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Philosophy

(Chs. 1–3, 8, 26–27, 33)

Truman G. Madsen

Roberts once called *The Truth, The Way, The Life* “the most important work that I have yet contributed to the Church.” He saw it as “crystallizing practically all of my thought, research, and studies in the doctrinal line of the Church.”¹ Though he considered himself a layperson, he came to *TWL* as one who had confronted many disciplines: as historian, theologian, philosopher, apologist, expositor, textual analyst, scientist, and advocate. Preston Nibley said of him that he “could only think in book lengths.”² He writes both in a comparative and a critical mode, striving to see how things interrelated, tying movements together, and picking and choosing ideas that appeared to him to approximate or confirm the teachings of Joseph Smith.

Roberts’s Purpose and Sense of Mission

Was Roberts writing for those whose approach to religion is primarily intellectual, or was his intent to reach into subjective religious concerns? The answer is both. He did not want to have the heart breathing defiance to the intellect. Further, he was bold enough to predict that once the intellectual foundations of the Restoration were properly presented as a whole they would not only enlighten the minds but inspire the hearts of future generations. This hope and his own agenda were lodged in a discourse he had given three decades earlier:

These doctrines contain the elements of a physical, moral and spiritual philosophy that will be the accepted philosophy of the New Age now dawning upon our world; a philosophy that will supersede all other philosophies and remain steadfast in both the beliefs and affections of mankind. The elements, I say, are here in these doctrines; they await only some future Spencer to weave them into synthetic completeness, that shall be as beautiful as it will be true, to make that philosophy acceptable to the higher intellects of our age.³

At a gathering of youth leaders charged with the creation of enthusiasm and loyalty, Roberts chose to present the “doctrines that challenge my affections and make me love Mormonism.”⁴ Typical of his dual sense of intellectual and spiritual commitment, his advocacy reflects his thirst for knowledge as well as his faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ:

My love for the gospel grows out of the partial knowledge I have of the great truths it contains. In it I feel the presence of a marvelous system of truth, a philosophy that gives unity to all history, and proper relationship to all existing things; that fills life with a real meaning, and makes existence desirable. And if I could only intelligently grasp these great truths in the presence of which I feel I am standing when I contemplate “Mormonism,” and reduce them to some orderly system which I am sure they are capable of, I would account myself most happy.⁵

The key word here is “system.” Roberts held that a chief characteristic of the New Dispensation was “the Unity of Truth,” that is, a set of truths combining toward one grand design, “the whole being given through a series of dispensations from the beginning of man in the earth until the present time.”⁶ He did not aspire to create a set of inter-related syllogisms ending respectively with “Q.E.D.” Rather, he sought broad-scale coherence with both the science and the philosophy of his time. That was Roberts’s ambitious and, as time and change have shown, somewhat hazardous enterprise.

At a time when his manuscript was all but press-ready, and just six months after he finished his six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Roberts expressed his feelings about the task of articulating the philosophical truths embedded in the gospel. He saw this mission as a mandate:

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.⁷

Roberts had another long-range concern: Would Mormonism become a worldwide movement or a narrow sect? *TWL* is in part his answer: “a world movement not a sect will be its character.”⁸ That meant to him, as he had often said through the years, that “we will yet measure arms with the most learned and greatest men of the world.”⁹

Roberts knew well that a final and definitive system was beyond mortal reach. “Too many philosophers have attempted closed systems,” he wrote.¹⁰ He regarded the New Dispensation as by definition open—open, that is, to the further clarification and supplementation of revelation and to the findings of ongoing scientific and philosophic inquiry.

Logic and Epistemology

Roberts commended the definition of truth revealed by Joseph Smith as “the completest definition of truth found in human literature.”¹¹ Truth is “knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come” (D&C 93:24). For Roberts, this definition was not a set of trite truisms. In the Prophet’s definition, Roberts saw absolute truth, in the sense of a fullness of truth presently beyond finite humanity. He also saw relative truth, namely truth relative to human perception and comprehension. And finally, he saw unfolding truth, the dynamic dimension of applied and living truth.

Truth in the Western tradition has been characterized both as “that which is” and as propositions about that which is. Three theories have prevailed: the correspondence, the coherence, and the pragmatic theories. In the first, truth is defined as “copying” reality. A statement is true if and only if it corresponds to reality. Coherence theory, in comparison, urges that truth is interrelational, that the full meaning of truth is its harmony with other truths.¹² Here the model is one of formal logic and consistency. Fragments are understandable only in relation to the whole, texts are to be understood within context, and a *Gestalt* is more than the sum of its parts.

For Roberts, if religion is not true in the correspondence and coherence senses, it must be rejected out of hand regardless of its effects. Regarding pragmatism, Roberts read extensively the works of William James, for whom truth is defined as practical outcomes in problematic situations. So for James the question “Does God exist?” becomes “What effects follow from acting as if God exists?” He deliberately applied this pragmatic criterion to religions and to religious experience. Roberts saw this application as a rewording of the New Testament test “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:20), but he did not see such application as an adequate definition of truth or as an all-sufficient test. An illusion may be comforting or disquieting, but either way it is self-deception.¹³

Roberts expanded the domain of truth beyond the realms of sensate empiricism and formal logic to the spheres of eternal knowledge, being, and becoming. In his own hand, Roberts inserted the following into Draft 3 of *TWL*: “Intelligence is the light of truth; or the power by which truth is cognized” (22). And he adds the word “absorbed,” thus conjoining truth and light as do many passages in modern scripture. This light “he [Joseph Smith] holds forth as eternal, uncreated and uncreatable therefore eternal as truth itself—a parallel existence with Truth. Intelligence-Truth! The existence-truth; and the light which discerns it—Intelligence” (22). Roberts followed the Prophet further by teaching that Christ’s emanating power is in all and through all things, that it lights every person in the world, that it will cut its own way and carry its own influence and recommend itself.¹⁴ From this statement, it follows that for Roberts no one has a monopoly on truth and everyone is influenced in a measure by the light of Christ.¹⁵ Are, then, the teachings of the New Dispensation utterly eclectic? No. Roberts interpreted “truth as becoming” to mean that the time will come when the puzzle pieces will fit, not approximately, but exactly. But we do not have all the pieces yet or even fully understand the pieces we have.

Roberts frequently expounded one implication of this view: “We Latter-day Saints do not want to contract our feelings, our sympathies, our opinions of the truth to the narrow limits of our own church fellowship; but we must recognize that God does things on a broad scale, and that He is directing, and that He is influencing, by His Spirit, His children.”¹⁶ Roberts saw the hand of God in religions, whether narrowly or inclusively conceived, as well as in science, philosophy, the arts, and every constructive human enterprise:¹⁷ “God’s spirit is working among all people to bring to pass the accomplishment of His great designs.”¹⁸

Throughout *TWL*, Roberts maintains that Christ is both the embodiment of truth and the “spirit of truth.” Because humanity is also the “spirit of truth” and was in the beginning with God (cf. D&C 93:23), communication and communion are possible between God and humans. For Roberts, the modern Prophet-teacher demonstrated and commended openness to reformulations and reconstructions. Hence, in the Restoration can be found no closed creed, no exhaustive articles of faith, no final revelation, no finished canon.

In matters of confirmation or verification of truth, the New Dispensation, Roberts wrote, is “bound by no rules prescribed by any . . . schools. . . . [I]t recognizes both experience and thought as avenues to

knowledge; and ‘both channels of knowledge mutually complementary and indispensable.’” Thus, to a degree, it “accepts what is known as rationalistic methods.”¹⁹ As for apprehending truths of revelation, Roberts cites repeatedly these lines from Joseph Smith: “Every word that proceedeth from the mouth of Jehovah has such an influence over the human mind—the logical mind—that it is convincing without other testimony. Faith cometh by hearing.”²⁰ Man is spirit. The spirit in man is native to truth—and when man represses or suppresses the impulses of the light within him toward the light from on high, he is under condemnation.

Even as flame leaps towards flame and blends with it, so truth proclaimed and striking the hearing spirit of man, finds entrance there, and understanding; unless he by perverseness holds back the will to believe,²¹ and with that holding back comes condemnation because he receives not the light which comes to his understanding—his intelligence. (264)

Thus, in addressing the perennial question “How do you know?” Roberts applies a federation of methods.

In outline, Roberts is concerned in his chapters on epistemology to establish that the mind enjoys self-consciousness and possesses knowledge of other selves and of the external world. His account is reminiscent of traditional discussions of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. He labors the point that the power to discriminate, to form judgment, is itself an act of freedom. His lengthy quotations from W. H. Mallock seem designed to counter the tendencies of determinism, behaviorism, and predestinationism. He allows for the impact of conditioning and limits on human powers. But the fact of agency “resides complete in the resolution which man makes after deliberation; it is the resolution which is the proper act of man, which subsists by him [in him?] alone; a simple fact independent of all the facts which precede or surround it” (32).

Though people are fully responsible for belief or disbelief, Roberts in other writings challenged the notion that all religious doubt or disbelief is the result of sin.²² There may be completely honest doubt. On the other hand, genuine faith in Christ is not a leap in the dark. It is, instead, “trust in what the spirit learned aeons ago.”²³ Religious recognition is just that—re-cognition. The Spirit brings “all things to . . . remembrance” (John 14:26). A person’s authentic response to truth requires a truthful—truth-full—nature. “Intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; . . . truth embraceth truth; . . . light cleaveth unto light” (D&C 88:40).

Intelligence and Free Will

It is axiomatic for Roberts that all intelligence is “independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself.” Agency is inherent in intelligence. “Behold, here is the agency of man” (cf. D&C 93:30–31). Responding to Josiah Royce, Roberts wrote that “will is more than choice,”²⁴ and he explicates that position in the section of *TWL* entitled “Free agency more than a choice of alternatives” (33). He intended to add to his 1907 article on the immortality of man the point that “will is an element of intelligences, that is, minds.”²⁵ Inside the cover of a personal volume, he noted, “One criticism of the doctrine of intelligences is that I represent the ego as too complexly and highly advanced mind—consider.”²⁶ He did consider. But whatever else is to be ascribed to primal intelligence, Roberts concludes that freedom must be. The freedom of intelligences is uncreate. The children of God are necessarily forced to be free (31–35).

Most arguments for hard determinism (which claims that human beings, like all other beings, are always effects and never self-determining causes) assume that something accounts for or precedes the person. This something may be chance, accidental collocation, mysterious fate, the big bang, the emergence of nucleic acids, *Moirai*, the decree of the stars, or the fiat creation of God. Such views of priority, whether temporal or metaphysical, are undercut by Roberts’s doctrine. Individual intelligences self-exist, coexist, and forever exist side by side with other intelligences and with the cosmos. God is not, contrary to major Western traditions, the only “necessary being.”

In many strands of world thought, individual volition—whatever its power—can be obliterated by an absolute will or by other wills. The aspiration of many mystics anticipates a union with God that is a kind of annihilation of individuality. Roberts, however, insisted that the scriptures describe individual human independence as inviolate.²⁷

Further, for Roberts, God, freedom, and immortality are fully manifest only in a society of selves.²⁸ Relationships obtain between and among persons, and only a persisting identity-person can sustain lasting relationships. This was a point that Roberts asserted in *TWL* as well as in his *Mormon Doctrine of Deity*. He wrote of “the principle of harmonizing individual wills with community will,” that if the will of a community “follows deliberation, it is fair and free, and then it is just that it be submitted to.”²⁹ Because of human individuality and energy, William James had speculated, “God himself may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity.” With approval, Roberts underlined that statement in James’s *Will to Believe*.³⁰ It is not blasphemy to speak of “God’s need of man.”³¹

Other LDS interpreters of scriptural statements about eternal intelligence have speculated that “intelligence” is not, without God’s intervention, individualized, but is the name of the primordial materials out of which spirits were created in the premortal sphere.³² But Roberts held strongly to the view that intelligences are individual, uncreate and, within limits, free.³³

The crux of the problem of the nature of intelligence is this: if intelligence is “in the mass,” and if from it God apportions or “organizes” or “begets” spirits, then upon God—and upon God alone—rests the responsibility for the natures, the choices, and therefore the radical inequalities among humans. But that view would contradict Roberts’s essential positions on the problems of individuation and evil. Furthermore, Roberts inquires, how can intelligence be independent—that is, conscious, free, and autonomous—if individuality or self-hood emerges from a force, divine or not, outside it?

Roberts also maintained that the uncreated and uncreatable intelligences are likewise indestructible. Responding to William James’s postulate about the world’s author putting the case of real risks and real gains to humanity (“Had James read of the Council in Heaven?” Roberts wrote in a margin), Roberts commented: “While in the exercise of their freedom these intelligences might decline participation in the scheme of things proposed, they could not sink back into non-entity.”³⁴

The eternal nature of intelligent beings leads to another shift in approaching the problem of evil. From his premises about free will and the nature of intelligence, Roberts concluded that the situation or predicament of mortality is partly the result of human initiative. We are here by our own advice and consent. This is the sense, and the only sense, in which the human race participated in Adam’s fall. We submitted to this option and voluntarily subscribed to it in the former estate.³⁵ In each stage of human existence, Roberts insisted, “God only becomes an efficient cause of our growth if we permit it.”³⁶

Causation and Metaphysics

TWL chapter 2, on knowledge, leads Roberts to more inclusive categories than “earth-bound” knowledge. He extends his inquiry in chapters 3–5 to a description of the solar system, the galaxy, galaxies, and what he describes in awe as the infinite cosmos. He says, however, that he is merely giving definitions, not attempting a “deep metaphysical inquiry” into these “building stones of knowledge” (37). But what he says about time, space, matter, force, and mind cuts deeply into traditional assumptions. How Roberts’s discussion relates to

contemporary developments in physics and the philosophy of science is another question.³⁷

Time. Roberts's charts and conclusions may be dated, but what is central to his account is his rejection of the concept of eternity that has prevailed in Western philosophical theology since Aristotle. In that tradition, time and eternity are utterly unlike. Eternity is defined as timelessness, that is, as nontemporality. God, it is held, exists "outside of time." The tradition says that time is unreal as contrasted to the really real: eternity. Hence, for centuries it has been taken for granted that God, being nontemporal, is immutable, that is, beyond process, and impassable, beyond either passivity or response.

But the close relationship of time and space that Roberts finds in the book of Abraham makes such ideas paradoxical. Roberts sees in the teachings of the Prophet Joseph the view that *time* is "infinite after its kind" (40). The notion of timelessness or a nontemporal eternal, although advocated by later Christian and Jewish philosophers, was foreign to early Jewish understanding of sacral time.³⁸ In Hebrew, the root word for time is *olam*, which also means "the world." Roberts kept notes on Augustine, Boethius, and Aquinas, all of whom hold that eternity has no succession, but exists all together. This Roberts called the "now-theory," finding it unacceptable, even unintelligible. Statements such as "all things are present before mine [God's] eyes" (D&C 38:2) or that God lives in an "eternal now"³⁹ mean to Roberts that past, present, and future are apprehended by God as present, not that God has no actual past, or present, or future. The "eternal now" idea, however, has some currency among Latter-day Saints because it seems to help account for divine foreknowledge. Joseph Smith, nevertheless, clearly refers to "God's time, angel's time, prophet's time, and man's time" and teaches that these are reckoned "according to the planet on which they reside" (D&C 130:4).⁴⁰ Thus, eternity, in Joseph Smith's teaching, may be viewed as an endless series of eternities.

On the question of immutability, modern revelation returns to the biblical view: Joseph Smith not only contradicts but also inverts the static conception. God is not the unmoved mover. God is the most-moved mover, most responsive, most all-encircling in care and concern. Furthermore, as Roberts argued in his *Mormon Doctrine of Deity*, the static conceptions of God make any approach to the Creation or the Incarnation impossible. In a personal notebook, after describing the Aristotelian and Thomistic notion that "creation is simply the divine Still Vision," Roberts writes, "They [the worlds] are only organized." Creation, which is design and ordering, is a process, not a motionless act. In entering the world at birth, God-Christ did not enter space and

time for the first time. He changed his location to the earth, and he participated fully in the processes of mortality. This approach to God has new defenders in our time.⁴¹

Metaphors for time, such as a line, a circle, and a spiral, all have a point. But Roberts implicitly undercuts the notion of eternal recurrence, the idea that everything happens or can happen all over again. For Roberts, the variety, plurality, and individuality of the components of the universe make such recurrence impossible. Nor did he seriously entertain the notion—pervasive in science fiction—that time may be reversed or that it may move backward.

Space. Roberts argues in similar ways on behalf of “boundless expanse and indefinite divisibility” (40). For example, he says that “space then is boundless. It is without a center; it is without circumference! The contrary is inconceivable” (41). In light of this concept, one can understand why Roberts settled on the word “eternalism” as the most comprehensive word for the LDS understanding of metaphysics.

On matter, force, and mind. Roberts works with Joseph Smith’s teaching that “element had an existence from the time he [God] had.”⁴² Thus, for example, Joseph taught that earth and water “had their existence in an elementary state, from eternity.”⁴³ So, Roberts says, the elements are eternal “when you get to them” (47). He notes that Joseph Smith spoke of “chaotic matter” but implied something more basic, namely, “the pure principles of element.” What are these principles? This much is clear in Joseph Smith’s declaration: “They may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning, and can have no end.”⁴⁴ The Prophet also referred to element as that “in which dwells all the glory.”⁴⁵

So, “elements” may be more basic than contemporary physics or metaphysics have been able to discover. Roberts’s notes on the Greek cosmologists and on the philosophy of Hobbes versus Berkeley reflect his view that neither the old forms of materialism nor of immaterialism were the last word. He asserts that “the New Dispensation conception of the universe is undoubtedly pluralistic.”⁴⁶ Clearly he was trying to avoid the “block universe” and the idea of Being (with a capital “B”) that is the premise and conclusion of much classical talk about God. But he was also trying to explicate, through some scientific theories of his time, the meaning of the Prophet’s statement that “all spirit is matter” (D&C 131:7). As for physics and the observable cosmos, Roberts writes, they “can only describe certain of [matter’s] properties and speculate as to its structure” (42). Whatever science or philosophy might discover about substance, Roberts affirms “its eternity and its limitless extension, its indestructibility and the necessary corollary of that quality, its uncreatability” (42).

How, again, does all this relate to a treatise on theology and Jesus Christ? One of Roberts's answers is as follows: "Grace, mercy, justice, and truth are qualities or attributes of mind or spirit, which may be matter, but of a finer quality than that which is cognized by the senses" (42-43). So spiritualism and materialism, properly defined, join hands.

Roberts ends chapter 3 with a brief postscript on mind and the divine mind. There is one God, "the Eternal God of all other gods" (D&C 121:32). That means there is also only one God-nature to which the children of God may be linked by the Spirit. God's power is the master power of the universe, and harmonized intelligences receive and manifest God's light which, Roberts believes, proceeds from all. This is "the very spirit of God, everywhere present and present with power" (49). Roberts thus ascribes to Joseph Smith the way out of another long-standing impasse in religious understanding: how can God be a person of attributes and location and yet at the same time be everywhere? Roberts's answer, following Joseph Smith's, is that God as a person is not present everywhere, although he is present through his emanating and all-pervasive Spirit.

Mind and Intelligence

In chapter 8, Roberts explores further the nature of intelligence, mind, or minds. Roberts took as axiomatic the scriptural statement that "intelligence . . . was not created or made, neither indeed can be" (D&C 93:29). He also accepted as clarification of that statement the further radical teaching of the Prophet Joseph that humans exist on the same principles as God exists,⁴⁷ namely, as self-existent beings.⁴⁸

Only weeks before his death, Roberts discoursed at length on topics from the manuscript of *TWL*. Speaking of the coexistence of divine and human intelligence, he said, "Splendid, I say, as the material universe may be, it has not outgrown the universe of 'Mind' incarnated in the Personal Intelligences that hold all this manifest glory and awe-inspiring power in balance, giving direction and purpose to the whole."⁴⁹ Then he cited an 1865 statement from the First Presidency and the Twelve. That statement concludes that "from all eternity there had existed organized beings, in an organized form, possessing superior and controlling power." The plural *beings* is emphasized by Roberts. Stressing the point of eternal coexistence, the official statement adds that "it [is] neither rational nor consistent with the revelations of God and with reason and philosophy, to believe that these latter Forces and Powers [what apostle Orson Pratt had speculatively called "self-moving intelligent particles"] had existed prior to the Beings who controlled and governed them."⁵⁰

Roberts found support for his teaching about the individuality of primal intelligences in the words of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Orson Pratt, and George Q. Cannon.⁵¹ He also found it in the teachings of his close colleagues, including John A. Widtsoe⁵² and Joseph Fielding Smith.⁵³ Roberts's understanding was that these "intelligences differ in degree of intelligence, moral quality, and greatness, hence also they differ in power, standing and appointment."⁵⁴

If God created everything, then he created the drastic problems to which the Atonement of his Son, Jesus Christ, is a drastic, cruel, and costly solution. But because of the "eternalism" of elements, volition, minds, and law, Roberts saw a rationale for the Atonement that is profoundly clarifying and deeply moving.⁵⁵

For his account in *TWL* of mental functions, Roberts is indebted to William James and Oliver Lodge; his ascriptions to the will follow Guizot. One may wonder why Roberts supposed that a clarification of issues about mental capacity would relate to a treatise on Christ. But Roberts's reason soon becomes clear enough. Since Christ, who is "more intelligent than . . . all" (Abr. 3:19) and even, as Roberts interprets the passage, more intelligent than all combined, then what can be said of His trustworthiness and the rational foundation for submission to His will?⁵⁶

At a minimum, Roberts ascribes to primal intelligences these traits: consciousness, self-consciousness, subject-object discrimination, generalization, and a priori ratiocination. By these labels, Roberts means powers of deduction, induction, imagination, memory, deliberation, judgment, and volition. In a summary statement of these powers in a later chapter, Roberts says, "To accredit an intelligence with fewer or less important powers than these would be to deny him intelligence altogether" (255).

Having said all this, he sides with the critics of pure materialism in affirming "the mysterious something" that moves and motivates the human brain and body. He finds confirmation in Oliver Lodge that minds will not disappear nor "vanish into nothingness," but "shall endure forever" (83).

Roberts cites William James's empiricism that the imagination can only make combinations of earlier perceptions, following Locke's dogma that there is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses (79-80). Roberts elsewhere argues for innate ideas in mortal awareness, including those presently hidden under amnesia. Here he simply wished to establish that image-making, remembering, and recombining images are powers inherent in the mind (83).

In *The Concept of Mind*, Gilbert Ryle held that the notion that there is a self that *has* a mind is a grammatical mistake, and he protested against a “ghost in the machine.”⁵⁷ In the thought of the New Dispensation, however, intelligence is not a ghost, but a subtle materiate entity; the human self—spirit and body—is not a machine, but an organism of life and consciousness.

Roberts skirts the question of how intelligence is manifest in the so-called lower forms, except to say, “We shall hold that there is a difference in mind-stuff as there are differences in matter; distinction between the intelligence of man and the instinct of brutes” (77). He takes generally a more positive view of the “lower animals” than does traditional thought. He also only hints at Joseph Smith’s teaching that the earth itself is in some sense alive (242) and omits the idea that it will die and be resurrected. Is it possible that there is life in all, even so-called inanimate, matter? That idea would lead to pan-psychism (consciousness in everything) or animism or vitalism (life force in everything). Perhaps Roberts does not address these concerns because he had already “twisted the nose of Dame Orthodoxy” far enough.

Spirits and Intelligence

In chapter 26, Roberts cites scriptures, especially the Johannine writings, that ascribe premortal existence to Christ. Roberts then relates these scriptures to insights that are in a measure unique to the New Dispensation. These insights are as follows:

1. Christ existed as an individual spirit before he was embodied. As a spirit being, he was the creator of worlds and world systems.
2. Humans likewise lived as spirits before mortality.
3. The “creation” of humans should be in quotation marks because, contra Creationism and Traducianism, both the human mind and spirit predate earth life. Birth brings a premortal spirit quickened by an ageless intelligence into a physical body.⁵⁸
4. Jesus is divinely preeminent as Firstborn of spirits, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Firstfruits of the dead, the Resurrection, and the Life.
5. The intelligence in humans is individual and eternal.
6. The idea of individual intelligences can be found in the doctrines of modern prophets and in a unique ancient source, the book of Abraham.

Also, chapter 26 anticipates the topic of chapter 33, the problem of evil or theodicy, by speaking of the “value” of the foregoing doctrines. They abandon the paradoxes of the dogma of creation from nothing. They shed light on how evil may exist in the universe. They show how in every stage of eternal progression Christ is exemplar. And between the lines, they resolve the paradoxes of the Council of Chalcedon, which asserted at one and the same time the absolute divinity and the absolute humanity of Jesus. Modern revelation is clear: Christ was divine before mortality. He did not, however, receive “of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness” (D&C 93:13). Hence, for Roberts, becoming is reinstated in the Christ-life.

Many philosophical accounts of the origin and the nature of mind assert that everything that can be called “mental” had its beginning in some earlier preconscious form. A corollary to this assertion is the view that mind will decline into lifeless cosmic dust in the vast total death of the universe. Roberts wrote in a notebook that “it is just here that the importance of an uncreated entity in man appears.”⁵⁹ The self is a unity, not a composite, and has not been arbitrarily (by chance or by God) pulled together in a way that may be broken up or coalesced into a new identity. The body may die and disintegrate, but the individual is indivisible. This eternally persisting self is the identity and continuity through all change. Hence, for every person there is premortal existence as there is immortality. Knowing this answers the problem of individuation and also of change. Mind is not reducible to brain. While it preserves its identity, intelligence may change and enlarge.⁶⁰

In taking this position, Roberts opted for an idea that is paralleled in Plato, the idea of the active soul. For Roberts, this idea takes precedence over Plato’s theory of forms or universals. The Greek view is that, in some way, *nous* or reason is immortal. Roberts viewed all of human essence as immortal. Plato taught that the world is created according to ultimate forms or ideas. Roberts wrote, “It must be a previous spiritual existence,”⁶¹ and he means for each particular person or thing.

In response to Hume and other Western thinkers who assert that the self is a composite of habits, a “bundle of perceptions,” Roberts wrote in a note, “Close to the Hindu karma, made up of acts, i.e. experience. But the self is coexistent with its experiences, not a collection of them. The self *has* experiences.” Dun Scotus held that “God knew individuals as pure ideas before the creation.” Roberts replied, “Instead of this he knew them as individual intelligences who were eternal.”⁶²

Roberts hoped to do more with the questions of why minds are enhanced rather than delimited by brain and why spirits are enhanced

by embodiment. Joseph Smith taught that “all beings who have bodies have power over those who have not.”⁶³ What, Roberts wondered, is the explanation of that superior power? And what is really at stake in the affirmation of modern scripture that “spirit and element when separated cannot receive a fullness of joy?” (260; see D&C 93:33–34).

In his private papers, Roberts addressed related theories that have in various forms characterized Oriental religions and medieval Judaism: reincarnation, transmigration, and metempsychosis. On two grounds, Roberts negated these ideas. First, the fundamental principles in each human body never become an essential part of any other body but are eventually resurrected.⁶⁴ Second, the seriousness and cruciality of mortal life is vitiated if it can be repeated in all-but-endless rebirths.

Purpose of Earth Life

All of Part 1 of *TWL* sets the stage for asserting the purposeful existence of the universe. This theme culminates in chapter 27. In the early 1920s, Roberts collected material from sundry books and articles on the question, “Is Life Worth Living?” He was somewhat surprised that the trend, at all levels of culture, was negative. He saw signs, as his notes on the writings of Nietzsche show, of what were called “the furies,” the anguished theme of meaninglessness which was to dominate Continental philosophy and theology in the twentieth century. This theme culminated in the death cry of Camus: “There is only one problem: suicide.” Claiming that he was “somewhat read in the philosophies of men,” Roberts said often that he had found no set of utterances quite equal to those of the New Dispensation.

What, then, is the meaning and the purpose of earth life? Roberts wished he could put the following sentences in the sky so that they blazed like the sun: “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39); “Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Ne. 2:25); “Spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy” (D&C 93:33); and “And as I, Christ, have received a fulness, you may receive a fulness” (cf. D&C 93:20). The significance of these verses arises from the recognition that humans are spirit as well as body, that the whole person is the soul of that person, that eternal life is life like the divine life, and that the resurrection of the body is therefore the redemption of the soul.

All these assertions cut against the grain, as Roberts recognizes in his notes, of Plotinus and Augustine in the Christian tradition and of Maimonides in the Jewish tradition. Those three maintain that the soul is immaterial, that only the soul is of worth (or even real), that

eternal life is the escape of soul from *soma* or flesh, and that human resurrection must be either utterly spiritualized as a symbol or rejected. The same tendencies have diluted Christology. Ancient docetic definitions of the infinity and incorporeality of God taught that Christ was never really physical but only appeared to be so, or that his resurrection was a temporary way of manifesting immortality.

But in the Restoration, Roberts observes, “the Christ illustrates what takes place with all intelligent entities of the divine human species. Intelligences are begotten spirits, and these spirits, no doubt are more definite personalities, and of greater tangibility, and possessed of higher powers than many suppose them to be” (262). Furthermore, “as with Christ so shall it be with men in varying degrees” (259). Roberts had previously elaborated these teachings in a long discourse, comparing and contrasting them to five philosophies: Epicureanism, Stoicism, Platonism, Aristotelianism, and the Christian Spirit of Love (Social Gospel).⁶⁵

So what is the *joy* that Lehi celebrates and describes? Roberts reads into this and related chapters an all-consuming joy that involves “intelligence, faith, knowledge, light, truth, mercy, love, justice, glory, dominion, wisdom, power; all feelings, affections, emotions, passions; all heights and all depths.” It is a joy that arises “from the highest possible development, the highest conceivable enlargement of physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual powers. . . . Joy arising from progress . . . bringing to pass the progress, enlargement and joy of others” (267–68).

The scriptures speak of joy of the Holy Spirit, joy of release, joy of creation, joy of enabling grace. These are parts of the joy-constellation, but they are not all of it. The connection between Lehi’s passage on joy and what Roberts calls “the law of opposite existences” shows that there is nothing Pollyannaish here. Joy is not an escape, not a withdrawal, not a product of the ascetic and mortification traditions. In its most inclusive state, joy emerges from confronting, coping, serving, partaking, and participating in all of daily life.

Roberts infers that the heights of virtue, moral as well as intellectual, are developed only in the mortal struggle. They are also related to giving oneself in the birthing, nurturing, and serving of children, who are the very children of God. This is the harder, but the blessed, way of joy in posterity: “Herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified” (D&C 132:63).

But humans do not exist, with all due respect to the creeds, as a fiat product of God for his own glory only. This, Roberts says, is a view that represents “God as selfish and vain of glory” (267). Instead, God and

Christ are glorified in the increasing glorification of their creatures, a “constantly increasing splendor” (267). This deepens three traditional answers to the why of humanity’s creation: that God can exercise his own good will and pleasure,⁶⁶ that he might have creatures to worship him, and that he might not be alone.

So Roberts revels in the Prophet’s King Follett teaching: God did not totally create men and women. He “found himself” amidst glory and intelligences. He sired spirit bodies and then initiated the siring of physical bodies. He chose to implement spiritual and physical law to share with his children his gifts of redemption and eternal life.

Problem of Evil

Chapter 33 deals with what Roberts cites Mansel as calling “the real riddle of existence—the problem which confounds all philosophy” (332). The problem is theodicy, the relationship of God and evil.

Roberts poses the problem in the manner of the ancient Epicurus: God does not eradicate pain and suffering from our lives, either because he cannot or he will not. If he cannot, he is not all-powerful. If he will not, he is not all good. But the major monotheistic religions insist that God is both absolutely powerful and absolutely good.

Two purported solutions to this dilemma are not even mentioned by Roberts. One maintains that the existence of evil is an impenetrable mystery, that in this, as in other ways, God’s will is inscrutable. So, in the name of reverence, many prefer no answer to any answer. The claim is not only that mortals do not understand, but that they cannot. The other way out is simply to deny that evil is evil. This is the position of extreme mysticism both in Far Eastern and Western forms. In Hinduism, for example, all differences, including the distinction between good and evil, are illusory, due to *maya*. Not only evil, but matter itself as we know it—and disease and death—are solely “in the mind.” That tack—although some things are no doubt taken to be evil which are not, and vice versa—is unavailable to Latter-day Saints.

The heart of Roberts’s treatise is that God sent his Son into this real world to cope with real diseases of spirit and body, real evil and opposition, and real death. Jesus came not only to eliminate illusions, but to transform reality.

Roberts observes that the problem of evil becomes more acute within the Judeo-Christian tradition because of the dilemma imposed by the view of *ex nihilo* creation and divine omnipotence: if God brought everything, except himself, into being, then he brought into being evil, the Devil (no more mysterious a creature, Roberts observes,

than evil-inclined men), and the calamitous consequences associated with mortality. Worse than that (if anything can be worse), God brought into being from nothing—with absolute foreknowledge which, Roberts argues, is close to precausation—people who would commit terrible atrocities. Furthermore, God created, in addition to this anguished world, a place for these evil persons' eternal suffering. If God can create from nothing, can he not return his creatures to nothing? Classical theology paradoxically answers no. Roberts concludes that to ascribe such total causation to the Divine is “revolting to reason” and “shocking to piety” (256).

One modification of the traditional approach is the privative theory, the idea that evil is the absence of good. Another is Leibniz's thesis that in God's perspective, under the aspect of eternity, this world is the best of all possible worlds even with all of its injustices, inequalities, and inabilities. This theory is often cited as philosophical optimism, but it can also lead to pessimism. What if Leibniz is right? It may be, as the phrase has it, that this world is “a vale of soul-making,” but all around us is evidence of soul-shrinking. Roberts argues that, as an instrument of probation and testing, this is the best possible world. But it is not the best conceivable. Therefore, “this best possible world presents apparent limitation to the power of its Creator: . . . he may not create space, nor matter, nor force, nor intelligence, nor annihilate evil. Yet all the power that is, creative, or destructive, or controlling is his” (338). Had he so minded, a God of unlimited power could have made a world in which all evils are absent and all people are perfect without stress, strain, and suffering. To say that God could not or cannot set up this condition is to acknowledge that God is limited.

What, then, of scriptural language that God is almighty and all-powerful, that because of him “all things are possible”? Roberts's answer is straightforward: God does not have absolute power. He has all the power possible in a self-existent universe amidst indestructible free selves.⁶⁷ Hence, it is appropriate to call him the Almighty. But then may not evil triumph in the end? Drawing on the optimistic view of the cosmos as articulated throughout *TWL*, Roberts concludes that the order of the universe “shall stand secure, because there will always be enough, and enough of sufficient power, to hold things in their course of progress, and to the attainment of the higher things, the best things” (261).

Roberts cites Lehi's words, written in the context of explaining the fall of Adam, and claims that Lehi's discourse is unique among sacred texts. It is all the more impressive, he says, because Lehi proceeds through a series of “if . . . thens,” defining the cruciality of human expo-

sure to contrasts, such as good and evil, bitter and sweet. Lehi ends this series by saying that if there were no contrasts, God himself would cease to exist. This is an inversion of the traditional argument that since there is evil, God cannot be. Roberts here and elsewhere champions one central theme: there is no substitute for experience—first-hand experience—and that means direct experience of contrasts. This situation or predicament is not altogether of God’s making. It is just the way things are.

So, the challenging answer to theodicy that Roberts finds in modern revelation is this: evil is among eternal things. Evil is not only the potential for the abuse of freedom; it is also the antithesis of good and the foundation of discerning, crucial judgment. It is, as Roberts cites Fiske at length to show, “part of the dramatic whole” (337). As Roberts wrote in his *Comprehensive History of the Church*:

Good and evil then, in Latter-day Saint philosophy, are not created things. Both are eternal, just as duration is, and space. They are as old as law—old as truth, old as this eternal universe. Intelligences must adjust themselves to these eternal existences; this, the measure of their duty.⁶⁸

Roberts finally extends his basic insight into the biblical narrative of the Garden of Eden and the two trees in order to confirm Lehi’s understanding: one cannot know sweet without bitter. The primal parents of the race chose the better, but also the bitter and harder, way.⁶⁹

Roberts completed chapter 33, and in fact his book, before major calamities of the twentieth century, including World War II, nuclear explosions, and the Holocaust. Furthermore, Roberts says little of natural evils: earthquakes, plagues, disease, volcanic eruptions, flood, and drought. Likewise, he does not directly address the plight of the innocent, especially children, who are victimized by these evils. Finally, one might ask, how does it help us cope with evil, even if we acquit God of being its cause? Roberts’s response is that evil cannot be totally eradicated from the universe. But through Christ it can, in individual and eventually in community lives, be overcome.

Because coercion is out of the question, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, which is the centerpiece of *TWL*, is an act of persuasion, the most powerful in the universe. The Atonement did not become “necessary” by arbitrary divine decree. Christ caringly gave himself because in no other way can human beings be more profoundly reached, enlightened, enlivened, and capacitated for eternal life. Eternal life includes eventual triumph over ignorance, sin, and death, and everlasting communion with God and his Christ.

Some things are possible for God that are not com-possible. God *can* prevent this or that, but he cannot prevent this or that and still open the way to the ultimate ends of perfecting and perfectionism that he envisions and that we agree to. Some insist that eventually no opposition to the divine will, in any creature whatever, will remain. To this position, Roberts responds in a notebook, “It does now. Why not in the future?”

NOTES

¹B. H. Roberts to Heber J. Grant, February 9, 1931.

²Preston Nibley, conversation with the author.

³B. H. Roberts, *Joseph Smith: The Prophet Teacher*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1927), 66–67 (hereafter cited as *JSPT*).

⁴B. H. Roberts, “The Creation of Enthusiasm and Loyalty,” *Improvement Era* 9 (September 1906): 844.

⁵Roberts, “Creation of Enthusiasm,” 844.

⁶B. H. Roberts, “Modern Revelation Challenges Wisdom of Ages to Produce More Comprehensive Conception of the Philosophy of Life,” speech delivered Sunday, April 15, 1923; *Liabona* 20 (May 8, 1923): 434.

⁷*Conference Report* (October 1930): 21.

⁸B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century I*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 6:555 (hereafter cited as *CHC*).

⁹*Conference Report* (October 1901): 57.

¹⁰In Roberts’s copy of William James, *A Pluralistic Universe, Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College on the Present Situation in Philosophy* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1909).

¹¹*JSPT*, 33.

¹²Josiah Royce in Roberts’s generation; Hocking, Blanshard, and Werkmeister more recently.

¹³Roberts kept notes in his copy of Southey’s biography of John Wesley, now in Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). Wesley was taunted by skeptical hearers. He replied, “Well, will it [Christian faith] at least make people happier here?” Roberts comments, “Think upon and analyze it in the dignity of truth.” Robert Southey, *The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism* (London: F. Warne, n.d.).

¹⁴*CHC* 6:554.

¹⁵Some significant passages on this point: D&C 88:7; *JSPT*, 14–15; and Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 237.

¹⁶*Conference Report* (April 1908): 112.

¹⁷See, for example, his account of “collateral rays” of divine inspiration which, he believed, “led to those great discoveries in the arts and sciences and in

mechanics, which make our age so wonderful.” *Conference Report* (October 1903): 72.

¹⁸*Conference Report* (April 1902): 16.

¹⁹*CHC* 2:410. He listed these in the same order in his discourse “Joseph Smith The Prophet Teacher,” delivered December 22, 1907, at the Salt Lake Tabernacle. The subheadings in chapter 63 of *CHC* (2:381–412), which is entitled “The Prophet’s Work—The New Dispensation a System of Philosophy,” are: Joseph Smith Taught No Systematized Philosophy; Joseph Smith’s Definition of Truth; As to Things—The Universe; Change and Its Tendency; Purpose of God in the Earth—Life of Man; The Eternal Existence of Intelligence; Other Worlds and World Systems than Our Own Inhabited by Intelligences; The Relationship of Intelligences—The Congregation of the Mighty; The Spirit of the Kingdom of Heaven’s Government; The Immanence of God; “The Light of Christ”; The Reign of the Law; The Doctrine of Opposite Existences—Good and Evil; The Moral Freedom of Intelligences; Eternity of Relationships; and Classification of the New Dispensation Philosophy.

²⁰Joseph Smith, Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 5:526 (hereafter cited as *HC*).

²¹The phrase is from William James, who later called it “the right to believe.” James and Fechner were both impressed with the subconscious as the mechanism of spiritual awareness.

²²Roberts’s personal notebook in LDS Church Archives (hereafter cited as Roberts’s notebook).

²³Roberts’s notebook.

²⁴In Roberts’s copy of Josiah Royce, *The Conception of God: A Philosophical Discussion Concerning the Nature of the Divine Idea as a Demonstrable Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 188, LDS Church Archives.

²⁵B. H. Roberts, “Immortality of Man,” *Improvement Era* 10 (April 1907): 401–23. This article, which advocates individual intelligence, was approved by a committee of the Quorum of the Twelve.

²⁶See note 10 above.

²⁷Abraham 3:18: “They [not it] are gnolaum, or eternal.” See also Roberts’s note in Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 354: “‘A spirit from age to age’ . . . ‘A spirit,’ that is, an entity, a person, an individual” (hereafter cited as *TPJS*).

²⁸Royce, *Conception of God*, 112, Roberts’s copy.

²⁹Royce, *Conception of God*, 274, Roberts’s copy.

³⁰William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, and Human Immorality* (New York: Dover, 1956), 61.

³¹B. H. Roberts, “God’s Need of Man,” *Improvement Era* 24 (August 1921): 907–11.

³²Elder Bruce R. McConkie took the view that “the intelligence or spirit element became intelligences after the spirits were born as individual entities.” *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 387. The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* presents both views and concludes that “the Church has taken no official position on this issue.” See Dennis J. Packard, “Intelligence,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:692; and Paul Nolan Hyde, “Intelligences,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 2:692–93. It has been pointed out that in some passages “intelligences,” as

referred to in the book of Abraham, are “spirits,” that is, begotten sons and daughters of God. Roberts acknowledges this point in his text. See *TWL* 251–55. See generally Kenneth W. Godfrey, “The History of Intelligence in Latter-day Saint Thought,” in *The Pearl of Great Price: Revelations from God*, ed. H. Donl Petersen and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 213–36.

³³For others who have shared this view, see notes 49–51 below.

³⁴In Roberts’s copy of William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1907).

³⁵See Roberts’s revision on the doctrine of the Fall in “Preface to the Third Edition,” *The Gospel*, 3d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1901), vi–vii.

³⁶Roberts’s notebook.

³⁷See William Evenson’s essay, pages 633–51 below.

³⁸Thus Ernst Cassirer speaks of the time mode of Judaism as “prophetic time.” See Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer* (Evanston, Ill.: Library of Living Philosophers, 1949), 398.

³⁹*TPJS*, 220.

⁴⁰See also time references in the book of Abraham, Facsimile 2, explanation of figure 1. See also D&C 121:31.

⁴¹See, for example, Charles Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology for Our Time* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1967), and John Cobb, Jr., *A Christian Natural Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965). They advocate process philosophy, following the lead of Alfred North Whitehead, as discussed in Truman G. Madsen, review of John B. Cobb, *A Christian Natural Philosophy*, in *BYU Studies* 6 (Spring 1965): 186–88.

⁴²*TPJS*, 351

⁴³*TPJS*, 158.

⁴⁴*TPJS*, 352.

⁴⁵*TPJS*, 351.

⁴⁶*CHC* 2:409; compare *TWL*, 86–88.

⁴⁷*TPJS*, 352.

⁴⁸Roberts traced this teaching to three main sources from Joseph Smith’s time: Doctrine and Covenants 93, the King Follett discourse, and the book of Abraham. He also adds a statement made by the Prophet in Washington: “I believe that the *soul* is eternal; and had no beginning; it can have no end.” *HC* 4:79; italics in original.

⁴⁹B. H. Roberts, *Discourses of B. H. Roberts*, comp. Elsie Cook (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948), 96. Discourse on God, June 18, 1933.

⁵⁰The statement was signed by Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve in 1865. James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 2:233. Also in *Millennial Star* 27 (October 21, 1865): 659.

⁵¹Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 3:356, 4:132, 6:146, and 8:205; George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses* 15:294; and Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses* 17:325.

⁵²Roberts underlined this sentence in his copy of Widtsoe’s *A Rational Theology*: “In each intelligent being has resided, from the beginning, an individual and distinct will, which, of itself, has been acting in some degree upon the external universe.” John A. Widtsoe, *A Rational Theology* (Salt Lake City: General Priesthood Committee, 1915), 32, LDS Church Archives.

⁵³Joseph Fielding Smith edited *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. He inserted several footnotes written by B. H. Roberts, including a comment on the following statement of Joseph Smith: “Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it.” Roberts wrote, “‘A spirit from age to age’—not ‘spirit from age to age’; but ‘a spirit,’ that is, an entity, a person, an individual. This paragraph in the Prophet’s remarks may well be taken as an interpretation of Doc. and Cov. Sec. 93:29.—Note by Elder B. H. Roberts.” *TPJS*, 354. Elder Smith affirmed these three stages of human existence in his recommendations to President J. Reuben Clark, who was planning to address a Relief Society conference. Elder Smith wrote:

My opinion is that the word “originally” or some such expression may help the youth to a better understanding as follows. First, a few words about our intelligences: originally uncreated and coexistent with the father, with our father. It is my understanding that first the intelligences—coexistent with God and uncreated. Then there were created the spirit bodies by their creator, for example, Jesus showed himself [as a spirit] to the brother of Jared. These spirits were organized and among them God came down and chose his rulers as he defined to Abraham. And then to these spirit bodies were given bodies of flesh just as Jesus took on a fleshly body. So as to each of us today there is *an* intelligence. (Joseph Fielding Smith letter to J. Reuben Clark, Jr., 1940, LDS Church Archives)

⁵⁴*CHC* 2:393.

⁵⁵He had, he said, embraced the Atonement as a principle of faith. But after reaching this framework of understanding,

my intellect also gives its full and complete assent to the soundness of the philosophy and the absolute necessity for the atonement of Jesus Christ. That this atonement, the method and manner of it is the only way by which there could be brought to pass an at-one-ment, a reuniting of soul of man with soul of God. I account it for myself a new conversion, an intellectual conversion, to the atonement of Jesus Christ; and I have been rejoicing in it of late, exceedingly. (*Conference Report*, April 1911, 59)

⁵⁶*TPJS*, 353, n. 8.

⁵⁷Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949).

⁵⁸Various views are held by members of the Church on the question of when the spirit conjoins with the body, for example, at conception, at quickening, or at birth. See pages 246–47 above.

⁵⁹Comment in Roberts’s notebook on Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, “Naturalism and Humanism,” *Hibbert Journal* 6 (October 1907), LDS Church Archives.

⁶⁰*TPJS*, 354. See also Roberts’s notes on Woodbridge, “Naturalism and Humanism.”

⁶¹See Roberts’s note in his copy of the Pearl of Great Price, 175, LDS Church Archives. William R. Fix, *The Bone Peddlars: Selling Evolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), concludes that for every living thing in this world there is a corresponding spirit. Individual spirits are eventually embodied. Why embodied? Because obtaining a body is somehow necessary for their further development.

⁶²Royce, *Conception of God*, 232, Roberts’s copy.

⁶³*TPJS*, 181.

⁶⁴*HC* 5:339.

⁶⁵“Modern Revelation Challenges Wisdom of Ages,” 433–39. See William De Witt Hyde, *The Five Great Philosophies of Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1904). Roberts expounds on this and related themes in *CHC* 2:381–412 and in *Seventy’s Course in Theology* 3:80–86.

⁶⁶Roberts cites Rev. 4:11, “Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created,” as an incomplete answer to the why of creation.

⁶⁷Anthony Kenny, *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 98, defines omnipotence as “the possession of all logically possible powers which it is logically possible for a being with the attributes of God to possess.” That is close to Roberts.

⁶⁸*CHC* 2:404.

⁶⁹On the impossibility of divine impassability, see Nelson Pike, *God and Timelessness* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970). On the meaning of “unchanging and everlasting” in biblical context, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, “God Everlasting,” in *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Steven M. Cahn and David Shatz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 88–95.