

this is the peculiar, or leading type of knowledge, sentiment, customs and habits introduced by his colony, and perpetuated in their generations.

The literature of the Jews, from the earliest times down to the beginning of Zedekiah's reign in Judah, 599 B. C.—the date of Lehi's exodus—was remarkable for several striking features, great antiquity, religious form, and poetical vigor being among them. But it was, largely, a literature of individual possession, existing in oral traditions and carried in the memory; not of written tablets or books. The difficult, and cumbersome method of engraving upon stone, metal or wood, was the only way of otherwise communicating or preserving knowledge before the time of David, who reigned from 1058 to 1018 B. C.

Jewish literature has been divided into nine historical periods; the first extending from an indefinite antiquity to 143 B. C. This ancient lore consisted, in great part, of sacred oracles, and emanations of Divine inspiration. Its agents and authors were men who looked upon the personage of the Creator, and spoke face to face with Jehovah; prophets, who wrote the history of their nation and of the world in advance of time; poet kings, and inspired minstrels, whose poetry was fired by the glow of celestial intelligence; legislatures and judges, whose laws have supplied the gems of liberty—the choice and precious parts of the civil codes that at present adorn and dignify the foremost nations of the earth. A wondrous and unique literature, embracing revelation, prophecy, law, history, lyric poetry, legends, and grotesque speculations; and while the leading idea was independence and a passionate enthusiasm for distinct nationality, an intensely religious order pervaded the entire system.

Lehi, an Israelite, indeed, offspring of the illustrious Joseph, prophet, priest and historian, was an embodiment of all these qualities and special endowments; and in all the ripeness and fulness of his character, this "learning of the Jews" was transferred to the new world, and took permanent root in all its subsequent institutions.

There was something fortuitous and uncertain in the emigration of Lehi. Like the uncertain wanderings of his exiled progenitor, Abraham, he knew nothing definitely of the destiny, and fiery ordeals awaiting him. But his faith and trust

were consummate, and furnished the moral force requisite for his extraordinary experience. He evinced his devotion to his calling and mission, and manifested the weakness of his self-interest, by abandoning his gold and silver, and other symbols of wealth, serenely leaving all behind; considering, no doubt, that such things would be useless encumbrances, or that the "Promised Land" would yield to his colony, all they could desire of earthly riches, hence:

"He departed into the wilderness. And he left his house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold and his silver, and his precious things, and took nothing with him, save it were his family, and provisions, and tents, and departed into the wilderness." I Nephi, ii: 4.

The specified reason for Lehi's flight from Jerusalem is thus stated:

"For it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah, (my father Lehi, having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days;) and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they should repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed. \* \* \* And it came to pass that the Lord commanded my father, even in a dream, that he should take his family and depart into the wilderness." I Nephi, i: 4; ii: 2.

The statement about the preaching of the prophets in Jerusalem at the particular time named in the quotation, is corroborated in the Old Testament in several places.

In II Kings, xxiv: 18, we read that:

"Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem."

In chapter xxv, we read of the taking of the city in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign.

The same events are recorded in II Chron., xxxvi, with the explanation:

"And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place."

"But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

Josephus bears testimony to the same things happening at the date named; giving minute particulars. The Jews, who survived the dreadful visitation of destruction upon their devoted city, were carried captives into Babylon, where they remained in abject servitude for seventy years; but in the case of Lehi's separation and removal we

discover the wise purpose and fatherly solicitude of Jehovah, in saving a branch of the house of Joseph, from the degradation of vassalage to a foreign power; and the peopling of a vast and magnificent country by a selected offshoot of His chosen race.

Lehi's first halting place was "by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea." From thence he traversed the desert, and next pitched his tent in a valley by a river side. In this sequestered vale the Patriarch built an altar to the God of his fathers, and gathered his wife Sarah and the other members of the pilgrim band around the simple, but efficacious shrine. As the sacrificial pillar of smoke and flame rolled upward and spread in fleecy folds upon the tranquil air, the prophet felt the responsive glow of heaven's approving smile; and then awoke the voice of inspiration, and the sturdy poet spake:

"And when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea, he spake unto Laman saying, O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of righteousness."

"And he also spake unto Lemuel: O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord." I Nephi, ii: 9, 10.

It is worthy of remark that the sons of the patriarchs and holy men of old did not always follow the precepts and example of their fathers. From the time of Cain and Abel the offspring of righteous men have been representative of the wheat and tares growing together. The comprehensiveness of this rule seems to imply that, in the celestial order, the family organization is not complete without different degrees and qualities.

Laman, Lemuel and Sam were the Ishmaels, the Esaus, the Simeons and the Levis of Lehi's family. They did not enter into the spirit of their father's mission, nor regard with favor the sacrifice they were apparently making in leaving behind them their comfortable home, and its luxurious surroundings. They complained and murmured, and cherished wrath and defiance in their bosoms. These germs of impious rebellion grew and rankled, and eventually brought forth a rancorous harvest of mischiefs and deadly evils. But while their father was with them, his sturdy bearing and potent eloquence awed them into submission.

"And it came to pass that my father did speak unto them in the