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Lessons from the Life of Nephi XII: Nephi Manufactures Plates

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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.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF NEPHI.

XII. Nephi Manufactures Plates.

TEXT.—And it came to pass that the Lord commanded me, wherefore did I make plates of ore, that I might engraven upon them the record of my people.—*1. Nephi, 19: 1.*

OUR readers will recollect that in our third lesson of this series we had an account of the manner in which Nephi obtained certain records from Laban at Jerusalem. These records were engraven on plates of brass, and contained an account of God's dealings with His children upon the earth from the creation of Adam to the reign of king Zedekiah. They also contained many prophecies of ancient inspired men down to the time of Jeremiah, who was living and prophesying at the time the records were obtained by Nephi. Shortly after the arrival of Lehi and his little party on this continent, Nephi received a commandment from the Lord to make certain plates of ore on which to engrave the doings of his people. And a few years later Nephi received further instructions wherein he was commanded to make other plates upon which also were to be engraven the history of the Nephite people. By them, both these plates were called the plates of Nephi, but they were not used for identically the same purpose. Upon one set of plates was inscribed the religious history of the people, upon the other was given in greater detail the history of their wars, contentions, development and other secular matters.

All the records were preserved with the most scrupulous care by Nephi. He considered them of the utmost value for the good of his people, that not only those who were living in his day might have the account of God's dealings with their forefathers in the land of Jerusalem, but that his descendants might have the record of the Lord's loving kindness to the Nephites themselves, and the copy of the prophecies and teachings of himself and his brethren. When he died the records went into the hands of his brother Jacob, who had grown exceedingly strong in

the Lord, who was a man great in faith and mighty in teaching, and who was also frequently filled with the spirit of prophecy. When Jacob died the records remained in the hands of his descendants till about two hundred years before Christ. They were then transferred to king Benjamin, who with his son Mosiah, held them to the year ninety-one B. C. Then they were given to Alma, the President of the Church, and he and his posterity retained them till three hundred and twenty years after the coming of our Savior. After this Mormon and his son Moroni were the custodians of the sacred records until the close of the Book of Mormon.

Moroni also seems to have had them in his care during the long ages that they were hidden in the earth, even to the present dispensation; and he, by the instructions of the Lord, surrendered them for a short time into the hands of the Prophet Joseph Smith that they might be translated into the English language for the benefit of mankind in this generation, and after that purpose was accomplished they were returned to Moroni, who, we understand, still keeps ward and watch over them.

That all people may be edified by the word of God these plates have not only been translated into English, but from the English into Welsh, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Hawaiian, Maori, Hindostanee and the language spoken by the Jews of continental Europe. In the last two languages they have not yet been printed. This, we believe, is simply a beginning and the Book of Mormon will be printed in one tongue after another until, like the Bible, it can be read by all kindreds, nations and peoples each in its own peculiar language.

Some years later, how long we are not told, Nephi anointed another man to be king over his people: and then, having grown old, he died. He had been their prophet, priest and king; father, friend and guide; protector, teacher and leader; next to God, their all in all. He labored diligently all the days of his life to teach the people to serve God, to believe in Christ, to keep the laws of heaven,

and to be and to do all that God's holy law required.

So greatly was he beloved by his subjects that when he passed away the people called the next king, Nephi the second, the next, Nephi the third, and so on. All the kings were thus called Nephi, in the same way as all the monarchs of ancient Egypt were Pharaohs, and the emperors of modern Russia are Czars.

Nephi's whole life is an example to us all and in every department of life. He was a dutiful son, an affectionate brother, a firm friend, a wise leader, an honorable man and a faithful servant of heaven. There are few characters in all history so perfect in all its parts, few lives so completely, so admirably spent in the service of God and to the good of their fellow man. *George Reynolds.*

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"EXCEPT YE ARE ONE, YE ARE NOT
MINE."

THE above is venerable, authoritative, precise, positive! It admits of no doubtful construction, and refers to matters temporal as well as to things spiritual.

The vital importance of the principle is unmistakably and clearly manifest in the prayer of the risen Redeemer, wherein He implored the Almighty in behalf of His disciples and all who might believe in their words, that they might be one with Him, as He was one with His Father.

Upon what plan did Christ pray for a perfect union that, throughout the ages, should make all believers His true disciples? His gospel, undoubtedly! That simple plan declared to be a "law of liberty," embracing love, justice, obedience, faith, hope and charity—the sure foundation upon which an unselfish, honest, truthful and chaste people might forever rest unshaken.

As Latter-day Saints, we claim and proclaim that the "falling away" spoken of by the Apostle Paul happened before the announcement of modern revelation through the boy Prophet, Joseph, unto whom God

Himself declared that all extant religionists had gone astray, saying: "They draw near unto me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." Thus, we know that the predicted apostasy had occurred; and, in the wake of that great "falling away," the evidence attending factional disunion in things social, financial, political and religious abounds.

For generations the voice of heavenly revelation was hushed; and man, unguided by spiritual light, sought with insincere lips to draw near, while his darkened heart was far removed from God. With the restoration of the gospel came the renewed mission of the Holy Ghost to quicken the memory, show things to come, and lead again into all truth, whether in heaven, on earth, or in hell.

To every soul securing His companionship and following His lead, the gate of truth stands open; and He whom Magdalene thought the "gardener" is there to teach—"as man is, so God was; as God is, so man may become." Having received the gospel of the Son of God, is it to us a "perfect law of liberty" as it was to the ancient disciples? A law of liberty to do right, not wrong! Liberty to be just, not unjust! Liberty to love, not hate! Liberty to be charitable, not selfish! Liberty to give as we have received, and not cling to blessings for the gratification of lustful desires! Liberty to seek Christ Jesus as our Life and Light and Guide, and not license to follow Perdition in any of his ways; for behold, he persuadeth no man to do good, but that which is of evil cometh always from him who, from the beginning, was an accuser of the brethren. His are the ways of inharmony, disunion, destruction, death, hell and the grave. Ever the exponent of disorder, rebellion, revolution, anarchy, chaos.

What Christ seeks to establish, Satan seeks to destroy. Hence, disunion, in or out of the Church, is his work; and if those in the Church who are not one are not Christ's, whose are they?

When supplicating for a union of all H.: