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Chapter V

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Abstract: The Nephites and Lamanites Separate—The Nephites seek a New Home—Nephi Chosen King—He Builds a Temple—Instructs his People in the Arts of Peace—War with the Lamanites—The Sword of Laban—Nephi's Death—Jacob, his Brother, Becomes the Chief Priest—Jacob's Teachings on Marriage

CHAPTER V.

THE NEPHITES AND LAMANITES SEPARATE—THE NEPHITES SEEK A NEW HOME—NEPHI CHOSEN KING—HE BUILDS A TEMPLE—INSTRUCTS HIS PEOPLE IN THE ARTS OF PEACE—WAR WITH THE LAMANITES—THE SWORD OF LABAN—NEPHI'S DEATH—JACOB, HIS BROTHER, BECOMES THE CHIEF PRIEST—JACOB'S TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE.

SCARCELY was Lehi buried than fresh trouble arose. Laman and Lemuel, with their friends, would not be led by Nephi. They asserted that they were the elder brothers, and theirs was the right to rule. They would not recognize Nephi's authority, though they knew that God had appointed him to be their leader. So, by the command of Heaven, the two parties separated. Nephi, and those who would listen to him, moved away, and left those who clung to Laman in possession of their first home.

Those who went with Nephi were his own family, Zoram, Sam, Jacob and Joseph, and their families, and some others whose names the Book of Mormon does not give us. Henceforth those who belonged to this branch of Lehi's house were known as Nephites, after Nephi, their leader; while those who remained with Laman were called Lamanites.

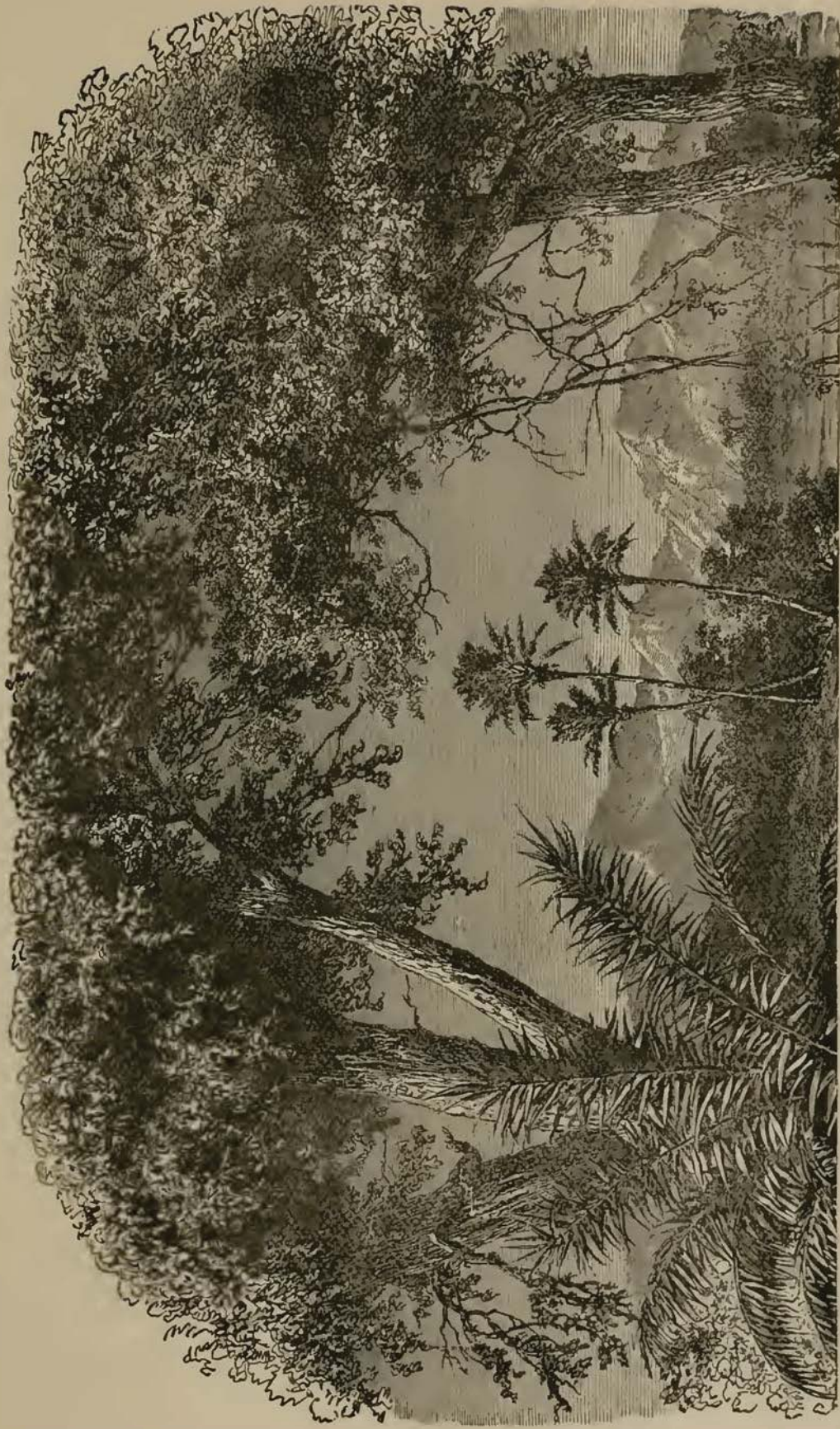
The condition of the Lamanites was now pitiable; they had cut themselves off from the presence of the Lord, the priesthood was withdrawn from them, the records and scriptures were beyond their grasp. Hatred and malice reigned supreme in their souls; they had no inclination for the arts of peace; they were restless,

cunning and idle, whilst they sought in the wilderness the food necessary to sustain life. Already the curse of God was falling upon them. Lest they should appear pleasant to Nephite eyes, their fair and beautiful skins grew dark and repulsive, their habits became loathsome and filthy, and this same skin of darkness came upon the children of all those who intermarried with them.

The Nephites called the new country in which they made their homes the Land of Nephi. There Nephi, by the wish of the people, became their king, though this step was contrary to his own feelings. So greatly was he beloved by his subjects that when he died 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 Tzars.

One of the first things that Nephi and his people did in their new home was to build a temple. This shewed great faith and courage on the part of so small a community. And their faith and courage triumphed, for the temple was finished. It was built after the manner of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, but not so large, so costly, or so grand. Yet it was a magnificent edifice for a people so few in number to erect. Here the Nephites offered burnt offerings according to the law of Moses, which they strictly observed; and Nephi consecrated Jacob and Joseph to be priests, to officiate therein.

Nephi not only built a temple, but he taught his people to be industrious and thrifty, honest and virtuous. He caused them to build dwellings and other



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edifices, and to work in wood, iron, copper, brass, steel, silver and gold; for there was a great abundance of precious ores in the land in which they now dwelt.

Nephi still retained possession of the sword of Laban; and, taking it as a pattern, he made many swords for his people to use in their own defense should they be attacked by the Lamanites. This precaution proved a very wise one, for in less than forty years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem the Lamanites had followed up the Nephites and commenced war upon them. But the Lamanites were not successful, for Nephi, wielding the sword of Laban with his own hands, led his people to battle and drove back the invaders.

When fifty-five years had passed away Nephi handed the small plates which he had made to his brother Jacob, that he might keep the sacred records thereon. Sometime after, how long we are not told, Nephi anointed another man to be king over his people; and then, having grown old, he died.

Great was the love of the people for Nephi. 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. In all these labors his brother Jacob nobly aided him.

When Nephi died Jacob became the chief religious teacher of the people. He was a man of much faith and diligence, and received the word of the Lord from time to time in great fullness, as the church needed.

We know but little of what occurred among the Nephites in Jacob's time. The people, however, appear in some respects to have fallen into sin. They had grown in worldly pride, and devoted far too much of their time and energies to the search for wealth. By reason of their isolated position, and because the Jews, their forefathers, had abused the principle of plural marriage, the people of Lehi had been commanded that each man should have but one wife. Some of them did not heed this special law, but took other wives, not only without God's sanction, but entirely contrary to his express command. Indeed they committed other grievous sins, excusing themselves therefor by quoting the actions of king David, and Solomon, his son. At this the Lord was greatly displeased, and he instructed Jacob to reprove them sharply. This he did in the temple. He re-affirmed the law that the Nephites of that age should have only one wife; but added, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, that if he wanted to raise up a holy seed to himself, he would command his people. This we have reason to believe, from reading the Book of Mormon, he afterwards did, though we find therein no direct statement on the matter.