

riodically through the years. Ethan Smith's book was published in the adjoining county west of Windsor County, where Joseph Smith was born and lived from 1805 to 1811. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Joseph Smith ever knew anything about this book. Detractors have pointed to several "parallels" between the two books, but others point to numerous "unparallels"; as two of many examples, the Book of Mormon never mentions an ark of the covenant or cities of refuge.

I. Woodbridge Riley in 1902 was the first author to suggest a relationship between *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon (*The Founder of Mormonism*, New York, 1902, pp. 124–26). In 1921, LDS Church authorities were asked to reply to questions posed by a Mr. Couch of Washington, D.C., regarding Native American origins, linguistics, technology, and archaeology. B. H. Roberts, a member of the First Quorum of Seventy, undertook a study of Couch's issues; he received some assistance from a committee of other General Authorities. Roberts's first report, in December 1921, was a 141-page paper entitled "Book of Mormon Difficulties." However, he was not satisfied with that work and later delved more deeply into other critical questions about Book of Mormon origins, which led him to a major analysis of *View of the Hebrews*.

Around March–May 1922, Roberts wrote a 291-page document, "A Book of Mormon Study," and an eighteen-point summary entitled "A Parallel." In the "Study" Roberts looked candidly at the possibility that Joseph Smith could have been acquainted with Ethan Smith's book and could have used it as a source of the structure and some ideas in the Book of Mormon. He cited some twenty-six similarities between the two books. In all his writings, Roberts did not draw any conclusions that Joseph Smith used Ethan Smith's work to write the Book of Mormon, but rather posed questions that believers in the Book of Mormon should be aware of and continue to find answers for. Roberts's faith in the Book of Mormon as divinely revealed scripture was unshaken by his studies.

Roberts's papers were published in 1985. This again stirred an interest in the relationship of *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon, especially since the editorial "Introduction" concluded that "the record is mixed" as to whether Roberts kept his faith in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon after making his studies (B. D. Madsen, p. 29). Subsequent research, however, strongly

indicates that Roberts remained committed to the full claims of the origin and doctrine of the Book of Mormon to the end of his life (Welch, pp. 59–60), and substantial evidence favors the position that there is little in common between the ideas and statements in *View of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon.

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## VIRGIN BIRTH

Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, was a virgin at the time of Jesus' birth. Of Old Testament prophets, ISAIAH alone foretold this circumstance (Isaiah 7:14), but Book of Mormon prophets also foresaw the virgin birth. NEPHI<sub>1</sub> described Mary as "a virgin, most beautiful and fair" and "mother of the son of God, after the manner of the flesh" (1 Ne. 11:15, 18). ALMA declared that Christ "shall be born of Mary . . . a virgin . . . who shall . . . conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God" (Alma 7:10).

In fulfillment of these prophecies, Gabriel "was sent from God . . . to a virgin . . . and the virgin's name was Mary," and Gabriel announced to her that she would "bring forth a son, and . . . call his name Jesus." To her question, "How shall this be?" Gabriel answered, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee . . . therefore [the child] . . . born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:26–35). Thereafter, Joseph married Mary but "knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son" (Matt. 1:25). Thus, Jesus was born of a mortal mother who was a virgin.

[See also Immaculate Conception; Mary, Mother of Jesus.]

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