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Chapter IX

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CHAPTER IX.

CAUSES THAT LED TO THE MIGRATION FROM THE LAND OF NEPHI—THE PEOPLE OF ZARAHEMLA—MULEK AND HIS COLONY—THE FUSION OF THE TWO NATIONS—MOSIAH MADE KING—HIS HAPPY REIGN.

MOSIAH resided in the land of Nephi, and lived there as near as we can discover during the latter half of the third century before Christ. Whether he was originally a prophet, priest or king, the historian (Amaleki) does not inform us. Most certainly he was a righteous man, for the Lord made choice of him to guide the obedient Nephites from their native country to a land that he would shew them.

The causes that led the Lord to make this call upon the Nephites are not stated, but some of them can be easily surmised. Amongst such we suggest that:

The aggressive Lamanites were constantly crowding upon them, ravaging their more remote districts, entrapping and enslaving the inhabitants of the outlying settlements, driving off their flocks and herds, and keeping them in a constant state of anxiety and dread, which hindered their progress and stayed the growth of the work of God. The Lord therefore led them to a land of peace.

Again, this course of events, continued for so long a period, had caused much hard-heartedness and stiff-neckedness in the midst of the Nephites. Some of the people had remained righteous, some had grown very wicked. To separate these classes the Lord called the faithful and obedient to follow Mosiah to another land.

For a third reason: there was a portion of the house of Israel, a few hundred miles to the north, entirely unknown to their Nephite brethren. These people had sunk very low in true civilization; they were so degraded that they denied the being of their Creator, they had had many wars and contentions among themselves; they had corrupted their language, had no records nor scriptures, and were altogether in a deplorable condition. To save and regenerate this branch of God's covenant people, Mosiah and his people were led to the place where they dwelt.

Few are the words and brief is the statement made by Amaleki regarding this great migration under Mosiah. We are altogether left to our imagination to picture the scenes that occurred at this division of a nation.

Imagine the conflict that perplexed many a heart between the appeals of love and faith, between duty and affection, when the old homes had to be deserted, when families had to be parted, and the one stern, uncompromising feeling of duty to the right and devotion to God had to be the all-controlling sentiment. Nor can we tell how many, preferring home, kindred and friends, and the endearments and associations of their native land, faltered and tarried behind, whilst the faithful started on their journey northward into the untrodden wilderness. Nor are we told what afterwards became of those who allowed the allurements of the world to prevail. It is most probable that they united with the Lamanites, were absorbed into that race, and, like them, became darkened, bloodthirsty and savage. Neither do we know the proportion to the whole population of those who left with Mosiah and those who stayed behind.

The Nephite evacuation of the cities built in the Land of Nephi no doubt had a beneficial effect on those portions of the Lamanite race that took possession of them. They thereby became acquainted with some of the comforts and excellencies of civilization, and, though very slow to learn, their experience at this time laid the foundation for a slight advance of the arts of peace in their midst, and from this time we read of two classes of this people, the one living in cities, the other roaming in the wilderness.

Mosiah gathered up the willing and obedient and, as directed by the Lord, started on the journey.

Whither they were going they understood not, only they knew that the Lord was leading them. Like their forefathers under Moses, when in the wilderness of Sinai, they were taught continually by the word of Jehovah and were led by his arm. With preachings and prophesyings they crossed the wilderness and passed down into the land of Zarahemla.

On the west bank of the river Sidon the people of Mosiah found a populous city of whose existence they had never before heard. Its people were a semi-civilized and irreligious race, speaking a strange language, and with many habits and customs different from those of the new comers.

The meeting must have been a perplexing one to both people. Heretofore both had considered themselves the owners of the whole continent. Now they were brought face to face, but unable to understand each other by reason of their different modes of speech. We often read in history of the irruption of an inferior or more barbarous race into the domains of a more highly civilized one, but it is seldom, as in this

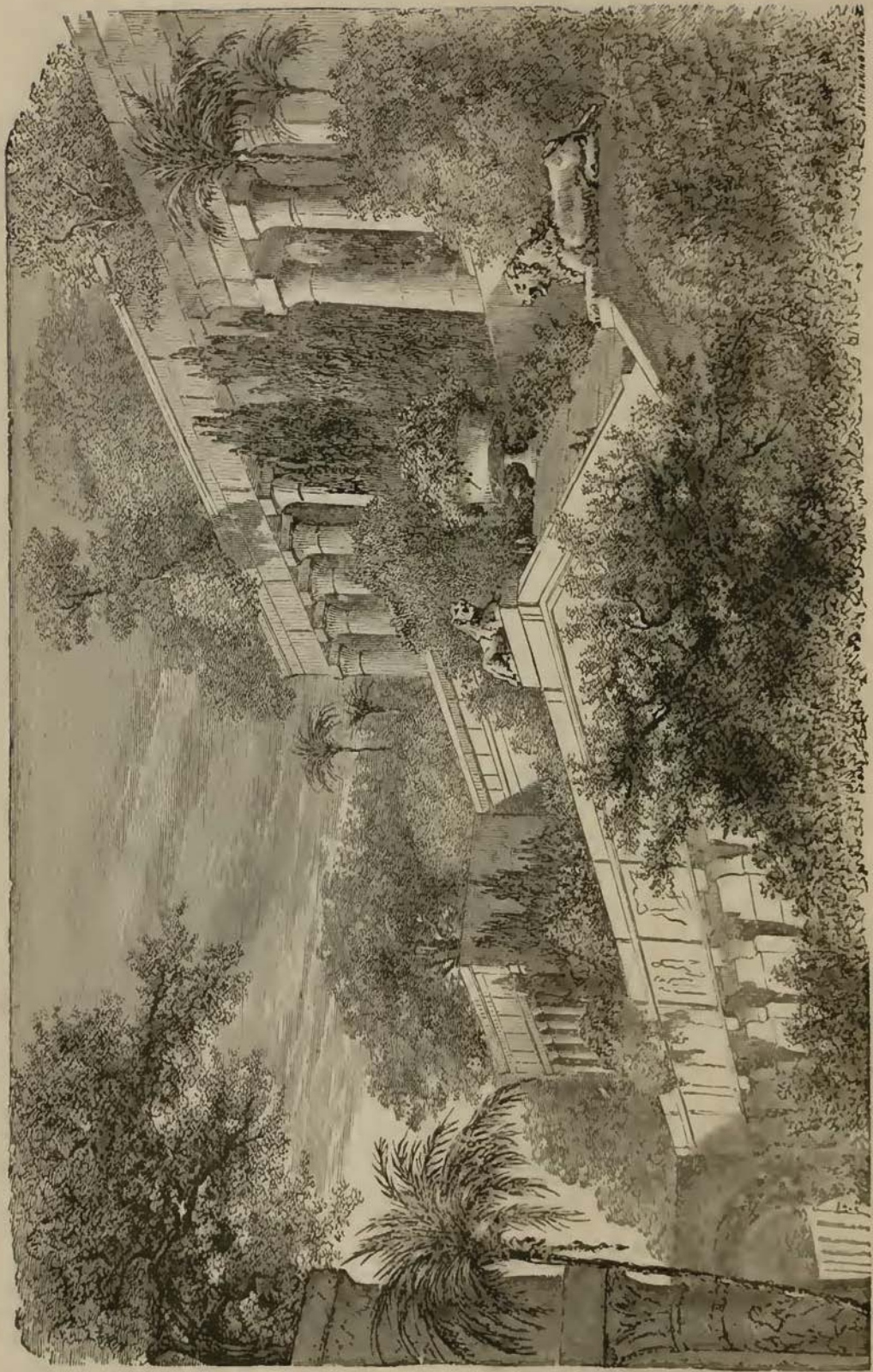
case, that the superior race moves in a body, occupies the country, and unites with the less enlightened people. It is probable that the first feelings of the old settlers were akin to awe and dismay as they learned of the hosts of the invaders that were marching upon them; but these feelings were soon soothed and an understanding arrived at by which the two people became one nation. Though the Book of Mormon



THE JEWS LED AWAY TO CAPTIVITY.

gives us no details on this point, we are forced to the conclusion that this arrangement could not have been effected without the direct interposition of heaven, by and through which both people were brought to a united purpose and common understanding.

When the Nephites began to comprehend the language of their new fellow citizens, they found that they were the descendants of a colony which had been led from Jerusalem by the hand of the Lord in the year



BABYLON.

that that city was destroyed by the king of Babylon (say B. C. 589). In that little colony was a child named Mulek; he was the only son of king Zedekiah who had escaped the fury of the Babylonish monarch. After wandering in the wilderness, they were brought across the great waters and landed in the southern portion of the North American continent, and in after years moved southward to the place where they were discovered by Mosiah and his people. At this time their king or ruler was named Zarahemla (about B. C. 200). He was a descendant of Mulek, and consequently of the tribe of Judah and of the house of David. The reason assigned for their departure from the worship of the true God, their degradation and the corruption of their language, was that their forefathers brought with them from their ancient home in Palestine no records or copies of the holy scriptures to guide and preserve them from error in their isolated land of adoption.

When the two races joined, it was decided that Mosiah should be the king of the united people, though the Nephites were then the less numerous. This arrangement probably grew out of the fact that though less in numbers they were the most civilized and, also being worshipers of the God of Israel, they would not willingly submit to be ruled by those who had no knowledge of his laws.

The education of the people of Zarahemla to the standard of the Nephites, and the work of harmonizing the two races, were not the task of an hour. It required much wisdom, patience and perseverance. Mosiah gave stability to the new kingdom by his own virtues and wise example, by the just laws he established, and by placing the service of the Lord before all earthly con-

siderations. It is evident that he built a temple in the new land, as its existence is particularly mentioned in the days of his son, king Benjamin, and as the people observed the law of Moses in the matter of sacrifices and offerings, a temple would be one of the very first necessities to enable them to carry out the requirements of their religion. But to the forms, types, shadows and ceremonies of the Mosaic law were added gospel principles, with a clear and definite understanding of the coming and divine work of the Messiah, all of which is very evident in the instructions given to their subjects by Mosiah's two successors.

Mosiah was not only a divinely inspired leader and king, but he was also a seer. Whilst reigning in Zarahemla a large engraved stone was brought to him, and by the gift and power of God he translated the engravings thereon. They gave an account of the rise, fall and destruction of the great Jaredite nation, from the days of its founders, who came out from the Tower of Babel, to the time of their last king, Coriantumner, who himself was discovered by the people of Zarahemla and lived with them nine moons.

When Mosiah died he was succeeded by his son Benjamin.