

to the souls of men that the work is true. While desiring to make it clear that our chief reliance for evidence to the truth of the Book of Mormon must ever be the witness of the Holy Spirit, promised by the prophet Moroni to those who will seek to know the truth from that source; and desiring, also, as I think is becoming in man, to acknowledge the superiority of God's witness to the truth as compared with any evidence that man may set forth—I would not have it thought that the evidence and argument presented in Parts III and IV are unimportant. Secondary evidences in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena, may be of first-rate importance, and mighty factors in the achievement of God's purposes. I only desire by these remarks to place the matters to be considered in their right relations.

B. H. ROBERTS.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION OF VOL. II, "NEW WITNESSES"

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B. H. ROBERTS.

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only ones I consider worthy or necessary of notice here; and even some of these scarce pass muster on the score of being worthy of consideration. I have already called attention to the tendency of misrepresentation in these objections; it is a characteristic of all objections that I have ever seen urged against the Book of Mormon. Why it is so I shall leave those to explain who make the objections. The arguments made against the Book of Mormon, especially those made by professed ministers of the Gospel, are wonderfully similar in spirit to those made by skeptics against the Hebrew scriptures, and in fact against all written revelation. The same scoffing at miracles; if they differ from those of the Bible—and sometimes when this difference is one only of degree—then it is argued that they cannot be true, because of said differences; if the miracles resemble those of the Bible—however remotely—then they are plagiarisms of the Bible, and are idle imitations unworthy of belief. The same old complaint of skeptics is made against the inadequacy and imperfections of the language—the language is not that of an All-Perfect Deity—it is unlike what might be expected of God, the human elements are all too apparent. And so one might continue through the whole gamut of criticism against the Book of Mormon.

Sectarian divines who would complain bitterly of such arguments if used against the Bible, do not hesitate to employ them and couple with them all the bitterness, ridicule, sarcasm, ribaldry, inuendo, and even misrepresentation that a certain class of skeptics have employed against the Bible. I do not mention these things in the way of complaint; I only want to point to the fact of them, that the reader, with me, may wonder at them and ask himself the question, why is this the case?

And now a final word as to these objections. Are all

the objections to the Book of Mormon satisfactorily answered? Are all difficulties which they represent removed? Frankly, no; they are not. Every one must feel that. But, on the other hand, do these objections that are not entirely and satisfactorily answered constitute an insuperable difficulty in the way of a rational faith in the Book of Mormon? My answer is, they do not. Nor does incompleteness of evidence on any particular point necessarily mean error as to the general result of the evidence. But a little more time, a little more research, a little more certain knowledge, which such research will bring forth, will undoubtedly result in the ascertainment of facts that will supply the data necessary for a complete and satisfactory solution of all the difficulties which objectors now emphasize, and on which they claim a verdict against the Book of Mormon.

Meantime, do not our opponents recognize the fact that some responsibility devolves upon them in the controversy? What of the positive evidences and arguments advanced in favor of the Book of Mormon? Have we not a clear right to expect and demand a recognition of these, or else a clear confutation of them? It is nugatory, as George Stanley Faber successfully contended respecting infidel arguments against the Christian religion—it is nugatory to say that the evidences in favor of the Book of Mormon are weak and unsatisfactory, while yet no regular confutation of that evidence, and those arguments are brought forward. To state difficulties, paraphrasing Faber,<sup>b</sup> is one thing; to refute evidence and answer argument is another. The work which we have the right to demand of our opponents is a work in which they shall go regularly through the treatise, say of Charles Thompson, of Orson Pratt, or Parley P. Pratt, or

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<sup>b</sup>“Difficulties of Infidelity,” Sec. I.