

B. H. ROBERTS -
BOM STUDY

PART I

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

COMMENTS ON BRIGHAM MADSEN'S HISTORY

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Brigham D. Madsen, professor emeritus of history at the University of Utah, and his collaborators owe their readers, if not the world, an explanation. Their aims and procedures in publishing B. H. Roberts' Studies of the Book of Mormon (University of Illinois, 1985) raise several serious questions.

In a day when some historians are crying "foul" and "cover-up," a careless and apparently biased case shows up in the hands of professors who claim to be in favor of objectivity and sincerity. 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. 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; Smith told me that he supposes it was written in 1923.

A radically different picture, however, would emerge if it could 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 would show 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, 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. From this it will be seen how critical bits of evidence have been systematically omitted from

the printed text of Roberts' Study. So thoroughly and consistently was this information omitted that it is hard to believe that the omissions were not done consciously. 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.

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, 1822 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 this letter was not printed by Madsen 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] greatest contribution to the literature of the church." "Autobiography," p. 210, also cited by Madsen, p. 11.

(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.

(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 main known places in which Roberts made statements 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.

It is obvious from this list that Roberts voluntarily, frequently, definitely, unambiguously and unequivocally referred to and averred 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 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. 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? There are several answers, which 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 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.

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 only to the Twelve and First Presidency. (Grant Ivins' letter 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 duty. (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, empahsis added). He ends the "Parallel" noting that the similarities raise a "legitimate query." (pp. 335, 344, empahsis 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 potently 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 wrote 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 1927 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 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 in part, by Madsen, pp. 23-24. Full text attached as Exhibit 10. The force of this conversation, which Roberts had with Lloyd on a summer's Monday, August 7, 1933, is understood, if not wholly mitigated, by the following four 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) Lloyd is not reliable as a reporter. He has many facts wrong in this journal entry. The Ritter question came in 1921, not after Roberts went to New York, as Lloyd states. The Study was done during 1922, not later, as Lloyd states. Apostle Lyman asked if the research would "increase our difficulties," not "help our prestige." The Study was 450 pages, not 400. The Study was never sent to President Grant, as Lloyd states. The Church has never had a copy, all of the copies have remained in the hands of the Roberts family until they were donated to the University of Utah. It seems unlikely that Roberts would have gotten so many things wrong. It seems more likely that Wesley Lloyd did not get Roberts' comments entirely straight.

Similarly, Lloyd reports 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." Since there is no such "swinging" or "showing" of subjectivity in the Study, it is easier to believe that this is Lloyd's interpretation of what Roberts said, but not necessarily what Roberts either said or meant. Furthermore, 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) Lloyd only says that Roberts "shifted his base on the Book of Mormon." Shifting bases, however, does not mean abandoning. It is well known that Roberts indeed shifted away from the external evidences on which he had relied earlier to the doctrinal approach (typifying 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 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 whether Lloyd wrote "most" or "more." As for his attitude toward the Doctrine and Covenants, perhaps what Roberts said to Lloyd was closer to what he said in his conference address, April, 1929, than what Lloyd records. 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." Since the authorship of the Doctrine and Covenants is not questioned, it is easier to comprehend.

It is doubtful, therefore, that Wesley Lloyd accurately understood and recorded what Roberts was saying.

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. While Wesley Lloyd did not report Roberts' complaints accurately, it is obvious that Roberts expressed some complaints that day. Roberts began his conversation with Lloyd by complaining 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). He then took issue with a new policy of not sending missionaries out without financial backing. He next complained that Brigham Young had made the Church into an "authoritative [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 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. Ivin's 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 others 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:

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"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.