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Lessons from the Life of Nephi VII: A Ship Built in the Land Bountiful

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Abstract: A narrative of Nephi's life and lessons that may be learned from the life of Nephi. At times it is better to suffer wrongs than to demand one's rights, and the purposes of God will not be thwarted.

calamity. It was useless to go down on his hands and knees and try to repair the mischief he had done. It was already half-past five by the clock in the main office. Ignorant of city customs, the lad decided that in another hour the brokers would be there.

His throat was parched and burning, and he was unaccountably weak and faint. Staggering into the room where he had seen the decanter and wine glass, he took the latter, and going to a washstand in the corner, filled it with water from the silver faucet and drained it.

Still that empty, helpless feeling that deprived him of nerve and spirit. Casting about for a cause, he recollected that he had missed his dinner. His luncheon, too, he had foregone for motives of economy. A stout, healthy boy cannot endure a long season of fasting. If the outer doors should open and his hosts enter he felt morally certain that he should guiltily collapse at their feet.

He had heard of shipwrecked mariners and Arctic explorers who had sustained life for a time upon old boots, but the tall rubber boots in the corner were decidedly uninviting. His eye fell on the great pear. He might take one or two bites from that, and turn it with the fair side uppermost, so that no one would observe it until he had gone! This idea he scouted at once as cowardly and dishonest. He would take the whole pear, boldly acknowledge it, and pay whatever it was worth. Fruit was cheap enough in California, even in midwinter. If his other troubles could be settled as easily he would carry a light heart.

His luncheon having brought him into a more healthy frame of mind, he resolved upon another sensible act. He would refresh himself with a half-hour's nap. Here, again, he was at a loss to find a comfortable place, and it was only after roaming from room to room that he made his way at length into the neat office with the bookcase and the pictures, and after one sorrowing glance at the wreck he had caused, dropped down upon a rattan lounge in one corner, and fell fast asleep.

So soundly did he sleep, that he was not awakened by the clatter of Biddy McGinnis, who cleaned gentlemen's offices for a living, and who, being behind-time, after her custom, contented herself with making a dab at the linoleum in the outer office and emptying the contents of a couple of waste baskets in the grate.

She did not even trouble herself to so much as look into the two rear rooms, consoling her conscience by invoking the blessings of all the saints upon their honors for being such "tidy gintlemin."

Tom did not arouse when Schreiber opened up the front office and prepared for the business of the day; but then Schreiber had a step like a cat.

Flora Haines Loughcad.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF NEPHI.

VII.—A Ship Built in the Land Bountiful.

TEXT. If God had commanded me to do all things, I could do them. If He should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth; and if I should say it, it should be done.—*1. Nephi 17: 50.*

WHEN the people of Lehi reached the sea shore they rejoiced greatly that their tedious wanderings were over; for they had not traveled in a straight line from coast to coast, but had wandered round and about as the Liahona directed them, and that worked according to their faith and faithfulness. Like the Jews in the wilderness in the days of Moses, their course was a very devious one, and eight years were spent in taking a journey which, had they been as faithful as they should have been, would only have occupied a few weeks or months.

They pitched their tents by the sea shore, and, after many days, the voice of the Lord came unto Nephi, saying, "Arise and get thee into the mountain." As ever, Nephi obeyed the heavenly word. He went up into the mountain, and there cried unto the Lord.

Then the Lord spoke unto him and commanded him to build a ship after a manner and pattern that He would show him, that the people might be carried across the great waters that lay before them.

prayers, the Lord told him where He could find ore with which he might make the tools he needed.

Nephi at once proceeded to carry out the commands of the Lord. With the skins of



THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP.

Here a difficulty presented itself to the mind of Nephi. He had no tools, and how was it possible to build a ship without the proper instruments. So he laid the matter before the Lord. Then, in answer to his

beasts he made a bellows to blow the fire, but fire as yet he had none, as the Lord had not permitted a fire to be lighted in the wilderness. So he smote two stones together, and their first fire was lighted since the company

left the borders of the Red Sea. When his forge was made and his fire was lit, Nephi began to molten the ore that he had obtained to make the tools that he needed.

When his brothers saw that Nephi was about to build a ship, they began to ridicule him. They said, "Our brother is a fool. He is conceited enough to believe that he can build a ship—one that will cross these great waters, but he can't do anything of the kind, he don't know enough." And they would give him no help, for they did not believe he was instructed of the Lord.

Nephi became very sorrowful because of the hardness of their hearts. When they saw this they were glad and tauntingly told him they knew that he was lacking in judgment and could not accomplish so great a work as to build a ship. Then Nephi answered and said unto them, "Do you believe that our fathers who were in bondage would have been led away out of the hands of the Egyptians if they had not hearkened to the word of the Lord? Do you not know that Moses was commanded of the Lord, and the waters of the Red Sea were divided hither and thither, and our fathers passed through on dry ground, but the armies of Pharaoh were drowned in its waters?"

Many other things wherein the power of God was manifested in the deliverance of their fathers did he relate unto them; how they were fed with manna; how they were preserved from their enemies; how the waters of the Jordan fled back at their coming; all of which he impressed upon them as a lesson that when God commanded, men should obey without doubt, or without question. Answered he, "If God had commanded me to do all things, I could do them. If he should command me that I should say to this water, Be thou earth, it would be earth. Then how much less is it to build one ship than to do the marvelous works of which I have told you."

At first when Nephi held out these great truths to his brethren, they were angry and threatened to throw him into the depths of

the sea, and not only did they threaten to do so, but they made the attempt; but so full was Nephi of the Spirit of God that he said, "In the name of the Almighty God, I command you that you touch me not, for I am filled with the power of God, even unto the consuming of my flesh, and whoso shall lay their hands on me shall wither even as a dried weed, and he shall be as nought before the power of God that shall smite him."

The truths which he taught and the power that was in him confounded his brethren, that they ceased to contend with him, and they dared not touch him for a number of days, and this because of the power of God which was in him.

After a time the Lord told him to stretch forth his hand again toward his brethren, and that they should not wither, but the power of God should smite them; and this he was commanded to do that they might know that the Lord was their God. So Nephi stretched forth his hand as he was commanded, and the Lord shook them as He had promised. Then they fell down to worship their younger brother, who in times past they had so much abused; but he would not permit them. He said, "I am your brother, even your younger brother, wherefore worship the Lord thy God, and honor thy father and thy mother."

Then the brothers of Nephi worshiped the Lord, and showed their repentance by helping Nephi to build the ship; while he, from time to time, received the word of the Lord as to how he should work its timbers; for he did not work after the manner of the ship-builders of that time, nor after any manner that men were accustomed to. But he built the ship just as the Lord had shown it to him; and he often went up into the mount and prayed to the Lord, and God showed him many great things.

Now when the vessel was finished according to the word of the Lord, Nephi's brothers saw that it was good, and its workmanship exceedingly fine, therefore they again humbled themselves before the Lord. Then the voice

of the Lord came to Lehi, commanding that he and his people should arise and go aboard the ship.

The next day they went on board, every one according to his age, taking with them their provisions, seeds, and such other things as they had brought with them, that it was desirable they should carry across the ocean to their new homes, far away on its opposite shores.

The great truth that this lesson impresses, is that all things are possible to those that have a living faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God or fulfil His purposes. By faith Noah, being commanded of God, built the ark; by faith Jared and his brethren built the eight barges which brought them to this land; and by faith Nephi constructed the ship that answered the same purpose as Jared's barges.

George Reynolds.

THE GENEROUS BIRD.

WHO that has studied the habits of the birds can say they have not the gift of "wisdom and understanding" to a certain degree? Here is a story of the wisdom and generosity of a bird, which, I think, you will be pleased to read, the circumstances to which I was an eye-witness:

I had gone early in May with two little girls, Ellen and Susie, and their mother, to spend the summer on the mountain, and the most delightful of all the pleasures afforded us there, I think, were the little birds. They awakened us every morning with the sweetest notes I ever heard; they cheered us all the day long with their beautiful strains, and when evening came they wafted us a melodious good night. And such a variety of colors as their coats represented never saw I before in any collection of birds or persons.

The ranchmen told us there were plenty of nests of many varieties to be found and at no great distance from our station; but we never saw any; perhaps it was because we did not

look for them, for I never could bring myself to disturb the privacy of a little bird.

Some of these birds were very tame. A number of them often came near the door of our shanty to pick up the grain and crumbs that the little ones threw to them, and often in their fearless innocence they would even hop upon the threshold.

One morning we awoke to find the snow falling heavily, and before very long the earth, trees and everything outside were wrapped in a white sheet. This was a delight to little Ellen, who had often wished it would snow in summer when she could enjoy it most, and make snowballs without the discomfort of aching fingers; but she soon discovered that summer's snow is as cold as that of winter.

"I guess the snow has surprised all the little birds, too, they all stay at home today," said little Susie, as she stood with her sister in the door in the afternoon watching the heavy flakes of snow fall. But presently a little brown bird dropped down upon the snow before the door. "Tweet, tweet," he said as he turned his little head saucily to right and left by turns.

"Oh, mother, just hear him, he is asking for *wheat!*" was the little girl's exclamation; but it seemed to me as if he said, "You were my friends while the sun shone and the weather was fair, and I sang sweet songs for you, now the storm and clouds have arisen and hushed our sweet notes, I have come to prove that friendship was sincere."

"Tweet, tweet," he said again as if in thanks as he gratefully picked up the crumbs of cake which the children showered out to him in abundance. But he did not reserve all the feast to himself, after the manner of a selfish person; but soon raised his wings and away he flew like an arrow, and soon returned accompanied by four or five of his bird friends, who enjoyed the repast with him with as much gratitude, seemingly, as he had done. His absence evidently had been to spread the good news of friends and plenty among his feathered relations.

The storm lasted two days and a half, and