

religious society, whether Jews, Mahomedans, Pagans, or Christians, are all equally interested in it, if it be what it professes to be.

If the Lord will assist and strengthen me by his Holy Spirit, which I believe he will do, through your prayers, I will endeavor to bring forth some few of the evidences which establish the Divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

I shall compare this evidence with the evidence for the Divine authenticity of the Bible. If the two books are supported by an equal amount of evidence, then all are required to have the same faith in the one as the other. But if the divinity of the Book of Mormon does not rest upon as sure a foundation as the Bible, then the people will have some little reason for rejecting it.

In the first place, I shall examine what evidences the present generation have to believe the various books incorporated in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be of Divine origin. It must be recollected that the book called the Bible was translated from manuscripts 247 years ago by King James' translators. The manuscripts from which the Bible was taken are not now in existence. Up to the year 1749, they were deposited at a Spanish University, called Alcalá, anciently named Complutem. The librarian sold them to one Toryo, who dealt in fireworks as materials for making skyrockets. (For authority, see Marsh's Michaelis, vol. 2, part 1, page 441.)

The oldest manuscripts of any of the books of the Old Testament at the present day date from the twelfth century of the Christian era. You will find proof of this in the Encyclopedia Britannica, the 8th edition, vol. 4, page 695, which series is now being published in Edinburgh, Scotland. That celebrated work says, "The sacred books of the Old Testa-

ment have come down to our times in MSS., the oldest of which date from the twelfth century. Nothing is known of the history of the text previous to that period after the return of the Jews from their captivity."

It is believed by the learned that the Old Testament Scriptures were all destroyed by the Assyrians nearly six hundred years before Christ. The Apocrypha informs us that Esdras was inspired to re-write them. In this manner it is conjectured that the Jews again came in possession of their sacred writings. These books again perished in the great persecution of Antiochus. (For further information upon this subject, see Brett's Dissertation in Bishop Watson's Collect, vol. 3, page 5.)

The history of the inspired writings anterior to the Babylonish captivity is very brief. The number of copies were very few. In the days of Josiah, all of the Jews seem to have been destitute of a copy of the law. During the reign of that king, in repairing the house of the Lord, a copy of the book of the law was found; and when presented to the king, he sent five messengers to Huldah, the prophetess, saying, "Go, enquire of the Lord for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found." The messengers returned and reported to the king that the book found was indeed a Divine revelation, and the king caused all the inhabitants of Jerusalem to be assembled to hear the words of the book. (See 2 Chr. 34.)

For a long period previous to finding the book, the Jews had been ignorant of the Scriptures, and had fallen into the grossest idolatry. A new revelation through the prophetess Huldah seems to have been sufficient to convince the king and all Israel of the divinity of the book. They must have been inclined, in that age of the