

it whispereth me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, He worketh in me to do according to His will."—Words of Mormon, i: 9-7.

It is evident from the above quotations, that Nephi in making and inscribing these plates, and others in preserving them, were moved upon by powerful feelings and peculiar inspirations, for which they could not account, nor explain the purpose. But a part, at least, of this "wise purpose" has been unfolded in this generation, and probably more remains to be wrought out.

An incident occurred while Joseph, the Prophet, was translating the plates of Mormon, which, though bitter in its experience to the inspired translator, manifested the prescience and providence of the Almighty, and made plain what was so mysterious to His ancient servants.

Joseph had translated Mormon's abridgement of the first, or historical plates of Nephi, filling some 216 pages of foolscap manuscript. At the importunate solicitation of his scribe, Martin Harris, he allowed the sacred manuscript to go out of his hands to be exhibited to a few over-curious persons. Harris bound himself by a solemn oath not to show the papers to any but his father and mother, his brother and wife's sister—a Mrs. Cobb. Nevertheless the manuscript was stolen and the Prophet never saw it again. See note c. Book of Mormon page 159.

In a revelation given to the Prophet in Harmony, Pennsylvania, May 1829, there is reference made to this grave matter:

"Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate, by means of the Urim and Thummin, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them. * * * Behold they have sought to destroy you; yea, even the man in whom you have trusted, has sought to destroy you. * * * Now, behold, they have altered these words, because Satan saith unto them, He hath deceived you; and thus he flattereth them away to do iniquity, to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God. Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands. For, behold, they shall not accomplish their evil designs in lying against those words. For, behold, if you should bring forth the same words they will say that you have lied; that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted

yourself. * * * And now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone forth out of your hands is engraven upon the plates of Nephi. * * * Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the (small) plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of King Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained."—Doctrine and Covenants, page 97.

Thus we discover in this circumstance some striking proofs of the foreknowledge and wisdom of our Heavenly Father. The artful designs of wicked men to scandalize the Prophet and destroy his influence and labor were frustrated; while the ingenuous servant of God learned lessons of prudence, obedience and truthfulness; and, moreover, by this intended evil, a revelation of some of the most precious and exalted doctrines of the Gospel of salvation has been given to the world in the present generation.

The impiety and rebellion against Nephi of his brethren Laman and Lemuel, and of the sons of Ishmael continued, with increased bitterness, after their settlement upon the land of America. Lehi died within thirty years after his exodus from his native city.

"And it came to pass, that not many days after his death, Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael, were angry with me because of the admonitions of the Lord. * * * Behold it came to pass that I Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren. But, behold their anger did increase against me: inasmuch that they did seek to take away my life. * * * And it came to pass that the Lord did warn me that I, Nephi, should depart from them, and flee to the wilderness, and all those who would go with me. Wherefore it came to pass that I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and also my sisters, and all those who would go with me. And all those who would go with me, were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God; wherefore they did hearken unto my words. And we did take our tents and whatsoever things were possible for us, and journey in the wilderness for the space of many days." 2 Nephi iv: 13. v:1-7.

From the forgoing historical items we learn several important facts. One marks a breach in the family of Lehi, whereby the family was divided into two great factions—Lamanites and Nephites—a breach which was nevermore closed. It distinguishes and names the

heads and founders of the Nephite nation. But for a more detailed account of this division the reader is referred to page 129 of the Book of Mormon. We learn further the causes of the rupture, and the motives which prompted the irreconcilable alienation. The Lamanites remained and spread over the locality they now occupied. Nephi led his followers to a section of country now known as Ecuador, South America. Page 155, note g. The new settlement was called "The Land of Nephi," out of respect to that great chieftain. Thither, also, Nephi transferred the public treasures and sacred records; and commenced, anew, to lay the foundations of a mighty commonwealth. He provided against the encroachments of enemies by constructing forts and military defenses, as well as the manufacture of weapons of war. He taught his people all manner of useful arts, and the necessities and adornments of civilized life. One of his stupendous enterprises, achieved in the early part of the settlement, was the erection of a magnificent temple. It was

"After the manner of the temple of Solomon, and the workmanship thereof was exceeding fine." II Nephi v: 11-16.

One of the first needs of a community is a head or ruler. And the need is usually enhanced by the urgent demands of the members themselves. And in every age, regal and magnificent governments have been objects of popular favor. It seems quite reasonable, therefore, that as soon as the followers of Nephi were separated from their hostile neighbors, and had founded a new settlement under the guidance of their favorite leader, that a unanimous desire to invest him with royal authority and honor was exhibited.

"And it came to pass that they would that I should be their king. But I, Nephi, was desirous that they should have no king." Verse 18. Nephi was looked upon as their "king or protector;" ch. vi: 2, but we are not informed that he was formally anointed to the kingly office but previous to his death "he anointed a man to be a king or ruler over his people." Jac. i: 6.

The objection of Nephi to his people having a king is a curious one but it did not originate with him. The same aversion to royalty was urged by the good king Mosiah. And this after the experience afforded by a succession of monarchs extending over