

CHAPTER XXIV

An Answer to Budvarson's Criticisms of the Book of Mormon (Concluded)

Budvarson now attacks (pages 37 and 38) the credibility of the Book of Mormon account respecting the curse brought by the Lord upon the skins of the rebellious segment of the Nephite people known as Lamanites. (2 Nephi 5:21; Jacob 3:5; Alma 3:6-9) He also calls attention to the accounts of converted Lamanites whose skins were turned white (3 Nephi 2:12-16) and ridicules the entire matter of the curse and its revocation in these words:

According to Joseph Smith and his "revelations," the Book of Mormon is supposed to contain the "gospel in its fulness" and was restored to the earth in 1830 for this, "the last gospel dispensation." If these claims were true, the world would be witnessing remarkable phenomena. Transformations would be taking place that would be more miraculous than the metamorphosis of a chrysalis into a butterfly! Rebellious Israelites would be changed into Indians (Lamanites) with black skins! Indians, when converted to Mormonism, would be changed into Israelites (Nephites, or Mormons) with white skins!

These words, better than anything we might say, reveal the spirit of ridicule with which Budvarson undertakes his whole investigation of the Book of Mormon. The last two sentences alone would reveal to any good Latter-day Saint who knows his Book of Mormon just how twisted Budvarson's concepts of Mormon views are.

Know this, Mr. Budvarson, that the Book of Mormon teachings respecting the Indian people of our day do not promise that they shall become white immediately upon conversion, as you imply. After the Lamanite people are restored to a knowledge of their fathers and to the knowl-

edge of Christ as had by their ancestors, they shall rejoice. (2 Nephi 30: 5)

For they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God; and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes; *and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and delightsome people.* (2 Nephi 30:6. Italics ours)

The process of change will be a gradual one, and, as a matter of fact, our ministry among the Indian peoples has only now gotten off to a good start. We make at present no claims for our Lamanite converts as a body; neither does the Book of Mormon except as quoted above. The real test is still yet future.

Up to this point Mr. Budvarson has been shadow boxing; he has hit nothing but thin air, not being able to direct a single blow that really hurts the Book of Mormon. Now, beginning at the bottom of his page 38 he is going to administer the final, merciful blow, the "coup de grace" to all claims for the Book of Mormon, by showing "true archaeological data." He quotes extensively from the Nephite record to "furnish illustrations of the immensity of the nations, their civilizations, and their cultures," and gives the names of numerous cities mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Then he says (page 40):

The Book of Mormon thus establishes the ethnology of the people in its story, and because of the claims made for this book, it only stands to reason that practically every archaeological discovery made on the American continent which dates from 2000 B.C. to 400 A.D. must of necessity prove to be either true or false.

In letters dated December 18, 1946, February 11 and 16, 1951, November 14, 1956, and October 10, 1958, from various authorities of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., Budvarson (pages 41-42, 61-63) attempts to show that there is no scientific evidence, archaeological or otherwise, which supports Book of Mormon descriptions

of ancient American civilizations and cultures. We shall answer the letters of the Smithsonian experts last.

In his pages 43-47, Budvarson deals with "Peculiar Stories of a Peculiar Language," ridiculing the prophet Joseph Smith's story of Martin Harris' visit to Professor Charles Anthon with a copy of characters taken from the Nephite record. The gentleman asserts that "it is obvious that deceptive and contradictory statements have been made evidently with fraudulent intent." (p. 45) He asks four questions, based on the prophet's account, the last two of which we shall answer at this point. The other two we think are sufficiently well answered in our Chapter IX, "Some Problems Arising from Martin Harris' Visit to Professor Charles Anthon." The four questions asked by Budvarson we give for the benefit of our readers:

- (1) The Book of Mormon states that "none other people knoweth our language," [Morm. 9:34] how then could Professor Anthon have known the translation was correct if it was an unknown language? (It is still unknown!)
- (2) Why would Professor Anthon say the characters were true Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic, all of which are known languages, when the Book of Mormon says the characters were "reformed Egyptian," a language known only to the Nephites?
- (3) Martin Harris was one of the "three witnesses" to the Book of Mormon. Just what was the purpose of Harris taking the plates to Professor Anthon?
- (4) Why did Joseph Smith give the characters and the translation of the characters to Martin Harris when Smith knew that God had had to prepare the means for interpreting and translating the plates?

In answer to question (3), we simply point out that Martin Harris was not one of the "three witnesses" to the Book of Mormon when he went to see Professor Anthon in February of 1828. It was not until June, 1829, that the revelation was given to Joseph Smith permitting Martin Harris to be one of the "three witnesses." (See D. & C. 17.) And there are at least two good reasons why Martin Harris took the transcript (not the "plates") to Professor Anthon:

1. The prophet Joseph Smith wanted Martin Harris to acquire faith in him and in his mission by having the testimony of a famed scholar relative to the identification of characters transcribed from the plates. Money would have to be raised to print the Book of Mormon, and Martin Harris would probably do that if he was convinced that the prophet's words could be believed. And you will have to concede, Mr. Budvarson, that Professor Anthon's testimony helped convince Martin Harris to the extent of three thousand dollars, the cost of the First Edition of the Book of Mormon.
2. When the Lord had Joseph Smith send Martin Harris to Professor Anthon (see our Chapter IX), He provided the means for the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the "learned." (See 2 Nephi 27: 15-18; cf. Isaiah 29:11.) You will scoff at this, Mr. Budvarson, but try to see how consistent it is from the point of view of Joseph Smith's story.

Budvarson's fourth question, the meaning of which is not entirely clear, has been pretty well answered by us already in our answer to his third question. But if he means to imply that Joseph Smith needed a learned man's confirmation of his translation and identification of characters, the idea is preposterous. If the prophet were an impostor, he would fear the opinion of a learned man. The fact that

Joseph Smith sent Martin Harris to Professor Anthon is rather evidence that he knew that his identification or translation of characters was correct and that there was nothing to fear.

Inasmuch as Budvarson rejects Joseph Smith's account of Martin Harris' visit to Professor Anthon, he proceeds to give "the true account" (pages 45-47) by presenting Anthon's letter concerning the facts to Mr. E. D. Howe, founder and editor of the *Painesville Telegraph*, Painesville, Ohio. In his letter to Howe, under date of February 17, 1834, from New York City, Anthon admits the visit of Martin Harris, not by name, but as a "simplehearted farmer," and denies having given approval to the prophet's identification or translation of the characters transcribed from the plates. He also denies giving Martin Harris an opinion in writing respecting the characters. Offhand, it would appear that Budvarson scores an important point in his case against the Book of Mormon, but instead, either with an inexcusable ignorance or oblivious to the facts, he fails to quote to his reading audience another letter of Anthon's in which the learned gentleman contradicts important statements made in his letter to Howe. The reader is again referred to our Chapter IX, where crucial parts of Anthon's letter to the Rev. Dr. T. W. Coit of New Rochelle, New York, under date of April 3, 1841, are compared with the parallels in his letter to E. D. Howe. The comparison is not very complimentary to Professor Anthon. In his letter to Coit, Professor Anthon admits giving Martin Harris an opinion in writing about the characters, a thing he denies in his letter to Howe. Because of this contradiction, we prefer to accept the straightforward account given by Joseph Smith of Martin Harris' visit to Professor Anthon. Now, Mr. Budvarson, why did you come to withhold from your readers the full truth about Anthon's letters? Your omission of Anthon's letter to the Rev. Dr. Coit reflects little credit upon you.

On pages 48-54 of his brochure, Budvarson professes to give "A Brief Outline of the History Recorded in the Book of Mormon." He makes some general statements which students of the Book of Mormon would challenge, but since they are of little importance for our purposes here, we shall let them pass. He concentrates his attack on the account given of the Jaredites in the Book of Ether, mainly resorting to ridicule in his attempts to sway his readers against the Book of Mormon. His innuendoes are cast more especially at the Jaredites' taking swarms of bees on their journey (Ether 2:3), at the accounts given of the building of the eight barges, at the method of lighting them with sixteen small stones touched by the Lord, at their ventilating systems, and at their being blown for three hundred and forty-four days upon the water and all landing the same day on the promised land. He also attacks the probability of there being on this continent the domestic animals mentioned in Ether 9:18-19, not to mention the account of the final battles of annihilation recorded by Moroni. He ends this section of his brochure by saying (page 54):

The Book of Mormon story is so ridiculous, and contains so many discrepancies and errors, that it is utterly unthinkable and impossible to accept it as a work, or the word, of Almighty God!

Well, Mr. Budvarson, the "many discrepancies and errors" in the account represent your assertions only; you haven't proved them. We just do not agree with you. As a matter of fact, it is not possible to prove or disprove the account given of the building of the eight barges, their lighting, ventilation, miraculous journey, and the like. We have no blueprint as to how the barges were made; moreover, the "blunder" you have the Lord make (page 50) in not providing air for them, and His asking the brother of Jared for "instructions" in the matter of lighting may only have been the Almighty's way of testing the faith and

spiritual resourcefulness of His servant. It is so easy to ridicule. The miraculous migration of the Jaredites is in much the same category as that of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan. Both migrations were accomplished under the watchful eyes of the Lord and with supernatural happenings taking place at intervals. And don't you know, Mr. Budvarson, we can find, if we are prone to do it, just as "many discrepancies and errors" in the Biblical accounts of the Exodus and settlement in Canaan as you profess to find in the Jaredite migration. You as a "true Christian" seem to "believe the Bible to be a complete revelation from God to man." (page 19) But do you really believe in the "wonders" brought about by Moses in Egypt, the turning of the Nile into blood, the frogs, lice, flies, murrain, boils, hail, locusts, thick darkness, the slaying of the firstborn, and the like? Do you really believe that Moses divided the Red Sea, that he brought water from the rock, and that Joshua divided the River Jordan? Do you really believe that Moses led about six hundred and three thousand fighting men (Num. 1:49), plus women and children, a probable total of two million five hundred thousand souls, into the wilderness? About four abreast, these would make a column nearly three hundred and fifty miles long, enough to stretch from Egypt to Sinai and back. Can you honestly say, Mr. Budvarson, that the record of Ether is any more "ridiculous" or that it contains any more "discrepancies and errors" than your Bible account? What could seem to the natural man more "ridiculous," to give another illustration, than the account of the hosts of Israel marching seven times around Jericho, giving a shout and having the walls of the city fall flat? (Josh. 6:15-20) It is no more difficult to believe the story of the Jaredite migration than to believe the Biblical accounts we have cited. If you accept the Bible on faith, so likewise do the Mormon people accept the Jaredite account of their migration.

Coming now to the matter of the domestic animals you

mention on your page 53, you say:

According to scientific research, the American continent was devoid of many of the domestic animals, cattle, swine, horses, and asses, until after the Europeans came to America. Also many of the other objects mentioned in the above quotations [Ether 9:17-19], were brought to the New World by the Europeans. As far as the cureloms and cumoms were concerned, they only existed in someone's imagination!

We frankly admit that scientific evidence for the presence on this continent in historic times of a number of the domestic animals mentioned in the Book of Mormon is sadly lacking at the present time. This lack of evidence is not one that is fatal to our claims for the Book of Mormon, but it is, of course, somewhat disappointing to us. As President B. H. Roberts said many years ago, "It should be remembered that there is a wide difference between a difficulty for which one has not at hand an adequate explanation, and one that would be fatal to the claims made for the Book of Mormon."¹ We believe that in due time the desired evidence will be forthcoming. Research takes time; we cannot hope to present to the world at present complete scientific proof for the Book of Mormon. In the meantime, our faith upholds and sustains us when complete knowledge is lacking to "prove" the Nephite record. Said the Lord to Mormon, "I will try the faith of my people." (3 Nephi 26: 11)

The reader is referred to our Chapter XVIII, "The Problem of the Horse and Other Domestic Animals," where the difficulties of the problem raised by Budvarson are discussed. Now, while it is true that for the present the lack of evidence concerning the presence of certain domestic animals in Book of Mormon times may be considered a debit in our account let us "count our many blessings" in other respects. Many years ago it was claimed that the Book of Mormon was wrong in its account of the use

of cement among the inhabitants of this continent. (Helaman 3:7, 9, 11) Today no one would dare challenge such ancient usage. Not too long ago the use or knowledge of the wheel was denied to the ancient inhabitants of whom the Nephite record speaks. To be sure, the Book of Mormon mentions the wheel but once, and that is in a quotation taken from the Book of Isaiah (2 Nephi 15: 28; cf. Isa. 5:28), but the implication that the wheel was commonly used is found in the mention of chariots by the sacred record. (See Alma 18:9, 10, 12; 20:6; 3 Nephi 3: 22.) Now we know for certain that the wheel was used because ancient American toys with wheels have been found.² And how could Joseph Smith have known, except by inspiration, that the common phrase "land of Jerusalem," in the Book of Mormon, as well as its statement that the Son of God should be "born . . . at Jerusalem . . . the land of our forefathers" (Alma 7:10) was in perfect conformity with ancient usage in the Near East? Not until the Tel-el-Amarna letters were translated could anyone have known how very accurate the Book of Mormon was in its statements. (See our Chapter XV.) Was Joseph Smith just a good guesser, Mr. Budvarson? And then consider how very much the linguistic evidence favors the cause of the Book of Mormon. Studies made of the Nephite text show that the underlying language of the plates was Hebrew, with some Egyptian showing through in the matter of certain proper names. The Nephites were Hebrews, and idiomatic Hebrew constructions show through in the relatively literal English translation made by the prophet Joseph Smith. Studies made of the text of Isaiah quoted in the Book of Mormon are very much in our favor. It is significant that Budvarson made no attack on our linguistic studies of the Book of Mormon. In this important field we can give him a rugged time. Years ago—many of us still remember it—the Mormon people were solemnly assured that the ancients did not write upon metal plates;

therefore it was claimed that Joseph Smith's account of finding metal plates had to be false. At the present time no serious historian would dream of contesting the fact that the ancients used metal upon which to write. The mass of evidence is such that we need not discuss it here.³ Examples of other "blessings" in favor of the Book of Mormon could be multiplied. This includes Dr. Hugh Nibley's research on the Jaredites, which Budvarson wouldn't appreciate.⁴

Thus the many scientific illustrations in favor of the Book of Mormon give us faith that all of the problems of a scientific nature connected with it will in due time be solved. We should keep in mind that a great mass of archaeological material from ancient America yet remains to receive scientific evaluation. Who knows what this material will disclose?

It should be noted by Mr. Budvarson that the Bible which he professes to believe in has had just as difficult a time at the hands of carping critics as the Book of Mormon—yes, more so. Not until comparatively recent years have the Old and New Testaments come into their own, archaeologically speaking. And they are not out of the woods yet—far from it; but recent discoveries now bear out to an amazing degree the truth of statements made by the Bible that were scoffed at by critics just a few decades ago. In the light of these facts, why, Mr. Budvarson, can't you find enough milk of human kindness in your soul to avoid ridiculing the Book of Mormon and allow it the same opportunity to prove itself archaeologically as the Bible has? The Mormon people don't ridicule the Bible because many of its statements of a historical nature do not as yet have full archaeological confirmation. American archaeology is very young, and the Book of Mormon needs a reasonable amount of time in which to prove itself. The Nephite record has done remarkably well for itself, however, consid-

ering the relatively short time it has been before the public.

Now let us consider the letters concerning the Book of Mormon which Budvarson cites from the Smithsonian Institution experts in Washington. Budvarson reproduces a letter (Feb. 16, 1951) from Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., Acting Director of the Smithsonian Institution (Bureau of American Ethnology) to Mr. Robert C. Breeze, of Norwalk, California in which he says (p. 42):

It can be stated definitely that there is no connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject of the Book of Mormon.

There is no correspondence whatever between archeological sites and cultures as revealed by scientific investigations and as recorded in the Book of Mormon, hence the book cannot be regarded as having any historical value from the standpoint of the aboriginal peoples of the New World.

The Smithsonian Institution has never officially recognized the Book of Mormon as a record of value on scientific matters, and the Book has never been used as a guide or source of information for discovering ruined cities.

On page 41 Budvarson also quotes three letters from the Smithsonian Institution in the same general vein in which it is alleged that "there is no correspondence whatever between archaeological sites and cultures as revealed by scientific investigations, and as recorded in the Book of Mormon," and that, moreover, "we know of no authentic cases of ancient Egyptian or Hebrew writings having been found in the New World."

Under date of September 30, 1958, Budvarson wrote a letter (pp. 60-61) to Dr. Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., in which he named many cultural objects and animals mentioned in the Book of Mormon, not to mention the names of numerous Nephite cities. Then he asked Dr. Roberts to comment on the following specific questions:

1. Have any of the above mentioned cities named in the Book of Mormon been discovered?
2. Does true archeological data of the New World agree with the subject matter of the Book of Mormon?
3. Has the Book of Mormon ever been used or recognized as a guide in archeological explorations?
4. Does the Book of Mormon have any value in connection with scientific investigation and archeological discoveries?
5. Has there been any Hebrew or Egyptian writings found in the ancient ruins discovered on the American continent?
6. What are cureloms and cumoms? Have they ever been discovered? I have referred to numerous dictionaries and encyclopedias and I cannot find any reference to either of them.

In his answer to Budvarson as of October 10, 1958, Dr. Roberts said the following things of most interest to us (pp. 62-63):

With respect to some of the questions which you have raised pertaining to the story in the Book of Mormon relating to aboriginal occupation in the New World, I may say that thus far no iron, steel, brass, gold and silver coins, metal, swords, breast plates, arm shields, armor, horses and chariots, or silk have ever been found in pre-colonial archeological sites. It is not until after the conquest of the New World by Europeans that materials in those categories appear in association with aboriginal artifacts. As a matter of fact there are not many such objects occurring in historic sites. Futhermore, cattle, sheep, swine, horses and asses, such as we know them, were introduced in the Americas by Europeans in post-Columbian times. No actual elephants have been found in any archeological site. In the early stages of aboriginal development during late Pleistocene times the Paleo-Indians did occasionally hunt and kill the mammoth and mastadon, and in some cases appear to have killed and eaten the native horse. Those creatures, however, became extinct at least 10,000 years ago.

I do not know of any case where an archeological site has been identified with any of the names of the cities mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The most likely ruined cities would be those in the Maya area, and they all have native names which do not correspond to those in your list. . .

I am not thoroughly versed in the Book of Mormon, but I have read it and I have also read some books on Mormon archeology and I have not found that any of the archeological data as we know them correspond with the subject matter of the Book of Mormon. . . .

To the best of my knowledge no authentic Hebrew or Egyptian writings have ever been found in the New World. A number of years ago the existence of an extensive Hebrew inscription was reported from New Mexico. It had been cut in the face of a cliff. Careful examination by linguists familiar with Hebrew writings indicated that the inscription was not genuine and probably was quite recent in age.... I was at the Maya city of Chichen Itza in Yucatan in 1932 when Dr. Breasted [recognized authority on Egypt] spent two weeks studying the ruins and inscriptions at that location as well as at several other cities in the area, and at the end of the period he was very emphatic about the total lack of evidence for any Egyptian influence.

I have no idea what cureloms and cumoms may be.

Now, let it be said that we have high respect for Dr. Roberts and his colleagues at the Smithsonian Institution and for their scientific competency, but let it be noted at the same time that they can hardly be said to know the Book of Mormon and its problems relative to geography, anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics like the men on our staff at Brigham Young University. We think it a pity that critics like Mr. Budvarson, not knowing much about the fundamentals underlying Book of Mormon problems, erect a straw man and then "use" honest scientists like Dr. Roberts to knock it down or to charge it in Don Quixote style. Let us patiently examine Budvarson's six questions and Dr. Roberts' answers. We think his answers represent well the views of Smithsonian Institution scientists.

In his first question, Budvarson asks whether any cities named in the Book of Mormon have been discovered. This was quite a naive question to ask in the first place. Supposing scientists had excavated cities like Zarahemla, Antiparah, and Nephihah, how could they expect to identify the ancient names of such places? Could they expect to

find a plaque, for instance, inscribed in Hebrew or reformed Egyptian saying, "This is the city of Zarahemla"? Or could they expect to find a sign on the approaches to a city saying the equivalent of "5 miles to Antiparah"? Seldom are American archaeologists blessed by finding inscriptions or caches of material that tell (if they can be read) the name of or anything intimate about a given site. Dr. Roberts was perfectly correct in saying that no "archaeological site has been identified with any of the names of the cities mentioned in the Book of Mormon." Let us ask Budvarson and Dr. Roberts if they know the true ancient name of *any* "Preclassic" American city that has been excavated, Nephite or otherwise. What makes Budvarson's question even more pointless is the fact that *the bulk of archaeological excavation in Middle America has been on sites which are dated after Book of Mormon times*. How could Dr. Roberts be expected to give a positive answer to Budvarson's question when very few or no true Book of Mormon sites have as yet received thorough archaeological investigation? Our point is made very clear by this quotation from a letter written by our colleague, Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, which is to appear in a forthcoming publication of the University Archaeological Society:⁵

(Nearly all our information to date on the region of the Book of Mormon civilizations—Mexico and Central America—pertains to the archaeological developments of the periods *after* that of the Book of Mormon, i.e. to the famous Maya, Teotihuacan, and Zapotec cultures of the "Classic" period, and the empires of the Toltecs and Aztecs. In fact the specialists in the field of Middle American archaeology will be the first to admit that not enough is yet known about the "Preclassic" period of this region —i.e. the period of the Book of Mormon—to enable anyone, least of all a true scientist or scholar, to reach a valid conclusion as to the claims of the Book of Mormon.) It is not, therefore, the oft-quoted opinions of "scientists" that will decide the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, but the actual evidence on hand and yet to come forth, both

internal (i.e. linguistic and literary indications within the Book itself) and external (i.e. archaeological and anthropological data, relating to the actual area and period of the Book of Mormon peoples).

Budvarson's second question, in which he asks whether true archaeological data of the New World agree with the subject matter of the Book of Mormon, should, of course, have been answered in the light of what we brought out in connection with his first question, namely, the paucity of excavated sites in true Book of Mormon areas and periods. Dr. Roberts gives the conventional answer (see above) concerning cultural objects and animals which we might expect but which we do not altogether agree with. It should be noticed that Dr. Roberts points out that not many cultural objects have been found as yet in pre-colonial archaeological sites. On this point, Budvarson is simply using the argument from silence against the Book of Mormon, which proves nothing. A few decades ago the same type of argument could be used against the Bible. But modern archaeology has tremendously enhanced our knowledge of cultural remains, and we hear few such arguments today. And as for evidence of remains of many domestic animals in ancient American sites, we shall simply have to wait patiently until the evidence is finally in. Our colleague, Dr. Ross T. Christensen, recently (July 17, 1963) wrote a short letter to a person concerning Dr. Roberts' answer to Mr. Budvarson in which he says:

Dr. Roberts' answer is, of course, not adequate. He is simply not acquainted with the evidence which has already been presented in the publications of the University Archaeological Society. He comments on the absence of iron, steel, brass, gold and silver coins, metal, swords breast plates, arm shields, armor, horses and chariots, and silk, in pre-colonial sites of ancient America. It would take volumes to answer this and the rest of his brief letter satisfactorily. But, commenting on the above, I can say that some iron has been discovered, although very little; brass [copper and zinc] undoubtedly means bronze

[copper and tin], and this has indeed been found, along with various other metals, among the civilizations of the New World. The Book of Mormon makes no claims for gold and silver coins.⁶ In fact, it does not mention coins of any kind, although it does talk about money—quite a different matter; various kinds of armor, including arm shields, breast plates, and swords, certainly have been discovered;⁷ there are at least some shreds of evidence in existence for the precolumbian existence of the horse and for the use of wheels, at least on the level of wheeled toy vehicles;⁸ and certain types of silk are, indeed, known from ancient America. (See an article by Maurice Connell in a recent issue of the *Improvement Era*, entitled "The Prophet Said Silk").⁹

There is really some point to Mr. Budvarson's third question relative to the Book of Mormon being used or recognized as a guide in archaeological investigations, because many over-enthusiastic Latter-day Saints have from time to time asserted, quite uncritically, that scientists, especially those from the Smithsonian Institution, have so used the Nephite record. Dr. Roberts' letter to Mr. Breeze on the matter (see above) is quite justified. Careful Book of Mormon scholars have never made such assertions, and those of us on the staff of Brigham Young University have done our best to discourage statements of the nature implied in Mr. Budvarson's question.

Dr. Roberts implies in his letter to Budvarson by way of an answer to question 4 that *he* has not found that any of the archaeological data as known by him and his associates correspond with the subject matter of the Book of Mormon. But Dr. Roberts honestly admits that he is "not thoroughly versed in the Book of Mormon"; neither does he discuss the possible value of the Book of Mormon when archaeologists really begin to excavate in American sites that are admittedly of "preclassic" significance, that is, come in the area and time of which the Nephite record speaks. We well remember a prominent archaeologist who scoffed at the Old Testament when he began to excavate

in Palestine, but our friends tell us that before his excavations had proceeded very far he had made the books of Kings a veritable handbook. Book of Mormon scholars can afford to wait patiently for a positive answer to Budvarson's fourth question. Dr. Roberts gave the best answer he could, since he is not a Book of Mormon scholar.

Budvarson's fifth question, relative to Hebrew or Egyptian writings being found in ancient American ruins, was answered by Dr. Roberts very broadly when he said that to the best of his knowledge "no authentic Hebrew or Egyptian writings have ever been found in the New World." We could, of course, not expect to find such writing in "Classic" or post-Book-of-Mormon sites, nor would many such inscriptions—inscriptions of any kind, for that matter—likely be found on the surface of sites of the "Preclassic" or Book of Mormon period where little or no excavation has been done. Dr. Breasted's examination of Chichen Itza would seem to be on a site of the Classic and Late Classic periods (c. 350-1500 A.D.), mostly after Book of Mormon times. Besides, we should not expect to find much Egyptian influence on a site dated 1000-2000 years or more after the Nephites had left Jerusalem. It may be true that Dr. Roberts has no knowledge of authentic Hebrew or Egyptian writings being found in the New World, but we, on the other hand, have some reason to believe that a few samples of true Hebrew writings have been found. And we happen to know of three instances where two pendants and a part of another, with Egyptian hieroglyphic characters upon them, have been found. Three young women found a copper or bronze triangle with such characters upon it under a rock on the mountains east of Provo, Utah. A number of men on the Brigham Young University staff saw it. We, of course, thought it might be a forgery. Three years later, Mr. Jesse Roots of Salt Lake City sent us a picture (both sides) of a pendant found by him twenty-two years before in a field in Illinois. It was covered with

Egyptian hieroglyphics and the triangle at one end was proved similar to the one found by the girls east of Provo! The very same characters were upon both, but it was apparent they did not come out of the same mold. To cap it all, Dr. W. W. Strong, a physicist of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, sent us a photograph of a "brass" pendant covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics that had been found near Wellsville, York Co., Pa. This pendant proved to be the same kind as the one found by Mr. Roots. Here we have three separate finds far remote from one another and by people completely unknown to each other. Dr. Strong and his friends had also collected enough Hebrew-like inscriptions on rocks as to justify their forming "The Phoenician Historical Society of America." It is of interest to know that two or three ancient Roman coins, quite unrelated to the Book of Mormon material, have been found in Idaho and Utah. Latter-day Saint scholars are, of course, making no scientific claims for the small number of Hebrew and Egyptian materials that have come to our attention, but we are keeping our eyes open. We strongly advise Mr. Budvarson to make no rash claims about Hebrew and Egyptian writing not being found in the New World. What Dr. Roberts said about such writing is purely negative and proves nothing as far as the Nephite record is concerned.

Budvarson's sixth question concerning the identity of cureloms and cumoms is perfectly ridiculous. Why did you ask the question of Dr. Roberts in the first place, Mr. Budvarson, since you seem to have made up your mind that these animals had "only existed in someone's imagination"? (p. 53) Why should you refer to "numerous dictionaries and encyclopedias" to find out about them when the Mormon people themselves don't know, neither have they pretended to know, their identity. Not only that, but Moroni, who mentioned them in the sacred record, didn't know what they were, else why should he have transliterated their Jaredite names, which transliteration was adopted by

Joseph Smith? Why should Dr. Roberts be expected to know what kind of animals cureloms and cumoms were when neither Moroni nor the Momon people know? The problem raised by Joseph Smith is a perfectly legitimate one, as any competent and discerning translator will admit. When a translator isn't acquainted with a particular kind of animal, has never seen it nor does not know of anyone who might recognize it, what can he do but transliterate the name as Joseph Smith did?

We conclude that no Latter-day Saint or investigator need be deceived by or converted to Mr. Budvarson's views concerning the Book of Mormon. His case fails because he has neither the spiritual insight nor the necessary training to criticize it competently.

¹ *New Witnesses for God*. II. 535.

² See, e.g., Dr. Frank S. Harris, Jr.. *The Book of Mormon Message and Evidences* pp. 91, 92, 1953

³ Those interested may consult Ariel L. Crowley, *Metal Record Plates in Ancient Times*, 1947; *About the Book of Mormon*, Ch. III, 1961; Frank S. Harris, Jr., *op. cit.* Ch. 10.

⁴ *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*. Bookcraft Publishing Co. 1952.

⁵ Our thanks go to Dr. Ross T. Christensen for permission to quote this material.

⁶ The statement in italics at the head of Alma 11 is not part of the text of the Book of Mormon proper.

⁷ It is strange that Dr. Roberts was not familiar with—at least he doesn't mention—A. W. Tozzer's translation (edited with notes) of *Landas' Relacion De Las Cosas De Yucatan*. Vol. XVIII pp. 35, 121, 122, 172, 216, 238, (Peabody Museum Papers, 1941) where references are made to various kinds of armor (quilted cotton packets, helmets, shields) and to little hatchets of metal. These references are to usage in the Mayan area at the time of the coming of the Spaniards, but the references also make very clear that the practices are old, going back at least into Early Classic times (400 A.D.) and probably earlier in many cases. We are indebted to our colleague, Dr. John L. Sorenson, anthropologist, for these references. Attention is also called to his article on metals in the *University Archaeological Society Bulletin*. No. 5, 1954.

⁸ See Alfonso Caso, et al., "Conocieron la Rueda lost Indigenas Mesoamericanos?" (Did the Natives of Mesoamerica Know the Use of the Wheel?), *Cuadernos Americanos*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb., 1946), Mexico, D.F. Cf. Gordon F. Ekholm, "Wheeled Toys in Mexico," *American Antiquity*. Vol. 11, No. 4 (April, 1946), pp 222-228

⁹ See references to Tozzer's work (as of footnote 7), pp. 201, 207, for mention of silk. This reference is also by courtesy of Dr. John L. Sorenson.