

Jewish "theocracy" was founded, a dispensation that was, according to prophetic declarations, only to last for a certain time. In the first eleven chapters of Genesis we find a few outlines of the Patriarchal dispensation, and some of the ordinances of that dispensation are referred to without any detailed account. The last chapters of Genesis contain merely a brief historical sketch of the transition from the Patriarchal dispensation to the Mosaic dispensation. The remaining books of Moses (as indeed all of the Old Testament) are nothing more than an incomplete history of the dealings of God with that one nation which He had chosen for the purpose of communicating His will to mankind, until the appearance of the promised "seed." But the dispensation itself was a transient one. The principles on which it was founded must necessarily also be subject to such modifications as a new dispensation would require. Paul, the greatest Jewish scholar of his age, is very emphatic on this point. "It (the Mosaic law) was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." "Before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 5.) "(God) also has made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death (the Mosaic law), written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? \* \* For if that which is done away (the law) was glorious, much more that which remaineth." [II. Cor. 4.]

The laws of the Mosaic dispensation have, according to the same apostle, no more claim or binding force, relative to the numbers of the Christian dispensation, than a dead husband has to a living wife: "For the woman which has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband; \* \* wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." [Rom. 7.]

Of the historical books of the Old Testament much need not be said. The book of Joshua describes the settlement of the Israelites in the Holy Land. In the Judges we read of repeated apostasy, its punishment and God's mercy in delivering the penitent. The books of Samuel show the establishment of the ancient prophetic office and also the rejection of this Divine appointment and of God as the ruler, and how God, yielding to the demands of His blinded people, allows them to have a king. In the books of the

Kings, to which the Chronicles seem to be a supplement, we can trace the awful consequences of the revolt of the people against the prophetic office, until the nation, after a short time of prosperity under David and Solomon, falls to pieces and are carried away captives.

The poetical books are effusions of devout hearts contemplating the past mercies of God, His present goodness and faithfulness, and containing more or less distinct predictions of the future events in the Kingdom of God. The Psalms, many of which were composed by David, were intended for the edification of the people when gathered to their national festivities in Jerusalem. The singing of them formed, no doubt, an important part of the service. The book of Job and the Song of Songs are specimens of early dramatical compositions. The hero of the book, Job, was an inhabitant of Uz, in the northeast part of the Arabian desert, and a contemporary, perhaps, of Terah, the father of Abraham. There are some grand lessons laid down in the book. The question is discussed whether great suffering is not an evidence of great guilt. The friends of Job affirm this, while he, himself, under the greatest afflictions, denies it, appealing to God's righteousness and faithfulness. The Song of Songs, the best one of the 1005 which Solomon composed (1 Kings 4: 32), is a description of wedded love, one of the noblest affections which man is capable of enjoying, and was probably composed when Solomon introduced into his family an Egyptian princess (1 Kings 31: 7, 8; 9: 24,) as a plural wife. The Proverbs, and the Ecclesiastes contain many sentiments showing both the wisdom and the vanity of the world, pointing to Him who is the Wisdom, the Truth and the Light of the world.

In all these books we find truths scattered as numerous and as beautifully as the stars in a clear November evening sky; but the very scope of each book is such that it cannot be accepted as a closed and finished code of revelations, sufficient for all contingencies that can ever arise in the history of the human race, any more than the beautifully sparkling light of the stars is all that is necessary for the illumination of the creation of God.

We can now go over to the

#### PROPHETICAL BOOKS

of the Old Testament.

These contain many predictions bearing directly on the last days, for prophecy is a record of future events, as history is a record of past events. But in reading ancient prophecy one very common error must be guarded against, namely, that the Prophets generally describe the events of the last days. This they evidently do not do. Their prophecies generally concern such events as were immediately future in their own time and in which their own generation was, on that account, mostly interested. Prophecies are often read as if they all related to events which are still future, and which we therefore look at with

anxious interest, when as the truth is that events long ago transpired, and which we have almost forgotten, but which once were the great epochs of history, form the important theme of the bulk of prophetic predictions. In some cases prophecy covers the ground of events yet to transpire. But then, it is noticeable that the more remote the events described are, the more rare and dim the visions concerning them become, until we clearly perceive that were it not for new additional light of continued revelations upon the last scenes of the history of the world, we would never, from the first predictions delivered, be able to form a clear and distinct idea of these scenes.

Notice, as an illustration of this, the first prediction of the "seed of woman" who should crush the head of the serpent, and follow the gradual development of this prophecy, until latter prophets are able by the Spirit of God to describe not only many minute details of the birth, life and death of our Savior, (Isaiah) but also the precise time for his coming in the flesh (Daniel). And so it is with all predictions given. They increase in clearness as the events draw near. They indicate, therefore, by their very nature the necessity of continued revelation, as the first rays of morning indicate the approach of the coming daylight.

In reading the prophetic books, this must be kept in view.

J. M. S.

[To be Continued.]

#### SOUTHERN IDAHO TOUR.

[Continued.]

FRANKLIN, Oneida Co., Idaho, April 30th, 1890. By the assistance of friends at Houtz's Ranch, who furnished Elder Andrew Kimball with another span of horses, in place of the animal that died the night previous, we were enabled to continue our journey on the morning of April 25th. We traveled seven miles to the little town of Snowville, situated on Deep Creek, in the east side of the Curlew Valley, where, at the request of Bishop Arnold Goodlife, we held a meeting with the Saints in the evening. We had a good time. Elder Kimball related some of his experiences among the Lamanites in the Indian Territory, and I gave a short account of my late visit to some of the waste places of Zion.

Snowville Ward, belonging to the Box Elder Stake of Zion, embraces all the Saints living in Curlew Valley, including the town of Snowville, half a dozen families at a little settlement called St Thomas, situated on springs seven miles northeast of Snowville (in Idaho), two families at Houtz's Ranch, near the sink at Deep Creek, one family at Dille's Ranch, seven miles east, and two families at the foot of the Black Pine Mountains, seventeen miles northwest of Snowville.

Curlew Valley extends from the Great Salt Lake on the south to the Sublette Mountains on the north, a distance of about forty-two miles,