

world, to believe the history of the servants of God more than in this age; for now the people generally require a vast amount of evidence. The testimony of a dozen witnesses is scarcely regarded.

I have already observed, through the persecutions raised against the house of Israel, their books were destroyed; yes, even the tables of stone, for some reason, were taken from them, and all Israel were left without even a copy of the law, until accidentally they happened to find one that had been hid in the house of the Lord, as I have already named; and they were so ignorant with regard to this copy that they were obliged to send for Huldah, one of the prophetesses in Israel, to inquire of the Lord to know if it really was his word. They found a book, but they did not know whether it was true or false; and they thought it important that it should be determined by the immediate word of God.

Why not this generation go and do likewise? Why not inquire of the Lord whether the Book of Mormon is a Divine revelation? The copy found anciently contained the words of the Lord. And the people were so rejoiced that the whole nation of Jews gathered together to hear it read, and rejoiced over it, and gave heed to its precepts. They were not like the present generation; they did not fight it, and testify all manner of evil against it, and publish lies against it; but they believed it on the testimony of the prophetess.

It is very probable that the Jews copied these sacred writings upon various materials. Bishop Watson informs us that "the Hebrews went so far as to write their sacred books in gold, as we may learn from Josephus, compared with Pliny." He further says, "Those books which were inscribed on tablets of wood, lead, brass, or ivory, were connected together by

rings at the back, through which a rod was passed to carry them by." "The first books," continues Bishop Watson, "were in the form of blocks and tables, of which we find frequent mention in Scripture, under the appellation of *sepher*—that is, square tables. That form which obtains among us (he quotes from Pliny), is the square, composed of separate leaves, which was also known, though little used among the ancients."

These copies of the Scriptures were destroyed, so that the Jews were again left destitute of the sacred writings. How they again obtained a copy, this generation are not informed.

Esdras informs us in the Apocrypha that he was inspired of God to write a great number of the books of the Old Testament Scriptures, so that the Jewish people might again be in possession of them. But how are this generation to know whether Esdras was a true Prophet or not? How are they to know that he was actually inspired of God to perform so great a work? It seems that the learned have no confidence in him, or they would not have placed his books among the Apocryphal writings as being doubtful.

But soon after the days of Esdras the sacred books again perished. How did the Jews again obtain copies? None of the learned can answer this question. For seventeen long centuries, the history of the sacred text is unknown. We are informed by learned writers that about three centuries before Christ the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, called the Septuagint; but have we any copies of the Septuagint? No. You may search all the archives of the nations, and you cannot find one of these ancient copies. Fifteen hundred years after this supposed translation, you find some Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Let us inquire into the situation of the manuscripts