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## Chapter XXI

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**Abstract:** Nephi Died—Example of his Life—Internal Evidence of Divinity of his Writings in the Spirit of God which Accompanies Them—An Eventful Career—Admirable in Every Relation—A Born Leader, Successful as a Mechanic, Miner, Seaman, Chemist, Metallurgist, Stockraiser, Agriculturist, Manufacturer and Statesman—Expanded Views of the Rights and Equality of Man—Religious Liberty—The End

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## CHAPTER XXI.

NEPHI DIED—EXAMPLE OF HIS LIFE—INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF DIVINITY OF HIS WRITINGS IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD WHICH ACCOMPANIES THEM—AN EVENTFUL CAREER—ADMIRABLE IN EVERY RELATION—A BORN LEADER, SUCCESSFUL AS A MECHANIC, MINER, SEAMAN, CHEMIST, METALLURGIST, STOCK-RAISER, AGRICULTURIST, MANUFACTURER AND STATESMAN—EXPANDED VIEWS OF THE RIGHTS AND EQUALITY OF MAN—RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—THE END.

“AND it came to pass that Nephi died.” In this simple language does Jacob record this event. He leaves Nephi’s works to speak for him. And their consideration cannot fail to be of profit to all who will give them attention. The example of such a life is of immense benefit to mankind; it strengthens, elevates and inspires with noble purpose all who become acquainted with it. No Latter-day Saint can read the life of Nephi, as he has given it to us in his record, without being incited to exercise greater faith, to live nearer to God and to cherish loftier aims.

It can be said about the writings of Nephi (and this is also true of the entire Book of Mormon, and in fact of all saving truth) that they bring the conviction of their divinity to the heart of every one who reads them in the spirit in which they are written. Read in that spirit, they fill the soul with a sweet and heavenly joy that only the Spirit of God can produce.

The career of Nephi was a most eventful one. He passed through many trials and afflictions; he was often in positions of peril: but he never yielded, never faltered, nor never shrunk from any ordeal to which he was exposed. In every relation of life he admirably performed his part. As a son, he was all his father could desire, and of this Lehi bore ample testimony before he died. As a brother he did all in his power to benefit and save his kindred. What his course was with those who

followed and cast their lots with him, we can understand by reading his teachings, his labors and the love in which they held him while living and his memory when dead. He was patient, persevering, energetic and skillful; a man who was evidently born to lead. He exhibited these qualities when required to return to Jerusalem. Afterwards in the wilderness it seemed as though the company would all have perished had it not been for his good sense and capacity as a hunter. In building the ship, in its management upon the ocean, in teaching his people to work in wood and in metals of all kinds—iron, copper, brass, steel, silver, and gold—he exhibited his skill as a mechanic, a miner, a seaman, chemist and metallurgist. He manufactured swords and other weapons of defense, he built houses, he cultivated the ground, he raised flocks and herds, he built a temple, which though not so costly as Solomon's, was constructed after its pattern, and the workmanship upon it was exceedingly fine; he taught his people to be skillful, industrious and how to apply their labor to the best advantage; as a statesman he organized society upon a firm and permanent basis, laid the foundation of civil and religious liberty; gave shape to the government and polity and implanted in the breasts of his people such a love for and a determination to maintain equal rights that the effects were felt, it may be said in truth, through all the generations of his race. Understanding as he did the government of the Lord, before whom there are no privileged classes, he respected the rights of the people; and while he knew there must be officers to bear responsibility and a properly organized government, he knew also that it should be based upon the consent of the people. He brought with him to this "promised land" the broadest conceptions respecting the principle of human equality and the rights of men. Some of his views we gather from his teachings. Speaking of the Lord, he says: "And He inviteth them all to come unto Him and partake of His goodness; and He denieth none that come unto Him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and He remembereth the heathen, and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile." The nobility in which he evidently believed, was the nobility of good deeds. The perfect performance of duty would ennoble the poorest and the lowliest

and make him the peer of the richest and the best born. While his people were true to his teachings, this sentiment always prevailed. They enjoyed the largest liberty consistent with the preservation of good order. Every man had the greatest freedom of belief. Theft, robbery, violence, adultery and murder were all punished under the law; but there was no law against a man's belief; persecution of religion, however erroneous or false the religion might be, was expressly forbidden and was made punishable. In this way the equality and free agency of the people were preserved, and they were left at liberty to choose for themselves their faith and form of worship. So far as his influence and teachings went among the people, they were free and the country was a land of liberty unto them.

We here close the life of Nephi. He has shown us how much a mortal man, who devotes himself to God and His work, can accomplish for himself and his fellow-mortals, and how near, by the exercise of faith, man can draw to God.