the History as that work nowhere, so far as I can recall, deals with the particular subject in hand.

B.H.R.

March 15, 1932.

Dear Elizabeth:

I discover that I omitted an item which I intended to enclose in the letter to you yesterday, to call your attention to the fact that while early authorities on Indian antiquities assigned to the Indians a Hebrew origin by claiming they were descendants of the lost tribes, that, of course, you will remember, is not the Book of Mormon attitude. While assigning to them Israelitish origin it nowhere claims that they are the lost tribes, but instead in the main are derived from the tribes of Ephraim and Mannaseh with a slight infusion of the tribe of Judah through the advent of the people of Amulek who came from Jerusalem at the destruction of the families of Zedekiah, an account of which you may read in the Book of Mormon. But the Book of Mormon theory is that the Israelitish descent is from the two tribes of ~~Jacob~~ Ephraim and Mannaseh and this infusion from Judah.

Lovingly
Father

These are copies made for Richard R. Lyman

A P A R A L L E L

BOOK OF MORMON
1830

VIEW OF THE HEBREWS
1823-5 *B. Y. Etchen*

(1) Place: Sharon, Windsor Co., Vermont; And Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) County, New York.

(1) Place: Poultney, Rutland Co., Vermont (adjoining county on the west from Windsor County, Vermont, *it* where Smith family lived).

(2) Title: "Book of Mormon," "by the hand of Mormon," ascribing Origin of American Indians to certain Tribes of the Hebrews. Translated by Joseph Smith.

(2) Title: "View of the Hebrews" or "The Tribes of Israel in America" written by Ethan Smith, Minister.

(3) Revealed Existence of the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith September 22, 1823.

(3) "View of the Hebrews" published (1st Ed.) 1823.

Gold Plates of Book of Mormon given into custody of Joseph Smith for translation, September 22, 1827.

Second Edition published 1825; considerably enlarged by quotations from Baron Humbolt's "New Spain" (Black's translation) American Edition, 1811. Copious quotations on ruined cities of America, Temple, and the story of Quetzalcoatl—Reminiscent of Moses "as a type" the Christ."

Book of Mormon published the latter part of March, 1830. "To the convincing of the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ." (Preface Title page)

Origin of the Am. Indians; Origin of American Ind.

(4) It is often represented by Mormon speakers and writers, that the Book of Mormon was the first to represent the American Indians as descendants of the Hebrews: holding that the Book of Mormon is unique in this. The claim is sometimes still ignorantly made.

(4) In his index to the "View of the Hebrews" (p.10) Mr. Ethan Smith informs us that from page 114 to page 225 (111 pages) will be devoted "to promiscuous testimonies", to the main fact for which his book stands, viz. the Hebrew origin of the American Indians. He brings together a very long list of writers and published books to show that this view very generally obtained throughout New England. One hundred and eleven pages devoted to evidence alone of the fact of such Hebrew origin gives space for much proof. Referring to Adair's testimonies on the subject, the "View of the Hebrews" lists twenty-three arguments to prove such origin. (pp.

147-3)

Apostle Hyde on the
truth of his remarks
so Roberts this paradox of
teaching seemed to put the
Church in a very inconsistent
position. The book, however
was tabled and his book
remains unpublished but
will be published under his
own direction without
Church backing if he can
raise the money. (He objects.)

I then ask Bro Roberts what
he thought of the present Church
Missionary system, and he
said we were bidding
ourselves in regard to its
effective ness. That the
missionaries were too often
going out apologetically
and that we present
invade by refusing to let

Elders go into the field
until they had a guarantee
of financial backing was
in opposition to the spirit
of missionary work as
Joseph Smith organized it.
In discussing Brigham Young
he said in spite of his
outstanding qualities he was
not a logical man in the
sense that Joseph Smith was
logical and that was
present authoritative dictation
in Church Government was
an out growth of Brigham
Youngs practice and that
Joseph Smith was much
more democratic. He said
that Brigham Young had
an early tendency to fatalism
and predestination of Calvin
which became very marked

change parts of the book but he said he would not.

In one meeting President Grant just told them both to drop it which was a snap judgement and temporary defeat for Roberts because dropping the controversy merely meant that the book could not be published under Church sanction. In the mean time Joseph F Smith had very unethically published in the Relief Society

magazine a veiled attack on Roberts unpublished work. In the article he dogmatically stated that before Adam there was no death - not even in the animal or vegetable world. That death of any

sort was brought into the world by the Fall of Adam and that was enough for him. Although science or anything else tried to prove to the contrary. This dogmatic way of saying the least word on the subject was too much for Roberts. He wrote the First Presidency asking that they either approve Brother Smith's article or say that it was put out without their sanction. He pointed out to them that Aaron Nyde, a more important and more qualified Apostle than Joseph Fielding Smith had given a speech in the Tabernacle setting forth just the opposite doctrine at the close of which President Brigham Young had arisen and given his sanction to it and complemented

Sunday Aug 6/33

Lillian took me over to Anna's place and I went to Prinos with mother. Alon & Helen the looked over the Barton's lunch which was for sale. Had dinner at Al's then up to the Hospital and saw Mr. Parkinson. Went at Lillian's mother's. Western about 6:30 o'clock. Spent Sunday in Prinos and came home and went to bed.

Personal Journal of Wesley P. Lloyd, former dean at BYU. He had served a mission under Elder B. H. Roberts. Journal is in private possession.

[now in GFD Archived Manuscript]

This was given to D. Telling by one of his students, a relative of Lloyd.

Monday Aug 7-1933

Busy and important day. One hour conference with Bramwell 3 1/2 hours with B. H. Roberts. Liberty Park lawn lunch with all descendants of C. E. Lloyd's family and wives. All living grandchildren were present.

Rev Lewis' conference with

Mr Merrill at Church's Office

Had supper and spent the evening until 8:30 at Jack's getting better acquainted with the children. (go triumphy)

Came home and took Clea Evans and Lillian down town for a ride.

Conference with Bro Merrill was a farewell visit. He leaves latter part of August to preside over the European Mission. Bramwell wonders what they will do with him. Miss. Mission will remain at the office. Missionaries with Bro Roberts

very interesting. This account
of it is near to what I can remember.
I ask him about the main
book which ~~was~~ authorities of the
Church would not accept. He
explained that it was by far
his best work, and a climax
to a life of study. The part that
could not be accepted by ~~some~~ of the
authorities was where he had
suggested that the knowledge of
God to his people came perhaps
to fill local needs. That the
story of the creation was a double
account. One was a brief account
of the creation up to Adam and
then a detailed account of Gods
dealing with men from
Adam on to the present. This
allowed for the Adam's man,
which doubt Joseph Fielding
Smith and others could not
follow. He said that ~~Joseph~~
he was called before the Twelve
and given an opportunity

to explain his side of the case
after Pres Grant had turned
the matter over to the Twelve
for settlement. He explained
his stand and then Joseph
Fielding Smith ask for time
to prepare an answer. After
several weeks it was prepared
and Pres Roberts was invited
to attend the meeting with
the Twelve where the paper
was read. It sounded to him
like a school boy composition
and he told some of them so
and prepared a paper of his own
and sent to Pres. Grant and
Pres Smith who passed it on
to the Twelve to do something
about it. They passed it
back to the First Presidency
and received severe criticism
from Pres. Grant for it.
They wanted Bro. Roberts to

and investigated it from
every angle but could
not answer it satisfactorily
to himself. At his request
Pres. Grant called a meeting
of the Twelve Apostles and
Bro. Roberts presented the
matter, told them frankly
that he was stumped
and ask for their aide
in the explanation. In
answer, they merely one
by one stood up and
bore testimony to the
truthfulness of the Book of
Mormon. George Albert
Smith in tears testified
that his faith in the
Book of M. was not been
shaken by the question.
Pres. Smith, the main

most likely to be able to
answer a question on that
subject was unable to produce
the solution. No answer was
available. Bro Roberts could
not criticize them for not
being able to answer it or to
assist him, but said that
in a church which claimed
continuous revelation, as
Crisis had arisen where
revelation was necessary.
After the meeting he wrote
Pres. Grant expressing his
disappointment at the failure
and especially at the failure
of Pres. Smith to contribute
to the problem. It was
mentioned at the meeting
by Bro Roberts that there
were other Book of Mormon
problems that needed
special attention. Richard P.
Lyon

in his later life and that when some good historian uncovers the real facts of ~~the~~ ^{the} Johnson Army during the Johnson Army episode, some of his glory or fame will diminish. The conversation then drifted to the Book of Mormon and this ~~consequently~~ ^{surprising} story he related to me. That while he was Pres. of the Eastern States Mission a Logan man by the name of Riter persuaded a scholarly friend who was a student in Washington to read them and to criticize the Book of Mormon. The criticism that the student made was that at the time of the discovery of America

there were fifty eight distinct languages in existence among the American Indians, not dialects but languages as different as English is from Spanish and that all human knowledge indicated that fundamental languages change very slowly whereas at the time of the Book of Mormon the people were supposed to have been speaking all one tongue. The student asked Riter to explain that proposition. Riter sent the letter to Mr. Saltnage who studied it over and during a trip east asked Brother Roberts to make a careful investigation and study and to get an answer for the letter. Roberts went to work

spoke up and said if they were things that would help our prestige and when Bro Roberts answered us, he said then why discuss them? This attitude was too much for the historically minded Roberts. There was however a Committee appointed to study this problem, consisting of Bros. Johnnager, Ballard, Roberts and one other Apostle. They met and looked vacantly at one and other, but none seemed to know what to do about it. Finally Bro Roberts mentioned that he had at least attempted an answer and he had it in his drawer. That it was an answer that moved some of the people that didn't

think, but a very inadequate answer to a thinking man. They asked him to read it and after hearing it, they adopted it by vote and said that was about the best they could do. After this Bro Roberts made a special

Book of Mormon study: Treated the problem systematically and historically and in a 400 type-written page thesis set forth a revolutionary article on the origin of the

Book of Mormon and sent it to Pres Grant. It was an article far too strong for the average church member but for the intellectual group he considers it a contribution. Wasn't in explaining Mormonism. He went to

a psychological explanation of the Book of Mormon and shows that the plates were not objective but subjective with Joseph Smith; that his exceptional imagination justified him psychologically for the experience which he had in presenting to the world the Book of Mormon and that the plates with the vision and thence without objective He explained. Certain literary difficulties in the Book such as the miraculous incidents

of the entire nation of the Jaredites, the dramatic story of one man being left on each side, and one of them finally being slain, also the New England flat hill surroundings of a great.

civilization of another part of the country. We see none of the cliffs of the Mayas or the high mountain peaks or other geographical environment of early American civilization that the entire story laid in a New England flat hill surroundings. There are some of the things which has made Bro Roberts shift his base on the Book of Mormon. Instead of regarding it as the strongest evidence we have of Church divinity, he regards it as the one out which needs the more ~~the~~ bolstering. His greatest claim for the divinity of the Prophet Joseph ~~there~~ lies in the electronic and congruence.