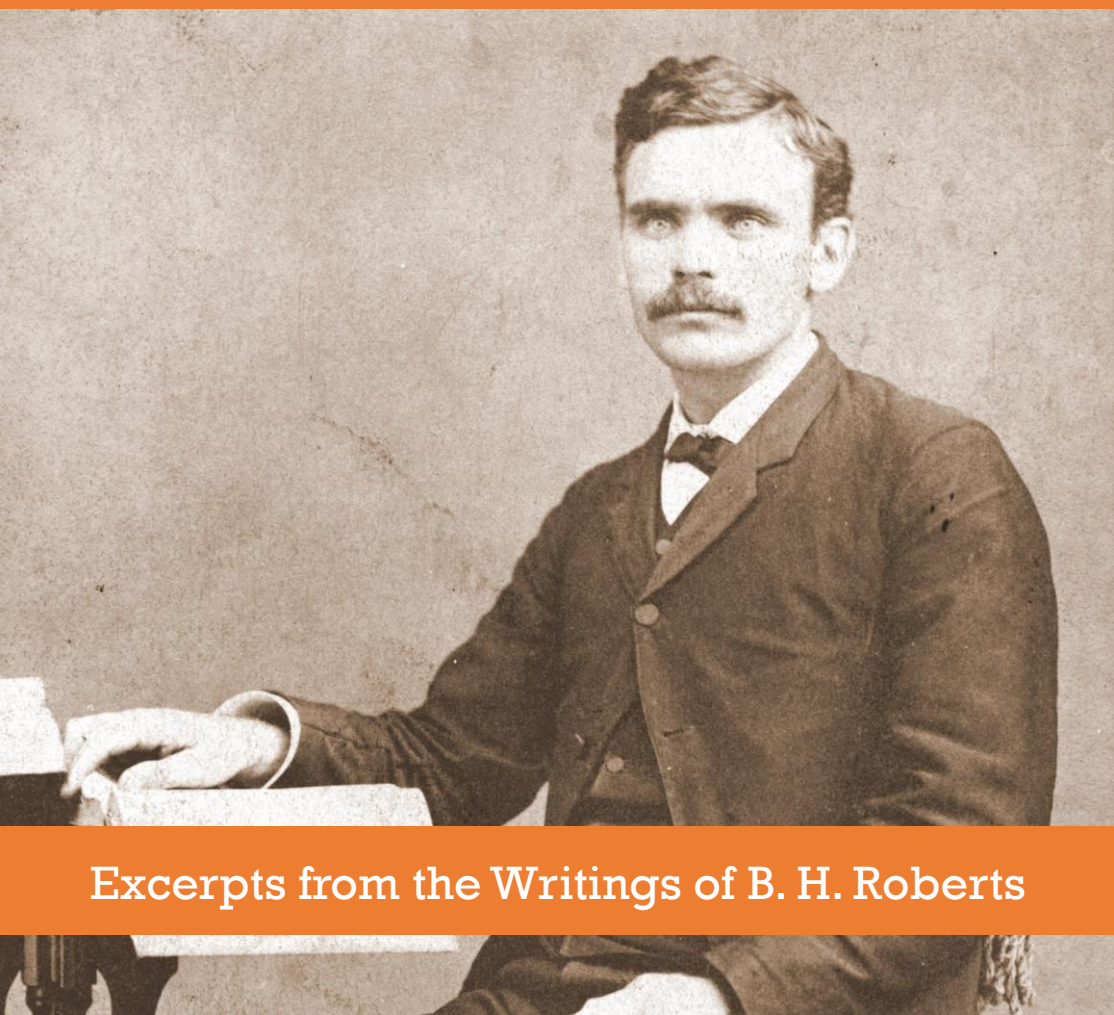




# A Beginner's Guide to B. H. Roberts



Excerpts from the Writings of B. H. Roberts



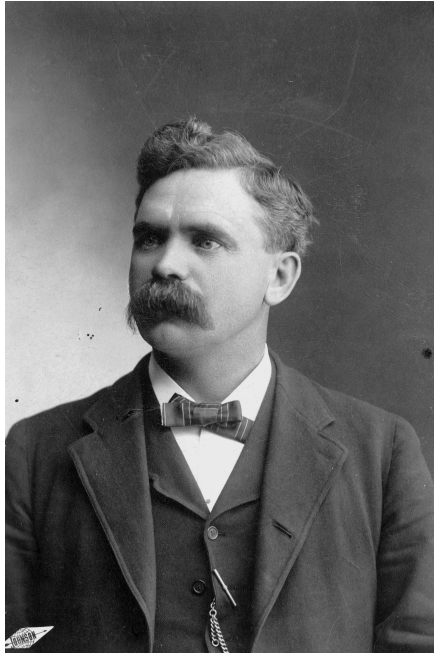
Known as “Mormonism’s most eminent intellectual” and its most effective “Defender of the Faith,” B. H. Roberts lived a life defined by a powerful tension between public advocacy and private, rigorous inquiry. This beginner’s guide introduces you to the mind of the man who was both the Church’s “great war horse” and its most unflinching internal examiner.

This volume collects key excerpts from the writings of B. H. Roberts, offering direct access to his most profound theology on the Atonement, the nature of God, and eternal progression. It also confronts his most complex intellectual challenges, including his private, probing studies of the Book of Mormon and his magnum opus, *The Truth, The Way, The Life*, which sought to synthesize faith with modern science and evolution.

For those seeking an “intelligent faith,” this guide presents Roberts’s own words, modeling an “unshakeable” conviction that could “look without fear upon all that can be said against” the truth.



A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO  
B. H. ROBERTS



**B. H. ROBERTS**

1857 - 1933

# A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO B. H. ROBERTS

EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS  
OF B. H. ROBERTS

*Compiled by Chad L. Nielsen*

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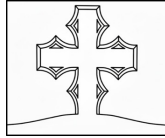
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## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO B. H. ROBERTS

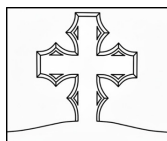
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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

This book had a long and winding road to reach the point of being released in its current form. During my mission from January 2010 to December 2011, I made a point of listening to many recordings of BYU Speeches. My brother-in-law recommended this, and one of his favourite speakers was Truman G. Madsen. As I listened to Madsen, I noticed that he referenced a person named B. H. Roberts frequently. D. Todd Christofferson also quoted Roberts in a conference address, which caught my attention. I was intrigued and decided that I would look more into Roberts when I had the chance.

After I returned home, I began to read some of Roberts's writings and was thoroughly impressed. He was articulate, deeply thoughtful, and theologically

focused—all things that I appreciated. As I continued to explore the literature of Mormon Studies more broadly, I found his name came up frequently for his colourful life, historical writings, and theological contributions to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I also appreciated Roberts's willingness to tackle the "hard questions" of history and theology with unflinching examination. I had an interest in the history and theology of the Church and began compiling quotes from Roberts as I read.

Then, in 2013 and 2014, Deseret Book published two books that appeared to be the start of a series of curated primers on the lives and thought of important thinkers in Latter-day Saint history. These were *A Beginner's Guide to Talmage: Excerpts From the Writings of James E. Talmage*, by Calvin T. Stephens, and *The Essential Nibley: Excerpts From the Writings of Hugh Nibley*, by Marvin R. VanDam. I was excited by the idea and redoubled my efforts to read everything that B. H. Roberts wrote and began writing introductory and biographical chapters for a similar book on Roberts. I even soft-pitched it to Reid Neilson over a dinner associated with the Arrington Lecture Series in Logan, Utah, since he was on the editorial board of the Deseret Book Company at the time, and he expressed interest in the idea.

When I checked in with the contact email for submitting proposals to Deseret Book, however, they

indicated that they were evaluating the market demand for those types of works based on sales of the Nibley and Talmage books, and it was unlikely that they would continue the series, even if I sent in a manuscript. A teacher at the Institute of Religion in Logan also suggested that Deseret Book was not a publisher I should work with based on the negative experiences of a friend of his. While I was close to finishing my effort to read everything from Roberts that I could get my hands on, that effectively killed the project at that time.

Still, having read that much by and about B. H. Roberts bore fruit in other ways for me. During 2021, I wrote a series of blog posts about the Doctrine and Covenants that became the basis of my 2024 book, *Fragments of Revelation: Exploring the Book of the Doctrine and Covenants*.<sup>1</sup> As some readers of the book have noted in conversations with me, I quote a lot from Roberts in my essays throughout. Then, when I became involved with the Latter-day Saint History blog *From the Desk: By Study and Faith*, I started my formal contributions to the site with an interview with John Sillito about his then-newly published biography, *B. H. Roberts: A Life in the Public Arena* (Signature Books: 2021).<sup>2</sup> Later, I pitched the idea of a quotes page for Roberts to Kurt Manwaring that would use some of the materials I had compiled, which we published on July 20, 2023.<sup>3</sup>

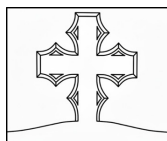
I thought that would be the end of things, but the idea of a book was still in the back of my mind. In 2025, I was introduced to Lulu Press, Inc. as an affordable self-publisher that didn't require a minimum number of books. I had several projects that platform would serve well, such as compilations of documents for the history of the Bells at Temple Square and a biography of my grandmother that I wanted to print for my family. In preparing those manuscripts for printing, though, I began to play with doing my own typesetting. From this experiment came the idea of preparing some of the books that I have toyed with that likely wouldn't have enough of a market to capture the attention of a publisher, to use as Christmas presents. The B. H. Roberts book, given how close it already was to completion, seemed like a good fit for the first of these. Beyond printing a couple of copies for myself and friends, I figured that the digital version of the typeset book would be something fun to share with anyone interested in B. H. Roberts through the Times and Seasons blog. Thus, after over a decade of work, I am happy to share the B. H. Roberts I have come to know—a man whose voice is perhaps needed now more than ever.

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## NOTES

1. Chad L. Nielsen, *Fragments of Revelation: Exploring the Book of Doctrine and Covenants* (By Common Consent Press, 2024).
2. John Sillito and Chad L. Nielsen, "B. H. Roberts and Utah Politics in the Early 1900s," *From the Desk*, updated September 19, 2025, <https://www.fromthedesk.org/bh-roberts-biography-sillito/>.
3. Chad L. Nielsen, "B. H. Roberts Quotes," *From the Desk*, July 20, 2023, <https://www.fromthedesk.org/bh-roberts-quotes/>.

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO B. H. ROBERTS



## INTRODUCTION

Brother Roberts has been my mentor; he has been my teacher; he has been my chronicler. I was relieved of reading the great histories; I didn't have to read a whole library searching for information. What did I have to do? When anything troubled me about the history of the Church or scripture, I went to Brother Roberts. He had the most wonderful mind and memory of any human being I have ever known, right up to the very last. A great light has gone out in my life. I will soon follow.<sup>1</sup>

These words, spoken by Elder J. Golden Kimball about his close friend, capture in many ways the life of a spiritual giant and defender of the faith, Elder Brigham Henry Roberts (1857-1933).

Over the course of the 90 years that have passed since his death, B. H. Roberts has received the high praise of being called Mormonism's most eminent intellectual,<sup>2</sup> the best officially accepted theologian that Mormonism has known,<sup>3</sup> one of our most important historians,<sup>4</sup> and the most prolific and most effective defender of the Church.<sup>5</sup>

His career was vast: he served as a newspaper editor, mission president, a member of the Church's First Council of Seventy, an assistant Church historian, a politician, and a U. S. Army chaplain during World War I. He wrote at a furious pace, publishing thirty-five books and over three hundred articles, becoming "the most prolific interpreter of Mormonism's first century."<sup>6</sup>

B. H. Roberts emerged at a critical time, when the Church was under attack over polygamy and new intellectual theories like evolution and "higher criticism" of the Bible were proving threatening to Christian religions in general. As Sterling McMurrin noted, at that time "more than anything else, the church needed defenses that would justify its existence, establish its moral and intellectual respectability, and guarantee its own integrity." The result was an extremely fertile theological era of definition and reconciliation with secular learning. There were many important writers in the Church active in this endeavor, such as apostles James E.

## INTRODUCTION

Talmage, Joseph Fielding Smith, and John A. Widtsoe. McMurrin noted, however, that B. H. Roberts was "the intellectual leader of the Mormon people in the era of Mormonism's finest intellectual attainment."<sup>7</sup> The Church needed defenses, and Roberts stepped into that role.

Truman G. Madsen noted that "three main interests dominated his scholarly efforts: ... historical and literary probing, doctrinal exposition, and public preachment."<sup>8</sup> The B. H. Roberts writings collected in this volume are a testament to those three "loves."

As a **historian**, he is largely responsible for ensuring that the Mormon community has an informative record of its past. He edited Joseph Smith's documentary history, and also produced the monumental six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church* and the first systematic (albeit outdated) treatment of the Great Apostasy, *Outlines of Ecclesiastical History*.<sup>9</sup>

As a **preacher**, he was "considered by many to be the greatest orator of the Church in his day." His intellectual force was legendary. After hearing him speak, the British author H. G. Wells remarked that "the idea that the 'Mormons' had no intellectuals was totally obliterated from my mind."<sup>10</sup> Notably, later Church president Spencer W. Kimball was almost named Roberts Kimball by his father, because he was impressed with Elder Roberts's oration skills.<sup>11</sup>

As a **theologian**, Roberts's work earned him the informal title "Defender of the Faith." His *Mormon Doctrine of Deity* has been called "the most impressive theological piece to come from an accepted Mormon writer."<sup>12</sup> But this intellectual drive was not just for public defense; it also led to profound and sometimes troubling theological inquiry. This included his private, probing B. H. Roberts Book of Mormon studies and his efforts to synthesize faith with modern science and evolution in his magnum opus, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, which was never published in his lifetime.

Sadly, much of Elder Roberts's work has been eclipsed in Latter-day Saint thought since he died in 1933. This *Beginner's Guide to B. H. Roberts* is intended to reintroduce his powerful voice by providing access to his primary theological ideas, statements that have doctrinal significance to the Church today, and quotes that display particularly profound or beautiful expressions of the Gospel.

Ultimately, however, it is hoped that as this volume is read, Elder Roberts's own conviction that "the end of all preaching, of all instruction, as I understand it, is to beget faith in the hearts of the hearers," may shine through and that his words will build faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup>

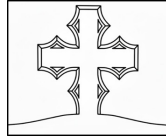
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1. J. Golden Kimball, *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 1933 (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 43.
2. See Stan Larson, "Intellectuals in Mormon History: An Update," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Fall 1993): 187–189.
3. See Blake T. Ostler, "An Interview with Sterling McMurrin," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17 (Spring 1984): 38.
4. See Craig Mikkelsen, "The Politics of B. H. Roberts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 26.
5. See McKay V. Jones, "Evasive Ignorance: Anti-Mormon Claims that B. H. Roberts Lost His Testimony," *FAIR*, <https://www.fairlatterdaysaints.org/archive/publications/evasive-ignorance-anti-mormon-claims-that-b-h-roberts-lost-his-testimony>.
6. Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Bookcraft, 1980), xi.
7. Sterling McMurrin, "B. H. Roberts: Historian and Theologian," foreword to *The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts*, edited by Gary James Bergera (Signature Books, 1990), viii–ix.
8. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*, 178.
9. On the *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Davis Bitton wrote that it was "far superior to any history of Mormonism which had yet appeared," and that "even today it is a work which no serious student of Mormonism can afford to ignore" (Davis Bitton, "The Truth, The Way, the Life: B. H.

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO B. H. ROBERTS

- Roberts' Unpublished Masterwork," 2, typed manuscript, in the David J. Buerger Collection, Ms 622, Bx 10, Fd 7, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT). On Roberts and the Great Apostasy, see Eric R. Dusteler, "Historical Periodization in the LDS Great Apostasy Narrative," in *Standing Apart: Mormon Historical Consciousness and the Concept of Apostasy*, edited by Miranda Wilcox and John D. Young (Oxford University Press, 2014), 23–54.
10. Cited in Ralph Wayne Pace, "A Study of the Speaking of B. H. Roberts, Utah's Blacksmith Orator" (BYU Master's Thesis, 1957), 32.
  11. Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball* (Bookcraft, Inc., 1977), 18–19.
  12. Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (University of Utah Press, 1965), 108. See also Blake T. Ostler, *Exploring Mormon Thought, Volume 1: The Attributes of God* (Greg Kofford Books, 2001), 93.
  13. B. H. Roberts, "The Doctrine of Faith," in *Collected Discourses Delivered by: President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, edited by Brian H. Stuy, 5 vol. (BHS Publishing, 1987–1992), 5:329.



# B. H. ROBERTS CHRONOLOGY (1857–1933)

**1857**

**March 13:** Born to Benjamin and Ann Everington Roberts in England.

**1862**

His mother, Ann, immigrates to Utah, leaving five-year-old B. H. ("Harry") and his sister Mary behind. Roberts spends the next four years living with the Tovey family, an "abusive, alcoholic, and poor" couple.

**1866**

Immigrated to Utah with his sister via the

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO B. H. ROBERTS

Perpetual Emigration Fund, walking barefoot for much of the journey across the plains. Reunited with his mother in Bountiful, Utah.

### 1871–1874

Works in the Ophir and Jacob City mining districts; falls into "vices" and is briefly disfellowshipped by Bishop Edwin D. Woolley before being restored to full fellowship.

### 1874

Apprenticed as a blacksmith to James Baird in Centerville, Utah. begins a period of "spiritual reawakening" and intense reading.

### 1878

Graduated at the top of his class from the University of Deseret (now University of Utah) after completing a two-year course in one year.

Married to Sarah Louisa Smith in the Endowment House.

### 1880–1882

Serves a mission to Iowa and Tennessee.

## CHRONOLOGY

### 1883–1884

Serves as president of the Southern States Mission.

**August 1884:** Retrieves the bodies of missionaries killed in the Cane Creek Massacre in Tennessee while disguised as a tramp.

**October 2, 1884:** Marries his second wife, Celia Dibble.

### 1886–1888

Flees to England to avoid arrest for unlawful cohabitation; serves as editor of *The Millennial Star*.

### 1888

Returns to Utah and is called as one of the Seven Presidents of the Seventy (First Council of Seventy).

### 1889

Surrenders to authorities and is imprisoned for five months in the state penitentiary for polygamy.

### 1890s

Marries his third wife, Margaret Shipp (likely after the 1890 Manifesto).

**1893:** Denied a presentation slot at the Parliament of World Religions at the Chicago World's Fair; refuses to present in a side room.

**1895:** Serves as a Davis County representative to the Utah constitutional convention; opposes women's suffrage.

**1896:** Signs the "Political Manifesto" after a period of intense conflict with the First Presidency regarding political activity.

#### **1898–1900**

Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Denied his seat by Congress (vote of 268 to 50) following a nationwide petition against seating a polygamist.

#### **1902**

Appointed Assistant Church Historian. Begins publishing the *History of the Church* (Documentary History), completing six volumes by 1912.

#### **1907–1912**

Publishes the five-volume *Seventy's Course in Theology*.

## CHRONOLOGY

### 1917–1918

Served as Chaplain of the 145th Field Artillery in France during World War I.

### 1921

Asked to respond to "five challenging questions" regarding Book of Mormon geography and linguistics, begins intense study into potential anachronisms.

### 1922–1927

Serves as president of the Eastern States Mission.

### 1928

Completes his magnum opus, *The Truth, The Way, The Life*, attempting to synthesize theology and science.

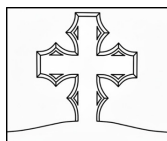
The work is rejected for publication by Church leadership due to conflicts with Joseph Fielding Smith over evolution and "pre-Adamites."

### 1933

**September 27:** Dies from complications of diabetes.

**October 1:** Funeral held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.





## B. H. ROBERTS: A LIFE OF CONFLICT AND CONVICTION

**T**he life of Elder Brigham Henry Roberts is among the most complex and consequential of all General Authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His story is defined by two major themes: a public life of overcoming difficulties and frustrations to become the Church's most ardent fighter and defender, and a life as its most eminent intellectual, marked by profound and sometimes troubling theological inquiry.

Roberts himself seemed to capture the essence of his own improbable journey. His observations that the premortal existence allowed him to “understand how it is that sometimes, despite all adverse circumstances, there are spirits that rise from the

lowliest and most unfavorable conditions to grandeur and nobility of heart and head," were stated, perhaps, somewhat autobiographically.<sup>1</sup>

## YOUTH

B. H. Roberts was born to Benjamin and Ann Everington Roberts on March 13, 1857, in England. His early years were not pleasant, and he later stated that, "My childhood was a nightmare; my boyhood a tragedy."<sup>2</sup> His father had difficulty keeping a job, leading to a transient, impoverished lifestyle. His mother had wholeheartedly joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints before B. H. was born, but his father resisted conversion. Eventually, Benjamin was baptized as well, but this was "a perfunctory thing to him and of doubtful credibility," and he did not stay involved in the Church for long.<sup>3</sup> In 1862, Benjamin sent Ann enough money to relocate the family and join him at the location of his latest job, but after counseling with Church leaders in Liverpool, Ann decided to use the money to immigrate to Utah. Unfortunately, however, there was only money to take herself and her two youngest children on the journey, which meant leaving behind five-year-old B. H. Roberts and eleven-year-old Mary for the time being.

Ann arranged for Mary to be sent to live with distant relatives, while Harry (as Roberts was called at the time) was left with a couple that had recently moved into the local Mormon branch. The Toveys, Roberts's guardians and keepers for the next four years, turned out to be less than ideal. They were abusive, alcoholic, and poor, which led to a prolonged Dickensian experience of "sad sensations of poverty, squalor and utter homelessness."<sup>4</sup> Yet, from his time with this couple, Roberts learned how to survive in a hostile world, learned to listen to the promptings of his "soul voice," and became familiar with the Bible and early Mormon history.<sup>5</sup>

Eventually, Roberts's mother was able to arrange for her two children to travel to Utah with help from the Perpetual Emigration Fund. After crossing the ocean, the Roberts children made their way through "the zig-zag route across the United States, through Canada, for the distant valley of Salt Lake, Utah" by way of train and wagon company.<sup>6</sup> Prone to mishaps and a bit of mischief, nine-year-old B. H. Roberts managed to lose his pocketknife, hat, shoes, and coat before the company was halfway between Nebraska and Utah, leaving him barefoot and cold for most of the westward trek. The Roberts children arrived in Utah, however, and were reunited with their mother.

Roberts's mother had married Seth Dustin and

was living in poverty in Bountiful, Utah. She took her children to live with her, and B. H. Roberts was able to work on farms and other odd jobs in the area for a few years. As an eleven-year-old, he was able to attend school during the winter, where he learned to read for the first time in his life. As a fourteen-year-old, however, his stepfather took him to the Ophir and Jacob City mining districts to work prospect for the next three years. The men of the mining districts had a terrible influence on the teenage Roberts. They pushed him into vices such as gambling, drinking liquor and coffee, and chewing tobacco. He witnessed gunfights and even had one of the most dangerous desperados in town take him under his wing for a time. Sensing the need for a wake-up call to this drifting youth, Bishop Edwin D. Woolley disfellowshipped him from the Church. Brought up short, Roberts appealed the decision, and was surprised to find Bishop Woolley at the council pressing for him to be "restored to full faith and fellowship."<sup>7</sup>

In time, Roberts left the mining camps and hired himself out as an apprentice blacksmith to James Baird in Centerville, Utah. Baird and another local man by the name of Nathan T. Porter helped Roberts undergo a spiritual reawakening that turned Roberts towards his course in life as a scholar, church missionary, and leader. It was during this time that

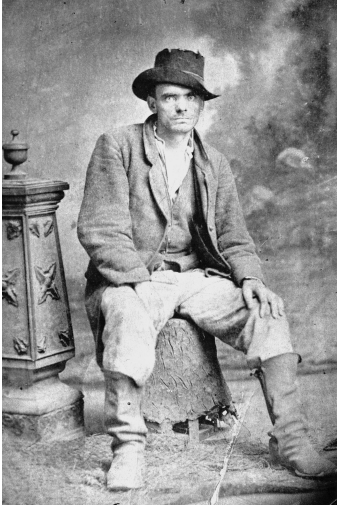
Roberts began to quench his thirst for knowledge, spending most of his spare time in classes or reading. During these few years, he read scores of books on history and theology—including a forty-two-volume set on the early Christian Fathers from Tertullian to John Chrysostom—and other literature.

Realizing that he was more of a scholar at heart rather than a blacksmith, Roberts decided to attend the University of Deseret (now the University of Utah). There, Roberts completed a two-year course in one year, graduating at the top of his class. Shortly before attending the university, he was sealed to Sarah Louisa Smith by John Taylor in the Salt Lake Endowment House. They would ultimately have seven children together.

## MISSIONARY WORK

After completing his course of study, Roberts began to provide for his young family as a teacher in Davis County, but was interrupted by a three-year mission call to Iowa in 1880. He was transferred to Tennessee partway through this mission due to a serious sinus infection brought on by the harsh Iowa winter.<sup>8</sup>

Having completed this mission, he returned home to his wife in Centerville, but less than a year



B. H. Roberts, disguised as a tramp. Photograph taken after retrieving the bodies of William S. Berry and John H. Gibbs.

later, he was called to serve as mission president in the Southern States Mission. He left home again, serving during a time of intense hostility to Mormonism in the South. The most dramatic event of his mission was the Cane Creek massacre in Tennessee in August 1884, in which a band of Ku Klux Klan members killed two missionaries (William S. Berry and John H. Gibbs) and two local members of

the Church (Martin Conder and John R. Hudson). Determined to ensure the missionaries had a proper burial by their families in Utah, Roberts disguised himself as a tramp with his face and hands smeared with soot and was successful in retrieving the bodies from Cane Creek despite threats to his life.<sup>9</sup>

## POLYGAMY

During a short vacation from his duties in the South in the winter of 1884–1885, Roberts secured

Louisa's consent to enter into polygamy, and the two agreed that he should propose to Celia Dibble. He did so, and they were married in the Endowment House on October 2, 1884. They would ultimately have eight children together. One unfortunate aspect of his life, however, is that his constant efforts to support the Church and fulfill his callings took him away from his family more often than not, as shown by his immediate return to the South after his marriage to Celia.<sup>10</sup> Roberts's personality was also not the easiest to maintain a close relationship with, either in the family or among colleagues. As one friend of the family noted, "He was respected, but I cannot say that he was loved. He wasn't the lovable type."<sup>11</sup>

After his return to Utah, Roberts was taken on as the editor of a Salt Lake City newspaper, *The Salt Lake Herald*. Due to anti-polygamy laws in the United States, however, he was arrested for unlawful cohabitation. The Church posted the \$1,000 bail and shipped him off to England before the trial the following morning. He arrived in his native land after narrowly avoiding capture on at least one occasion during the journey and served as a missionary and the editor of the Church publication, *The Millennial Star*, for the next two years. Upon his return to Utah in 1888, Roberts was called to serve as a president of the Council of the Seventy.<sup>12</sup>

In 1889, Roberts left the underground and

turned himself in to the authorities for practicing polygamy. He was imprisoned for five months in the State penitentiary. This was not enough to shake his conviction in what he viewed as a commandment from God, and he married his third wife, Margaret Shipp, after his release. Ironically, it was around this same time that President Wilford Woodruff issued the 1890 Manifesto, which began the process of ending polygamy in the Church.<sup>13</sup>

The Manifesto marked an important turning point for the Church, launching an era of intellectual adjustment and internal conflict. When the Manifesto was issued, however, many Church members felt betrayed by the Church because of the change that was being made. B. H. Roberts recalled that when he initially heard the news, he had the impression flash through his soul that “That is right.” Yet afterwards:

I began to reflect upon the matter. I thought of all the Saints had suffered to sustain that doctrine; I remembered my own exile, my own imprisonment; I thought of that of others. I remember what sacrifices my wives had made for it; what other had made for it. We had preached it, sustained its divinity from the pulpits, in the press, from the lecture platform. Our community had endured every kind of reproach from the world for the sake of it—and was this to be the end? I had

learned to expect that God would sustain both the principle and his saints who carried it out, and to lay it down like this was a kind of cowardly proceeding that the more I thought of it the less I liked it.<sup>14</sup>

Like many other Latter-day Saints at the time, he may not have taken the Manifesto as binding on his personal choices. John Sillito, for example, noted that while "B. H. Roberts never wavered in his claim that he had married his third wife—Margaret Curtis Shipp—in April 1890," there is a strong possibility that it was a post-Manifesto plural marriage: "Most scholars doubt that claim, though estimates of the marriage year vary from 1891 to 1894," which means that the best research available indicates it was indeed a marriage after the Manifesto was issued.<sup>15</sup> Roberts may have also flirted with the idea of courting Leah Dunford—the daughter of Susa Young Gates and future wife of Apostle John A. Widtsoe—during the late 1890s.<sup>16</sup>

Roberts eventually reconciled himself to the Manifesto. Later, he even wrote that it wasn't accurate to state that "Mormonism is based on polygamy" since "Mormonism existed ten years ... before plural marriage was ever introduced into the Church." After the practice was abandoned, "Mormonism still survives," showing that "the doctrine of the rightfulness of plural marriage is in every sense but

an incident in the 'Mormon system' rather than a basic principle." Thus, he affirmed that "Salvation in the Mormon religion is not made to depend upon a plurality of wives."<sup>17</sup>

## THE CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR

During the 1890s, Roberts worked to represent the Church, both in speeches and in print. For example, the World's Columbian Exposition (the Chicago World Fair of 1893) has been seen as a turning point for the Church's national image and modernization. The Salt Lake City Tabernacle Choir was well-received and was awarded second place in the Eisteddfod (a Welsh choral competition). The presentation of the Choir as a group of clean, healthy, and artistic Americans bolstered the public image of the Church.<sup>18</sup> The Church also used the Utah exhibit at the World's Fair to retool its image by portraying its members as pioneers who contributed to and revered American expansion.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, women of the Church participated in events, giving speeches and networking with national and

international organizations, strengthening their relationship with groups like the National Council of Women and the International Council of Women.<sup>20</sup>

B. H. Roberts hoped to achieve a similar recalibration by presenting about the history, theology, and cultural contributions of Mormonism at the Parliament of World Religions at the Exposition. While the parliament's goal was "to unite all religions against irreligion," Roberts was rejected due to anti-Mormon bias. After further lobbying, Roberts was allowed to present his paper but was relegated to a side room at the last minute rather than the main hall. Furious at being snubbed, Roberts refused to present. Despite his best efforts, he did not find a favorable situation at the Chicago World's Fair.<sup>21</sup>

## POLITICS

Aside from polygamy, the other primary objection to Mormonism in the United States was the Church's influence over members in politics. The Manifesto addressed polygamy, and soon afterwards, Church leaders began to address their political influence. The initial steps were taken by disbanding the Church-run People's Party in 1891 and pushing for members to become involved in the two-party system practiced in the United States.

To avoid perpetuating the Mormon-Gentile rift in Utah and to court favor with Washington, D.C., Church leaders felt that it would be beneficial for members to avoid going en masse to either party. The tendency at the time, however, was for the Mormons to support the Democratic Party, while non-Mormons in Utah favored the Republican Party. To remedy this situation, the leading brethren decided to tip the balance in favor of the Republicans. This brought B. H. Roberts into conflict with his superiors in the Church, since he supported the Democratic Party wholeheartedly and was not afraid to publicly embrace controversy or to attempt to make a show of unity with the Brethren when he felt at odds with them. Later efforts to preserve peace by reducing general authority involvement in politics altogether brought further conflict with Roberts's belief that Church leaders could be involved in politics as individuals, though any attempt to use Church position in politics would be a breach of trust. The conflicts that resulted from this clash of rights flared up between Elder Roberts and his ecclesiastical superiors throughout the 1890s.

During the first Utah elections after the split into national political parties in 1892, the *Herald*, which Roberts edited, criticized the Church's position that the Latter-day Saints should be equally divided into the parties and the actions of certain (Republican)

Church leaders in appealing to religious arguments to support political parties. Then, despite an October 1892 decision by the leading Brethren that general authorities should no longer take the platform to make political speeches, Roberts canvassed the state in favor of the Democratic Party. After the election was over, he found himself, along with two other general authorities who had acted similarly, facing discipline by the Church. All three apologized and made amends.

The ban on general authorities being involved in politics was lifted temporarily for the state constitutional convention as Utah prepared for statehood. Roberts was elected as the Davis County representative and played a large role in shaping the Utah constitution, though he aroused no small amount of controversy by almost single-handedly holding up the issue of women's suffrage for ten days in opposition to the idea. After the convention, Roberts seems to have felt that the ban on general authorities being involved in politics had been lifted permanently and ran for office as a congressman in the 1895 elections, while Apostle Moses Thatcher ran for Senate, both on the Democratic ticket.

It soon became clear that other Church leaders had not intended the ban to be lifted indefinitely. President Joseph F. Smith, then a member of the First Presidency, publicly censured the two Democratic

candidates for entering the political arena without discussing the advisability of dividing their energies between church and state affairs with the First Presidency. Roberts felt that he was not at fault for using his right as a United States citizen to be involved in politics and that President Smith's words were a form of ecclesiastical interference from someone who was seen as "a very radical Republican."<sup>22</sup> Roberts proceeded in his campaign despite continued objections from Church leadership and caustically criticized his superiors for their objections in the public forum.

Concerns over the disunity and disruption caused by B. H. Roberts's course in the campaign led to a series of long meetings between Elder Roberts and the Quorum of the Twelve and First Presidency in the Salt Lake Temple, in which Roberts stubbornly refused to make reconciliation with the Brethren. At the direction of the First Presidency, a document known as the "Political Manifesto" was prepared, setting forth the rule of the Church that general authorities must consult with the leading authorities of the Church before accepting any position that would interfere with their ecclesiastical duties. Both Roberts and Moses Thatcher refused to sign the document.

Apostles Heber J. Grant and Francis M. Lyman were assigned to work with Roberts to resolve the

situation, and spent days of laboring with Roberts that included discussing, weeping, and praying about the issue. J. Golden Kimball, as Roberts's friend and colleague in the Presidency of the Seventy, also attempted to persuade Roberts to submit to his ecclesiastical superiors. Kimball lamented that "Roberts is a noble spirit, intelligent, brave, valiant, and true, yet on this question he is in darkness. I pray God that his heart may be softened, and the time speedily come when he can see his mistake and continue his great work."<sup>23</sup> At the last minute, Roberts yielded and "appeared before the authorities and told them he was ready to acknowledge his wrong, and would sign any paper they might ask him to sign, or do anything they might tell him to do."<sup>24</sup> Roberts signed the Political Manifesto and continued in his Church position. Moses Thatcher did not and was subsequently dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve, though he retained his membership and remained supportive of the Church until his death.<sup>25</sup>

These difficulties, however, did not end Roberts's political ambitions. In 1898, after returning to Utah from a period of service in the mission field, Roberts received permission from President Lorenzo Snow to seek public office and ran for Utah's seat in the House of Representatives. He won the election despite opposition on several accounts and traveled to Washington, D.C., the following year to be sworn

into office. Upon arrival, however, he found strong sentiment against seating a polygamist, supported by petitions against Roberts containing seven million signatures, principally from Evangelical Protestant religious organizations and women's clubs from across the nation. These objections led to several weeks of discussion in Congress and intense attention from the national press to Roberts and his family. John Sillito observed, "Because of the considerable press attention focused on his election to Congress in 1898 and the efforts to have him expelled from that body, Roberts was probably the best-known Latter-day Saint in the country."<sup>26</sup> In the end, Congress ruled by a vote of 268 to 50 that B. H. Roberts should not have a place in the House. Although Roberts continued to be an influential figure among Utah Democrats, this effectively ended his career in seeking political office.<sup>27</sup>

## CHURCH SERVICE

The remainder of Roberts's life was devoted to service in the Church. The next fifteen years saw a majority of his books either published or written, and he devoted considerable efforts to strengthening the Seventies in the Church and fulfill his 1902 call to be an assistant Church historian. In his work, he was

fiercely loyal to the Church, hardworking, and eloquent, earning the respect and admiration of his fellow Church authorities and members, though his stubborn and argumentative personality occasionally raised their ire as well.

After the turn of the twentieth century, Roberts turned his attention to a variety of writing projects. One of the most consequential was editing and publishing the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (informally known as the Documentary History of the Church). Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon (with George W. Robinson as scribe) began work on this history of the Church on April 27, 1838. After the Mormon-Missouri War interrupted their work, Smith renewed efforts to create the history on June 11, 1839, with James Mulholland as scribe, with other clerks working to continue the history of the following years.<sup>28</sup> They began publishing a version of the history serially in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842. Scribes and Church historians continued work, including some addenda added to the holograph manuscript after the same portions were already published.

After the disruptions associated with Joseph Smith's death and the move west to Utah, the history was expanded and published in the *Deseret News*, with the *Millennial Star* in England following suit shortly thereafter. George Q. Cannon had begun work

on stabilizing and publishing this history in book form in the 1890s, but after his death, the project was passed to Roberts. As a result, Roberts did the work of annotating, editing, and reconciling the various editions of the text before publication. Six volumes were published between 1902 and 1912, which became the standard reference source for Joseph Smith's History throughout the twentieth century.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the monumental nature of the work Roberts did in editing this history of the Church, the project raised its own controversies. The editorial methods used by both the scribes who prepared the original version of the history in the 1840s and 1850s and by Roberts himself were deeply flawed, especially by today's standards. A fair amount of criticism over the editing has been published over the years, which is one reason why the Joseph Smith Papers Project was necessary and why that effort has superseded the Documentary History of the Church.<sup>30</sup>

The project also sparked theological controversy over Roberts's choice to include the King Follett Sermon, which was not in the good graces of Church leaders at the time. Roberts published the sermon in Church periodicals and formulated a doctrine to reconcile the sermon's teaching of uncreated spirits with the later, prevalent belief that spirits were born in heaven (known as "viviparous spirit birth"). Roberts proposed a two-phase

premortal existence: first, uncreated, eternal "souls" or "intelligences" had no beginning; second, these intelligences were later "placed into the spirits born in heaven." This theory brought him into conflict with First Presidency members Charles Penrose and Joseph F. Smith. They opposed Roberts's efforts to both publish the sermon and offer theological insights deriving from it, viewing the sermon as a corrupted text produced by incompetent clerks and the idea of uncreated spirits as theologically incorrect. The debates over this issue served to further sideline Roberts among the Church's leadership.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, Roberts continued to make important and well-respected contributions to Latter-day Saint theology. President Heber J. Grant commented, for example, that the volume of *The Seventy's Course in Theology* on the Atonement of Jesus Christ was "the most beautiful book on the mission of Christ the Redeemer that I have ever read."<sup>32</sup> Terryl L. Givens also explained that this publication was particularly important because "the major development in Mormon thinking about atonement only came with B. H. Roberts." Givens went on to explain that: "The significance of Roberts's thought is in his reinterpretation of penal substitution theory through the lens (consistent with both Smithian and Book of Mormon theology) of moral agency. He thus recasts the language of justice, punishment, and

retribution into an emphasis on choice, consequence, and human freedom."<sup>33</sup> These types of contributions helped secure Roberts's ongoing place as an important theologian among Latter-day Saints.

## CHAPLAIN IN THE GREAT WAR

In his efforts to defend the Church, it was often said that B. H. Roberts was calmest and most lucid in conflict. As one friend of the Roberts family said, "He loved to fight, and if a good fight wasn't handy he would create one."<sup>34</sup> Roberts loved a challenge that would test him mentally or physically. One such challenge arose in the opportunity to be involved in World War I. At his request, Governor Simon Bamberger appointed him as Chaplain of the First Utah Light Field Artillery, known as the 145th. With persistence and the help of Senator Reed Smoot, he was transferred from reserve to active duty and, to the surprise of many, passed the required rigorous six-week course at Camp Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky, for officers and chaplains as an over-sixty grandfather. The 145th sailed to France but failed to reach the battlefield before the Armistice of November 11, 1918, was proclaimed.

## THE 'FAITHFUL INTELLECTUAL': FINAL STUDIES

Having proven his physical and spiritual mettle as a chaplain, Roberts returned to a Church grappling with the challenges of the 20th century. His final years would be defined not by a political fight, but by a series of profound intellectual and theological examinations that would become a key part of his legacy.

One area that Roberts had devoted considerable energy to in his career was defending the Book of Mormon. When a set of five challenging questions about the authenticity of the Book of Mormon was submitted to Elder James E. Talmage in 1921, the apostle passed them to Roberts with the request to provide answers to the questions. These questions focused on some significant anachronisms in the Book of Mormon: (1) Linguistic Diversity (too many distinct Native American languages to have evolved from Hebrew in the time allotted); (2) Horses; (3) Steel; (4) Scimitars (a 16th-century Persian saber);

and (5) Silk. After researching and pondering on the questions, Roberts wrote back, requesting more time because, "I found the difficulties more serious than I had thought for; and the more I investigated, the more difficult I found the formulation of an answer to Mr. Couch's inquiries to be."<sup>35</sup> Although he produced a few somewhat reasonable answers to the investigator's questions, Roberts was not satisfied that he had resolved the difficulties and embarked on a series of deeply probing studies that investigated potential problems with the historicity of the Book of Mormon, some of which he presented to the other general authorities and intellectuals in the Church.

Roberts seemed to be disturbed by the findings. This was particularly the case for parallels between Ethan Smith's 1823 *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon. As he explained it, "There are many things in the former book that might well have suggested many major things in the other. Not a few things merely, one or two, or a half dozen, but many; and it is this fact of many things of similarity and the cumulative force of them, that makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith's story of the Book of Mormon's origin."<sup>36</sup>

Still, Roberts continued to affirm his belief in the Book of Mormon up to his death over a decade later, but stated clearly the seriousness of the questions he had tried to address. He wrote about his

research:

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 conclusion of mine. ... It may be of 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 is not only unshaken but unshakeable in the Book of Mormon, and therefore we can look without fear upon all that can be said against it.<sup>37</sup>

It has been an ongoing debate ever since whether Roberts experienced an intellectual crisis as a result of his Book of Mormon studies or whether he was merely engaging in a theoretical, intellectual exploration that had little impact on his personal views.<sup>38</sup>

Roberts's last assignment in the Church, apart from a life-long calling as a Seventy, was his call to serve as president of the Eastern States Mission, where he served from May 1922 to May 1927. He served effectively in this capacity and offered intensive and unique training to the missionaries serving under him throughout this time. John Sillito observed, "In their reminiscences, many missionaries who served under B. H. Roberts frequently identify these sessions as fundamental to their success in the

mission field and essential to their future Church activities."<sup>39</sup> Some missionaries bound for other missions attended Roberts's training and shared his systematic approach elsewhere, such as Reinhold Stooft, who attended shortly before traveling to Argentina to become president of the South American Mission.<sup>40</sup> Two of Roberts's wives, Louisa and Margaret, died during his tenure in the east, while Roberts was himself diagnosed with diabetes, the disease that would ultimately lead to his own death a few years later.

It was at the conclusion of this mission that Roberts began work on his magnum opus of doctrinal writing, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*. The book was finished in 1928 and was highly anticipated among Church leaders. Roberts felt that it was his most important book. Publication, however, floundered over a number of issues in the text, most notably his doctrinal speculations and conceptual bridges that he used to achieve his goal of synthesizing Mormon doctrine with the science of his day. These points of discussion included his belief in pre-Adamite humans, organic evolution, the ancient age of the earth, and the eternal progression of God. His relatively modernist take on these points brought him into sharp disagreement with Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, who held a fundamentalist, literalist, and anti-evolution perspective. Since Roberts was unwilling to

make the changes suggested by the church committee that reviewed his work, it was never published in his lifetime.<sup>41</sup>

A specific point of conflict between Roberts and Smith was over evolution, which led to a larger discussion among Church leaders. In the end, the First Presidency skirted the issue, leaving Roberts and Smith in a stalemate by stating that:

Upon the fundamental doctrines of the Church we are all agreed. Our mission is to bear the message of the restored gospel to the world. Leave Geology, Biology, Archaeology, and Anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church.

We can see no advantage to be gained by a continuation of the discussion to which reference is here made, but on the contrary are certain that it would lead to confusion, division, and misunderstanding if carried further. Upon one thing we should all be able to agree, namely, that Presidents Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund were right when they said: 'Adam is the primal parent of our race.'<sup>42</sup>

Church leaders in the room, including Elder Roberts and Elder Smith, sustained the decision and

agreed to no longer discuss in public the question of humanlike life before Adam.<sup>43</sup>

## DEATH AND LEGACY

B. H. Roberts died on September 27, 1933, from complications due to diabetes. His funeral was held on October 1, 1933, in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Many of the talks in the General Conference held shortly afterwards honored both B. H. Roberts and James E. Talmage, who had died weeks before Roberts, offering praise to these spiritual and intellectual giants. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. stated that: "They were great captains of the Lord's hosts. They did a great work; they were armored in truth; they loved truth for truth's sake."<sup>44</sup> Likewise, President Heber J. Grant offered his own fitting eulogy to these great defenders of the faith:

I know of no one of our general authorities who has studied more or was better posted—I know of no one of them who has been a greater promulgator of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, than were the two men who were with us six months ago—James E. Talmage, and Brigham H. Roberts—who have since passed away. They will go on progressing beyond the grave and using that marvelous store of



Gravestone of B. H. Roberts in Centerville, Utah. Photograph taken by Chad L. Nielsen in July 2023.

knowledge and information that they had gained. We miss them, the whole Church will miss them.<sup>45</sup>

Brigham Henry Roberts's life, which began in the poverty, squalor, and utter homelessness of his nightmare childhood in England, stands as a testament to the theme he himself identified: a spirit rising from the lowliest and most unfavorable conditions to achieve greatness.

His first legacy is that of the public "Defender of the Faith" and the indomitable fighter. This was the Roberts of pure physical and political courage: the mission president who disguised himself as a tramp to retrieve the bodies of murdered missionaries from

the 1884 Kane Creek massacre; the "over-sixty grandfather" who willed himself into service as a WWI chaplain in France; and the fiery politician whose 1898 election and subsequent expulsion from the U.S. Congress made him the best-known Latter-day Saint in the country. It was this Roberts who produced the monumental *Comprehensive History of the Church* and who, despite his stubborn and argumentative conflicts with leadership over the "Political Manifesto," was called "the great war horse of the Church."<sup>46</sup>

His second legacy is that of "Mormonism's most eminent intellectual," a self-educated scholar defined by his fearless willingness to follow wherever his reason led him. This legacy is not one of simple answers, but of profound and challenging questions. It is found in his deeply probing studies into Book of Mormon historicity, where he unflinchingly confronted difficult anachronisms and the serious menace of parallels with Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*. It is also embodied in his unpublished magnum opus, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, a bold attempt to synthesize faith and modern science that was ultimately suppressed following his sharp disagreement with Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith over issues like pre-Adamites and organic evolution.

Ultimately, Roberts's enduring importance lies in the tension between these two legacies. He was at

once the Church's most eloquent public advocate and its most rigorous internal examiner. He never resolved all his own questions, leaving behind a "marvelous store of knowledge" that modeled a life of ~~"unshakeable" faith existing side-by-side with a~~ relentless and honest intellectual quest for truth.

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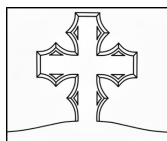
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  33. Terryl L. Givens, *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundation of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 226.
  34. McMurrin, "Remembering B. H. Roberts," 73.
  35. B. H. Roberts to Heber J. Grant, et al., December 29, 1921, in B. H. Roberts, *Studies of The Book of Mormon*, second edition, edited by Brigham D. Madsen (Signature Books, 1992), 98.
  36. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, 372.
  37. Cited in Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 111.
  38. George D. Smith, "'Is There Any Way to Escape These Difficulties?': The Book of Mormon Studies of B.H. Roberts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 94–111; Truman G. Madsen, "B.H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 4, (1979): 427–445,

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39. Sillito and Nielsen, "B. H. Roberts and Utah Politics in the Early 1900s."
40. See Mark L. Grover, *Planting the Acorn: The South American Mission* (BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book, 2025), 173–174.
41. See T. Benjamin Spackman, "(No) Death before the Fall?: The Basis and Twentieth-Century History of Interpretation," in *The Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ and Evolution*, edited by Jamie L. Jensen, Steven L. Peck, Ugo A. Perego, and T. Benjamin Spackman (BYU College of Life Sciences, 2025), 81–115, <https://lifesciences.byu.edu/00000196-3fde-d175-add6-bfdf50c80001/gospel-evolution-pdf>.
42. First Presidency Minutes, Apr. 7, 1931, in William E. Evenson and Duane E. Jeffery, *Mormonism and Evolution: The Authoritative LDS Statements* (Greg Kofford Books, 2005), 54–67.
43. See Matthew Bowman, *Joseph Fielding Smith: A Mormon Theologian* (University of Illinois Press, 2024), 32–40; *Saints, Volume 3*, 318–322, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/saints-v3/part-3/21-a-keener-understanding?lang=eng>.

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44. J. Reuben Clark, in *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 1933 (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 101 (hereafter cited as Conference Report).
45. Heber J. Grant, Conference Report, October 1933, 10.
46. Madsen, *Defender*, 351.



## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

ABHR=*The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts*, edited by Gary James Bergera. Signature Books, 1990.

CD=*Collected Discourses Delivered by: President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, edited by Brian H. Stuy, 5 vol. BHS Publishing, 1987–1992.

CHC=*A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965).

CR=*Conference Reports of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.

DFS=*Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, 2 vol. Deseret News: 1907–1912.

DF=Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith*:

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*The B. H. Roberts Story*. Bookcraft, 1980.

DHC=*History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. Deseret News, 1902–1912.

EBHR=*The Essential B.H. Roberts*, ed. Brigham D. Madsen. Signature Books, 1999.

FA=*The Falling Away*. Deseret News Press, 1931.

JSPT=*Joseph Smith the Prophet Teacher: A Discourse by Elder B. H. Roberts*. Deseret Book, 1908.

LJT=*The Life of John Taylor, Third President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., 1892.

MDD=*The Mormon Doctrine of Deity: the Roberts-Van Der Donckt Discussion*. The Deseret News, 1903.

MRCCS=*Mormonism: The Relation of the Church to Christian Sects, Origin and History of Mormonism, the Doctrines of the Church, Church Organization, Present Status*. Deseret News Press, 1903.

NWFG=*New Witnesses for God*, 3 vol. Vol. 1: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1895. Vol. 2 & 3: Deseret News, 1903–1908.

OEH=*Outlines of Ecclesiastical History*. George Q. Cannon & Sons Company, 1893.

OT="On Tracting." Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1924.

SCT=*The Seventy's Course in Theology*, 5 vol. The Deseret News, 1907–1912.

SPC=*Succession in the Presidency of the Church of*

## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

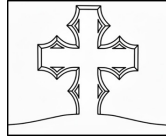
*Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd edition. George Q. Cannon & Sons Publishing Company, 1900.

TG=*The Gospel: An Exposition of its first principles; and Man's Relationship to Deity*, 3rd edition. Desert News, 1901.

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO B. H. ROBERTS

EXCERPTS FROM THE  
WRITINGS OF B. H.  
ROBERTS





# DOCTRINE OF DEITY

## GODHEAD

The Father and the Son and the spirit-personage known as the Holy Ghost, constitute the supreme godhead for us men, to whom we owe allegiance; to whom we submit our judgment and our will, for this alone is true worship. We know these divine personages also through their chief functions. The Father primarily is Creator. The Son primarily is the Revelator of God, and the Redeemer of men; and the Holy Spirit is God's witness of the Father and of the Son, and of all truth, the whole volume of it; the divine Witness for God to the souls of men (CR, October 1912, 30-31).

Paul expressly says: "There is none other God but one." That statement taken alone would seem conclusive; but considered in connection with its context, which explains it, it will be found in harmony with all the passages here produced to prove a plurality of Gods. The single statement quoted above is immediately followed by these words: "For though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be Gods many, and Lords many); but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him." [1 Cor. 8:4-5]

From this it appears that there be many that are called Gods both in heaven and in earth. ... The apostle teaches that to us there is but one God, the Father; and one Lord, Jesus Christ. So also taught the Prophet Joseph. He taught that there was but one Godhead to whom it was proper for us to pay divine honors in worship—God, the Father; Jesus Christ, the Son, and of whom the Holy Ghost is the witness. And these three, in the teachings of the great modern prophet, as in the teachings of the Jewish scriptures, constitute one Godhead, or Grand Presidency to whom alone man owes allegiance to be expressed in divine worship. (NWFG 1:466-467, 471.)

This oneness is not a oneness of persons, not a oneness of individuals, but a oneness of mind, of

knowledge of wisdom, or purpose, of will, that all might be uplifted and partake of the divine nature, until God shall be all in all (MDD, 29).

## NATURE OF GOD

No matter what your conception of divine things may be—however wide or high—the divine things themselves, be assured, are much greater than your conceptions of them. (DFS, 2:465.)

We first say that God is represented as being in human form, and then to get the exact truth say: "Or, rather, man was created in the image and likeness of God." (SCT, 2:192.)

The Eternity of God may be regarded as absolute. "I am that I am," the Eternal One, the Self-existent, admits of no modification as to his Eternity.

His Immutability should be regarded as stability, adherence to principle. What stands among men under the name of "constitutional morality," fixed devotion to law; and working through law to the achievement of his divine purposes, rather than by caprice, or by arbitrary, personal action. But God's immutability should not be so understood as to exclude the idea of advancement or progress of God.

Thus, for example: God's kingdom and glory may be enlarged, as more and more redeemed souls are added to his kingdom: as worlds and world-systems are multiplied and redeemed and enrolled with celestial spheres, so God's kingdom is enlarged and his glory increased. So that in this sense there may come change and progress even for God. Hence we could not say of God's immutability as we do of his eternity that it is absolute, since there may come change through progress even for God: but an absolute immutability would require eternal immobility—which would reduce God to a condition eternally static, which, from the nature of things, would bar him from participation in that enlargement of kingdom and increasing glory that comes from redemption and the progress of men. And is it too bold a thought, that with this progress, even for the Mightiest, new thoughts, and new vistas may appear, inviting to new adventures and enterprises that will yield new experiences, advancement, and enlargement even for the Most High? It ought to be constantly remembered that terms absolute to man may be relative terms to God, so far above our thinking is his thinking; and his ways above our ways.

So with the All-knowing attribute, Omniscience: that must be understood somewhat in the same light as the other attributes considered: not

that God is Omniscient up to the point that further progress in knowledge is impossible to him; but that all knowledge that is, all that exists, God knows. He is Universal Consciousness, and Mind— he is the All-knowing One, because he knows all that is known.

So the attribute "Omnipresence"—the Everywhere Present attribute. This must be so far limited as to be ascribed to God's Spirit, or Influence, or Power: but not of God as a Person or Individual; for in these latter respects even God is limited by the law that one body cannot occupy two places at one and the same time. But radiating from his presence, as beams of light and warmth radiate from our sun, is God's Spirit, penetrating and permeating space, making space and all worlds in space vibrate with his life and thought and presence: holding all forces—dynamic and static—under control, making them to subserve his will and purposes.

God also uses other agencies to reflect himself, his power or authority also his Wisdom, Goodness, Justice and Mercy—angels and arch-angels, both in heaven and on earth; and in the earth prophets, apostles, teachers—all that make for up-lift, for righteousness; all that catch some ray of the Divine Spirit in poem, music, painting, sculpture, state-craft or mechanical arts—all these but reflect God and are a means of multiplying and expressing him, the Divine. And in a special way, as witness for God, and under

very special conditions, the Holy Ghost, that Being accounted the Third Person of the Godhead—he reflects and stands for God, his Power, and Wisdom: his Justice, Truth and Mercy—for all that can be, or is, called God, or is God. All these means, direct and indirect, convey God into the universe, and keep him everywhere present in all his essentials of Wisdom, Power and Goodness, while his bodily presence remains at the center of it all. (SCT, 4:69-71.)

If God has personality, he is a person, a something, and hence limited... then of course not infinite being. ... God's "infinity," so far as it is spoken of in scriptures, does not refer to his person, but evidently to the attributes of his mind—to his intelligence, wisdom, power, patience, mercy, and whatsoever other qualities of mind or spirit he may possess. (MDD, 111, 119-120.)

God is a person in the sense that he is an individual. He is revealed to us through Jesus Christ. We believe in that revelation of God that is to be read in the life and character of the Nazarene—the Lord Jesus Christ. To us he is the very image and likeness of God; nay, as the Christ was and now is, so God is! ... As the Son is, so we are assured, is the Father—a glorious mighty intelligence of tangible reality, as much so as the Christ was there on the mount in all

his resurrected glory—a being whose heart throbs in sympathy with his children. (DFS, 2:388.)

The Latter-day Saints do not hold that God is a personage of flesh and blood, but a personage of flesh and bone, inhabited by a spirit, just as Jesus was after his resurrection. Joseph Smith taught concerning the resurrection that "all [men] will be raised by the power of God, having spirit in their bodies, and not blood." Again, in speaking of the general assembly and church of the first born in heaven (Heb. 12:23), he said: "Flesh and blood cannot go there; but flesh and bones, quickened by the Spirit of God, can." So that it must be remembered... that the Latter-day Saints do not believe that God is a personage of flesh and blood; but a personage of flesh and bone and spirit, united. (MDD, 69-70.)

God..., in the Bible, is called "invisible," not because he is absolutely so by reason of his nature, because he is "immaterial or bodiless," but because he is not to be seen by men except under very special conditions. The special conditions complied with, however, certain holy men have seen God; the Father, and have borne witness of the fact. Of course, it follows that the "invisibility" of God as here set forth does not carry with it the idea that God is immaterial or bodiless; nor would it follow that God is

immaterial, even if absolutely invisible to human eyes in our present existence..... Is that true? Is the atmosphere visible? No. But it is material. (MDD, 82.)

It is written that God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, and that is true, he cannot; but how about the sinner? Why, he may look upon the sinner with infinite compassion. (MDD, 204.)

## JESUS CHRIST: THE REVELATION OF GOD

Christ being, under the direction of the Father the Creator and Redeemer of the earth, he and his Father have a proprietorship in this earth, and by virtue of that are the Supreme Governing Power in it. The Lord Jesus Christ, under directions from his Father, created it; he then redeemed it by his own suffering; he is now, and has been from the beginning, watching over it; and will yet sanctify it, and present it to the Father a glorious, celestial sphere to be added to the redeemed and glorified kingdoms of God. "Remember the former things of old," saith the Lord through Isaiah, "for I am God and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me,

declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." [Isaiah 46:8-10.] (TG, 108-109.)

This is the world's mystery revealed. This is God manifested in the flesh. This is the Son of God, who comes to reveal the Father, for he is the express image and likeness of that Father's person, and the reflection of that Father's mind. Henceforth when men shall say, "Show us the Father," he shall point to himself as the complete revelation of the Father, and say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also." Henceforth, when men shall dispute about the "being" and "nature" of God, it shall be a perfect answer to uphold Jesus Christ as the complete, perfect revelation and manifestation of God, and through all the ages it shall be so; there shall be no excuse for men saying they know not God, for all may know him, from the least to the greatest, so tangible, so real a revelation has God given of himself in the person and character of Jesus Christ. (SCT, 2:119.)

Whatever... quality that is ascribed to God, *must be in harmony with what Jesus Christ is.* (MDD, 119.)

Is Jesus Christ without passions? No; his deathless love for his friends, so beautifully manifested by word and deed throughout his mortal life, together with his love for mankind, which led him to give his life for the world, as also his explicitly declared hatred of that which is sin and evil, forbid us thinking of him as without passions. (MDD, 122.)

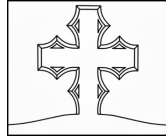
## THE PERSONAGE OF THE HOLY GHOST

There is very much that is beyond our power to understand in relation to the Holy Ghost, from whom proceeds influences so subtle, powerful, sensitive, intelligent and universal that they are far beyond our present powers of comprehension. (TG, 195.)

In some of the writings of the early Elders of The Church, the fact of the personality of the Holy Ghost was not sufficiently emphasized. In some passages of their writings, indeed, it would almost seem that the Holy Ghost was not regarded as a personage at all; but, mistaking the manifestation of his universal influence for himself, they speak of him as a universally diffused substance, such as electricity

or ether. ... The Holy Ghost, however, according to the word of God is a personage of spirit, and as such has the limitations of all persons or individuals; but he is possessed of an influence universally diffused and operates as the very power of God. (TG, vii.)

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO B. H. ROBERTS



# THE TRUTH, THE WAY, THE LIFE: JESUS CHRIST AND THE ATONEMENT

As to the importance of the subject, need anything be said? It is the very heart of the Gospel from whose pulsations the streams of both spiritual and eternal physical life proceed. It is the fact which gives vitality to all things else in the Gospel. If the Atonement be not a reality then our preaching is vain; our baptisms and confirmations meaningless; the eucharist [the sacrament] a mere mummery of words; our hope of eternal life without foundation; we are still in our sins, and we Christian men, of all men, are the most miserable. A theme that affects all this cannot fail of being important. And yet, how our writers upon theology have neglected this subject!

(SCT, 4:iv-v.)

## THE ATONEMENT OVERCOMES THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL AND INDIVIDUAL SIN

Through this Atonement, made by Messiah, a full and complete redemption from the consequences of Adam's transgression is brought about; that is, a victory over the grave is secured; and that, too, through the merits of Jesus Christ, And while the law transgressed by Adam has been vindicated, the posterity of Adam, who became subject to death through his disobedience, are redeemed from the grave without anything being required of them. For as their agency was not concerned in bringing about the mischief, neither is anything demanded of them in order to obtain redemption from it.

So far salvation is free, universal, and unconditional extending to every man, woman and child who has ever breathed the breath of life. And hence the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote as one of the articles of our faith—"We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's

transgression."

This is what I mean, then, by General Salvation: Free redemption for all mankind through the resurrection from death, which was the great penalty affixed to the law that Adam transgressed. This is what the Atonement of Christ accomplished for man, but this is not all it did, as we shall see when we come to speak of Individual Salvation. (TG, 27.)

Quite apart from the transgression of Adam is man's individual violations of the laws of righteousness—violations of the laws of God in which man's agency is exercised; for he sins at times wilfully and wantonly; knowing the right, he dares to do wrong. Here justice has a claim upon him and may demand the payment of the penalty to the uttermost. But the mercy of God as well as his justice is active, and offers redemption from the consequences of individual transgressions on the condition of obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel. (DFS, 1:14-15.)

For the transgression of that law which brought death into the world, upon all the posterity of Adam, a free redemption was provided out of the pure grace of God and Christ his Son; but in the case of these individual sins, where the agency of every person is directly and fully exercised, justice demands

that the penalties affixed to the violated laws be satisfied, and the transgressors punished. But here again the principle of mercy is active. As I have before stated, the victory over death is not the only benefit arising from the atonement of the Messiah; but by the sacrifice which he made he purchased mankind as an inheritance for himself, and they became of right under his dominion, for he ransomed them from an endless sleep in the grave. Nor is that all, but as the scriptures saith:

He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows... . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed... . The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. [Isaiah 53:4-6.]

So that his Atonement not only broke the bonds of death, but also atoned for the individual sins of men on conditions of their obedience—their loyalty to Christ, who by virtue of his Atonement redeemed them from endless death, and therefore of right became their law-giver, and had power given him to dictate the terms upon which the full benefits of his Atonement should be applied to individuals, in order to release them from the penalties which follow as a consequence of their personal violations of the principles of righteousness. (TG, 30-31.)

## ATONEMENT

We are ... at one in relation to the great fact of human redemption; we know that we are redeemed from the consequences of Adam's transgression through the atonement of the Christ, without condition, so far as that mere fact is concerned, that is without condition on our part; for as in Adam all died, even so in the Christ will all be made alive. We are redeemed from the consequences of our individual sins and transgressions also by acceptance of the atonement of the Christ; and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel; and we know, from the revelations of God, without any doubt whatsoever, what those laws and ordinances are. We know that we must signify our acceptance of the atonement of the Christ by submitting to and performing the symbols of the atonement in our baptism; symbolizing therein the death and the resurrection of the Christ; and in confirmation by the laying on of hands we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Being brought by that ordinance and a right disposition into complete fellowship with the Holy Ghost—to have Him for friend and guide and witness of the truth in our souls.

In order to keep in memory the covenants and obligations that we make, we repeat these symbols of the atonement in partaking of the holy sacrament; partaking of the broken bread in remembrance of the broken body of the Christ; partaking of the water or

the wine in memory of the shed blood of the Christ, witnessing unto the Father that we will always remember Him, and keep His commandments that He has given us; in order that we might have all this crowned with the realization of that beautiful and splendid promise, that we shall have His Spirit always to be with us. (CR, October 1912, 31.)

Following this must be the repentance of sins, not merely by expressing sorrow for them, but by departing from sin; the true manifestation of sorrow for our sins is in that we forsake them. Then, what else? That we shall take upon us the name of the Christ, that we shall by that act symbolize the great redemption there is in the atonement of Christ by witnessing, in our baptism, His burial; and coming forth out of the water symbolize His resurrection. For in addition to giving us this very great gift of forgiveness of sin, he also opens the door of immortality to man, and has brought to pass the resurrection from the dead. After water baptism comes the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Knowing our human weakness, knowing human inability to live unassisted upon the high moral plane projected in the ethical teachings of the gospel, God brings to our poor, human weakness the strength of God by imparting the Holy Spirit, which is the link that shall hold us to God, the medium of communication

between our souls and soul of God; making, at need, God's strength our strength, his wisdom, as we may bear it, our wisdom, and his righteousness our righteousness. How beautiful all this is! How great it is! How hopeful we ought to be, since such a plan of salvation is in the world! (Deseret Semi-Weekly News, October 13, 1910, p. 8.)

## REIGN OF LAW

The Prophet of the New Dispensation, ... taught the doctrine of the reign of law in God's universe; and not alone in the physical or natural universe, but as well in the spiritual and moral phases of that universe.

In the revelation already quoted for the reign of law in the physical universe, he also says: "And again, verily I say unto you, that which is governed by law is also preserved by law, and perfected and sanctified by the same. That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willet to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice nor judgment. Therefore they must remain filthy still." And again he said: "There is a law irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world upon which all blessings are predicated;

and when we obtain any blessing from God it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. The Prophet of the New Dispensation, then, the gospel of that dispensation, its Theology, stand committed to the sublime doctrine that the universe in every way is under the reign of law; and hence, in some way, the Atonement, by and through which man is redeemed; the necessity,—the absolute necessity—for it; the reason why that means, and that means alone, could bring redemption and put man in the way of salvation—all this, must be by reason of the existence of some law by which the facts in the case are governed. (SCT, 4:80-81.)

Inexorableness is of the essence of law. There can be no force in law only as it is inexorable. What effect is to cause, in the physical world, that penalty must be to violation of law in the moral and spiritual kingdom. This is what is meant by the inexorableness of law... .

If a reign of law is supposed to exist and the law is not inexorable, but may be set aside, suspended, abridged, enlarged, or its penalties annulled; and these changes affected not by the operation of any fixed principle, or by some controlling higher law, but capricious, through the interposition of some sovereign will, call it special providence or what not, then, of course, you have no

reign of law at all; but the reign of a sovereign will that operates independent of law. Under such government—if, indeed, it could be called government—all would be confusion, uncertainty, perplexity, doubt, despair. Happily no such conditions exist; but instead there exists a divine government in the world, operating through a reign of law; and the virtue and value of that government arises from the inexorableness of law. (SCT, 4:82, 83.)

Violation of law involves the violator in its penalties, as surely as effect follows cause. Upon this principle depends the dignity and majesty of law. Take this fact away from moral government and your moral laws become mere nullities. (NWFG, 3:203.)

So long as law exists, penalties must also exist. They are the necessary concomitants of law, without which laws are mere nullities. But because punishments, so-called, take on the name of Him in whose authority they are administered, and because law is necessarily paralleled by penalty—therefore punishment will always exist for offenders against law; in other words is endless—it does not follow that each transgressor of the law will suffer its penalties eternally. Such a conception is revolting to reason and derogatory to the justice and mercy of God. While one must needs believe that penalty follows violation of

law, the violator only partakes of that penalty to the extent that is necessary to vindicate the law and correct the transgressor's own disposition: whereupon mercy has her claims, that may not be denied: and the one time violator of law, instructed by his experience in suffering, goes forth to walk, let us hope, in harmony with law, and hence in peace. (JSPT, 28.)

If, however, the exorableness of law is to be insisted upon up to this degree of emphasis, where then does mercy, which is supposed to mitigate somewhat the severity and inexorableness of law; and, furthermore, is supposed in some way to represent the direct and gracious act of God when mitigating the law's severity—where does Mercy appear? At what point does she enter into the moral and spiritual economy? A large question, this, and one not to be considered just yet, except to say that the entrance of Mercy into the economy of the moral and spiritual kingdom, is not in violation of law, but in harmony with it. In fact, as we shall see somewhat later, Mercy takes her part in the economy of the moral and spiritual kingdoms because of the existence of a reign of law, rather than in derogation of it. (SCT, 4:83-84.)

So here men stand under the reign of Law, before God. No one may hope to escape the penalty

## ATONEMENT

due to violation of law through favor; no one will fall under the condemnation of the law through lack of favor with God, by reason of capriciousness in him, much less through vindictiveness, which is unthinkable in God. God will make no infraction of the law, in the interests of supposed favorites; such "blessings," whether in the providing of permanent opportunities for individuals, families, or races, as may reach through the apparent complexity of things to men; or occasional blessings such as seem to come to some individuals as special acts of providence; all will come in accordance with the laws upon which such blessings were predicated before the foundations of the world were laid; and this notwithstanding inequalities and diversity of fortunes and misfortunes that exist among individuals, families, nations, races of men. Underneath all the diversities and equalities that exist, so difficult to account for in some of their aspects, there law is operating despite all seeming incongruities; and out of all these diversities and complexities of experiences, at the last, will come justice—God's justice; and men will be satisfied that it is so.

Meanwhile this reign of law, with all its inexorableness—nay, rather because of it—present and operating as well in disintegrating as in integrating processes; present in the manifestations of mercy and "special acts of providence," as in

manifestations of severity in the moral and spiritual world; how splendid it all is! How satisfying! What assurance, what confidence it gives! No wonder that John Fiske, remarking upon the idea of the reign of law, said: "So beautiful is all this orderly coherence, so satisfying to some of our intellectual needs, that many minds are inclined to doubt if anything more can be said of the universe than that it is a 'Reign of Law,' an endless aggregate of coexistences and sequences." ...

It is this quality of exornableness in law, excellent and essential as it is, that made the Atonement of the Christ necessary to the salvation of man. (SCT 4:85-86.)

## JUSTICE AND MERCY

How can satisfaction be made to justice in order that redemption may reach fallen man[?] Admittedly man, the transgressor of law, is powerless to make such satisfaction. True, it is conceivable that he might repent of his transgression, and through struggle maintain himself in righteousness for the future. But that does not reach the past. If he should by struggle maintain himself in righteousness for the future, that is no more than he ought to do. Man owes that duty every day in the present and in the future. It is the breach in the law that must be mended. Man is

## ATONEMENT

under the sentence of eternal death, spiritual and temporal, for a past transgression of the law of God. Doing what is merely his duty in the present and the future will not make satisfaction for the past. Man is helpless in the presence of that broken law. (SCT, 4:93-94.)

Men having transgressed the law of God by their own personal violations of it, they are helpless of themselves to make satisfaction to the justice of God; and are just as dependent upon a Redeemer to rescue them from the spiritual effects of their personal transgression of the divine law as from the effects of Adam's fall. Also, under a reign of law, God may not pardon men for their individual sins by arbitrary act of sovereign will. He may no more set aside the claims of justice unsatisfied in the case of men's personal sins than in the case of Adam's first sin. In both cases "a necessary and immanent attribute of Deity" stands in the way of the non-infliction of the penalty due to sin, vis., the attribute of Justice, which not even the attribute of Mercy may displace, or rob of that satisfaction which is due. God must act in harmony with his own attributes. (SCT, 4:101-102.)

We conclude then that for man's individual sins as for Adam's sin, though differing in some respects already noted, involves the same necessity of

Atonement to the honor of God by one equal with God— hence God.

There is the same inexorableness of law; the same helplessness on the part of man to make satisfaction for his sin, hence man's dependence upon a vicarious atonement, if he is to find redemption at all. There is the same need for capacity in the one making the atonement to make full satisfaction to the justice of God by paying the uttermost farthing of man's obligations to the law; the idea of satisfaction necessarily involves that of penal suffering, coupling together those two ideas, satisfaction and expiation; or satisfaction to Justice through expiation. The Deity who redeems man must pay the penalty due to sin by suffering in man's stead.

... And what shall prompt a Deity to make such an atonement? Two attributes of the Deity now a long time kept in the back ground, viz.. Love and Mercy. (SCT, 4:103.)

This creates a situation that can only be met in one of two ways if justice is to be maintained, the integrity of the moral government of the world perpetuated, and the harmony of God's attributes remain unbroken;

First: Justice must take its course, the punishment must be inflicted upon the actual sinner, leaving man to satisfy justice by an endless misery; or

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Second: God must satisfy his own claims against man; he must make a satisfaction to justice, there must be a vicarious Atonement made for man, since, as we have seen, man himself is helpless.

The adoption of the first of these alternatives would thwart the general purpose of God with reference to man, the bringing to pass his progress and the possibility of his eternal happiness; and also it would violate the covenant of God with man, made before the world began, the promise of eternal life." This alternative, is impossible, then, and may be dismissed without further consideration.

The second alternative is all that remains. God must make a vicarious Atonement for man; a Deity must satisfy the claims of God's honor. God must satisfy the demands of justice, that Mercy may assert her claims and redeem man.

And that order of things is in force; that is "the great plan of happiness"—the Gospel—"Glad tidings;" "Glad tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people." Back of it, underlying it, is the great Love of God for man; Love manifested in great acts of mercy; for Mercy is but Love active.

This Love prompts God to make reparation to God's honor, and satisfy Justice by undergoing the penalty due to Adam's sin, that he might bring to pass the resurrection from the dead; and make it possible for man spirit and body united, to resume his union

with God.

This Love prompts God to suffer for the individual sins of men; to pay the penalty due to each man's sin, that there might be ground for man's justification under the law. That Mercy might claim the sinner upon conditions that Love may prescribe. (SCT, 4:108-109.)

It is not absolute necessity that individual men should sin, or that they sin without limit. Men can refrain from sin if they will; the power is in them. They are able to stand, "yet free to fall." They have power to choose good and to follow that instead of evil if they so elect. Therefore, while it is eminently proper that the Atonement of the Christ should be made to include satisfaction to Justice for the personal sins of men, and the debt of suffering due to them should be paid vicariously,—especially since man is powerless to offer expiation himself— for it is needful that ample provision be made for the justification of man's pardon; yet it is also in accordance with Justice that man shall co-operate with God in bringing about the blessed result of his deliverance from the consequences of his personal sins; and that conditions shall be required as necessary to participation in the forgiveness provided; such conditions as belief in and acceptance of the terms of Atonement; repentance of sin, and a hearty co-operation with God in

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overcoming evil and its effects in the human soul. ... Moreover, this salvation from the effects of personal sins is not only a matter of forgiveness of past sins; a matter of justification before God; a matter of re-establishing union with God, which is spiritual life; but it is a matter of sanctification of the soul; and of power to maintain the renewed spiritual life with God. It is a matter that involves human desires and human will. Surely it is unthinkable that God would hold man in union with himself against his desire, or against his will. Such a condition would not be "union" but bondage. The co-operation of man then in this work of his personal salvation becomes an absolute necessity, and hence the conditions of individual salvation already noted, and which may be summed up in the doctrine of man's self-surrender unto God, manifested by his obedience to God under the law; and the declared intention of that obedience by receiving the symbols of the Atonement, to be found in the ordinances of the Gospel, especially in baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's supper. (SCT, 4:111-113.)

The Christ came with his doctrine of the possibility of vicarious suffering—suffering for each other, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son for its ransome; the Christ so loved the world that "he suffered for its sins, the just for the

unjust that he might bring us to God." And hence the atonement was made. Justice was satisfied, and mercy could assert her claims—mercy, the quality of which "is not strained"

"It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath; it is twice blest:  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown.

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It is an attribute to God himself."

The satisfaction of justice, the incoming of mercy through the atonement of the Christ, constitutes the basis from which comes forgiveness of sins. (EBHR, 216-219.)

## THE CHRIST'S SUFFERING

Among men we sometimes see this willingness to suffer for others. Men there are who would lay down their lives for their friends. In the times when imprisonment for debt was customary in England, we often meet instances where out of pure love and kindness towards his fellows, a man under no obligation whatever to do so, has paid the debts of the unfortunate, satisfied the demands of the law, and set the captive free. It is related of Lord Byron that when

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he was a lad attending school, a companion of his fell under the displeasure of a cruel, overbearing bully, who unmercifully beat him. Byron happened to be present, but knowing the uselessness of undertaking a fight with the bully, he stepped up to him and asked him how much longer he intended to beat his friend."

What's that to you?" gruffly demanded the bully.

"Because," replied young Byron, the tears standing in his eyes, "I will take the rest of the beating if you will let him go."

That partakes to some extent, at least enough so for illustration, of the spirit by which the Son of God was actuated when he offered himself a ransom for mankind, to redeem them from the power and dominion of death, from which they were powerless to free themselves. (TG, 23-24.)

The severity of the Atonement should impress men with the fact that we live in a world of stern realities; that human actions draw with them tremendous consequences that may not be easily set aside if the actions in which they have their origin are wrong.

Moral laws have their penalties as physical laws have their consequences; there could be no moral laws without penalties; and penalties of laws must be enforced, else laws are mere nullities.

Violations of moral law are attended by shame and suffering; suffering is the consequence or the penalty of violating divine, moral law; and the penalty must be paid, either by the one sinning or by another who shall suffer vicariously for him. (SCT, 4:127-128.)

The effects of the Atonement were realized by the ancient saints previous to the coming of Christ to earth and hence previous to his actually making the Atonement; but that was because the Atonement for man's sins, the satisfaction to Justice, had been pre-determined upon, and this fact gave virtue to their faith, repentance and obedience to ordinances of the Gospel. (SCT, 4:123, note c.)

Now, in the suffering of the Christ for the sins of all men you must regard the sum total of suffering due to the individual sins of all men; throw all their sin into one mass, and then remember that the Christ suffered for it all. You must not think of the Christ's suffering as merely that which was manifested on the cross, nor merely the driving of the nails through the hands and feet to hold him to the cross, not his physical agony at that time, not at the last when the Roman spear plunged through his side, through which deep rent the streams of life leaped out. I think that must have been relief rather than suffering to him. But if you would know the mental torture, the

anguish, the suffering for sin that the Christ endured for the world, then go with him to Gethsemane, when stupor and darkness shrouded the minds of his especial friends and witnesses, and they could not, seemingly, watch with him through a few brief hours, but slumbered apart while he alone endured the agony that is due to the sins of the world, and that made him, even God though he was the greatest of all to bleed from every pore! (EBHR, 219-221.)

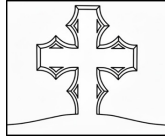
## THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS THE CHRIST

The work of God, as revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith ... is essentially a preparatory work; its direct mission is to prepare for the glorious coming of the Son of God to reign over the earth. (OEH, 450-451.)

Of all events that will take place in the immediate future, the most important to mankind is the glorious appearing of the Son of God, generally spoken of as the Second Advent of the Messiah. And if there is one thing that the writers of Scriptures are most explicit in than another, it is in relation to this all-important event. (The Second Coming of the

Messiah and Events to Precede It, [Liverpool, England: Latter-day Saints' Publishing Office, 1888].)

In the early decades of the Church the people were led to believe almost in the immediate coming, the glorious coming, of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory, and that the time was near at hand. Indeed there were many who fixed upon about the time when he would come. Well, we still believe in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we do not very often refer to it in these days, and it is not so particularly influencing our actions and our faith as it did in times past. The Lord will come when he will come, and that he will come we are assured. The time of it is in his hands, where we feel that we can safely let it rest. Indeed, we must needs leave it there because it is part of the revelation of God unto the world that no man knoweth the day nor the hour of his coming, no, not even the angels in heaven. So I say we leave that in the hands of God (CR, October 1928, 87).



# B. H. ROBERTS ON THE PLAN OF SALVATION

## PREMORTALITY

Our sacred books teach that not only was Jesus Christ in the beginning with God, but that the spirits of all men were also with him in the beginning, and that these sons of God, as well as the Lord Jesus Christ, became incarnate in bodies of flesh and bone (MDD, 91).

Man is not so much lime, phosphate, and other gross materials, but man is spirit; and was, like Jesus, in the beginning with the Father. (CR, April 1904, 18.)

The effect of these two doctrines, the

recognition of the spirit of man as an eternal being, and his being a free moral agent, is tremendous in accounting for things. Elsewhere, contrasting this view of things with some modern Christian views, I have said: "As matters now stand, the usually accepted Christian doctrine on the matter of man's origin is that God of His free-will created men. That they are as He would have them, since in His act of creation He could have had them different if He had so minded. Then why should He—being infinitely wise and infinitely powerful, and infinitely good—for so the creeds represent Him—why should He create by mere act of volition, beings such as men are, not only capable of, but prone to, moral Evil? Which, in the last analysis of things, in spite of all special pleadings to the contrary, leaves responsibility for moral Evil with God?" ...

On the other hand, under the conception of the existence of independent, uncreated, self-existent Intelligences... Under this conception of things, how stand matters? Why, ever present through all changes, through all the processes of betterment, is the self-existent entity of the "Intelligence" with the tremendous fact of his consciousness and his moral freedom, and his indestructibility—he has his choice of moving upward or downward in every estate he occupies. ...

This conception of things relieves God of the

## PLAN OF SALVATION

responsibility for the nature and status of intelligences in all stages of their development; their inherent nature and their volition makes them primarily what they are, and this nature they may change, slowly, perhaps, yet change it they may. God has put them in the way of changing it, by enlarging their intelligence through change of environment, through experiences; the only way God effects these self-existent beings is favorably; He creates not their inherent nature; He is not responsible for the use they make of their freedom; nor is He the author of their sufferings when they fall into sin: that arises out of the violations of law, to which the "Intelligence" subscribed, and must be endured until the lessons of obedience to law are learned. (JSPT, 57-60.)

So far as moral evil is concerned, then, I say it is not of God's creation. It is one of those possibilities that are eternal. It did not begin with the transgression of Adam upon this earth. It existed before that; even in the heavens, when Lucifer rebelled against the King and majesty of heaven—God. Lucifer had power even there to sin; and so far' back as the agency of intelligencies extends, there has existed always the possibility of sin; and so far forward as the agency of intelligencies shall extend, there will always be the possibility, of the transgression of law, of sin; for sin potentially, is an

eternal reality. It is concurrent with the free agency of intelligences. (DFS, 2:509.)

There is that in man, according to our doctrine, which is not created at all; there is in him an "ego"—a "spirit" uncreated, never made, a self-existent entity, eternal as God himself; and of the same kind of substance or essence with him, and, indeed, part of him, when God is conceived of in the generic sense. (MDD, 102.)

The difference, then, between "spirits" and "intelligences," as here used, is this: Spirits are uncreated intelligences inhabiting spiritual bodies; while "intelligences," pure and simple, are intelligent entities, but unembodied in either spirit bodies or bodies of flesh and bone. They are uncreated, self-existent entities; but let it be observed, in passing, that nothing is here said in relation to the form of these intelligent entities, nor anything as to their mode of existence. Indeed, so far as I know, nothing has been revealed in relation to their form or mode of existence; nothing beyond the fact of existence, their eternity and the qualities necessary to them as Intelligences. (SCT, 4:12-14.)

These intelligences in the many kingdoms of God, and before the "beginning" of that earth-order of

things, with which we are now connected, were begotten spirits. That is to say, a spirit body was provided for them, of which God is the Father; for he is called in the scriptures "the father of the spirits of men," hence our "Father in heaven." I use the term "begotten" above instead of "created," advisedly; and because I believe we are warranted in believing that the "begetting" of spirit-bodies for "intelligences" is an act of generation rather than of creation. (IE, April 1907, 402-403.)

The intelligent entity inhabiting a spirit-body make up the spiritual personage. It is this spirit life we have so often thought about, and sang about. In this state of existence occurred the spirit's "primeval childhood;" here spirits were "nurtured" near the side of the heavenly Father, in his "high and glorious place;" thence spirits were sent to earth to unite spirit-elements with earth-elements—in some way essential to a fulness of glory and happiness—and to learn the lessons earth-life has to teach. The half awakened recollections of the human mind may be chiefly engaged with scenes, incidents and impressions of that spirit life; but that does not argue the non-existence of the uncreated intelligences who precede the begotten spiritual personages as so plainly set forth in the revelations of God. (IE, April 1907, 403-405, 415-416.)

There is a wonderful amount of information that runs side by side with this doctrine of the pre-existence of man's spirit. There is a world of knowledge unfolded when this principle is recognized. I can now understand how it is that sometimes, in spite of all adverse circumstances, there are spirits that rise from the lowliest and most unfavorable conditions to grandeur and nobility of heart and head. ...

I believe that character primarily is based upon the nature of the spirit, the extent of its development, the amount of growth it had before it tabernacled in the flesh; and that parentage, instead of creating character, can only modify it; that instead of environment creating character, it can only modify it. Hence, you sometimes see this strange thing, that in spite of vicious parentage, in spite of unfavorable environment, you see a character rising to its own native heights of nobility and grandeur, purely because the spirit before it came here had stamped upon it God's own nobility, and no amount of influence coming from vicious parentage or from unfavorable environment could altogether crush out the native nobility of that spirit; but it sprung upward, took its place in the earth, and became a benefactor to the children of men. ("What is Man?" Discourse Delivered by Elder B. H. Roberts in the Tabernacle,

Salt Lake City, Sunday, January 27th, 1895. Deseret Evening News 1895-03-09, p. 9.)

As the sun struggles through clouds and mists that at times obscure his brightness, so these spirits, stirred by their innate nobility, breaking through all disadvantages attendant upon ignoble birth and iron fortune, rise to their native heights of true greatness. (NWFG, 1:453.)

## CREATION

It is the purpose of God to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, because a union of spirit and element is essential to the fulness of man's joy. That immortality and eternal life is brought to pass by the indissoluble union of the body and the spirit of man, by which he becomes soul—one, united, inseparable, an entity indestructible, and put in the way of attainment of a fulness of joy... .

Now ask the question, David; "What is man that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The answer is: Sons of God, brothers to the Christ, sparks struck from God's own eternal blaze—parts of him—parts of God! Hence, God is mindful of man; hence he visits them, hence he places all things under their feet, and gives them the

high mission to multiply and replenish the inhabitants of the earth, and to have dominion over it.

How blessed this doctrine! How high and lifted up it is above the notion that man has his origin in the slime of the ocean, and the protoplasm which rises from it, until it differentiates into the various forms of life, and man comes from some one or other of the many lines that lead out from this common source of life

I have been thrilled in this conference by reference to that vision that the Lord gave to Abraham of the intelligences that were organized before the world itself was formed. In the great host before the throne of God there were many noble and great ones—noble and great ones! And God looked upon these spirits, "and they were good;" and he said to Abraham: "These I will make my rulers. Thou, Abraham, art one of them." I pray you note the characterization of these prominent spirits—"noble," "great," "good"! These are characteristics that embrace all other virtues. They include everything that could be desired in the way of character elements. How splendid that is! Of course we common men, doubtless stand far below that high level on which God placed these "noble" ones, and "great" ones, and "good," in the vision he gave to one of the noblest—Abraham. But how comforting it is, and how blest it must be to have the assurance that though far below,

in excellence, these whom God has selected to be his rulers, we nevertheless are brothers to them; and in lesser degree possessing that which they possess, with the opportunity and privilege granted to us to approach if we may not attain to their excellence. Then to be brothers to him—brothers to the Christ; and brothers to that worthy host that has been chosen to be associated with the Christ in leadership of those things which make for the accomplishment of God's purposes with reference to the existence of man in the earth. That affords me much more comfort than to think of man as being related—even though distantly related—to the brute creation. (CR, October 1925, 147, 149-150).

## FALL

"Men are that they might have joy." That is to say, the purpose of man's earth-life is in some way to be made to contribute to his "joy," which is but another way of saying, that man's earth-life is to eventuate in his advantage. ...

"Men are that they might have joy!" What is meant by that? Have we here the reappearance of the old Epicurean doctrine, "pleasure is the supreme good, and chief end of life?" ... This is not the "joy," it is needless to say, contemplated in the Book of

Mormon. Nor is the "joy" there contemplated the "joy" of mere innocence—mere innocence, which say what you will of it, is but a negative sort of virtue. A virtue that is colorless, never quite sure of itself, always more or less uncertain, because untried. Such a virtue—if mere absence of vice may be called virtue—would be unproductive of that "joy" the attainment of which is set forth in the Book of Mormon as the purpose of man's existence. ...

The "joy" contemplated in the Book of Mormon passage is to arise out of man's rough and thorough knowledge of evil, of sin; through knowing misery, sorrow, pain and suffering; through seeing good and evil locked in awful conflict; through a consciousness of having chosen 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. It is a "joy" that will arise from a consciousness of having "fought the good fight," of having "kept the faith." It will arise from a consciousness of moral, spiritual and physical strength. Of strength gained in conflict. The strength that comes from experience; from having sounded the depths of the soul; from experiencing all emotions of which mind is susceptible; from testing all the qualities and strength of the intellect. (NWFG, 3:198-201.)

However difficult it may be to comprehend fully all things connected with man's Fall, and God's plan for his redemption, we may be assured that the Fall was not a blunder, nor was it an accident. ... All that has befallen man, we may rest assured, is essential to his eternal and perfect happiness. From our limited experience, we know that men learn to appreciate the joys of prosperity by drinking of the cup of adversity; they learn to prize the boon of health, by languishing upon the bed of affliction; they learn the value of wealth, by experiencing want and poverty; the sweets of life are rendered still more sweet by the draughts of bitterness men are compelled to drink; and the ever intermittent gleams of sunshine are made more bright by the renewing storms which darken the sky. ...

... In order that his children might know how to prize the greatest of all his gifts, Deity has ordained that they should pass through the dark valley of death; and in the meantime, by passing through this probation we call life, they might have the opportunity of demonstrating before the heavens their integrity to principles of righteousness and truth; and by coming in contact with evil, they might forever prize that which is pure and good; that vice might ever be hideous to them, and virtue lovely—and thus the eternal happiness of man be made secure. Thus with death, as with many other things,

that which at times is considered our greatest calamity, turns out to be our greatest good. (TG, 15-17.)

Adam fell that man might "be" in the environment of earth-life; in the midst of broken harmonies, where good and evil are seen in conflict; in a life of adventure and danger; in a life where real losses may have to be sustained; and sorrows as well as joys are realities; where death as well as life is encountered; and where spiritual deaths may be as endless, as spiritual lives may be eternal. ...

May it not, however, from some points of view be regarded as a misnomer, this "fall?" Certainly it is but an incident in the process of rising to greater heights. It is but the crouch for the spring: the steps backward in order to gain momentum for the rush forward; a descending below all things only that there might be a rising above all things. Such the benefits to arise from the fall; at least to some, and doubtless to the benefit ultimately, of most of the Intelligences that participate in earth-life, though there will be real losses in the adventure. The fall is to eventuate in the advantage of God's children, then, in the main. (SCT, 4:38-39.)

## MORTALITY

There came a time in the course of the existence of these spiritual personages when an earth-existence, a union of the spiritual personage with a body of flesh and bone, became necessary for his further development, for his enlargement; an existence where good and evil were in actual conflict, where the mighty and perhaps awful lessons which such conditions have to teach could be learned... .

The spirits of men came to earth primarily to obtain bodies through which their spirits may act through all eternity. They came to effect a union of spirit and element essential to all their future development and their joy and their glory; secondly they came to obtain such experiences as this earth-life has to give—to be taught by the things which they suffer; learning the lessons that sorrow and sin and death have to teach, finding both the strength and weakness of their own natures—proving the fidelity, valor and honor of their own spirits; making proof of their worthiness for that exceeding great and eternal weight of glory which God has designed for those who overcome and in all things prove faithful. (NWFG, 3:227-228.)

It is the spirit that gives form to the whole man. The spirit out of the elements in this earth-life clothes

itself with this beautiful garment, the human body, which in the providences of God shall be made immortal. This through the processes, first of birth into mortality—earth life; and after that, birth into immortality through the resurrection. Through these processes shall come forth those personages that shall be eternal—a union of spirit and element that shall be indissoluble. The mortal state is but a prelude to that immortal life, and to that "eternal life" which shall include with it an eternal union with God, a union that shall lead to the eternal progress and development of the divine intelligences that inhabit these bodies (CR, October 1925, 148-149).

A word in relation to this question of free agency. Of course it is recognized as one of the great theological questions that has puzzled mankind. By the phrase, free agency is here meant to represent that power or capacity of the mind or spirit to act freely and of its own volition, with reference to these matters, that are within the power of its achievement. That is to say, it is not meant that by an act of will man may overcome the force we call gravitation, and leave the earth at his pleasure; or that he can pluck down the moon by an act of will; or influence a mass of people at his will and against theirs; or create two mountains without a valley between them; but what is meant is, that man possesses the quality of

determining his own actions, his own course with reference to things that are within the realm of the possibility of his achievement, and more especially, with reference to moral questions; that man has the power to take a course in harmony with those moral ideals that he has created by his own intellectual force or that have been created for him by his education, or the environment in which he has lived; that he can decide for himself to walk in harmony with these ideals, or that wontingly, and against all that he conceives to be to his best interest, he can violate them and walk contrary to what in his heart he knows to be right and true. This constitutes his freedom, his agency, and it is because of this fact that he is morally responsible for his conduct. (NWFG, 3:208-209.)

## TRIALS

What is progression? Overcoming difficulties. Those who have the most difficulties, disappointments, sicknesses, etc., develop the greatest souls. (DF, 35.)

The sorrows, the afflictions, the trials, the poverty, the imprisonment, the mobbings, the hatred of mankind, are experiences that furnish men an opportunity to prove whether or not the material is in

them to outride the storms of life, prove their right and title to that exaltation and glory which God has in reserve for the faithful. You cannot fully comprehend this subject as to the past unless you contemplate it in the relationship it bears to the future. But before taking up that theme I want to call your attention to the proof for the statement I just made to the effect that God's favored sons are called to pass through affliction. When the Prophet Joseph Smith was confined in Liberty jail, Clay County, Missouri, and the Church was driven in a body from the state, he himself and a number of his brethren having been betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and cast into prison—after lying in a dungeon for five weary months, while his people were being smitten and driven, scattered and robbed, very naturally he inquired after the Lord, in the midst of his sore trial, and the Lord in reply to him said:

If thou art called to pass through tribulation;  
if thou art in perils among false brethren; if  
thou art in perils among robbers; if thou art in  
perils by land or sea;

If thou art accused with all manner of false  
accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; if  
they tear thee from the society of thy father  
and mother, and brethren, and sisters; and if  
with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee  
from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine

offspring, and thine cider son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? and if he then shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb;

And if thou should'st be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

The Son of Man hath descended below them all; art thou greater than He? [D&C 122:5-8]

I take it that the life of Jesus Christ and these His words to the Prophet demonstrate the truth for which I was contending, that not those furthest removed from trials and afflictions are most blessed; but those who are called to pass through the thickest

of afflictions are the most blessed; for the Son of Man hath passed through them all. O ye who are bowed down with sorrow, ye who are tried with adversity, torn perhaps from comfort and affluence to be plunged into perplexities and perchance into poverty, lift up your heads, I beseech you, and rejoice, for these things shall but minister to your experience! Do not regard them as judgments of God; they are not so in every case, I am sure; but look upon them as giving you an opportunity to develop your own nobility of character; as giving you an opportunity to stand the test, and prove yourselves worthy of the glory God intends to bestow upon the faithful ("What is Man," CD, 4:237-238).

The existence of evil in the world has ever been a vexed problem for both theologians and philosophers, and has led to the wildest speculations imaginable. (NWFG, 3:221.)

Evil as well as good is among the eternal things. Its existence did not begin with its appearance on our earth. Evil existed even in heaven; for Lucifer and many other spirits sinned there; "rebelled against heaven's matchless King," waged war, and were thrust out into the earth for their transgression.

Evil is not a created quality. It has always existed as the back ground of good. It is as eternal as

goodness: it is as eternal as law; it is as eternal as the agency of intelligence. Sin, which is evil active, is transgression of law; and so long as the agency of intelligences and law have existed, the possibility of the transgression of law has existed; and as the agency of intelligences and law have eternally existed, so, too, evil has existed eternally, either potentially or active and will always so exist.

Evil may not be referred to God for its origin. He is not its creator, it is one of those independent existences that is uncreated, and stands in the category of qualities of eternal things. While not prepared to accept the doctrine of some philosophers that "good and evil are two sides of one thing." I am prepared to believe that evil is a necessary antithesis to good, and essential to the realization of the harmony of the universe. "The good cannot exist without the antithesis of the evil—the foil on which it produces itself and becomes known." (NWFG, 3:223-224.)

The German philosopher Kant put the same thought in beautiful form when he said, in substance: The dove, as she speeds her way through the air, may marvel at the resistance to her flight by the atmosphere, but we know that but for that resistance she could not fly at all. So far Kant. Applied, the conclusion would be: As the resistance of the air to

the flight of the dove, so is evil to the progress of Intelligences. (JSPT, 45-47.)

If we attend solely to observation and the summing up of evil alone, we are very apt to get a mis-vision of things. Truth is knowledge of things as they are—not as they are in wrong vision of them, but as they are in reality (CR, April 1922, 99).

## DEATH

I think it must be evident to all who have looked upon the dead, that man is a dual being. Who that has stood by the bier of a friend, a parent, child or wife, and looked upon the lifeless form stretched upon it, but has felt that the being he loved has departed, that he is looking upon the casket merely that contained the jewel —the spirit. (The Gospel: An Exposition of its first principles; and Man's Relationship to Deity, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1901), 284-285.)

## SPIRIT WORLD

I take it that no one present here today is ignorant of the great fact of death. We have met with it in our experience in some form or other. There are parents here who have lost children; there are children who have lost parents; brothers who have lost sisters; sisters who have lost brothers; and if, perchance, there should be any who have not come in contact with death in these near relationships, then all, at least, have lost friends. All have looked upon the dead; and as we gazed into the cold, marble faces of those whom we loved, who is there that has not been struck with the thought on such occasions that what he gazed upon was but the temple, or the house, in which the soul he loved had dwelt. The casket only was before him; the jewel was gone.

We need not engage in any fine-spun speculations about the existence of the spirit. I take it that no man has looked upon the dead who has not been impressed with him truth to which I now invite your attention. We may take it as a fact conceded that man is dual in his organism; composed not merely of the gross materials that make up the body of the flesh and bone; there is the mind or spirit as well. This I, this ego within man—and that is more properly the man—is just as much a fact as the existence of the body. In death we see these, the spirit and body,

separated ("What is Man?" CD, 4:233).

The innumerable millions who have died without a knowledge of Christ or of His Gospel, together with those who have been deceived by the teachings of pseudo ministers of Christ, are not eternally lost, but that, since the spirit of man when separated from the body retains all the faculties of mind, the Gospel is preached in the spirit world to the disembodied spirits, and that on condition of their accepting the Gospel, and living according to the laws of God in the spirit, they may be saved on condition of the outward ordinances of the Gospel being administered vicariously for them upon the earth by their agents—their relatives....

The Gospel of Christ is not limited in its power to save to this life, or this world alone. Its powers enter into the spirit world (The Second Coming of the Messiah and Events to Precede it [Independence, MO: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing Company], 12, 13).

Punishment exists eternally, and stands ready to be applied to those who violate the laws of righteousness. But because the penalty stands ever ready to vindicate any law which may be broken, it does not necessarily follow that persons violating the law will for ever have to endure punishment. Mercy,

though not allowed to rob justice, somewhere, and at some time, will step forward and claim her own; permitting the violator of law to endure punishment no longer than is necessary to vindicate the law, and satisfy the reasonable claims of justice. Hence we may conclude, that while the actions of men in this probation will greatly affect their standing in the life that is to come, those actions do not, in every case, fix the status of men for eternity. (TG, 248-249.)

## DEGREES OF GLORY

It is idle today to ask men to be satisfied with the old sectarian notions of man's future life, where at best he is to be but one of a minstrelsy twanging harps and singing to the glory of an incorporeal, bodiless, passionless, immaterial incomprehensible God. Such a conception of existence no longer satisfies the longings of the intelligent or spiritual-minded man. Growth, enlargement, expansion for his whole nature, as he recognizes that nature in its intellectual, moral, spiritual and social demands, are what his soul calls for. (MDD, 35-36.)

[Joseph Smith] taught that as there is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars, so in future men will exist in varying degrees of

glory; that as the stars of heaven differ in infinite degrees of brightness, so also will men in the future exist in places and states of infinite variety, corresponding to the infinite variations of their intelligence, knowledge, tastes, acquirements, inclinations, and aspirations. In other words, environment will correspond to nature, with always the possibility present of improving both the environment and the nature, until a fulness of joy is attained by each intelligent entity—by each man. (JSPT, 27.)

It appears that Mercy has special claims upon those men and women, and also upon nations and races who know not the laws of God, or have never heard the gospel... .

Still, those who have died without law are placed at this disadvantage; that if they are not under the condemnation of the law, through not having had it delivered to them, neither are they sanctified by the law, and consequently their development in spiritual knowledge and experience is not such as may warrant us in expecting that they are prepared to inherit the same degree of glory with those who have received the law of the gospel, faithfully observed all its requirements and through their obedience have become sanctified by it, and inherit the celestial glory, the highest of all. Therefore, it is written of those who

die without the law:

These are they who are of the terrestrial [world], whose glory differs from that of the church of the First Born, who have received the fullness of the Father, even as the moon differs from the sun in the firmament. Behold these are they who died without law." [D&C 76:71, 72.]

I know of nothing that is written, however, which prevents us from believing that they may, eventually, enter the celestial kingdom. Of one thing at least we may rest assured, and that is, that they will receive all the glory, all the exaltation, that their capacity can comprehend and enjoy, and they will be satisfied with the mercy and justice of God (TG, 35-36).

The Priesthood that man receives is not laid aside even at death, but follows him into the world of spirits, where he may continue to minister to those who sit in darkness—to those who have lived upon the earth when the truth was obscured in the rubbish of human traditions, and when people were deceived by the cunning and craft of men. There they have the privilege of enlightening the minds of their fellows and leading them to the truth, as they did here. And when their spirits shall again be reunited with their bodies, their Priesthood does not end there, either; but

so long as time shall last or immortality itself endure, just so long shall this power continue with those who are faithful unto it, and they shall have the everlasting privilege of doing good and being the representatives for God and help Him in the work of redeeming the children of men. I come to this conclusion from one of the revelations to the Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith, which says: "That they of the celestial glory," speaking of the time after the resurrection, "shall minister to those of the terrestrial glory, and they of the terrestrial glory shall minister to those of the telestial glory." And what is the object of this ministration? Why, it must be for the purpose of leading the children of men to the truth, of taking them by the hand and going higher and still higher in the scale of intelligence and of progression, until every son and every daughter of God shall receive all the honor, all the glory, all the power and happiness that it is possible for their natures to encompass. ("Priesthood and the Rights of Succession," CD, 2:370).

I observe in one of the declarations of the Presbytery held at Spanish Fork, that they set it forth—and I speak of it because they undertake to justify their assertion by reference to a publication of mine—that those who do not accept the person and the mission of Joseph Smith are heretics and are to

become sons of perdition.

It is scarcely necessary in this congregation for me to say that Mormonism does not teach any such doctrine as that. I am sure that I have never taught it. Indeed, I am rather of the opinion that men cannot be sons of perdition until they do receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ, until they themselves hold part of God's authority in the Holy Priesthood, and that having come to the light and to the possession of this power they then do violence to it by becoming traitors to God, and by denying the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by altogether turning away from the Gospel. I am of the opinion that no man can become subject to the same condemnation that rests upon Lucifer until he commits the same sin that Lucifer committed; then, and then only, can like condemnation fall upon him, and that cannot be until he has tasted the good word of God and partaken of His power. Therefore, our friends are mistaken when they say that we teach that those who do not accept the testimony of Joseph Smith and the work that he was the instrument of establishing, become sons of perdition. ("The Spirit of the Gospel," CD 5:139.)

## BECOMING LIKE GOD

Salvation is a matter of character-building under the Gospel laws and ordinances, and more especially with the direct aid of the Holy Spirit. (TG, 208.)

Our lives through the gospel may be made to touch the life of God, and by touching the life of God partake somewhat of His qualities (CR, April 1905, 45).

The man who so walks in the light and wisdom and power of God, will at the last, by the very force of association, make the light and wisdom and power of God his own—weaving those bright rays into a chain divine, linking himself forever to God and God to him. This the sum of Messiah's mystic words, "Thou, Father, in me, and I in thee" — beyond this human greatness cannot achieve. ("Brigham Young: A Character Sketch," Improvement Era, June 1903, 574.)

Mormonism is something more than a machine which proposes to make men of one length, and one height, and one weight. It is not a machine for making stereotyped men, but a system of truth with principles guiding conduct; the truth to be voluntarily accepted, and the principles personally applied until man shall

## PLAN OF SALVATION

be enabled, under this system of truth and these principles, to approximate something towards the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus (CR, April 1908, 107).

The Lord revealed the great truth, through the Prophet, and lodged the truth with the Church, that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and men are of the same race; that there is something divine in man, an Intelligence that is not created or made, but is in the very essence of it akin to God; and that in that divine Intelligence there are infinite possibilities. Development may take place from that germ, that shall expand into all that is great, and noble, and wise, and pure, and powerful! There is in that Intelligence such possibilities of development that we may hope as eons of time shall pass by, to see it rise to something—that is truly great and dignified, and worth while to preserve (CR, October 1910, 37-38).

Whatever man may be today, whatever his excellence may be—even the excellence of the most highly developed men—we believe that there are heights beyond those which he has now attained, to which it is possible for him to mount. (DFS, 2:397).

Think for a moment what progress a man makes within the narrow limits of his life. Regard him

as he lies in the lap of his mother, a mere piece of organized, red pulp—a new-born babe.... From the helpless babe may come a Michael Angelo, who from some crude mass of stone from the mountain side shall work out a heaven-born vision that shall hold the attention of men for generations, and make them wonder at the God-like powers of man that has created an all but living and breathing statue. Or a Mozart, a Beethoven, or a Handel, may come from the babe and call out from the silence those melodies and the richer harmonies that lift the soul out of its present narrow prison house and give it fellowship for a season with the Gods (MDD, 33-34).

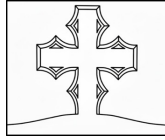
I know how like sacrilege it sounds in modern ears to speak of man becoming a deity. Yet why should it be so considered? Man is the offspring of God, he is of the same race and has within him—undeveloped, it is true—the faculties and attributes of his Father. He has also before him an eternity of time in which to develop both the faculties of the mind and the attributes of the soul—why should it be accounted a strange thing that at last the child shall arrive at the same exaltation and partake of the same intelligence and glory with his Father? If Jesus Christ, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," [Philippians 2:6] why should it be considered blasphemous to teach that man by faith

and righteousness in following the counsels of God, shall at last become like him, and share his power and glory, being a God, even a son of God? (NWFG 1:458.)

The distance between the noblest man and the position of God is greater, perhaps, than that between the infant in the cradle and the highest development of manhood but if so, there is a longer time—eternity—in which to arrive at the result; and God and heavenly influences instead of human parents and earthly means to bring to pass the necessary development. (NWFG, 1:459.)

Let it be observed that ... when Jesus was accused of making himself God, he did not deny the charge; but on the contrary, called their attention to the fact that God in the law he had given to Israel had said to some of them—“Ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.” And further, Jesus argued, if those unto whom the word of God came were called Gods in the Jewish law, and the scripture wherein the fact was declared could not be broken, that is, the truth denied or gainsaid [declared untrue or invalid]—why should the Jews complain when he, too, who had been especially sanctified by God the Father, called himself the Son of God? (NWFG, 1:465–66).

Nor will this exaltation of man detract from the majesty and exaltation of Divine Intelligences. Joseph Smith's doctrine does not degrade Deity, it merely points out the future exaltation of man. The glory of God does not consist in his being alone in his greatness, but in sharing that greatness and his intelligence and glory with others. It is a case where the more is given the richer he becomes who gives, because he is constantly widening the circle of his own power and dominion. As the glory of earthly parents is increased by having beautiful, intelligent children, capable of attaining to the same intelligence, development and standing as the parents, so the glory of the heavenly parent—God—is added unto by having sons who shall attain unto the same honor and exaltation as himself, and who shall be worthy of sharing his power and glory and everlasting dominion (NWFG, 1:473).



## THE GOSPEL

**T**he Gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto every one who believes and obeys it. (TG, 10.)

Jesus Christ came into the earth to accomplish two great purposes; first, to redeem mankind from the consequences of Adam's transgression; second, to save them from the consequences of their own sins. The first is a general salvation, which, without any conditions whatever, will be applied to all mankind, irrespective of their obedience or disobedience to God, their righteousness or wickedness, their belief or unbelief. The redemption will be as universal as the fall. The second may be regarded as a particular salvation, dependent upon faith in, and obedience to the gospel of Christ by the individual. (OEH, 87.)

## FAITH

I come to the question. What is faith? And in answer say that it is an assurance in the mind of the existence and reality of things which one has not seen, or which to him have not been demonstrated. It may be an assurance in the mind of the existence of some Being whom we have not seen, but whose works are visible, and who has been seen by others; or it may be of the transpiring of some event at which we were not present, but of which others bear witness; or it may be an assurance of the correctness of certain deductions based upon scientific calculations, though the principles of the science, and the method of dealing with them, by which the conclusions are reached, we neither understand nor are able to follow; in whatever it may be, that assurance of the mind which accepts as truth those things which one has not seen, and does not know for a certainty from his own experience to be absolutely true, is faith. (TG, 44.)

Faith of necessity is a factor in the Gospel, because it is the incentive to all action; for unless men believe in God's existence, and in the revelations and commandments which he has given them, they will consider themselves under no obligations to obey

him; and hence will neglect the things which concern their salvation. It was the knowledge of this fact, doubtless, which led Paul to say: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is (i.e. exists), and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." [Heb. 11:6] And Jesus, too, when he said: "If ye believe not that I am he (the Redeemer, the Son of God), ye shall die in your sins." [John 8:24]—had the same thing in his mind. (TG, 39.)

Of necessity Faith in God and in this plan of salvation is of first importance, and must be an active principle in the mind, for without it men would consider themselves under no obligation to yield obedience to any ordinance whatsoever. The reason the infidel does not repent, or perform any other act of obedience, is because he has or pretends to have no faith in the existence of God. As from the rising sun there beams those rays of light which streak the heavens with glory, so from faith spring those acts of obedience required in the gospel of Jesus Christ. (DFS, 1:15.)

Belief in God and in Jesus Christ—in the sense I have described in the foregoing—when once fixed in the mind and heart, leads men to obedience to God's laws. It leads them to repentance and every other good work. (TG, 40.)

Faith is trust in what the spirit learned eons ago. (B. H. Roberts, "Scriptural Notebook," BYU Special Collections under "F".)

In this life we are required by divine wisdom to walk by faith, not by sight. It is part of our education that we learn to act with reference to sacred things on probabilities. A veil of oblivion is stretched over our past spirit-existence. The future is hidden largely from our view, and we are required to perform this life's journey from the cradle to the grave in the midst of uncertainties, except as we increase our faith and establish assurance by the development of spiritual strength from within. Why this should be so may not always seem clear to us; but of the fact of it there can be no doubt. Nor can there be any doubt as to the wisdom of it, and the benefit of it to mankind, since our Father-God has so ordered it. (NWFG, 2:335.)

Faith must ever have its foundations in evidence. (DFS, 1:13.)

Faith is based upon evidence, upon testimony. It is the evidence we have in the testimonies of the writers of our Scripture, and the prophets of God to which I have alluded, supported to some extent also

by the glorious works of nature, that creates in the mind faith in the existence of God. ... Only correct evidence, only truthful testimony can produce fruitful, profitable faith. No matter how sincere one's belief may be in an error, that will not transform the error into truth. (TG, 46-47.)

I maintain that "simple faith"—which is so often ignorant and simpering acquiescence, and not faith at all—but simple faith taken at its highest value, which is faith without understanding of the thing believed, is not equal to intelligent faith, the faith that is the gift of God, supplemented by earnest endeavor to find through prayerful thought and research a rational ground for faith—for acceptance of truth; and hence the duty of striving for a rational faith in which the intellect as well as the heart—the feeling—has a place and is a factor. (SCT, 5:v.)

## REPENTANCE

What is repentance? I shall venture as a definition this, Repentance is a deep and heartfelt sorrow for sin, producing a reformation of life. That is the significance of the word to my mind as associated with the Gospel; and I think such a definition arises from the spirit, and, I may say, the letter of the

scriptures.

"Repent, and turn yourselves from your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" [Ezekiel 43:30, 31.]

Such was the word of the Lord to Israel through the prophet Ezekiel. I call the attention of the reader to the fact, that the idea of turning away from transgressions, and making a new heart and a new spirit, or in other word, a reformation of life, is associated with the commandment to repent, and forms part of it. (TG, 126-127.)

Repentance ... consists not alone in deep and heartfelt sorrow for sin, but coupled with it must be a firm determination of amendment of conduct. It must be a godly sorrow working a reformation of life. (Defense of the Faith and the Saints, 2 vol. Salt Lake City: Deseret News: 1907- 1912), 1:15-16.)

To repent, then, means to turn aside from the path which leads to death, and choose that which leads to life—to life eternal. (TG, 131.)

Repentance is chiefly beneficial to the person

who practices it. The commandment from God to repent—always given in connection with the declaration of the Gospel—is really nothing more than an invitation to do one's self a kindness. It can only be an abomination to fools to depart from evil. (The Gospel: An Exposition of its first principles; and Man's Relationship to Deity, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1901), 131.)

True repentance is sincere sorrow for sin, accompanied by a firm resolution to forsake that which is evil. The legitimate fruits of such sorrow—repentance, is a reformation of life. And if, peradventure, through weakness of human nature one should fall into transgression, even after setting his heart to work righteousness, let him not be discouraged, but repeat his repentance, and I believe the experiences I have pointed out in these pages, both individual and national, demonstrate that God is good, and "goodness still delighteth to forgive." He is merciful and willing to pardon abundantly those who are sorry for their offenses, and will make a manly effort to reform. But on the other hand, those who mock him, and presumptuously sin, thinking to impose upon his long-suffering, have need to fear, both persons and nations, for all history teaches that it is a fearful thing to fall under the displeasure of the Most High. (TG, 144.)

## BAPTISM

The ordinances [required for salvation] are neither numerous nor difficult of performance; but in the plan of man's salvation, as in all other works of Deity, simplicity marks its outlines and efficiency justifies its adoption. The laws and ordinances referred to have not for their chief object the propitiation of the anger of God as the old Pagan ordinances of religion had; but on the contrary, by their nature and operation, they affect the character of man, and are calculated to so purify and exalt his nature as to prepare him to dwell in endless felicity in the presence and companionship of his Maker. (DFS, 1:15.)

Is it necessary to be born naturally in order to obtain life? All will answer: "Yes, we know of no other way, no other means by which life is obtained." So likewise is it necessary that men should be born into the heavenly kingdom, as well of water as of the Spirit, in order to attain unto spiritual life in the kingdom of God; and without being born of the water and of the Spirit, Jesus himself declares that the kingdom of God cannot be seen, it cannot be entered into—[John 3:3-5] therefore baptism must be

necessary to an entrance into the kingdom of God; and as there is, and can be, no salvation outside of that kingdom, baptism must be necessary to salvation. Not that there is saving virtue in the water itself, but the ordinance derives its virtue from the fact of its being appointed by the Lord as a means of grace to man. (TG, 148.)

By this immersion in the water is symbolized the death and burial of the Christ, the Atonement he made for the sins of man. In the coming forth again out of the water, is symbolized the resurrection of the Christ, his triumph over death, the victory side of the Atonement; death is conquered, life is triumphant; Christ is the first fruits of the resurrection and through him all men participate in the resurrection... .

Nor is this all; but in baptism is symbolized the forgiveness of sins to the baptized... . Baptism then not only becomes a symbol of the Christ's death, burial and resurrection to newness of life; but also the death and burial to sin of the baptized; and his resurrection to a newness of moral and spiritual life. To him it is a birth to righteousness. (SCT, 4:117-118.)

It is not the physical fact of being immersed in water that brings remission of sins, nor the physical fact of the imposition of hands that re-established the union with God through the medium of the Holy

Ghost. These as we have tried to explain are symbols of the deeper and greater realities that produce the results of forgiveness of sins and union with God. Back of the physical fact of baptism is the Atonement of Christ, wrought out by his making satisfaction to the injured honor of God, occasioned by sin, and bringing to pass the resurrection from the dead, because a Lord of life, and having the power to impart life to others, to the dead. Back of the physical fact of the immersion of a man in water, in order to a remission of his individual sins, is the fact that Jesus by his own suffering paid the penalty due to that and every other man's sins in the world, and thus brought all men within the claims of Mercy, and made it possible for the sins of men to be forgiven without violence to the Justice of God. This ordinance of baptism supplies the symbols of these realities; it is, however, in the realities instead of the signs or symbols of the realities whence arises the power of God unto salvation. Still the symbols of the realities may not be dispensed with; they are necessary to the perpetuation, in palpable form, of the realities behind them, hence the Church teaches and will always teach the necessity of conforming to or obeying them; they are but the signs and seals of our salvation. (SCT, 4:118.)

## ROLE OF THE HOLY GHOST

After water baptism comes the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Knowing our human weakness, knowing human inability to live unassisted upon the high moral plane projected in the ethical teachings of the gospel, God brings to our poor, human weakness the strength of God by imparting the Holy Spirit, which is the link that shall hold us to God, the medium of communication between our souls and soul of God; making, at need, God's strength our strength, his wisdom, as we may bear it, our wisdom, and his righteousness our righteousness. (Deseret Semi-Weekly News, October 13, 1910, p. 8.)

Through water baptism is obtained a remission of past sins; but even after the sins of the past are forgiven, the one so pardoned will doubtless feel the force of sinful habits bearing heavily upon him. He who has been guilty of habitual untruthfulness, will at times find himself inclined, perhaps, to yield to that habit. He who has stolen may be sorely tempted, when opportunity arises, to steal again. While he who has indulged in licentious practices may again find himself disposed to give way to the seductive influence of the siren. So with drunkenness, malice, envy, covetousness, hatred, anger, and, in short, all the evil dispositions that flesh is heir to.

There is an absolute necessity for some additional sanctifying grace that will strengthen poor human nature, not only to enable it to resist temptation, but also to root out from the heart concupiscence—the blind tendency or inclination to evil. The heart must be purified, every passion, every propensity made submissive to the will, and the will of man brought into subjection to the will of God.

Man's natural powers are unequal to this task; so, I believe, all will testify who have made the experiment. Mankind stand in some need of a strength superior to any they possess of themselves, to accomplish this work of rendering pure our fallen nature. Such strength, such power, such a sanctifying grace is conferred on man in being born of the Spirit—in receiving the Holy Ghost. Such, in the main, is its office, its work. (TG, 179-180.)

This is not an easy plan of salvation. After forgiveness of past sins the human weakness still remains, human inclinations ascend and still drive man on toward error, and his imperfect judgment is not sufficient to make him equal to the task of living in harmony with the divine law. Hence the need for an unction from the Holy One, by which he may know all things, an anointing which, if it will abide upon him will teach him all things. (IE 1 [September 1898]: 833.)

To my mind this ordinance [the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost] is the most philosophical of any in the Gospel. On one occasion as Jesus passed through a throng of people, a woman who had been troubled with an issue of blood for twelve years, and had spent all her living upon physicians, but received no benefit from them, came up behind him, saying in her heart, if I can but touch the hem of his garment I shall be healed. And it was so, even according to her faith; for pressing through the crowd she laid hold of his garment and was immediately made whole. "And Jesus said, who touched me?" When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, "Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou who touched me? And Jesus said, somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." [Luke 8:43, 46.]

Now, what had happened. And why the expression—"Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." My answer would be that the person of Jesus, aye, and also the very garments he wore, were so charged with that divine influence, known to us as the Holy Spirit, that when the woman with the issue of blood touched his garments, so much of that Spirit left him to heal her that it was perceptible to him, and he exclaimed, "Virtue is gone out of me!"

So, when a servant of God, filled with that Spirit, and with authority to act in the name of Jesus Christ, lays his hands upon one who has prepared himself for the reception of the Holy Ghost, through faith, repentance, and baptism, a portion of that Holy Spirit passes from the one who administers, to him upon whom he lays his hands and he is baptized with it. These are the laws by which it is received and conveyed; these are the conditions that must exist, in order that men may obtain this holiest of all influences, and its full and free enjoyment. And its transmission from one person to another by an observance of the ordinances and principles of righteousness we have now considered, is as natural and philosophical in the spiritual things of the universe, as it is for electricity or steam to perform the wonders which these forces are now made to enact in the commercial and mechanical worlds; and which they will not perform, unless the conditions by which their power is made available, are complied with. (TG, 190-191.)

Salvation is a matter of character-building under the Gospel laws and ordinances, and more especially with the direct aid of the Holy Spirit. (TG, 208.)

## ENDURE TO THE END

If a man accepts the principles and obeys the ordinances I have now treated upon ... and they are administered by men having authority from God to act in his name, then he is born again, born of the water and of the Spirit—born into the kingdom of God, and hence is a child of God, a citizen of his kingdom.

And since by submitting to these ordinances a man is born into the kingdom of God, I would remind the reader that his position in that kingdom is closely analogous to the child just born naturally into this world. The infant possesses all the faculties, all the organs, all the limbs of a man, but they are in embryo, undeveloped. ... So it is with those just born in the church of Christ. They, at their birth, are not fully developed men and women in the things of God. It is expected that they will have to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of God."

There is no one great thing that man can do and then do no more and obtain salvation. After entering into the kingdom of God, in the manner already pointed out in these pages, it is by learning "precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little and there a little," that salvation will be made secure. It is by resisting a temptation today, overcoming a weakness tomorrow, forsaking evil associations the

next day, and thus day by day, month after month, year after year, pruning, restraining and weeding out that which is evil in the disposition, that the character is purged of its imperfections. Salvation is a matter of character-building under the Gospel laws and ordinances, and more especially with the direct aid of the Holy Spirit.

Nor is it enough that one gets rid of evil. He must do good. He must surround himself with circumstances congenial to the sensitive nature of the Holy Ghost, that he may not be offended, and withdraw himself; for if he does so, amen to that man's spiritual or moral development... .

Thus by refusing to allow the evil inclinations of the disposition on the one hand, and cultivating noble sentiments on the other, a character may be formed that shall be godlike in its attributes and consequently its possessor will be fitted to dwell with God, and if so prepared, there is no question but his calling and election are sure. (TG, 206-209.)

The attainment of this condition of Christian righteousness, however, becomes a matter of character building under the favorable conditions provided by the gospel; and character building, even under favorable conditions is a matter of slow, self-conquest. It means to follow the admonition of the chief Judean apostle, and "add to your faith, virtue;

and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound," said he, "they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (SCT, 4:113.)

The power to brand with shame rests with each man and nowhere else. I have lived up to this day in all good conscience in harmony with the moral teachings of the communities in which I was reared and am sensible of no act of shame in my life. (ABHR, 217.)

## TEMPLE WORK

The Gospel of Christ is not limited in its powers to save to this life, or this world alone. Its power enters into the spirit-world. And by its proclamation in the world of spirits the fathers will learn that they are dependent upon the children still in this world for the performance of the outward ordinances of the Gospel; hence, their hearts will be

turned to the children. The children on the earth will learn that it is within their power to attend to ordinances of the Gospel for their progenitors; hence, the hearts of the children will be turned to the fathers. It is because of this—because of the knowledge restored by Elijah, that the Latter-day Saints, wherever they have planted their feet, have sought, even in the days of their greatest poverty, to build a temple, the proper place in which to attend to these ordinances for the dead; and they thus witness to the world that the hearts of the children are turned to the fathers. (The Second Coming of the Messiah and Events to Precede It, [Liverpool, England: Latter-day Saints' Publishing Office, 1888].)

While the Gospel is preached in the spirit world, it appears from all that can be learned upon the subject, that all the outward ordinances, such as baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, anointings, sealings, etc., etc., must be performed vicariously here upon the earth for those who accept the Gospel in the world of spirits. This is the work that children may do for their progenitors, and upon learning this, the hearts of the children are turned to their fathers; and the fathers in the spirit world, learning that they are dependent upon the actions of the posterity for the performance of the ordinances of salvation, their hearts are turned to the children; and thus the work

that was predicted should be performed by Elijah—turning the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children—was accomplished in restoring the keys of knowledge respecting the salvation for the dead. (TG, 245.)

This work that can be done for the dead enlarges one's views of the gospel of Jesus Christ. One begins to see indeed that it is the "everlasting gospel;" for it runs parallel with man's existence both in this life and in that which is to come. It vindicates the character of God, for by it we may see that justice and judgment, truth and mercy are in all his ways. (NWFG, 1:380.)

Notwithstanding the absence of the gospel and the authority to administer its ordinances {during the Great Apostasy}, the children of God living through those dark ages will not be deprived of its saving powers. That must be a very contracted view of the great plan of human redemption which would confine its operations to the brief span of man's existence in this life. "Mormonism" holds no such view. On the contrary, it teaches that the gospel is everlasting; that it walks beside man throughout eternity; and means for its application to him have been provided by the mercy of God. It may be that "Mormonism" does not stand alone in this broad

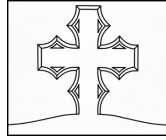
conception of the application of the gospel to our race; but while others are speculating as to whether it is possible or not for man to attain unto repentance and forgiveness of sins in his future existence, "Mormonism" is erecting temples to the name of the Most High, and within their sacred walls the Saints are vicariously performing the ordinances of salvation for those who have passed from the earth when the gospel and authority to administer it were not among the children of men. Such is the conception that Mormonism holds and teaches of the gospel of Jesus Christ and its application to mankind; and surely one may see in this conception the fullness of that glorious scripture which says: God, our Savior, would have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of truth. (1 Timothy 2:3, 4.) (DFS, 1:17-18.)

At first thought I was tempted to say that this work for the dead was by far the greatest part of the work contemplated in the New Dispensation; for as the leaves upon the trees in a single summer are insignificant in comparison to the leaves that have flourished upon the trees in all the summers since creation's dawn, so the number of men now living is insignificant in comparison to the unnumbered millions that have passed away; but I chanced to remember that this work extends to the future as well as to the past; that it will effect the generations to

## THE GOSPEL

come, as well as those that have gone, and so I checked the thought that the work in relation to past generations was greatest. (NWFG, 1:381.)





# B. H. ROBERTS ON THE GREAT APOSTASY AND THE RESTORATION

## DISPENSATIONS

A dispensation, without reference to any specific application or limitation of the term, is the act of dealing out or distributing, such as the dispensation of justice by courts, the dispensation of blessings or afflictions by the hand of Providence. Theologically a dispensation is defined as one of the several systems or bodies of law in which at different periods God has revealed His mind and will to man, such as the Patriarchal Dispensation, the Mosaic Dispensation, or the Christian Dispensation. The

word is also sometimes applied to the periods of time during which the said laws obtain. That is, the period from Adam to Noah is usually called the Patriarchal Dispensation. From Noah to the calling of Abraham, the Noachian Dispensation; and from Abraham to the calling of Moses, the Abrahamic Dispensation. But the word dispensation as connected with the Gospel of Jesus Christ means the opening of the heavens to men; the giving out or dispensing to them the word of God; the revealing to men in whole or in part the principles and ordinances of the Gospel; the conferring of divine authority upon certain chosen ones, by which they are empowered to act in the name, that is, in the authority of God, and for Him. That is a dispensation as relating to the Gospel. (DHC, 1:xxv.)

There is a very general idea existing in the Christian world that nothing was known of the Gospel of Christ—its principles and ordinances, until the personal ministry of the Messiah began; whereas the truth is, the plan of redemption, the Gospel, was understood in the heavens before the foundations of the earth were laid; and was revealed to the first patriarchs of the race, and extensively preached many centuries before the coming of Messiah in the flesh. (TG, 228.)

The Gospel ... is of great antiquity. Older than the hills, older than the earth; for in the heavenly kingdom it was formulated before the foundations of the earth were laid. Nor were men left in ignorance of the plan of their redemption until the coming of the Messiah in the flesh. From the first that plan was known. (DHC, 1:xxvi-xxvii.)

Respecting the Gospel being presented to ancient Israel, this is the sum: The Lord gave them the Gospel, but because they would not observe its sacred requirements, he took it, that is in its fullness, from among them, and also the higher or Melchisedek Priesthood; but left them the lesser or Aaronic Priesthood, and to the part of the gospel which remained, viz., repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, was added the law of carnal commandments, which was to educate them for the fullness of the gospel when Messiah should come with it. At the appointed time Messiah came and taught the Gospel of the kingdom; and though the Jews as a nation rejected him, and their Sanhedrin sentenced him to death, yet a few received his teachings, and among them the Lord Jesus organized His church, established his priesthood and gave to his servants a commandment to go and teach all nations. (TG, 235.)

I believe that there have been many dispensations of the gospel given to men. The dispensation between Adam and Noah, counted as the patriarchal dispensation; and the gospel, or part of it, not wholly, but rather imperfectly expressed through the law that was given unto Israel in symbols, and signs of things yet to come and not the very things themselves, but stood as representatives of those things—the "school master" to bring men to Christ... .

I believe that the great dispensation, introduced by the ministry of John the Baptist, and followed by the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the dispensation of the meridian of times, for the development of those great things concerning the salvation of men and the expression of the love of God. I also believe that, in fulfillment of the inspired words of the servants of God in those days, men subsequently transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broke that glorious covenant, and left the world again in darkness. True, throughout that period from the Christ to our day, there were left fragments of the splendid truths and sublime teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, that have become the common heritage of the world. But the formal authority of the Church and the ordinances of salvation—these were departed from, and a period of dark apostasy hung over the world until, in the providences of God, the

time came for the introduction of what is known to us as the dispensation of the fulness of times. God raised up a prophet in these latter days to introduce that bringing together of all the dispensations that have ever been, and welding them into one great final triumphant dispensation. That restoration was brought to pass through the work that God introduced by the Prophet Joseph Smith; by revealing himself and his Son Jesus Christ to this witness, who was to be God's witness in the world in these last days, the witness par excellence; and hence the vision given to him was clearer and fuller than had ever been given in the world before. I believe that with all my soul (CR, October 1929, 86-87).

## THE GREAT APOSTASY

A "falling away" from the truth of God by mankind is not a novel thing. It is something that had often happened in times previous to the Christian age... .

There were such "fallings away" from the days of Adam to Noah, and the wickedness of man was so great in the earth that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually". And the "falling away" in that age ended in the cataclysm of the flood; which, save for Noah and his family,

destroyed the race. Those “fallings away”, too, were “fallings away” from the gospel—from true religion. And the only reason why that truth is not more clearly revealed in Genesis is because of the fragmentary character of that ancient scripture. (FA, 14.)

After the introduction of the gospel by the personal ministry of the Son of God, when men transgressed its laws, and corrupted its teachings and ordinances by their vain and foolish fancies, or by their efforts to modify it to make it acceptable to a pagan nation, because of transgression, it was taken from among them. Not abruptly. Not in such a sense as that the Christians some night in the third century all laid down to sleep good, faithful saints and awoke next morning stripped of the Gospel and turned pagans. No; but as the elders and bishops who held divine authority were destroyed by persecution, or passed away by natural death, the people with each succeeding generation growing worse and worse, and less and less worthy of the gospel— false teachers without authority from God usurped power, corrupted the gospel and the church until the false displaced the true. (NWFG, 1:129-130).

Nothing remained but fragments of the gospel; here a doctrine and there a principle, like single

stones fallen and rolled away from the ruined wall; but no one able to tell where they belonged in the structure, and so many of the stones missing that to reconstruct the wall with what remains is out of the question. (NWFG, 1:130.)

When the Gospel was taken from the earth and divine authority removed from among men, God was gracious enough to leave behind in the world the written word, which, though fragmentary, yet contains precious gems of truth; and that so far as Christian sects embraced those truths—nay, and for that matter, so far as so called heathen religions embraced the same truths—so much is good that they have. You know after the sun sets there is still a twilight left in the heavens; and after the twilight passes away in a sea of glory, and the sable mantle of night overspreads the sky, God has permitted the stars to shine through, to break away absolute darkness, that in this light men may walk with some degree of safety. And so when the Gospel of Jesus Christ was taken from the earth, fragments of it were left to reflect some of its glow, some of its truth, and our Father, in His kindness and goodness, did not leave the inhabitants of the earth to total darkness (CD, 5:140).

It is complained by [a group of Protestant

Christians in Utah], that the "Mormon" Church denies that the Christian churches have been representing Christ for 1,700 years, notwithstanding Christian martyrdoms, organized charities, the reforms the churches have fostered, the progress of mankind which Christians have chiefly promoted. I wish to explain briefly the attitude of the Church, with reference to this interregnum between the apostasy and the restoration of that gospel in the nineteenth century, through our prophet.

Our position is this: While there was this universal apostasy, while the Church of Christ as an organization was destroyed, and replaced by the churches of men, yet just as when the sun goes down, there still remains light in the sky— so, too, notwithstanding this apostasy from the Church, there still were left fragments of truth among the children of men, and some measure of truth thank God, through his mercy, has always remained with man, not only with Christians but with all God's children. He has not left himself in any of the ages of the world without his witnesses, and he has sanctified all generations of men with some measure of the truth; therefore, when we proclaim this apostasy from the Christian religion and the destruction of the Church of Christ, it does not follow that we hold that all truth, that all virtue, had departed from the world, or that God had absolutely withdrawn from his creation. Not

so. The light of truth burned in the bosom of good men; but it does not follow that because these fragments of truth remained there was necessarily the organized Church of Christ and divine authority in the world. These fragments of the truth could remain in the so-called Christian parts of the world, as we now know them to exist in what is called the heathen world. (DFS, 2:303-304.)

“The Reformation,” [was] ... a revolution instead of a reformation, since the so-called reformation by no means re-established primitive Christianity, either in its form or essence; but it did overthrow the power of the Catholic Church in a great part of Western Europe, gave larger liberty to the people, and thus prepared the way for the greater work which followed it—the introduction of the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times. (OEH, iii.)

Such was the fruit of the great revolution of the sixteenth century in Germany—religious liberty. To that end all the struggles tended, and its result was indeed glorious, worth all the tears and blood it had cost to gain it. But it was not a reformation, if by that is meant the bringing back of primitive Christianity. That the "Reformers" did not do. Indeed they left more truth in the Catholic church than they brought out with them, or found in their speculations after

leaving that church. (OEH, 249.)

That revolution of the sixteenth century [the Reformation] was the first glimmerings of the dawn which heralded the approaching day; the light became clearer in America in the establishment of religious liberty under the constitution of the United States; the sun rose when the Lord introduced the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times by revealing himself and his Son Jesus Christ to the Prophet Joseph Smith. (OEH, 294-295.)

## RESTORATION

This is the dispensation of the fullness of times, and we see running into it, as mighty streams rush into the ocean, all the former dispensations, putting us in touch with them, putting them in touch with us; and we see that God has had but one great purpose in view from the beginning, and that has been the salvation of His children. And now has come the final day, the final dispensation, when truth and light and righteousness must flood the earth. (CR, Oct. 1904, 73.)

## CHURCH HISTORY

I love Mormonism. I love it because it is true—because it is the fullness of truth. And then I rejoice in its bigness, in its grandeur. I love its spirit of liberality, as manifested here in the words of the brethren at this conference. I love it because its roots run down deep into the great things of God, and it is as a tree well planted, that the winds which beat upon it shall only help by driving its roots deeper into the soil, spreading further to right and left, establishing itself as a tree of God's planting, under whose friendly branches there is room for all who will come unto it; and whose very leaves are sufficient for the healing of the nations (CR, April 1904, 19).

God has given us a system of truth that constitutes the Gospel of Jesus Christ—to my mind this Gospel is invulnerable; it is perfect, and unassailable with truth and reason. To defend it is a joy, and always a success. But our history—which is but another name for our conduct—is not always defensible at all points. (CR, October 1909, 103).

It is always a difficult task to hold the scales of justice at even balance when weighing the deeds of men. It becomes doubly more so when dealing with men engaged in a movement that one believes had its

origin with God, and that its leaders on occasion act under the inspiration of God. Under such conditions to so state events as to be historically exact, and yet, on the other hand, so treat the course of events as not to destroy faith in these men, nor in their work, becomes a task of supreme delicacy; and one that tries the soul and the skill of the historian. The only way such a task can be accomplished, in the judgment of the writer, is to frankly state events as they occurred, in full consideration of all related circumstances, allowing the line of condemnation or of justification to fall where it may; being confident that in the sum of things justice will follow truth; and God will be glorified in his work, no matter what may befall individuals or groups of individuals. (CHC, 1:vi-vii.)

While the servants of God, chosen as presidents, apostles, and other leaders of the great New Dispensation movement, carried heavenly treasures in their hands and high truths, yet they bore these in earthen vessels, liable at times to be broken and the heavenly treasures marred.

It must be said of those entrusted with this great mission of God that they were not always 100 percent perfect and right in their administration. Neither were those who fought them always and every time 100 percent wrong. Even in the divine things human frailty touches them or enters into their

development and are liable to take on human limitations and uncertainties (ABHR, 228).

Let not this remark, however, be regarded as implying too great a censure upon the leading men of the New Dispensation. While many of them fell into grievous sins, and all of them at times plainly manifested errors of judgment and limitations in their conceptions of the greatness and grandeur of the work in which they were engaged, yet doubtless they were the best men to be had for the work, since they were chosen either directly of God, or else by a divinely appointed authority, and in either case called of God, and ordained to bring forth the work. (CHC, 1: vii.)

I am willing that this tree of Mormonism should be judged by its fruits absolutely, and let it stand or fall by that test. But, what I do object to is the course so often pursued by our critics. That course is as if one should go into an orchard of twenty or fifty acres of fruit-bearing trees, and should seek out and find here and there—as one may, even in the best of orchards—the wind-beaten, blasted, mildewed, dwarfed, or shrunk fruit, and carefully raking this together, represent that as the fruit of the orchard! Whereas the facts are that there are scores of tons of beautiful, ripe and perfect fruit that is a credit to the

orchard and to the husbandman of it. Yet all that is passed by, and you are asked to judge the orchard by the blasted specimens that have been raked together.

So in this work called Mormonism. Let our critics take into account the rich harvest of righteous souls that this system has produced; and the present upright and honorable men and women of our system, and judge not the people by those who have failed to reach the high ideals that Mormon-ism holds up as the goal of moral and spiritual achievement, and who fail because they depart from our principles and the practices they enjoin. (DFS, 2:444-445.)

The testimony of the Eight Witnesses differs from that of the Three Witnesses in that the view of the plates by the latter was attended by a remarkable display of the glory and power of God and the ministration of an angel. The glory of God shone about them; the angel turned the gold leaves of the ancient record; he spoke to them or at least to David Whitmer, saying: "David, blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps his commandments;" and the very voice of God was heard out of the bright light shining about them, saying:

These plates have been revealed by the power of God; and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what

you now see and hear.

No such remarkable display of God's splendor and power was attendant upon the exhibition of the plates to the Eight Witnesses. On the contrary it was just a plain, matter-of-fact exhibition of the plates by the Prophet himself to his friends. They saw the plates; they handled them; they turned the leaves of the old Nephite record, and saw and marveled at its curious workmanship. No brilliant light illuminated the forest or dazzled their vision; no angel was there to awe them by the splendor of his presence; no piercing voice of God from a glory to make them tremble by its power. All these supernatural circumstances present at the view of the plates by the Three Witnesses were absent at the time when the Eight Witnesses saw them. Here all was natural, matter-of-fact, plain... . They could pass the plates from hand to hand, guess at their weight—doubtless considerable, that idea being conveyed, "we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety, that the said Smith has got the plates." They could look upon the engravings, and observe calmly how different they were from everything modern in the way of record-making known to them, and hence the conclusion that the workmanship was not only curious but ancient. (NWFG, 2:281-282.)

Doubtless the Lord had his own purpose to

subserve in giving different kinds of testimony—divine and human—to the same truth. The testimony of the Three Witnesses, attended as it was by such remarkable displays of supernatural power, he knew would be opposed from the very circumstance of its being supernatural. It cannot be but that God foreknew of the rise of that so-called "Rational Criticism" of divine things which would resolve inspired dreams, visions, revelations and the administration of angels into hallucinations, brought about first by an inclination to believe in the miraculous, (and "ordinarily," argue the "Rational Critics," "expectation is the father of its object.") supplemented by the theory of self-deception, self-hypnosis or hypnotic influence of others. (NWFG, 2:296.)

Thus "Rational Criticism" would explain away the testimony given by the Three Witnesses. The vision of the plates, of the angel, the glory of God that shone about the Witnesses, the voice of God from the midst of the glory—all was illusion, hallucination produced by mental suggestion, on the part of the Prophet. All was chimerical, a mental mirage!

But what of the testimony of the Eight Witnesses—all so plain, matter-of-fact, straightforward and real? How shall that be accounted for? Here all the miraculous is absent. It is a man to man transaction. Neither superstition, nor expectation of

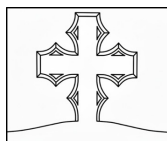
the supernatural can play any part in working up an illusion or mental mirage respecting what the Eight Witnesses saw and handled. Their testimony must be accounted for on some other hypothesis than that of hallucination. (NWFG, 2:306.)

## ZION

The word "Zion" refers not only to a land called Zion, and a city called Zion, but also to a people, ... "Zion" is not only to rejoice upon the mountains, but is also to "be assembled together," which really could only be consistently said of a people. In another revelation the Lord says: "Let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion, the pure in heart; therefore, let Zion rejoice, while all the wicked shall mourn." (NWFG, 1:300.)

Let us not, I pray you, confine our feelings and views respecting Zion to limits that are too narrow for the genius of this great work of God. If anyone has supposed that the prosperity and success of this work called Mormonism depends upon the Latter-day Saints retaining political control of Salt Lake or any other city; of this state of Utah or any other state, or group of states, his views do not rise to meet the grandeur of God's great Latter-day work. Our work is

to preach the gospel; and to so preach it that its principles will leaven the whole mass of modern religious and philosophical thought; to so preach it that it shall influence the lives of men in all the world. No petty, political scheme can be said to be any part of the great Later-day work which God has established in the earth. That work is broad as eternity; it is deep as the love of God, and concerns the salvation of all the children of men. Our religion is in the earth to benefit and bless and uplift mankind. Our Church is not the Church of Jesus Christ for the United States, or for American. It is truly the catholic (i.e., the universal) Church, the Church of the whole world. (DFS, 1:438-441.)



## B. H. ROBERTS ON PROPHETS

### PROPHETS

This term "prophet"—what do you make of it? Generally, when you speak of a "prophet," you have in mind a predictor of future events, one who foretells things that are to come to pass, and indeed that is, in part, the office of a prophet—in part what is expected of him. But really this is the very least of his duties. A prophet should be a "forth-teller" rather than a fore-teller. Primarily he must be a teacher of men, an expounder of the things of God. The inspiration of the Almighty must give him understanding, and when given he must expound it to his people, to his age. He must be a Seer that can make others see. A Teacher

sent of God to instruct a people—to enlighten an age. This is the primary office of a prophet. (JSPT, 12.)

God, in his wisdom, and for the accomplishment of his own wise purposes with reference to us, has ordained that his children in this world's probation shall walk by faith, not by sight. To produce the faith, he sends forth special chosen servants, prophets, apostles, his own Son, and through them announces the divine will. Then when drawn to God by faith, when love-inspired towards God, the Lord gives the witness of the Holy Spirit, by and through which man may know the truth, for he becomes possessed of the very spirit of divine intelligence and of truth, by which power he is made to know the truth. (NWFG, 2:338-339.)

I want to warn members of the Church against speaking lightly or slighly of sacred things, or of the servants of God. In nothing, perhaps, can you more offend God or grieve his Spirit. Have nothing to do, I pray you, with “smart” quips against the truth, however respectable their origin, or however popular or catchy their phraseology. I pray you give them no lodgement in your hearts. Remember, we live under the law of God.—Speak no evil of mine anointed; do my prophets no harm. And remember always that whatever the weakness and the imperfections of men

may be, whatever weaknesses they may have manifested before the Church in the past, or may manifest before it in the future (for the end is not yet), their weaknesses and imperfections affect not the truth that God has revealed. The Lord will vindicate his truth, and at the last it will be found that,

‘Tis no avail to bargain, sneer, and nod,  
And shrug the shoulder for reply to God.

Remember also that ridicule is not argument; that a sneer, though it may not be susceptible of an answer, is no refutation of the truth; that though profane ribaldry may provoke a passing merriment, the profaner’s “laugh is a poor exchange for Deity offended.” I therefore admonish you, as a friend and brother, to stand aloof from all these things. Hold as sacred the truths of God; and hold in highest esteem, as indeed you may, those whom God has appointed to be his prophets, apostles and servants. (IE [March 1905], 370.)

In the work of the last days, men are but instruments; God is the grand architect and builder of the structure human hands seemingly uprear. And yet God is a master-builder, a wise architect; he uses means suitable to the purpose he would accomplish. When he draws a sword to execute his divine purpose, you may be assured it will not prove false to his hand in the conflict. It will neither bend in the

thrust, nor break when it falls upon the crests of the enemy. So when God chooses a man for his prophet, to whom he entrusts for the time the issues of his kingdom on earth, be assured God knows his instrument. He will not fail. And he will possess not only the qualities, but the combination of qualities that will make him serviceable to the Master's use. The instrument will be adequate to the Master's purpose; the prophet will possess the qualities of mind and heart that fit him for God's work. And if the work to be done is a great work, if the achievement is mighty; if the issues concern the souls of men; the salvation of a people, or the perpetuity of God's Church in the earth—then rest assured the man equal to such an occasion—great in mind, pure of spirit, lofty of purpose, possessed of every mental, moral and spiritual endowment will be chosen for that work. (IE [June 1903], 573.)

## JOSEPH SMITH

What was Joseph Smith's mission? It was the mission of Joseph Smith, under God's direction, to establish the Church of Christ and the Kingdom of God upon the earth; and to the accomplishment of this work he devoted the whole energy of his life, trod was faithful unto death. (JD, 25:130.)

## PROPHETS

Great as we believe the Prophet Joseph Smith to have been, and he was great ... but as between him and the Christ, as the mountains rise above the foothills so, too, does the Christ rise above him, and all men, all angels, all teachers, all prophets. To him, and not to any man or set of men, do we pay divine honor. ("Roberts in Defense of His Faith," Ogden Evening Standard, September 19, 1910, p.4.)

The groves were God's first temples ... and now came one to this grove as a solemn temple, to submit his mind and his will to God, man's highest act of worship—self-surrender. (DF, 368.)

This splendid revelation [the First Vision] is of vast importance: First, it dispels the vagaries that men had conjured up in respect to the person of Deity. Instead of being a personage without body, parts or passions, it revealed the fact that he had both body and parts, that he was in the form of man, or, rather, that man had been made in his image. Second: it clearly proves that the Father and Son are distinct persons, and not one person as the Christian world believes. The oneness of the Godhead, so frequently spoken of in scripture, must therefore relate to oneness of sentiment and agreement in purpose. Third: it swept away the rubbish of human dogma

and tradition that had accumulated in all the ages since Messiah's personal ministry on earth, by announcing that God did not acknowledge any of the sects of Christendom as His church, nor their creeds as His gospel. Thus the ground was cleared for the planting of the truth. Fourth: it showed how mistaken the Christian world was in claiming that all revelation had ceased—that God would no more reveal himself to man. Fifth: the vision created a witness for God on the earth: a man lived who could say to some purpose that God lived and that Jesus was the Christ, for he had seen and talked with them. Thus was laid the foundation for faith. (OEH, 307-308.)

Now, let us talk about the substance of this vision a little while and see if we can not soften the seeming harshness with which this message of Mormonism begins: "The churches are wrong." But, my friends, the people then living were not responsible for those conditions. They had inherited them. Generations ago men had transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant of the gospel, and formulated creeds which failed to grasp or record truly the central truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the nature of God, the relationship of man to Deity, or the purpose of man's earth existence. The false notions and doctrines that obtained respecting these matters our generation

inherited from preceding generations. It was a case of the fathers "eating sour grapes, and the children's teeth being set on edge." (DFS, 2:374-375.)

All that pertains to the Church organization, and largely to the development of its doctrines, all that pertains to the Church, in fact, comes of a series of direct revelations to Joseph Smith subsequent to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon... . The Church, in other words, is the after-work of the spired Prophet who translated the Nephite record into the English language. Bringing into existence the Church and developing its doctrines was the continuation of the work that began with the first vision of Joseph Smith, the visitation of the angel Moroni, and the translation and publication of the Nephite record. (NWFG, 3:118-119.)

Joseph Smith was a man of like passions with other men; struggling with the same weakness; subjected to the same temptations; under the same moral law, and humiliated at times, like others, by occasionally, in word and conduct, falling below the high ideals presented in the perfect life and faultless character of the Man of Nazareth.

But though a man of like passions with other men, yet to Joseph Smith was given access to the mind of Deity, through the revelations of God to him;

and likewise to him was given a divine authority to declare that mind of God to the world (EBHR, 237–238).

The Prophet's teaching ... was unique in its way. He may scarcely be said to have made any attempt at creating a system of philosophy however much may be said for his system of religion and of ecclesiastical government. His philosophical principles were flung off in utterances without reference to any arrangement or orderly sequence; and in the main were taught in independent aphorisms, which is a remarkably effective way of teaching, for an aphorism resembles the proverb, and is a form in which Truth is bound to live. (JSPT, 62.)

[Joseph Smith] lived his life, as I have said elsewhere, in crescendo, it grew in intensity and volume as he approached its close. Higher and still higher the inspiration of God directed his thoughts; bolder were his conceptions and clearer his expositions of them. So far was he from being a “fallen prophet” in the closing months of his career, as apostates charged, that he grew stronger with each passing day; more impressive in weight of personal character, and charm of manner; for he was preserved amid all the conflicts and trials through which he passed—until the shadows of impending death began

to fall upon him in Carthage prison—the natural sweetness of his nature, and the intellectual playfulness characteristic of him from boyhood. (DHC, 6:xlili.)

I affirm that Joseph Smith was faithful to God and the church up to the day of his death. Never in his life was he more faithful, more favored by God, or more powerful, or fruitful in revelation or intelligence than in the closing year of his life. He was God's mouthpiece to the church of Christ on earth to the very moment that he sealed his testimony with his blood at Carthage, Illinois. (SPC, 87.)

## LATER CHURCH PRESIDENTS

After the murder of the prophet Joseph and his brother, Hyrum ... the work he had been founding through fourteen troubled years was about to be tested. Would it survive him? Was it possessed of those vital principles which would enable it to endure now that he was taken away? The fact of its survival in all the power and glory he had imparted to it proved that the work he had accomplished was greater than the man. The Church had been so

organized that it was practically indestructible. (MRCCS, 20.)

I believe that Brigham Young inherited, by the fact of his succession to Joseph Smith, all that Joseph Smith had received from God through the ministration of holy angels with their several keys of authority and power. And that, succeeding Brigham Young, the next man in position came to the same heritage, power and authority. The one following him in like manner received the same heritage of power and authority; and so all down the line until the present time... .

I believe then that this line of six succeeding presidents of the Church have been men inspired of God; that God has been with them; and as I stated recently from this stand, the occasions of observing inspiration in these men have been too positive and frequent for me to doubt for a moment that the Church of the Latter-day Saints has been organized on God's plan; that he has ordained that there is but one man at a time on earth who receives revelations for the whole Church, and that man is of his appointing, approval and upholding (CR, October 1929, 88-89).

I have been fortunate enough to know all the Presidents of the Church since the Prophet Joseph

Smith. Of course I only knew Brigham Young as a boy may know a great man from a distance. But I sat under the sound of his voice, and heard his teaching, felt the influence of his spirit, and noted the evidence of inspiration in his face when he taught the people, and in his bearing as he stood before them—he was God's mouthpiece unto the people. (CR, October 1929, 88-89.)

President Young was a natural leader among men—a master spirit. His genius especially manifested itself in his ability to organize and govern men. He had not only been the President of the Church and the first Governor of Utah, but he was also the friend of the people. In times of trial and sorrow they turned to him for comfort; in times of danger they looked to him to direct their action; in times of perplexity they went to him for the word of the Lord; and Brigham Young, full of heaven-inspired wisdom, never failed them in any of these things. (OEH, 444.)

In its effects Brigham Young's life-work will be as some magnificent fountain sending forth a stream of living water. That stream constantly widens and deepens its channel, until great areas of country are made fruitful by its generous floods, and a pathway is opened to the ocean on which the commerce of

nations may be carried in safety. So the fountain life-work of Brigham Young has sent forth a stream that will bless humanity; and not alone in time, but also in eternity (IE [June 1903], 561-562).

John Taylor I knew more intimately [than Brigham Young]. When I went on my first mission there was no mission organized in that particular state where I was laboring. I was the only elder in it, and my reports were made directly to President John Taylor, and my instructions were received directly from his office. Later, when presiding in the Southern States Mission, I found it necessary to submit problems and questions to him directly, and to sit with him in council in relation to the affairs of that mission. Later, of course, as some of you know, I became his biographer; so that all his letters in existence, personal and official—his official communications, his journals, and everything that had been written to or by him, passed through my hands; and I wrote the story of his life. That made me intimately acquainted with him. (CR, October 1929, 88-89.)

President John Taylor ... was a boyhood hero of mine. (ABHR, 81.)

John Taylor was the embodiment of those

qualities of mind and heart which most become a man. (LJT, v.)

John Taylor would have had a remarkable history even if Mormonism had not found him; for he possessed those qualities of mind which would have made him a leader and a reformer among men. It is quite probable, too, that in the event of Mormonism not finding him, he would have won more of the honors and applause of men. (LJT, iii.)

With Wilford Woodruff I had the good fortune to have most personal and confidential relations, and to me, of the dearest kind. I may say the same thing, though not to the same extent, with reference to Lorenzo Snow. Joseph F. Smith I knew more intimately. I came in contact with his mind, and sometimes it was flash against flash. But I must say for Joseph F. Smith that I saw him on numerous occasions respond to the spirit of inspiration from God, and rise above himself and give decisions and draw conclusions; though some times contrary to his natural inclinations, yet he followed the light as God gave him to see it—I am sure of that. (CR, October 1929, 88-89.)

We stand at the point [with the death of President Joseph F. Smith] where one presidency

leaves us, and another is inaugurated. I think it is fitting that we should not only have our minds drawn out towards the man who is taking on new responsibilities, viz.. President Heber J. Grant, but that we should also remember in loving kindness the faithful labors of him who, so short a time ago, was the President, and very worthily the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, viz.. President Joseph F. Smith. Those of us who were in close association with him and who knew him and worked with him, cannot, I think, look upon this inauguration of a new president without calling to mind the devotion, the fidelity, and the splendid administrative abilities of Joseph F. Smith, son of Hyrum Smith... . Under his administration the Church was truly and greatly blessed, blessed not only by the wisdom that was manifested in his counsels, but also blessed by the example of his righteous life. So that when he passed away he passed away in honor and much beloved by the people (CR, June 1919, 21-22).

I now proclaim my faith absolutely that Heber J. Grant possesses all that these other men possessed; that he is God's servant; that he is the mouthpiece of God to this people and likewise to this generation of men so long as he shall live. I believe that, and that there has been no diminution of authority and power

between him and his predecessors....

There is no man that I know of anywhere who by the texture of his nature and character, who by the purity and the uprightness of his life, can be more loved of God than President Heber J. Grant. I have absolute faith in his honesty, and if God has a word to impart to the Church or to the world, I could not select in my mind, or from my experience among my friends fix upon a man whom I would believe could hold the confidence and favor of God more than he. So that not only by the ordinations that he has received, and calls to authority and place, I believe absolutely in his fitness for his position. And when God has a word to give His Church or to the world, this man, as long as he lives, will be the man through whom it will come. That is my faith in regard to Heber J. Grant. (CR, October 1929, 88-89).

It is no disparagement to say that President Grant is not a highly imaginative person; intellectually speculative, or a constructive theorist, or largely a doctrinaire. He is not likely to come to his people with such rhapsodic visions as an Isaiah would bring... .

In a word, President Grant's message to his people and to his times, judged by the temperament of him, and the sternly practical nature of him, is emphatically and is likely to continue to be, practical;

and will reflect his oft repeated admonition:

“Latter-day Saints, keep the commandments of God.”

Or as officially and sacred put in his notable discourse at the dedication of the Hawaiian temple (1919) and frequently repeated by him—

“It is not the miraculous testimonies we may have, but it is keeping of the commandments of God, and living lives of absolute purity, not only in act, but in thought, that will count with the Lord.”

That thunderbolt utterance of his, of course, is all inclusive. What exists outside of it as duty of man or requirement of God? (CHC, 6:485-486.)

## PROPHETS AMONG ALL HUMANKIND

How petty and unworthy ... is that sectarian Christian view that would limit God's revealed word to the few books contained in the Bible! How partial and unjust does that same sectarian view of revelation make God appear! If there is one doctrine more emphasized in the teachings of the New Testament than another, it is that God is no respecter of persons; "but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh

righteousness, is accepted with him." [Acts 10:34-35]

...

In [certain] Book of Mormon passages we have the grandest conception respecting God's dispensations of his word found in human speech. They recognize God's obligation—born of his Fatherhood and love—to make known his word and will in some form to all nations and races of men. They recognize as constituting a noble brotherhood of God-inspired men, the sages of all races and ages, who have taught their fellow men better things than they knew before. The wise men among Assyrians and Egyptians as well as the shepherd-patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are to be regarded as inspired of God. Jethro, the priest of Midian, though not of Israel, as well as Moses, possessed divine wisdom; and even counseled the Hebrew prophet-prince, to the latter's advantage. The sages of Greece, from Thales to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, belong to the same glorious band. So also the great teacher of India, Siddhartha, Buddah—the enlightened; Kongfutse [Confucius], the teacher of God's children in China; Mohammed, the prophet of Arabia; the teachers of philosophy and reformers of Europe—some professed Christians, some not, some even making war upon apostate Christendom; but I include all those within the honored band of the God-inspired who have come with some measure of the

truth to bless mankind, to alleviate somewhat the hard conditions in which men struggle, and who have raised the thoughts and hopes of man to higher and better things. "The path of sensuality and darkness," says a profound modern teacher of moral philosophy, "is that which most men tread; a few have been led along the upward path; a few in all countries and generations have been wisdom-seekers or seekers of God; they have been so because the Divine Word of wisdom has looked upon them, choosing them for the knowledge and service of himself." Not that these teachers, sages, prophets have each come with a fullness of truth; or that they possessed the gospel of Jesus Christ with divine authority to administer its sacred ordinances; not so. Such truths as they possessed were often fragmentary, and mingled with them was much that was human, hence imperfect, and confusing. But so much of truth as they possessed was God-given, and they but instruments of God to set it free that the truth might bless mankind. Our Book of Mormon passages only require us to believe concerning this world-band of inspired teachers, that they come with that measure of God's word which in the divine wisdom it is fitting that men among whom they are called to labor should receive. (NWFG, 3:257, 259-261.)

While the Church is one of God's

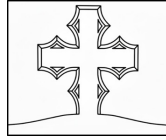
## PROPHETS

instrumentalities for making known the truth, we do not maintain that he is limited to this Church for such purposes, neither in time nor place. According to the Book of Mormon, God raises up wise men and prophets among all the children of men of their own tongue and nationality, speaking to them through means that they can all comprehend, not always giving a fulness of truth, such as is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but always such measure of truth as the people are ready to receive. We hold that all great teachers are servants of God, inspired men appointed to instruct the children of God according to the condition in which they are found; therefore, it is not obnoxious to us to regard Confucius as a servant of God; nor Buddha as an inspired teacher of a measure of truth; nor the Arabian prophet as inspired who turned his people from worshiping idols to a truer conception of Deity. And so with the sages of Greece and Rome, and the Reformers of the early Protestant times. (IE [March 1905], 362-363.)

While the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is given a prominent part in this great drama of the last days, it is not the only force nor the only means that the Lord has employed to bring to pass those things of which His prophets in ancient times have testified (CR, April 1902, 14).

To the Church has been assigned the honor of the title role in God's great drama of the last days. But as in the drama the actor bearing the title role does not alone develop the thought of the poet's mind, so we as the Church of Latter-day Saints, though bearing the honor of the position assigned to us, do not constitute the only force that God is using in bringing to pass His great and mighty purposes (CR, April 1903, 13).

The purpose of God in the introduction of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times was not to destroy any truth that existed in the world, but to add to that truth, to increase it, and to draw together all truth and develop it into a beautiful system in which men may rest contented, knowing God and their relationship to Him, knowing of the future and their relation unto it (CR, April 1906, 16).



# B. H. ROBERTS ON THE CHURCH: PRIESTHOOD, COMMON CONSENT, AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FAITHS

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF MORMONISM TO OTHER FAITHS

While the Church is one of God's instrumentalities for making known the truth, we do not maintain that he is limited to this Church for such

purposes, neither in time nor place. According to the Book of Mormon, God raises up wise men and prophets among all the children of men of their own tongue and nationality, speaking to them through means that they can all comprehend, not always giving a fulness of truth, such as is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ, but always such measure of truth as the people are ready to receive. We hold that all great teachers are servants of God, inspired men appointed to instruct the children of God according to the condition in which they are found; therefore, it is not obnoxious to us to regard Confucius as a servant of God; nor Buddha as an inspired teacher of a measure of truth; nor the Arabian prophet as inspired who turned his people from worshiping idols to a truer conception of Deity. And so with the sages of Greece and Rome, and the Reformers of the early Protestant times. (IE [March 1905], 362-363.)

This is the "Mormon" theory of God's revelation to the children of men. While the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is established for the instruction of men; and is one of God's instrumentalities for making known the truth, yet he is not limited to that institution for such purposes, neither in time nor place. God raises up wise men and prophets here and there among all the children of men, of their own tongue and nationality, speaking to

them through means that they can comprehend; not always giving a fulness of truth such as may be found in the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ; but always giving that measure of truth that the people are prepared to receive. "Mormonism" holds, then, that all the great teachers among all nations and in all ages, are servants of God. (DFS 1:512-513.)

So far as the Catholic church is concerned, I believe that there is just as much truth, nay, personally I believe it has retained even more truth than other divisions of so-called Christendom; and there is just as much virtue, and I am sure there is more strength in the Roman Catholic church than there is in Protestant Christendom.

I would not like, therefore, to designate the Catholic church as the church of the devil. Neither would I like to designate any one or all of the various divisions and subdivisions of Protestant Christendom combined as such, church; nor the Greek Catholic church; nor the Buddhist sects; nor the followers of Confucius; nor the followers of Mohammed; nor would I like to designate even the societies formed by deists and atheists as constituting the church of the devil. The Book of Mormon text ought to be read in connection with its context—with the chapter that precedes it and the remaining portions of the chapter in which It is found—then, I think, those who study it

in that manner will be forced to the conclusion that the Prophet here has In mind no particular church, no particular division of Christendom, but he has in mind, as just stated, the whole empire of Satan; and perhaps the thought of the passage would be more nearly expressed if we use the term "the kingdom of evil" as constituting the church of the devil.

I understand the injunction to Oliver Cowdery to 'contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil,' to mean that he shall contend against evil, against untruth, against all combinations of wicked men. They constitute the church of the devil, the 'kingdom of evil, a federation of unrighteousness; and the servants of God have a right to contend against that which is evil, let it appear where it will. ...

All that makes for untruth, for unrighteousness constitutes the kingdom of evil—the church of the devil. All that makes for truth, for righteousness, is of God; it constitutes the kingdom of righteousness—the empire of Jehovah; and, in a certain sense at least, constitutes the Church of Christ. With the latter—the kingdom of righteousness—we have no warfare. On the contrary both the spirit of the Lord's commandments to His servants and the dictates of right reason would suggest that we seek to enlarge this kingdom of righteousness both by recognizing such truths as it possesses and seeking the friendship and co-operation of the righteous men and women

who constitute its membership. (CR, April 1906, 14–15.)

If we cannot in strict logic, recognize our Christian friends as possessing the fulness of truth, let us never forget that there is something we can do: we can recognize in each other fellow citizens of the same commonwealth, children of the self-same God, all heirs to salvation, all entitled to the same political rights and liberties. We can be kind neighbors; we can all be good citizens. And if on doctrinal points we cannot altogether come to see eye to eye, we can become united in upholding a high standard of morality in the community, and can protect each other in the enjoyment of all our rights and liberties as citizens of the same commonwealth. ("The Spirit of the Gospel," CD 5:140.)

[Although] the Lord has opened the heavens and has given a new dispensation of the Gospel, it does not follow that His servants or His people are to be contentious; that they are to make war upon other people for holding different views respecting religion. (CR, April 1906, 14.)

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT

As I understand the Church of Christ its mission is two-fold: first, it is to proclaim the truth; second, it is to perfect those who receive the truth. I think these two things cover, in a general way, the entire mission of the Church (CR, October 1903, 75).

The Church evidently has two great functions to perform: first, proclaiming the truth—the Gospel which God has committed to her keeping, to the whole world; second, instructing and perfecting the body of Christ, The Church, until the Saints are brought to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the son of God—unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (TG, 216.)

From the gospel and the priesthood comes the church. The church is the medium through which the gospel is promulgated—by which it is made known among the children of men. It is the system of government by which those who accept the gospel are controlled in things religious. It is the government of, God on earth pertaining to religious affairs. The Lord hath clothed it with his authority, which is his power; and it hath authority not only to teach the gospel, but to execute its laws, and inflict the penalties attached to a violation thereof—at least so far as dealing with the

## THE CHURCH

membership of transgressors is concerned; as for other penalties that will fall upon the violators of Divine law, the Father hath reserved that to himself, and will in his own time and way vindicate his own laws, having due regard to the relative claims of justice and mercy. The authority of the church comes from the priesthood, and may be said to be the collected authority of all the quorums of the priesthood combined—the aggregation of God's authority in the earth, in relation to things religious. Such is the church. (OEH, 374.)

The Church may be said to arise from the Priesthood. Comprehensively defined it may be said to be an organization of people—including all officers and members—who believe in and endeavor to incorporate in their lives God's Truth; who have obeyed the ordinances or sacraments appointed of God for salvation and admission into his Church; whose officers are of divine appointment and commission, (that is, possessed of divine authority, the Priesthood) guided by an ever present inspiration from God, and walking within reach of an ever present and continuous source of immediate revelation. (SCT, 1:13.)

When the king of England dies, a herald is sent out to make the announcement, which he does in this

form: "The King is dead. Long live the King." No sooner is the announcement made that the king is dead than it is followed by the other sentence, Long live the king. It is an announcement which means that though the king has just died, yet England has not been an instant without a ruler. In one breath the passing of one monarch is made known, and the all hail given to his immediate successor. That is the theory of the British constitution, that while kings may come and go, the British sovereign always is, and there is no lapse in succession to the throne. In some such way that is true of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also. From the time it was organized by divine appointment of God there has never been a moment when there has not been a President of the Church of Jesus Christ in the earth. And although presidents may come and go in the future, my faith is that there will never be a time when there is not an immediate successor in the presidency. The constitution of the Church makes this provision. (CR, June 1919, 20-21.)

In the course of the investigation of the subject of revelation [during the Reed Smoot Hearings], it was developed that a law revealed from God, before it became binding upon the Church, was submitted to the people in conference, and they voted to accept or reject it. Then this question was asked:

"Suppose a revelation is given to the Church, and the Church in conference assembled reject it by vote, what remains? Does it go for nothing?"

To which answer was made, in substance, that if the people rejected it, it would go for nothing for them—that is, so far as the people were concerned.

The senator then exclaimed: "A sort of veto power over the Lord!" and then there was laughter.

That is one of the catchy phrases which some of the youth of Zion are permitting themselves to be pleased with. A veto power on God! On further investigation we shall find that it is smart rather than profound. (IE [March 1905], 359.)

After revealing himself to Joseph Smith, the Lord finally told him, with reference to the organization of the Church, that he must call together the baptized members and submit to them the question whether or not they were willing that he and Oliver Cowdery should proceed to organize the Church of Christ, and whether the people were willing to accept them as their spiritual leaders and teachers.

We may well marvel at such condescension of God; and yet when we come to analyze this, we learn that in this God only recognizes a great truth, and the dignity of his children, and acknowledges their rights

and liberties. When he selected his prophet, to whom he first revealed himself, he chose whom he would and gave him the power of the apostleship; but when he was to effect an organization and exercise that authority upon others, then it must be with the consent of the others concerned, not otherwise. This is the principle of common consent, which the Lord respected at the organization of his Church, and which he still recognizes in its government.

The very title of our Church—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—indicates that it is not only "the Church of Jesus Christ," but also of the "Latter-day Saints." It is Christ's because he made it possible by his sacrifice, because it is the depository of his truth, because he has called it into existence, because he has given it a mission to proclaim the truth, and to perfect the lives of those who accept that truth; it is ours because we accept it of our own volition. God has conferred upon his Church and our Church the right of being governed by common consent of the members thereof. It is not a tyranny, nor an ecclesiastical hierarchy dominating the people and destroying individual liberty, as our friends the opposition have frequently declared. But now they are confronted with the fact that, so far from being a tyrannical institution, not only the officers but the very revelations of God are submitted to the people for their acceptance! And then they turn to the other

extreme, and, astonished, exclaim: "Then you presume to have a veto power on God!"...

... It is infamous for any man who knows anything of "Mormonism" to represent the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as being so narrow and bigoted as to believe that they legislate in their conferences in all spiritual matters for the whole world. When the Church votes upon the acceptance of any revelation, whether on doctrine or the appointment of officers, it acts for itself alone, and neither concerns, for praise or censure, people outside of the Church. It is merely the exercise of a right conferred upon the Church in the very inception of its organization, which granted it the right to accept or reject any rule or law that was suggested for its government. This law of common consent is in strict harmony with God's moral government of the world. Man is by nature a free moral agent, and that agency involves the liberty of violating the laws of God as well as the liberty of respecting them. If individuals reject the will of God, they will be rejected by him; and this applies also to the Church. What men may do in their individual capacity, the Church may do in its organized capacity with, of course, similar results to the institution; for if the time should come that the Church, in the exercise of those rights and that freedom which God in the beginning bestowed upon her, should persistently reject his word and his

servants until she became corrupted, God would repudiate and disown her as his Church, just as he would reject and condemn a wicked man. But so far, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints has received as divine law the revelations and doctrines proposed to her by the prophets of God. But suppose a law is promulgated before the Latter-day Saints, and the Church, in the exercise of the liberty which God has conferred upon them, reject it, the question is then asked, what remains?

The truth remains. The action of the Church has not affected it in the least. The truth remains just as true as if the Church had accepted it. Its action simply determines the relationship of the members to that truth; and if they reject it, the truth still remains; and it is my opinion that they would not make further progress until they accepted the rejected truth. The truth remains—that is the answer to the Senator's question, for, as one of our poets has said:

Though the heavens depart, and the earth's  
fountains burst,

Truth, the sum of existence, will weather the  
worst,

Eternal, unchanged, evermore. (IE [March  
1905]: 361-364)

It should be observed here, perhaps, that "revelations" to a man personally, that he is called to

be President of the church, even when clear and definite, do not constitute him the President. Something else is necessary. As observed elsewhere, not only must a man be called of God, but he must be accepted by the church—"chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church." [D&C 107:22.] (SPC, 76.)

I think it a reasonable conclusion to say that constant, never-varying inspiration is not a factor in the administration of the affairs of the Church; not even good men, no, not even though they be prophets or other high officials of the Church, are at all times and in all things inspired of God. It is only occasionally, and at need, that God comes to their aid.

That there have been unwise things done in the Church by good men, men susceptible at times to the inspiration of the Spirit of God, we may not question. Many instances in the history of the Church, through three quarters of a century, prove it, and it would be a solecism to say that God was the author of those unwise, not to say positively foolish, things that have been done. For these things men must stand responsible, not God.

It is well nigh as dangerous to claim too much for the inspiration of God, in the affairs of men, as it is to claim too little. By the first, men are led into superstition, and into blasphemously accrediting their

own imperfect actions, their blunders, and possibly even their sins, to God; and by the second, they are apt to altogether eliminate the influence of God from human affairs; I pause in doubt as to which conclusion would be the worse. ("Relation of Inspiration and Revelation to Church Government," IE 8 [March 1905]: 367-369.)

It is not given to mortal man to always walk upon that plane where the sunlight of God's inspiration is playing upon him. ... Sometimes the servants of God ... speak merely from their human knowledge, influenced by passions; influenced by the interests of men, and by anger, and vexation ... When they so speak, ... that is not likely to be the word of God... . In any event it must be allowed by us that many unwise things were said in times past ... that did not possess the value of scripture, or anything like it; and it was not revelation. (DFS, 2:457-458.)

## PRIESTHOOD

Divine authority ... is the holy priesthood, meaning power or authority which God bestows upon men, by which they act in God's stead, in his name—which signifies by his authority or power. It is by this authority that men become the agents or

## THE CHURCH

representatives of God (The Lord Hath Spoke, No. 5 [1924], 1.)

The officers of The Church, and in fact the whole Church organization, grows out of the priesthood. Priesthood is divine authority or power which God delegates to man, by which a man is authorized to act in the name of God. It makes him the legally appointed agent of God; and so long as he performs his official acts in accordance with the laws of the priesthood—by which we mean the regulations which God prescribes for it—whatsoever man does in that official capacity is as valid as if it were done by God himself. (TG, 218.)

"What is Priesthood?" The greater portion of this congregation are familiar with the definition the Latter-day Saints have learned to give that word. It is "Power which God delegates to man, by which man is made the agent of God; by which he may by and in the name of God act for Him." That is Priesthood, as we understand it.

For the benefit of the younger brethren and sisters who may not grasp the full import of these words without illustration, I offer the following: There is such a thing known among men as power of attorney. It is this: A man possesses property in this city, perhaps real estate, perhaps a merchandising

establishment—bonds, stocks of various kinds; but he does not reside here—his home is at a distance, and he is not able to give his personal attention to his business interests in this location; he therefore selects some man in whom he has confidence, in whose business integrity he places great reliance, and he says to him: I wish you to become my agent, to act for me, to take possession of this property, to manipulate it with a view to increasing my wealth. And in order that the proceedings may be lawful, and that the people may have confidence in your transactions, we will go to a notary public and draw up an instrument stating that I give to you this authority, that you shall act for me; and it shall be signed, and the seal of the court shall be placed upon it. That is done, and the agent, equipped with this power of attorney, goes into business circles; he buys, he sells, he makes contracts, signs them, disposes of property, and purchases other property; he does whatever his judgment dictates as being wise and profitable; and by whatsoever he does, so long as he continues within the lines marked out in this power of attorney, the principal is bound. He is compelled in law to respect the acts of his agent; and whatsoever he shall do, when acting under the law, is just as good and valid as if the owner of the property himself were performing the transactions. We call that power of attorney.

Priesthood is something like that. It is power

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which God gives to men by which they are made His agents; and when operating in the same way that this agent we have been speaking of does, they do whatever they are appointed to do by the Lord Almighty; and so long as they act in accordance with the law of the Gospel, so long as they act in harmony with the prescribed powers of the Priesthood, whatsoever they shall do is just as binding and valid as if the Lord Almighty, from whom they receive or derive their authority, had performed the act Himself. ("Priesthood and the Rights of Succession," CD, 2:368-369.)

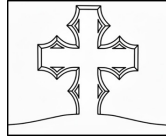
In the church of Christ there are two grand divisions of priesthood; or rather its powers are grouped under two great heads— for all priesthood comes from God, is power from him, and therefore cannot properly be regarded as two different priesthoods. The two divisions of priesthood are named respectively the Melchisedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood. (OEH, 374.)

Our quorums are to become our workshops for the education of men, and each should manifest the willingness to try. (SCT, 1:vii.)

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE

## LORD'S SUPPER

As a further means of grace, the Church of Jesus Christ recognizes the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by which men may frequently renew their covenant with God and witness to each other that they are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, gratefully remember the atonement he has made for them, express a willingness to keep his commandments, and by doing so draw to themselves a constant renewal of the Spirit of God. (DFS, 1:16.)



# B. H. ROBERTS ON REVELATION, SCRIPTURE, AND BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION

## THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Book of Mormon [is] one of the most valuable books that has ever been preserved, even as holy scripture (CR, April 1933, 117).

I proclaim to you, my brethren and sisters, that in the Book of Mormon, more than in any other book

written in this world, and I do not except the New Testament—in the Book of Mormon more than in any other book, we have there the necessity of, and the truth of the atonement of the Christ taught to the children of men as nowhere else. (CR, April 1911, 60.)

A writer [Rev. John Watson] held much in esteem by the orthodox Christian world—and deservedly so—in a noble work but recently issued from the press, said:

Were a parchment discovered in an Egyptian mound, six inches square, containing fifty words which were certainly spoken by Jesus, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been published since the first century. If a veritable picture of the Lord could be unearthed from a catacomb, and the world could see with its own eyes what like he was, it would not matter that its colors were faded, and that it was roughly drawn, that picture would have at once a solitary place amid the treasures of art.

If this be true, and I think no one will or can question it, then how valuable indeed must be this whole volume of scripture, the Book of Mormon! Containing not fifty, but many hundred words spoken by Jesus! Containing also an account of the hand dealings of God with the people inhabiting the

western hemisphere, from earliest times to the fourth century after Christ. Wherein also are found his revelations to those peoples; his messages by angels sent directly from his presence to declare his word to them; his instructions, admonitions, reproofs, and warnings to them through men inspired by his Holy Spirit; and last of all, the account of Messiah's appearance and ministry among the people, his very words repeated, and rightly divided for us (as we shall see later), that we may the better understand what of his teaching is general, and what special; what universal and permanent, and what local and transient. (NWFG, 2:35-36.)

All races of men have a common origin. They are all made "of one blood," and have one common Father—God. Yet if one judge the spirit of orthodox believers in the Bible, he would conclude that this Father's anxiety had all been expended in the enlightenment of those races and nations inhabiting the eastern hemisphere. That he had made ample provision for their instruction in the ways of God, and revealed to them, through his Son, the means of their salvation; but left the untold millions of His children in the western hemisphere to perish in ignorance. No prophets instructed them; no Son of God came to announce to them the means of salvation, or proclaim by his own resurrection the reality of the future life

and immortality of man... .

It is just here, however, where the importance of the Book of Mormon is best exhibited. It is here where it can be proclaimed as the voice of the western hemisphere proclaiming the sublime truth that God did not leave himself without witness among the races and nations of men that inhabited the western world. It is here that its importance is felt as the voice of sleeping nations speaking as out of the dust to the whole world, not only vindicating the quality of justice in God, in that he did not leave the inhabitants of the western hemisphere to perish in ignorance of himself and the plan of life and salvation which had been ordained for the redemption of mankind; but also in that it bears witness to the world that the collection of books known as the Bible is the word of God, authentic, credible, and binding upon the consciences of men. It is a Witness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of the truth of the Bible. (NWFG, 2:21-23.)

O, what the world would have lost, if the Book of Mormon had not been brought forth!

I wish I had the time to consider the things that would have been lost to the world but for the bringing forth of the Nephite scriptures, the American volume of scriptures. I remember in my early days coming in contact with opponents of the Book of

Mormon who charged, for instance, that it had no aphorisms of any importance, and that it was in this respect in strong contrast with the Jewish scriptures. I want to call, your attention, however, to a few aphorisms that are of great worth, and that enrich the sacred literature of the world. For instance, there is that sharp-cut sentence:

"Wickedness never was happiness."

I think it would be difficult to find an epigram more important than that, and a truth that the world ought to know.

Again: "All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things."

A beautiful utterance; and a declaration of confidence in the perfect knowledge of God; and builded upon that perfect knowledge—and it can only be builded upon perfect knowledge—perfect wisdom. And that beautiful declaration is followed by this announcement of the great truth, giving us clear vision of the purpose of God with reference to the earth-life of man, the like of which is not found elsewhere, neither in Jewish nor Christian scriptures ; nor in the philosophies of men:

"Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy."

That is the thing that God is working out, and what a lesson of cheer and good will and of hope it is!

Here is another:

"The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he prepares a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them."

You who are starting to bring to pass the high purposes of God, with reference to this creation of his, what comfort that assurance brings! "God will require nothing at the hands of the children of men save he prepares the way for them to accomplish that thing."

Again, Moroni, near the close of his record, seems to tremble for the success of his work, and as he reviewed it and became conscious of the weaknesses in it, he was very deeply sorrowful and he wrote in substance—and all these quotations are but in substance:

"Lord, the Gentiles will mock at our weakness in writing."

And the answer of the Lord was:

"Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for all who humble themselves before me, saith the Lord."

I remember having a very rich bit of experience with that passage in the younger days of my ministry when I was on my first mission. It fell to my lot to engage in a three-day debate with a seasoned man in that line of work. I was but twenty-three and had had no experience. He was fifty-four and had the reputation of having driven all his opponents from

the platform. He mocked considerably at the Book of Mormon, and brought up this very question of its lack of incisiveness and clear-cut aphorisms, and challenged me to produce anything that could be comparable with the sharp, clear-cut aphorisms of the Bible scriptures.

I told him I could think just at the moment of but one, and that was, "Fools mock, but they shall mourn."...

After calling this gentleman's attention to that passage, "Fools mock, but they shall mourn," he did not ask for any more aphorisms.

"Fools mock, but they shall mourn!" And then this richer statement follows it:

"I, the Lord, give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me."

(CR, April 1928, 107-109).

"I can no more remember the books I have read than the meals I have eaten," said Emerson, "but they have made me." In this way the American philosopher recognizes the simple truth that the reading of books has something to do with the making of a man—that they affect the mind. A book has a spirit as distinctly as a painting or of a piece of sculpture has "feeling"—of course I mean a real work of art into which

something from the soul of the artist has passed. The best thing about a painting or piece of sculpture is said to be that which cannot be described; so also the best part of a book is the spirit of it, which may not always be describable. And that elusive, mysterious quality we call its spirit may arise from something quite apart from its rhetoric, or logic or diction. It may be even as the voice of God: not in the strong wind, that rends the mountains and breaks in pieces the rocks before the Lord; not in the earthquake nor in the fire; but in the still, small voice which follows the wind and earthquake and fire [see 1 Kings 19]. So with a book: its spirit may owe its existence to its simple truth—to the spirit of truth in them that made it.

"Do you ever think," said a writer in one of our popular magazines—"Do you ever think what is the effect of a book on your mind? ... Is your mind purer for it, or clearer? Has it filled your mind with good or bad images? Has it raised your standard or lowered it? ... Every book you read and understand affects you for better or worse. It has some effect upon you, and if you are sane you are bound to find out what that is."

In common with all books the Book of Mormon has its spirit, produces its effects upon the minds of men; and as it claims to be a work originally written and also translated through the inspiration of God,

and deals primarily with sacred things, it is to be expected that the spirit of this book will have not only a good, but even a divine influence; that it will be of a faith-promoting, doubt-dispersing, comfort-bringing character. Its effects upon the minds of men, therefore, may be another test of its claims to a divine origin; and to that test I now submit it... .

The experiences of ... [a] host of believers may be properly appealed to as evidence for the effect of the book upon their minds; and I cannot believe but that it is also an evidence of its truth. Men have gone to the Book of Mormon in despondency, and have come away cheered; they have gone to it in sorrow, and have come away comforted; they have gone to it at times when overwhelmed for the moment by the mists which the speculations of men sometimes throw over truth, and have come away from it enlightened—with faith and hope and charity renewed. It created for them a firmer faith in God. In the presence of its spirit doubt took wings. Its moral and spiritual standards they find to be the highest and noblest. Indeed so perfect is its morality that no one has yet been able to bring a complaint against it on the ground of moral defect; and it was doubtless a consciousness of its moral excellence that led the Prophet Joseph Smith himself to declare on one occasion, when in council with the Twelve Apostles, that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any

book on earth, and that a man could get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts than by following any other book whatsoever. If in its historical parts believers find it dealing with events that exhibit selfishness, unholy ambitions, and all the follies and crimes common to all times and all nations and races of men, they never find its treatment of such things of the kind that blazons evil deeds, or consecrates crime, much less of the kind that canonizes the vicious. In its pages they see things in their true light. There is no shuffling, but evil deeds receive their proper condemnation in the simple, straightforward language of its inspired men... .

All this and more believers find in the pages of the Book of Mormon, and the book that breathes such a spirit must surely have somewhat of divinity in it; and the existence of the divine spirit in the book must be somewhat of evidence that its claims are honest, and its contents true. This, or else we must believe that men gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles; that impure fountains send forth pure streams! (NWFG 3:324-325, 326-328.)

The fact should be recognized by the Latter-day Saints that the Book of Mormon of necessity must submit to every test, to literary criticism, as well as to every other class of criticism; for our age is above all things critical, and especially critical of sacred

literature, and we may not hope that the Book of Mormon will escape closest scrutiny; neither, indeed, is it desirable that it should escape. It is given to the world as a revelation from God. It is a volume of American scripture. Men have a right to test it by the keenest criticism, and to pass severest judgment upon it, and we who accept it as a revelation from God have every reason to believe that it will endure every test, and the more thoroughly it is investigated, the greater shall be its ultimate triumph. (IE, April 1906, 435-436.)

So long as the truth respecting it is unbelieved [the Book of Mormon] will remain to the world an enigma, a veritable literary sphinx, challenging the inquiry and speculation 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. (NWFG, 3:406.)

It is provided in God's providences respecting this volume of scripture, that its truth shall be attested to individuals by the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind. "When ye shall receive these things," says the prophet Moroni, referring to the writings of the Nephites, "I would exhort you that ye should ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of

Christ, if these things are true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of them unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." [Moroni 10:3-5]

This must ever be the chief source of evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon. All other evidence is secondary to this, the primary and infallible. No arrangement of evidence, however skilfully ordered; no argument, however adroitly made, can ever take its place; for this witness of the Holy Spirit to the soul of man for the truth of the Nephite volume of scripture, is God's evidence to the truth; and will ever be the chief reliance of those who accept the Book of Mormon, and expect to see its acceptance extended throughout the world; for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so must the testimony of God forever stand above and before the testimony of men, and of things. (NWFG, 2:vi, vii.)

However interesting it might be to know definitely the location of particular Jaredite and Nephite lands—the extent of their kingdoms, empires and republics; the location of special provinces and other political districts or divisions therein, together with a knowledge of the exact location of their capitals, and metropolises, I do not believe those

things can be learned with any degree of certainty.  
(NWFG, 2:169, f.)

## BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION

One of the chief objections to the Book of Mormon from the first has been the uniformity of its literary style, and the defects in its language—errors in grammar, New York Yankee localisms, and the use of modern words—unwarranted, it is claimed, in the translation of an ancient record... .

The things to be considered in these objections, are:

First: does the uniformity of style exist: do the errors in grammar exist; are there modernisms and localisms in the book, and more especially in the first edition, since it was with this edition that this criticism began? These questions must be answered in the affirmative. The existence of uniformity of style, errors in grammar, modernisms and localisms cannot be denied, as all know who have investigated the matter. A comparison of current editions with the first edition will disclose the fact that many of the most flagrant verbal and grammatical errors have been corrected, besides many unimportant changes, such

as "which" and "that," to "who" and "whom," and vice versa, to conform to modern usage; and many more such corrections, without changing the slightest shade of statement or thought, could still be made to advantage.

Many of these changes, perhaps most of them, were effected under the supervision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. (NWFG, 3:407, 409.)

Second: How are these errors in language to be accounted for? How is it that errors in grammar are found in a work said to be translated by the "gift and power of God, through the medium of the Urim and Thummim?" Are these errors in language to be assigned to the Urim and Thummim, or to God? Is it true, as stated by Professor Turner, that such is the description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated, that all accounts "agree in making the Lord responsible not only for the thought, but also for the language of the book, from the necessity of the case, for they [those who have described the manner of translation] all claim that the words passed before Smith's eyes while looking through the pellucid stones?" Must we remember, as the professor admonishes us to "remember," that according to Smith's story "the Lord is responsible not only for the thought, but also for the language of this new translation? The words of the translation Being

read off through the stone spectacles?"

For one, I refuse to accept this statement of the case. I do not believe that the Lord is responsible for any defect of language that occurs in the Book of Mormon, or any other revelation. On the contrary, I stand with Moroni here: "And now, if there be faults [i. e. in the Nephite record], they are the mistakes of men." [Moroni's Preface, title page Book of Mormon.] Also with Mormon: "If there be faults, they be the faults of a man." [Mormon 8:17.] If the Lord should speak directly to man without any intermediary whatsoever, it is reasonable to conclude that his language would be perfect in whatever tongue he spoke. If, however, he elected an intermediary through whom to communicate his message to the world, the language in which that message would be couched might, or might not, be perfect, according as the intermediary was learned or unlearned in the language through which the Lord communicated the revelation. (NWFG, 3:410-411.)

Third: Can these verbal errors, and errors in grammar, these modernisms and localisms arise from equivalent defects in the original Nephite records? That is to say, can these errors have been transferred from the ancient Nephite language into our English idioms? I know how unreasonable such a proposition as that will seem to readers in any way familiar with

translations. I speak of it, however, because there are those friendly to the Book of Mormon who contend that such is the case. Those who take this view believe that because the Prophet used Urim and Thummim in the translation of the Nephite record, therefore, the process of translation was a word for word bringing over from the Nephite language into the English; that the instrument did the translating rather than the Prophet, the latter merely looking into Urim and Thummim as one may look into a mirror and tell what he sees there reflected; and that, therefore, the translation was really an absolutely "Verbatim et literatim" translation of the record. They further believe that since the instrument was of divine appointing it could make no mistakes, and therefore if errors in the translation into English occur it is because these errors were in the Nephite language as recorded by Mormon.

As already remarked, to those at all acquainted with translation, this will be recognized as impossible. They know that such a thing as an absolute literal translation, or word for word bringing over from one language into another is out of the question; that for the most part such a literal translation would be meaningless. (NWFG, 3:411-412.)

Fourth: Granting, as preforce we must, that there are verbal and grammatical errors, together with

modernisms and localisms, in the English translation of the Nephite record; that the thought is expressed not only in English idioms, but also, at times, in Western New York localisms; that the whole body of phraseology is of the time and place where the work of translation was done; and all the errors are such as would be made by one circumstanced as Joseph Smith was as to knowledge of the English language; and that these local idioms and errors in grammar were not found in equivalent terms in the Nephite language and brought over into English by a process of word for word bring over—granting all these things, is there any way by which this criticism, based upon the faulty English of the translation, may be effectually met, and the truth still maintained that the translation of the Book of Mormon was made by a man inspired of God, and aided by an instrument of divine appointment?

I firmly believe that all these requirements can be met; that, as a matter of fact, the defects in English in the Book of Mormon constitute no real difficulty; that the difficulties, so far as they exist, are of our own creation (I speak of those who accept the Book of Mormon as a divine record); that our trouble arises through having accepted too literally the necessarily second-hand accounting, given by Martin Harris and David Whitmer, of the manner in which the translation was done. Because it has been said that the

Prophet saw the Nephite characters in the Urim and Thummim; that the translation would appear in English under these characters; that the Prophet would read the translation to the scribe and that both characters and translation would remain in Urim and Thummim until written—because of this description of the manner of translation, our opponents have insisted—and we by our silence have conceded to some extent—that Joseph Smith had nothing to do with the translation except to see what the instrument revealed and parrot-like repeat it; therefore it has been concluded by our opponents that the translation must be attributed entirely to the Urim and Thummim; and as it is unreasonable to think that God, or a divine instrument provided by him for the purpose of translating unknown languages—that is, that God directly or indirectly could be charged with these errors in English—they have argued that the translation was not inspired; that God had nothing to do with it; that Joseph Smith's pretensions were blasphemous, and the Book of Mormon untrue. (NWFG, 3:413-414.)

With the Nephite record was deposited a curious instrument, consisting of two transparent stones, set in the rim of a bow, somewhat resembling spectacles, but larger, called by the ancient Hebrews "Urim and Thummim," but by the Nephites

"Interpreters." In addition to these "Interpreters" the Prophet Joseph had a "Seer Stone," possessed of similar qualities to the Urim and Thummim; that the prophet sometimes used one and sometimes the other of these sacred instruments in the work of translation... .

It should not be supposed, however, that this translation [of the Book of Mormon] though accomplished by means of the "Interpreters" and "Seer Stone,"... was merely a mechanical procedure; that no faith, or mental or spiritual effort was required on the prophet's part; that the instruments did all, while he who used them did nothing but look and repeat mechanically what he saw there reflected... .

I repeat, then, that the translation of the Book of Mormon by means of the "Interpreters" and "Seer Stone," was not merely a mechanical process, but required the utmost concentration of mental and spiritual force possessed by the Prophet, in order to exercise the gift of translation through the means of the sacred instruments provided for that work. This might be inferred from the general truth that God sets no premium upon mental and spiritual laziness; for whatever means God may have provided to assist man to arrive at the truth, he has always made it necessary for him to couple with those means his utmost endeavor of mind and heart. (NWFG, 2:110-111.)

Just in what manner the Urim and Thummim was of assistance to him may be beyond human power to at present explain, but of this we may be certain, it was by no means the principal factor in the work; its place must forever be regarded as secondary; it was an aid to the prophet, not he an aid to it; wonderful as it may be as a divine instrument it could not be so marvelous as the mind of man. (NWFG, 3:423.)

## DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

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 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, that 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. (CR, April 1929, 118-119.)

All that pertains to the Church organization, and largely to the development of its doctrines, all that pertains to the Church, in fact, comes of a series of direct revelations to Joseph Smith subsequent to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. These revelations were given for the specific purpose of bringing into existence the Church as it now exists, the depository of the divine authority, in the new dispensation, and the instrumentality for proclaiming the truth to the world, and perfecting the lives of those who receive it. (NWFG, 3:118.)

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: and the living word of God in this age, as contained in the revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants and in the Pearl of Great Price, brought forth by the Prophet Joseph Smith, are here to correct the errors of those who would throw out of the reckoning the word of God as found in the record of the “Twelve Apostles of the Lamb,” the New Testament; 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; that he is the Creator, not only of our own world, but of many worlds. (CR, April 1924, 77-80.)

## THE BIBLE

A word, in passing, on the Bible as a whole, I am of the opinion that a very great many people look upon the Bible as simply one book, one testimony—one witness for God; when in fact it is not one book, but a collection of books; not one witness for God, but the collected testimony of many witnesses for him. (TG, 51.)

In some of its details and in its translation the Bible has been marred by the hand of man; a number

of sacred books lost, and some plain and precious parts taken away from those we have, and it is not surprising that men find imperfections in it, and some things difficult to harmonize with our ideas of the mercy and justice of God.

Yet, with all its imperfections, in the main the Bible is true, and may be relied upon as a witness for God; that is, as to his existence, his character and attributes; and also to the existence, character and mission of his Son, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, and of the plan of salvation—the Gospel. What it says of those, and topics associated with them, may be relied upon as God's truth. (TG, 87.)

One thing should be borne in mind with reference to this whole volume of ancient Hebrew scripture [the Hebrew Bible], and that is, whatever the sub-division may be, history, legislation, poetry, prophecy, biography, or proverbs, it is written under the inspiration of God. That does not mean that human elements are not to be found in it, but rather that a divine spirit is present in the midst of those human elements giving forth light and truth and wisdom such as is to be found in no merely human production. There is a divine spirit always present in these scripture narratives, prophecies and poetry that make the whole to contain a revelation of God, and an account of his methods of doing things among men,

all of which gives to those writings an authority that does not pertain to the ordinary writings of men. (SCT, 1:26.)

I remember one of my old teachers calling the attention of our class to the fact, and demonstrating it, that a ray of white light was not so simple a thing as we might think it to be. When you see a white ray of sunlight streaming through some window or other aperture into a dark room, you might think that the bar of white light consists simply of one white ray. But the teacher referred to took a prism and caused such a ray of light to fall upon that prism, and upon a dark screen opposite we discovered that the rays of light composing the white ray were separated into various colors—blue, orange, red, green and the various other colors of the several rays that entered into and made the white ray; and as he went on using one prism after another for this illustration, I discovered that the sharpness and clearness with which the separation of these several rays were made depended somewhat upon the clearness and purity of the prism through which the light passed. And so in after years it occurred to me that this might be used to illustrate how the white ray of God's inspiration falling upon different men would receive different expressions through them, according to the characteristics of those men. So it is that Isaiah

preserves his identity, Amos his, Ezekiel his, and so on with the prophets of our own day. (DFS, 1:518.)

What is needed, both as to the New Testament scriptures and the Nephite scriptures, is a thorough-going recognition of the fact that the truth is of more consequence than the form in which it is expressed. The wheat is of more importance than the chaff in which it grows, and which holds it until the trashing and the winnowing. The question is not so much is all the mine-ledge gold, but is there gold in the ledge.

The inspiration of God falls upon a prophet as a white ray of light may fall upon a prism, which separates the white ray into the various colored rays of which it is composed—blue, orange, red, green, etc. The clearness of these several rays and the sharpness in which they are defined will depend upon the purity, and perhaps the position, of the prism through which the white ray passes. So with the white ray God's inspiration falling upon men. It receives different colorings or expressions through them according to their personal characteristics. While it is true that the inspiration of God may be so overwhelming in its force at times that the prophet may nigh lose his individuality, and become merely the mouthpiece of God, the organ through which the Divine speaks, yet the personality of the prophet is not usually so overwhelmed; hence each prophet

preserves even under the inspiration of God his agency and his personal idiosyncrasies. (NWFG, 3:421-423.)

The question is not so much as to whether in the four (New Testament) Gospels or in the fifth (i.e., the Book of III Nephi in the Book of Mormon) all is gold, but is there gold in them. I do not think the four Gospels are without alloy. In other words I do not think the four Gospels are perfect. I believe there are imperfections in them, in forms of expressions and in the fact that they do not convey all the Jesus both taught and did; at best they are but fragmentary. ... The whole five Gospels are fragmentary and tainted with imperfections and limitations, as all things are that pass through human hands; but containing, nevertheless, God's precious truths [the gold of the mine]; and some of these are found in the fifth Gospel as well as in the four Hebrew Gospels; and to me the truths of the fifth or Nephite Gospel are as precious and important as are those of the other four Gospels." (NWFG, 3:422.)

[On] the subject of understanding the language of the Bible literally ... it is well known that the language of the Bible is highly figurative, almost extravagantly so in places, and much allowance must be made for the inclination to imagery of prophetic

natures, which, like poetic temperaments, are given to imagery; and hyperbole is the vice of oriental speech. (MDD 89-90.)

I suggest ... that the revelations in the Bible are revelations, in the main, concerning our earth and the heavens pertaining to it; that the revelations do not attempt to deal with or furnish an explanation of conditions that obtain throughout the universe.... In other words, the revelations of the Bible are, in the main, local; it is only here and there that a glimpse of things is given outside of our heaven and our earth. (MDD, 159-160.)

[During] the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time ... an inspired volume of scripture, the New Testament, was also brought into existence, from the teachings of the inspired Apostles, in which the great fundamental truths of the Gospel were embodied and cast in a form that would be enduring, and to which men could appeal through all the ages to come, as an authoritative statement, not only of what Jesus said and what He did, but also a statement of what doctrines are to be believed; what precepts to be practiced; what ordinances to be observed. By thus embodying the chief doctrines of Christ in a volume of Scripture that should live forever, and be published in all the languages of the world, provision was made

for such a dissemination of the knowledge of God, that the world would never again be wholly without that knowledge... . In this volume of Scripture men henceforth would have at hand a standard of truth by which to test the utterances of the would-be teachers, while at the same time it would keep above the horizon of the world's knowledge the great truths of the Gospel—the existence and character of God; the manifestations of Him through the person and character of Jesus of Nazareth; the relationship existing between God and man; the fall of man; and the redemption provided for him in the atonement of Jesus Christ. (DHC, 1:xxx, xxxii.)

## REVELATION

The means by which revelation may be communicated to the church or to man are varied. Revelation may be given by direct communication with God, as in the case when the Lord walked with Enoch, or talked face to face with Moses, as a man speaks to his friend. Or it may be by the ministrations of angels, of which we have numerous instances, both in the Old and New Testaments; but more generally the communication of God's will to man is through the medium of the Holy Ghost. (NFWG, 1:152.)

The spirit of prophecy and revelation is necessary in the church to direct the officers thereof in the performance of their duties. It is useless to contend that the directions given by the spirit of revelation to the ancient servants of the Lord will answer for God's ministry now. As well might it be argued that the miller today could grind with the water which passed his mill-wheel yesterday. The conditions under which the Church of Christ exists in various ages are constantly changing; and the officers of the church always require divine direction, which can only be supplied by revelation. (NWFG, 1:158.)

We not only believe in the revelations that have been given, that are now being given, and that will be given in the future, but we believe also in all these modes of revelation—revelation by inspiration, by the manifestation of miraculous powers, by face to face conversations with God, and communion with Jesus Christ as a man might commune with his friend. And we believe that all these modes of revelation will continue.

But we do not believe that the will of man will control in these matters. From some things that have been said recently relative to revelation one would reach the conclusion that because we have in our midst prophets and apostles, inspired men, God and angels and the Holy Spirit are subject to their beck

and call; and because a man is upheld as a prophet of God some people seem to suppose that he may enter the presence of God when he will and talk with Him face to face; or, that by his summons, a prophet may bring angels to his side at his own sweet will! Not so. These divine things are under the control of the Lord Almighty, and He will reveal Himself when and in whatsoever mode seemeth Him good. (CR, April 1905, 43–44).

It requires striving—intellectual and spiritual—to comprehend the things of God—even the revealed things of God. In no department of human endeavor is the aphorism “no excellence without labor”—more in force than in acquiring knowledge of the things of God. The Lord has placed no premium upon idleness or indifference here—“seek and ye shall find;” “knock and it shall be opened unto you;” “seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; seek learning even by study and also by faith”—such the admonitions God gives in reference to our pursuit of knowledge of divine things.

Oliver Cowdery thought the work of translating from the Nephite plates would be easy. He sought the privilege of translating and was given an opportunity. He, it appears, believed that all that would be necessary would be for him to ask God, and without giving further thought the translation would

be given him. His expectation in this was disappointed. He failed to translate. Then the Lord said: "You supposed that I would give it [i. e., the power to translate] unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me; but behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right." (Doc. and Cov. Sec. 9.)

The incident illustrates the truth here contended for—achievement in divine things, progress in the knowledge of them, comes only with hard striving, earnest endeavor, determined seeking (SCT, 5:iv-v).

About men being constantly under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that all they say and do is an inspiration of God, even the answering of questions.

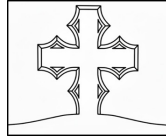
There is nothing in the doctrines of the Church which makes it necessary to believe that, even of men who are high officials of the Church. Cases exist where men have been excommunicated for their discourses. They were certainly then not inspired. When we consider the imperfections of men, their passions and prejudices, that mar the Spirit of God in them, happy is the man who can occasionally ascend

to the spiritual heights of inspiration and commune with God! (IE 8 [March 1905]: 365-367).

When you come to think of human weaknesses and imperfections, and how difficult it is for men living under the effects of the Fall, and borne down with inherited tendencies also—when you think how extremely difficult it is for even the best of men to rise above these things and walk in the sunlight of God's inspiration, in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, I think it is expecting too much to claim that every utterance is a divine inspiration. Men are exercised by a variety of emotions. Passions, selfish interests, prejudices, traditions, bear in upon the souls of men and tend to break up and mar the inspiration of the Spirit of God in them. Blessed is the man who can rise above the human weaknesses and imperfections once in a while and commune with God; and blessed are the people among whom he dwells; because if he can do that he will return to them from such communing so strengthened and helped that he will be an inspiration to all who touch the sphere of his influence. I say happy is the man who once in a while can ascend to these spiritual heights and commune with God. It is about as much as you can expect of men. (DFS, 1:521-522.)

## COMMENTARY ON SCRIPTURES

The story of the man who said he could prove that the Bible commanded every one to hang himself may be commonplace; but it illustrates the methods of [one opponent of the Book of Mormon]. The proof was supplied in this way: He quoted the passage, "and Judas went out and hanged himself." Then from another passage, from another book, he quoted these words, "Go thou and do likewise." (DFS, 1:330.)



# B.H. ROBERTS ON TEACHING: "GOD SETS NO PREMIUM ON MENTAL LAZINESS"

## MISSIONARY WORK

What the Prophet said in 1837 is still true, that "after all that has been said the most important thing is the preaching of the gospel" (CR, October 1928, 84).

I see only one serious danger to the Church, and that is this: If we begin to think that we are so far ahead of the rest of the world, and if we think that God will automatically lead us on to greater

achievements without aggressive effort on our part, just at that time will we begin to lose ground. (EBHR, 310.)

Now, if we can only get the people of the world to understand this fact of unselfishness—this very genius of Mormonism—if they could be made to know that Mormonism is here to do good, to raise mankind from the low levels on which they walk to the higher plains where God would have them walk, that they might have sweet fellowship with God, much of our difficulty in preaching the gospel would disappear (CR, April 1906, 17.)

As you know, I have had some experience in the world as a preacher of the Gospel, as a representative of the Church in mission fields. It is something of a matter of pride with me that I never yet preached the Gospel in such a manner that it resulted in mob violence; yet during my connection with the Southern States Mission and the mission in Great Britain, there was scarcely a disturbance with which I was not connected, but it was invariably to render assistance to others who were in trouble, and the trouble was none of my creating. From the experience then gained I know that much of the opposition met with in the world is the result of the folly of some of the Elders.

We carry with us the Gospel of Peace, it is true, but occasionally we find Elders who shoot it at the people as if it were porcupine quills, with the result that they stir up needless animosities by their actions. We ought not to marvel very much that the religious world dislike us... . So, now, if we recall our imperfections and realize that some of our troubles have arisen through our own folly, and the manifestation of weakness in us, it will be all the easier for us to raise this standard of peace and to learn, from the experiences of the past, better methods of presenting the truth to the people. Let us preach the Gospel of peace also. Brother Junius F. Wells here, once said—or he quoted somebody as saying—"Brethren, preach the Gospel, and preach it pleasantly." I think that is good advice... .

... We will sacrifice no truth to please mortal man. We can't be untrue to God; that is out of the question; but we can proceed peacefully in teaching this truth that God has committed to us and which is so perfect; we can and ought to cultivate the spirit of preaching it in the spirit of peace. (CR, April 1908, 104-106).

As in the matter of physical warfare so also in the matter of theological contention, I believe it is proper for the Latter-day Saints to renounce war and proclaim peace; not to take such a course as would

excite the antagonism of the world, but seeking rather such ground-work of truth as may be held in common between them and ourselves; for the Lord has brought forth His work in the last days, not for the purpose of subtracting from such truth as men may possess, but to add to that truth, to increase it, to enlarge it, until at last God, through the agencies He has appointed, shall gather together in one system all truth....

We should present our message to the world in the spirit of peace, charity and longsuffering; and avoid contention; for as our Book of Mormon tells us, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of God. (CR, April 1906, 16.)

The Church has two great functions to perform, that is to say, you can generalize her responsibilities and her duties to the world under two general heads, namely, the proclamation of the truth which God has deposited with her, to all the inhabitants of the earth; and the other great duty of the Church is to perfect the lives of those who accept those truths. Upon those two things hang all the law and all the prophets, so to speak.

I merely wish to call your attention to one part of that great mission, and that is the responsibility of making proclamation of the truth which God has restored to the earth, and deposited with His Church. That burden rests upon the whole Church of Christ;

## TEACHING

not upon one section of it.... The duty and the burden of carrying out that part of the mission of the Church rests upon the entire body of the Church of Christ (CR, April 1915, 128-129).

We must always count that it will require a ton of effort to obtain and ounce of result (OT, 13).

## TEACHING

The end of all preaching, of all instruction, as I understand it, is to beget faith in the hearts of the hearers, and the reason why it is of such great importance that faith be implanted in the hearts of the children of men is because faith is the incentive to all action, the foundation of all righteousness. Hence the labors of the servants of God in all ages of the world have been to implant faith in the hearts of the people. Faith is not the first principle of the Gospel merely on account of some conventional arrangement that has been made; it is the first principle of the Gospel because of the nature of the thing itself; from its nature it comes first, it being, as I have already stated, the incentive to all action, the driving force, the power which impels men to repentance and to every good word and work ("The Doctrine of Faith," CD 5:329).

To be known, the truth must be stated and the clearer and more complete the statement is, the better the opportunity will the Holy Spirit have for testifying to the souls of men that the work is true. (NWFG, 2:vii.)

Do not be content with words, words, words! Make your words mean something; have ideas behind them. (OT, 17.)

We should consider the foundation principles of our faith. I am well aware of the fact that many regard them as simple, but they are the things that will effect our prosperity both spiritually and temporally ("The Need for a Peculiar People," CD 2:255).

It is a good thing, occasionally, to recur to first principles, as a means of keeping in view the whole system for which we stand. (DFS, 2:492.)

Home reading and preparation outside of class hours should be insisted upon. It is not intended that the only mental work in connection with our course of study shall be the two or three hours devoted to the work on Sunday morning. There must be reading through the week. (SCT, 1:v.)

I trust no one will receive the impression that I leave out of consideration, or have not attached proper importance to the part which the Spirit of God takes in these things (the preaching of the gospel). I think there is no one with whom I am acquainted that believes more fervently than I do that in order to succeed in preaching the gospel one must do so by the gift and by the power of the Holy Ghost. I know that the Lord has given instruction to the Elders of the Church that separates their methods of work, as wide as day is separated from the night, from those methods of preaching adopted by the world—I know that he has said: "Think not what ye shall say, but in the very hour that it is needed it shall be given to you that which you shall say." But while I remember that, I remember also the admonition which he has given to the Elders in the self same passage, to the effect that they should "treasure up continually the words of life," a part of the instruction that I have sometimes thought is too much neglected. I believe we shall best succeed if, when treasuring up the words of life, we do it systematically; that instead of being like an unwise builder who throws into one promiscuous heap lime, sand, bricks and frames, together with a hundred and one other materials that enter into the construction of his building, that each be placed by itself, carefully stored away where the workmen can readily find it and bring each part to the building as

the builder has need. So, I say, systematize your efforts in reading, in thought, in speech, and after you have done all that, I believe that you will have all the more claim upon the Spirit and blessing of God. After you have made the attempt to carry out the instructions which our Father in heaven has given in respect of storing your minds with the words of life, you can then go to him saying: Father, I have done all I can with the powers thou hast placed at my command, now help me by thy grace; and bless all that I have done, and the honor and praise and the glory shall be thine." Under these circumstances, if your efforts be accompanied by secret prayer before God, who hears in secret and rewards openly, he will bless your ministry beyond all your expectation. (SCT, 1:20-21.)

## EDUCATION

God sets no premium upon mental and spiritual laziness. (NFWG, 2:111.)

Mental laziness is the vice of men, especially with reference to divine things. Men seem to think that because inspiration and revelation are factors in connection with the things of God, therefore the pain and stress of mental effort are not required. (Spiritual

Law, pp. 89, 90.)

It is a good thing, occasionally, to recur to first principles, as a means of keeping in view the whole system for which we stand. (DFS, 2:492.)

We need not follow our researches in any spirit of fear and trembling. We desire only to ascertain the truth; nothing but the truth will endure; and the ascertainment of the truth and the proclamation of the truth in any given case, or upon any subject, will do no harm to the work of the Lord which is itself truth. Nor need we be surprised if now and then we find our predecessors, many of whom bear honored names and deserve our respect and gratitude for what they achieved in making clear the truth, as they conceived it to be—we need not be surprised if we sometimes find them mistaken in their conceptions and deductions: just as 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. (NWFG, 3:503-504.)

## SCIENCE

Well, that I think discloses somewhat the responsibility of the Church to become efficient as teachers of those truths which God has revealed, and also as to all truth, because I recognize the fact that the Lord from time to time has granted through his prophets, especially, great flashes of light that men call philosophical truth, as well as moral and spiritual truth and admonition. And I regard it the duty of the Church to represent and uphold and sustain in the exercise of the mission given to her of God the so-called philosophical truths of the revelations of God, as well as the important doctrinal truth and ordinances of the Gospel that he has restored. It is binding upon the Church, from my viewpoint, that she shall weave into beautiful harmony, as I believe it can be woven, the truth that God has revealed, and also those undoubted truths which men, and especially in this wonderful age, have been developing by their profound research and experimentations. (CR, October 1830, 19-22).

I believe Mormonism affords opportunity for ... thoughtful disciples who will not be content with merely repeating some of its truths, but will develop

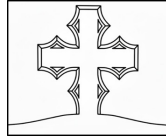
its truths; and enlarge it by that development ... departing from mere repetition, will cast them in new formulas. (DFS, 1:309-310.)

I put to myself the question: Well, has science discovered God? and I had to give a negative answer to this question....

But I wanted to go a bit farther than that and not only say that science has not discovered God, but to say also that 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 the facts for religion to discover God. The order of the facts is God must reveal God. That is the only means by which God can be discovered to the understanding of men, by God revealing himself, his nature, his

attributes, his relations to men, and man's relation to him. That done through the revelation of God, and you have your basis for religion. The basis of man's duty to God, as well as God's relationship to the race of men (CR, October 1832, 94-95).



# B. H. ROBERTS QUOTES ON PRAYER, SERVICE, MUSIC, AND CIVIC DUTY

## CIVIC DUTY

Only those who know how to obey law are qualified to make it. (MDD, 198.)

While governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, there goes with that the awful, moral responsibility, direct to God, of every man and woman participating as sovereigns in a free government, for the kind of government that

obtains in such country. The great doctrine of direct, moral responsibility to God of a free people is indeed a soul-inspiring utterance, but it is also an awe-inspiring condition, and on its face bears evidence of the divine source whence it comes. (CR, October 1912, 33.)

Government becomes necessary because of the vices and injustice of men... . Its chief function is to restrain men from injuring one another and thus give security to society. When all the people are righteous government becomes well nigh unnecessary, or operates at least in a very limited sphere, and the form of government becomes a matter of more or less indifference. (NWFG, 3:155-156.)

It is by preparing the units of which society is composed through the acceptance and practice of the gospel; by preserving all that is desirable in individualism and at the same time abundantly providing for the common good; by recognizing the religious sentiment and righteousness as elements necessary to its success ; by teaching that it is the duty of those possessed of transcendent abilities to employ them for the common good ; by inculcating that humility that shall make those possessed of humbler abilities willing to be active in less exalted spheres, and, above all, by depending upon the enlightening

and directing influence of the Holy Ghost, as well in each member of the community as in the appointed leaders,—it is by doing all this that the plan for the amelioration of the present distressed condition of society, revealed through Joseph Smith, hopes in the end to achieve success. (NWFG, 1:404-405.)

Civilized man must of necessity take thought of tomorrow, and plan for it, and practice self-denial, that in the future greater things may be accomplished, through the thinking and the sacrificing of today. These things are the very keynote of building up civilization (CR, April 1928, 110).

## MUSIC

A Mozart, a Beethoven, or a Handel, may ... call out from the silence those melodies and the richer harmonies that lift the soul out of its present narrow prison house and give it fellowship for a season with the Gods. (MDD, 33-34.)

We do suggest ... that singing be made part of [opening exercises for quorum meetings]; both on account of its being a very beautiful and appropriate exercise for such meetings as we propose our quorum class meetings to become, and also for the reason that

singing is a training that our Elders very much need to equip them for their mission work. ...

... Let us learn to sing Mormonism as well as to preach it. (SCT, 1:viii-ix.)

Since it is natural for man to express his highest emotion, perhaps, in music... it would be expected that the highly religious emotions attendant upon the religious events of the church of the New Dispensation, would be to give birth to an hymnology and to music of a somewhat special kind. This it has doubtless done. (CHC 6:244.)

## PRAAYER

Prayer is not a mechanical function. One may not always pray when one chooses. Something more than words is needed. Prayer is soul of man communing with soul of God—the infinite of man reaching upward to touch the infinite of God. God must be a party to the blending of souls, else there is not prayer. (A comment on Newell Knight's attempt to pray, HC 1:83. DF, 354.)

[Prayer] may be "uttered or unexpressed." Prayer may be in silent thought as well as in spoken word. A desire from the heart is a prayer unto God.

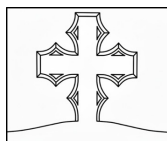
(OT, 18.)

## SERVICE

About the only way in which men can effectively express their love for God is through service to the children of God, to men. (CR, April 1914, 101.)

Every service that is rendered to humanity in the name of God is holy service in the sight of God, no matter how rough it may be, or how uncouth may be those who render it (CR, April 1914, 107).





# B. H. ROBERTS

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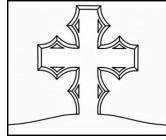
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## ABOUT THE EDITOR: CHAD L. NIELSEN

Chad L. Nielsen is an independent scholar and author with a passion for Latter-day Saint history and theology. He is the author of *Fragments of Revelation: Exploring the Book of the Doctrine and Covenants* (By Common Consent Press, 2024). He is also a four-time winner of the Arrington Writing Award at Utah State University and has had pieces published in *Journal of Mormon History*, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, and *Element: A Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology*. A regular contributor to the Latter-day Saint blogs *Times and Seasons* and *From the Desk*, his writing often bridges the gap between academic scholarship and devotional study.

Nielsen's interest in B. H. Roberts began during his mission (2010–2011), where he was

introduced to Roberts's work through the speeches of Truman G. Madsen. This sparked a decade-long project of compiling Roberts's writings, originally intended as part of a Deseret Book primer series.

Outside of religious studies, Nielsen pursues a career in biotechnology. He is also a musician, currently serving as a member of the Bells at Temple Square. He resides in Utah, where he continues to explore the intersections of science, music, history, and faith.