

Hugh Nibley--Gifts
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Well, I accepted this call because there were some things that I wanted to settle in my own mind and I started asking questions and got into a heated debate with myself. That's what this will follow.

And so we begin with question number one. (Don't bother to mark down the questions--they go fast). Here it goes. "What are the principle issues," I ask myself (not knowing anything about these subjects) "what are the principle issues in political science today?" The economy and defense--how to have a prosperous nation and a secure one. "What can I say about that?" Nothing significant. "Why not?" Because I don't know enough. "Who does?" I don't know. "Have I made the effort to find out?" Yes, we get two newspapers and four news magazines and listen to T.V. Panels, and the experts, especially the economists (including Nobel Laureates) can't seem to agree on anything. "Do you think the situation is hopeless?" Yes, their's is hopeless. "But is there any hope in sight?" Indeed there is. (This is a very optimistic talk from now on.)

I call attention particularly to the Book of Mormon--this I consider the handbook for our times--as the author intended it to be. "Isn't the author a bit out of date?" No, he is a living prophet. "What do you mean by that?" Just what I say. The man is Moroni, he was a living, resurrected being when he gave that big dossier to Joseph Smith, he is still living, and at some future time he is going to be active on the earth again, (as we are told in the 27th section of the D&C). "But isn't the

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story he tells ancient history?" Consider his visit to Joseph Smith as described. He, Joseph, described Moroni's person and the manner and nature of his arrival and his departure in clinical detail, very concrete. It was a real visit. And since the angel repeated his lesson four times in one night, and then once a year, the same night (winter equinox) for the ensuing four years, Joseph is able to record exactly what the message was-- it consisted entirely of quotations from earlier writers, earlier prophets, earlier visitors to the earth. It was sort of a pastiche of messages. Joseph says he commenced by quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. Then he gives a long list of passages. He changed some, others word for word as they are given in the King James, in fact Moroni's message is simply a long list of these Bible quotations. (Well, so is the Bible itself.) But he quotes all of that stuff because it's going to be relevant. The heavenly messenger updates everything that has gone before without ever losing sight of it. He's putting it all together--he says he's doing it. "This is now about to be fulfilled, you've been looking forward to this, this has been fulfilled, this is where we stand now, with reference to these things." So we'll take Moroni as our guide.

"Would you say that present day, living prophets supercede him?" No, not anymore than they compete with him. He's as alive as they are. Notice that the scriptures are never outdated here. Moroni is quoting prophecies thousands of years old because those prophecies were still in effect, and in some cases as in verses 40 and 41 in Joseph's writing, were about to be at last fulfilled. Nothing could be more pertinent than that message. He was bringing Joseph up to date.

"Well how about other angels?" Exactly the same. For the dispensation of the meridian of time was ushered in by an angel who first appeared to a priest in the temple, talked to him all morning, quoting ancient scriptures. And then the same angel, from the presence of God, went to Mary at her house and repeated other ancient scriptures which were about to be realized in her. But the most significant example is that of the Lord himself, who after his resurrection came to instruct the apostles--and we are told in the last chapter of Luke, ~~the~~ beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them, in all the scriptures, things concerning himself. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. Just as he had commanded the Nephites always to search the scriptures and add their own careful records to them and after that He expounded to them all of the scripture which they had received and said unto them, "Behold other scriptures. I would that ye should write that that ye have not", whereupon He proceeded to dictate the words of Malachi to them. Then he called them to bring forth the records and He cast His eye upon them and proceeded to point out some important omissions (the story of Samuel the Lamanite among them). In these important cases notice the heavenly messengers, including the resurrected Lord himself, do not waive the old written record. They don't say, "The ipsa dixit is here himself, now we can forget about the old musty records and so forth." They stick right to them--though the living Lord Himself is there (imagine that). If you pray for an angel to visit you, you know what he'll do if he comes. He'll just quote the scriptures to you--so you're wasting your time. (laughter) I'm quite serious about that.

"Well, does that mean we give the written records priority over the living word?" No, of course not. Heavenly visitors and the Holy Ghost must take charge. The written record is their text and they expound upon it. "Why do they have to have a text?" Because it is always with us. Remember that after He had expounded everything concerning Himself to the Nephites, He said, "I want you to write this down because I'm not always going to be with you--you'll always have this to go by." But He's not going to leave us on the strength of the text itself--it must be read when moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

"But who's to interpret it, do I have a right to interpret the scriptures as much as anyone else?" Of course. You may remember that the wars of the Reformation were fought on that issue--does the ordinary person have the right to read the scriptures. We regard that as a definite step forward in the Lord's work on the earth, and in the church every individual is commanded to read the scriptures for himself. Of course the story of the Last Dispensation begins with the prophet Joseph, as a young boy, reading the scriptures very much for himself, putting the most literal interpretation on them, belonging to no church at the time, without asking for anybody's permission--so we do that. As far as official interpretation of the scriptures, remember, the Latter-day-Saints scoff at the idea that one must study special courses and get a special degree--"training for the ministry"--and thus interpret the Bible for others. Joseph Smith noted many times that interpreters of the scriptures like William W. Phelps and Fredrick G. Williams read the scriptures quite differently than him, but he didn't order them

to change or anything like that. He says you try to use reason and testimony--but that's all you can do. The brethren are instructed to stick to the scriptures and all their teachings and no man's opinion is worth a darn. Teach nothing that you cannot prove by the scriptures.

Well, why all the fuss about the scriptures? Because I intend to take Moroni as my guide to the present world situation. Why him? Moroni and his father are the principal, definitive editors of the Book of Mormon. They not only compiled and edited, they've gone through and picked out things they feel will be important for us, then they evaluate that and apply it to us and explain everything to us. What a marvelous thing to have it all summed up for us by the principal actors in this thing. And both of them are concerned with two things (both Moroni and his father), the questions with which we began. The questions of prosperity and security. The great inseparably related issues of wealth and war.

"Does Moroni give specific advise to us?" Most emphatically! His great closing narration is this--he repeats it again and again-- an impassioned appeal to us: Do not deny the gifts of God.

"What gifts? Who would want to deny them? Why?" One question at a time. The gifts are spiritual and they are temporal, but in fact they are inseparable. A temporal gift is in one dimension spiritual. They are listed in the scriptures. Please recall very quickly the spiritual gifts--you know them-- to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That is one of the gifts given to some. To others it is given to believe on their words, to some to know the difference of administration, to some

to know the diversity of operations, to others the Word of Wisdom, to others the Word of Knowledge, to some to prophesy, to some the working of miracles, to some the discernment of spirits.. there is a long list here of these spiritual gifts given to us, by the Lord--which are gifts, of course. We can't dig them up for ourselves or anything else. He gives them, and He says He gives them. We must ask with real intent and with an honest heart. You can have them--any gift. And there is a nice protective clause written in there--if you're not supposed to have it, what you are worthy of, what is beneficial or expedient-- you shall have that. (Since we are left to our own wisdom we may ask for very foolish things.) But all these things are available-- all we need to do is ask. But you must ask for it, and of course if you ask not you receive not. The gifts are not in evidence today, except one gift, which you notice the people ask for--the gift of healing. They ask with honest intent and with sincere hearts and we really have that gift. Because we are desperate and nobody else can help us, then we really ask with sincere hearts of our Lord.

But as for these other gifts--how often do we ask for them? How earnestly do we seek for them? We could have them if we did ask but we don't. "Well, who denies them?" Anyone who doesn't ask for them--they are available to all for the asking, but one must ask with an honest heart, sincerely.

"Do people prefer temporal gifts today?" How that's a strange thing. People don't want them either. "What are the temporal gifts?" Anything you could possibly ask for in order to

get along in the world. "People don't want them?" No, not as gifts--they are proud and don't want to accept a dole. (I'm arguing with myself here) "Isn't that rather admirable?" It looks that way. Their hearts are really set on these things--they want to have them but they want to earn them fair and square and to be beholden to no one for them. They want to say 'this is mine because I earned it'. No one has a right to a gift--no one can go to the giver and demand it as something he has earned. What is owed you, you don't receive as a present but as your due. In our Anglo-Saxon ethic we just don't like the idea of having to depend upon anyone else--we must be independent before all things. Well, I say, "What's wrong with that?" I answer, we think we are being realistic about it, but are we? Independent of what? Of God? Of our fellow man? Of nature?

"What is the issue here? You said the economists don't agree on anything, do you expect to come up with a definitive answer?" The issue is the scriptures. This would not be my answer in a million years but it keeps throwing it at me and I can't get away from it. They speak out loud and clear--so persistently and urgently on the subject--do not deny the gifts. Everything you have is a gift, everything. You have earned nothing. There is no concern for prosperity and survival where the gospel is concerned. Everything we could possibly need for survival is given us at the outset as a free gift.

"But surely God expects us to work?" Of course He does, but we keep thinking of one kind of work and He wants us to think of another. "Please explain," (says the wise guy). "Willingly," (says the astute informant).

Let us begin our story with Adam. Now the antiquity of the story can be affirmed by a large number of early apocryphal writings which have been unearthed in recent years--just as lots of things have been turning up recently to change all our ideas about astronomy and so forth and to confirm the ideas of Einstein (whose birthday we celebrate tomorrow) in the same way. An awful lot of documents are pouring out to confirm things that we all know. What I am saying here is not stolen from any LDS protocol, but it can be confirmed from direct sources which are now quite abundant.

Adam came down to earth. It is an earth fully-equipped for his support and delight. "We have made for you this earth and have placed upon it everything you could possibly need." Every imaginable type of fruit and herb you could possibly imagine growing spontaneously, of which he may partake freely. All a gift. The earth was created for him. And we have planted a garden already for you--all you have to do is take note of it. And everything is for the taking. There is one gift, however, which is withheld from Adam: the fruit of the tree of good and evil. Now into this world, most glorious and beautiful, with everything supplied, he comes. And then comes somebody else. And his first act is to offer Adam and Eve, he's been lying in wait for them as a matter of fact. That's what the word lie actually means, it means the one who lies in wait, who lurks in ambush, waiting--he was there first, waiting. And so...the first act is to offer to Adam and Eve the one gift which has been forbidden them. And for acting out of order, the stranger (no longer a stranger), is denounced and

cursed. He had given the fruit to Adam and Eve; it was not his prerogative to do so--regardless of what has been done in other worlds. When the time comes for such fruit it will be given us legitimately. He was acting out of order, so meddled by this rebuke and the curse he flares up in his pride and announces what his program for the economic and political order of the new world is going to be. He will take the resources of the earth and with precious metals as a medium of exchange he will buy up military and naval might, or rather those who control it, and so will govern the earth--for he is the prince of this world. He does rule, he is. Here at the outset is the clearest possible statement of our military-industrial complex ruling the earth with violence and ruin. But as we are told this cannot lead to anything but war because it has been programmed to do that. It was conceived in the mind of Satan in his determination, we are told in the Book of Mormon, to destroy the world. The whole purpose of the program is to produce blood and horror on this earth.

Adam is cast out of the garden now, and he is consigned to a new life. The first person he meets in the new world is already looking him up, he is waiting for him, and it is the same person that looked him up in the garden. He has come to Adam with a deal. He announces that the earth is his property from one end to the other and that he rules and stands for no nonsense. He asks what Adam wants; he asks him two times, what is it you want? He will supply any gifts forthcoming in this world--but at a price. When Adam says what he really wants is more light and knowledge, Satan offers to provide that and after

some dickering hires a preacher to do the instructing. When the real preachers, whom God has proposed, arrive (sometimes called the Three Strangers, the Three Visitors, sometimes the Angel Michael--it is different ones in different versions but it is a very close story), Satan challenges them as trespassers who have tried to take over his splendid property. They come to give Adam priceless gifts, Satan asks them if they have any money, not just pocket change, but big money--they can have anything for that in this world. Adam poignantly observes, as Peter does to Simon Magnus later--he enters the picture later on when he says to Simon Magnus that the gifts of God are not negotiable. In Acts 8:20, "Thy money perish with thee because thou hast thought that the gifts of God may be purchased with money." You cannot buy these gifts, they are not negotiable, you cannot use them in business. Well, Adam refuses Satan's offer and Satan discusses contracts with the minister. This is the false horse, a comic character in very early Egyptian temple ceremony. And Satan insists that he is true to his business agreements, which he is, he is all business. But having failed to sell Adam he later goes to his son Cain. He offers to make a contract with him and tells him how to get possession of his brother's wealth in return for Cain's help in organizing his work in the world. Cain loves the idea, he loves Satan more than God. And he makes the famous pact with the Devil (which goes down through the literature).

Satan gives him a special course to make him prosperous in all things; the Mahan technique, the great secret of converting life into property. Later Lamech graduates with the same degree--Master Mahan, Master of this great secret. He glories in what

he has done, it becomes the normal world economy. Nearly all the posterity of Adam, we are told, entered into business and all Adam and Eve could do about it was to mourn before the Lord. Everyone went off following the Cainites. And Cain did it all, we are told, "for the sake of getting gain." He was not ashamed, he gloried in what he had done, he said, "I am free, now, the property falls into my hands--my brother's flocks."

Well, Moroni picks it up at this point. The order of Cain carries right over into the Book of Mormon. These passages I should really read. These are really good, I think they are pertinent--like something I just cut out of the paper today, in fact. Let's start out with Ether 9:11. "Now the people of Akish were desirous for gain, even as Akish was desirous for power; wherefore, the sons of Akish did offer them money, by which means they drew away the more part of the people after them." Akish got elected because he offered the people money. He wanted power and they wanted gain and they made a bargain. The reference I have here is this: A poll shows that 85% of this year's contested Senate races were predicted by ^(Card, etc) So you can buy that sort of thing as Akish did. People got their money and Akish got his power. "And it came to pass that they did agree with Akish and Akish did administer the oaths unto them which were given by them of old who also sought power--which had been handed down even from Cain." (Ether 8:15).

So here Moroni is picking up the story--it comes from Cain's time-- "who was a murderer from the beginning." And then we go on, he talks about that and then it carries on in Helaman 6:26

where we get an interesting discussion. It is important here because this tells us how it leads directly and necessarily to war.

"Now behold, those secret oaths and covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton from the records which were delivered unto Helaman; but behold, they were put into the heart of Gadianton by that same being who did entice our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit--

"Yea, that same being who did plot with Cain, that if he would murder his brother Abel it should not be known unto the world. And he did plot with Cain and his followers from that time forth.

"And also it is that same being who put it into the hearts of the people to build a tower sufficiently high that they might get to heaven. And it was that same being who led on the people who came from that tower into this land; who spread the works of darkness and abominations over all the face of the land, until he dragged the people down to an entire destruction, and to an everlasting hell.

"Yea, it is that same being who put it into the heart of Gadianton to still carry on the work of darkness, and of secret murder; and he has brought it forth from the beginning of man even down to this time.

"And behold, it is he who is the author of all sin. And behold, he doth carry on his works of darkness and secret murder, and doth hand down their plots, and their oaths, and their covenants, and their plans of awful wickedness from generation to generation according as he can get hold upon the hearts of the children of men.

"And now behold, he had got great hold upon the hearts of the Nephites; yea, insomuch that they had become exceedingly wicked; yea, the more part of them had turned out of the way of righteousness, and did trample under their feet the commandments of God, and did turn unto their own ways, and did build up unto themselves idols of their gold and their silver."

And all this happened in the space of not many years. And the result of that--in the next chapter he (Nephi) tells us:

"But behold, it is to get gain, to be praised of men, yea, and that ye might get gold and silver. And ye have set your hearts upon the riches and the vain things of this world, for the which ye do murder, and plunder, and steal, and bear false witness against your neighbor, and do all manner of iniquity.

"And for this cause we shall come unto you except ye shall repent. For if ye will not repent, behold, this great city, and also all those great cities which are round about, which are in the land of our possession, shall be taken away that ye shall have no place in them; for behold, the Lord will not grant unto you strength, as he has hitherto done, to withstand against your enemies."

For this cause directly--that they had set their hearts on the economy--this is an interesting thing: it is not which economy. Remember what Samuel the Lamanite said--you're trouble is that you always think of your riches--for that reason, he says, you are going to lose them. "If you do that you will lose them--they will become slippery that you cannot hold them." You have no control over the stock market at all, the more closely you watch it the more that escapes (inaudible). Well, we won't follow that up, we'll leave it to the economics people.

How this motive leads to war can be illustrated by Alma 50, the beginning of the great 14 years war. That episode begins with a post war boom. (Very well described in Alma 45). The next phase of the war ended after one very well described in the sixth chapter of III Nephi. This describes the rebuilding of the cities and the repairs, the big contracts, building of roads between the towns, bustling intercoastal trade, all the rest of it being extremely profitable. And as a result of this tremendous post-war boom, he tells us in verses 10-14 its generalizing effect. And then the stroke of doom. Now the cause of their wickedness was this, Satan (right back to the Garden again) had put it in their hearts to tempt them to seek after power, authority and riches. This was their undoing.

Well, back to the Alma version now. After the post-war boom, Helaman, as the head of the church, is alarmed. He sees how this is leading people to set their hearts on riches:

"Therefore, Helaman and his brethren went forth to establish the church again in all

the land, yea, in every city throughout all the land which was possessed by the people of Nefhi. And it came to pass that they did appoint priests and teachers throughout all the land, over all the churches."

He tried to do something about it and immediately the resentment of those whom he rebukes flairs up against him. They propose an action program. Quite a dangerous one. Being closely knit, interested families, they begin to organize an opposition party and that is taken over by a man of considerable genius, who is capable of the unscrupulous; Amalikhah, who organized the coalition. And the coalition consisted of these people, in this order: first the rich, then ambitious judges seeking for power and office (including lawyers) (laughter), thirdly, some members of the church who didn't know any better. (More laughter). That's Alma 46:6,7 if you want to look it up--I could read these and it would be much more interesting because Alma knows how to put it. Fourth, aspiring businessmen and officials--merchants, lawyers and officers. People distinguished by rank according to their riches and their chances for learning. (Paper Chase.) (Laughter.) Fifth, important families, those judges had many friends and kinsmen and almost all the lawyers and high priests united in the interests of those judges--the upper-crust--they stuck together. Sixth, those professing the blood of nobility, and mentioned it quite often. Seventh, those who were in the favor of kings, (those of high birth), they sought to be kings and they supported those who sought power and authority over the people. The same theme is found in III Nephi later on.

What we have here is perfectly clear--the familiar economy we are all familiar with and the obsession with that economy. They were determined to defend their economic interests and privileges by force, and it leads them right into the great war.

Well, continuing our story now, very fittingly, Amalickiah's people are designated by the overall name of King-men. From the first, their tendency, we are told right in the opening verse, their tendency was to violence:

"And it came to pass that as many as would not hearken to the words of Helaman and his brethren were gathered together against their brethren."

"And now behold, they were exceeding wrath, insomuch that they were determined to slay them."

Intemperant and self-righteous like Laman and Lemuel. That's why Amalickiah was able to advance his interests among them by "gathering together a wonderfully (inaudible)" All sort of mixed interests. Time and again he threatened the peace and very existence of the Nephite state, constantly entreating the Lamanites and exploring opportunities, using their power to his advantage. Thus he went over with a host to stir up the Lamanites to anger against his own people. And caused them to come to battle against them. He was a real war monger. He was opposed at every turn by Moroni, whose sole object was to keep peace with the Lamanites (46:31), and among his own people (46:37). Moroni was supported by the nation as a whole, not a peculiar party. Actually the King-men seem to have been quite a small group, merely an element of Amalickiah's coalition--they began to use both terms freely, though. The rest of the people were referred to simply as the people of liberty, who, in a free election, put

the King-men to silence (these are not formal titles as yet, they merely serve to distinguish two main tendencies of interest). When Moroni by his Title of Liberty called attention to the serious threat posed to freedom by the militant opposition, who were actually in arms, behold the people came running together with their armor and so forth. Moroni compares them with the foreign outcast remnant of Joseph rather than a mighty army. In Moroni's history internal and external security are inseparably comingled with the conflict of economic and party interest (quite a picture).

The fiction has been diligently cultivated that Moroni on this occasion put all the pacifists to death. Those put to death were not those who had ^{refused to} take up arms to defend their country but had taken up arms to attack it, and who were on their way to join the enemy across the border, who were glad in their hearts when they heard that the Lamanites were coming down to battle against their country; who were dissenters to the enemy. Pacifists? They were all members of Amalickiah's army, armed to their teeth on their way to join the enemy when Moroni caught them. And whosoever of the Amalickiahites that would not enter into the covenant, he caused to be put to death, and they were but few. Armed violence, not pacifism, had been their program from the beginning. We can sum up the issue by referring to Alma 51:17:

"And it came to pass that Moroni commanded that his army should go against those king-men, to pull down their pride and their nobility and level them with the earth, or they should take up arms and support the cause of liberty."

You see it was a coalition of the important people, the persons

who lifted the sword to fight against Moroni--it was a battle, it was not an execution. They were in open battle and if you had arms in your hands and were fighting, then if you didn't lay them down, if you didn't surrender (as in any war), you had to suffer the consequences. Inasmuch as they were lifting up weapons of war to fight against Moroni, they were hewn down. And those of their leaders who were not slain in battle, were taken and cast into prison. The remainder yielded to the standard of liberty. It was a pitched battle, not an execution. And in a later battle the men of Pahorah received their trial according to the law, yea those king-men who would not take up arms in defense of their country, but would fight against it, were put to death. They were actually, again, fighting against it. They were all fighting men taken with weapons in their hands and refusing to give them up. Well, the freemen, it is interesting in all of this, this title first appears only in the late stages of the war as defenders of Pahorah, the legitimately elected judge. They took to themselves a name and a covenant. The man they supported, the incumbent chief judge won the election, although he was later driven from office. But in the correspondence between them, both Moroni and Pahorah refer to the freemen simply as "their people"--it could be a group of special people with them or just their side in general--the most dedicated, or more dedicated of the Nephites. Moroni refers to his brave soldiers holding a sector of front as "part of my freemen". And Pahorah refers to part of his supporters as freemen and reports that those now in power have "daunted my

freemen, that they have not come to you." In all these instances, they (the freemen) may represent a more dedicated part of the Nephites or just the Nephites in general. But what they stood for, freedom, homes, country and so forth, are the clichés that both sides in every war fight for. And perfectly justified and sincere. When the fighting starts you have to defend. This is the way it is rigged. Specifically, we are told what they were against and why they were (inaudible), which could only be called a coalition of vested interests which aimed at ceasing the government, and occasionally succeeded. And when they did, they legislated for their own sweet interests, and with the inevitable result, we are told, of war and contentions.

"And thus they did obtain the sole management of the government, insomuch that they did trample under their feet and smite and rend and turn their backs upon the poor and the meek, and the humble followers of God."

"They did obtain"; this is the, remember, a para-military group, the Gadiantons, "did obtain the sole management of the government", and doing that, they filled the judgment seats, having usurped the power and authority of the land, laying aside the commandments of God, and "they did trample under their feet...the humble followers of God." As soon as they got in power, they started legislating in their own interests. They put judges in who would do what? "Letting the wicked go unpunished because of their money", and "held in office at the head of the government to rule and do according to their will that they might get gain and glory of the world." They were doing that --there was an interest, it was a party, they tried to make the best of it^{as} they could.

So this is the situation we have there, they are in there to get gain and the glory of the world and they did everything with an eye single to their glory: politically, socially, economically ambitious. They were opposed by the common people organized by Moroni, who made them conscious of themselves as the poor and humble afflicted outcasts of Israel, always calling upon the Lord. Here we have the two totally different highly defined ideologies; we have the one which prevails throughout the world today and throughout ancient, medieval and modern history (you know which side that is--where war and economics are the two sides of the same coin like the famous Shield of Achilles.)

"But if everything is given to us, don't we have to work?" Of course; the gifts do not excuse us from work, they leave us free to do the real work. The instrument is given to you, it is up to you to show what you can do with it. I'll give you the piano or I'll give you the violin--the real work is showing what you can do with it. The Lord does that. The tools are provided. I'll give you the stone and the chisel--now you show that you are a Michelangelo. It is much harder to be a Michelangelo than to work enough to buy a chisel and some stone. Take this parable. A businessman had a young child who showed great promise in music and wanted to learn to play the piano. "Very well," said the shrewd, realistic, hard-headed businessman father. "As soon as you have manufactured a piano for yourself, going out and mining the metals and getting together all of the other materials, doing all the work necessary to make a piano, then I

will consider letting you take piano lessons." The child says, "Well, these are two different kinds of work." Playing a piano and making a piano are related, but in ^{your} short time on earth you can't do both. And that's the way it is. I'm not saying that temporal things are not important--they are indispensable. We must have them at the outset free of charge. Our welfare is a very important matter to Him. And God has recognized that and has taken care of it. He picks up the tab, and expects us not to concern ourselves with it, certainly not as constantly and exclusively as we do, or even give it priority. He supplies us with bodies free of charge and with their upkeep, also free of charge.

"Well, don't you think this idealistic immaterialism of yours is quite unrealistic?" (I ask myself). Indeed it is for non-LDS, it is simply laughable in the present world, not to talk about unrealistic. Remember--what we regard as real and what the rest of the world regards as real is by no means the same thing. For us the great reality is the visitation of Heavenly beings to the world. Nothing could be further from reality or distract one's mind further from cold factual workaday realities of life than an angel with gold plates or a gold book. The Latter-day-Saints will tell you a story which to them is perfectly real, whatever the world may think about it.

But what about the struggles of this life, the climbing and striving, the developing strength and character? It's very exhilarating climbing the ladder--but the question to ask is which ladder are you going to climb? "Well," I say, "what difference does it make as long as you develop your character?"

It makes all the difference in the world. What are the qualities that make for success in the business world? Hard work, dependability, sobriety, firmness, imagination, patience, courage, loyalty, discrimination, intelligence, persistence, ingenuity, dedication, consecration, etc.--you can add to the list. But these are the same qualities necessary to make a successful athlete, artist, soldier, bank robber, musician, international jewel thief, scholar, hit man, spy, teacher, dancer, author, politician, minister, smuggler, con man, general, explorer, chef, physician, engineer, builder, astronaut, scientist, godfather, inventor.--again, you name it. Too often these attributes of character ^{are} represented as unique to the business world, putting a stamp of glory on the man in the executive suite.

You don't have to go into business to develop character, on the contrary, consider statistics: There are a quarter of a million millionaires in the country--but how many first rate composers or writers or artists or even scientists--a tiny handful. It's a common place in church history that those leaders and saints who have denied the gifts became more depraved, intemperate and self-deceived than others. As usual, the Book of Mormon has the explanation for that--in the Zoramites. They had many good qualities, wonderful people. But they misdirected it and made them all the more vicious. Alma found them to be the wickedest people in the world. He couldn't believe people could be so evil. Misdirected for what? "Because with all their virtues they set their hearts upon riches." He says here (Alma 31:24ff) "I can't stand it, I can't look at it anymore, it hurts, it's too much, take it away from me, how can people be so wicked?" He

really goes into a four-star fizzle here. This is what was wrong--Alma 31:28:

"Behold, O my God, their costly apparel, and their ringlets, and their bracelets, and their ornaments of gold, and all their precious things which they are ornamented with; and behold, their hearts are set upon them, and yet they cry unto thee and say--We thank thee, O God, for we are a chosen people unto thee, while others shall perish."

"How can I dwell here below in the flesh to behold such gross wickedness"--that language is pretty strong. "Behold, O God, they cry unto thee, and yet their hearts are swallowed up in their pride. They cry unto thee with their mouth." Remember, they went every once a week and they bore their testimony and they were very strict in dress regulations and so forth and so on. They were brave and courageous and enterprising and prosperous and all those other things--but this was what was wrong: the 'and yet' (as Cleopatra says, I do not like 'and yet') "They cry unto thee with their mouths while they are puffed up even to greatness, with the vain things of the world. Behold, O my God, their costly apparel, and their ringlets...and behold their hearts are set upon them and yet they cry unto thee and say, We thank thee, O God, for we are a chosen people unto thee, ect." at the same time. And that was what the great crime was. Don't try to combine the two.

Here we have a final powerful motive moving you along--it's a wonderful thing to have except when you are moving in the wrong direction. Now like Adam, it makes a difference which ladder you are climbing. Like Adam, we are sent to this earth to go to school to learn things by our own experience, to be tried and

tasted and to seek ever greater light and knowledge. While we are here at school our room and board are all paid up by our kind, indulgent father. What are we to study? Are we to spend all of our time at school studying how to get more and fancier room and board? That's a vote of low confidence in our kindly benefactor--that's a cynical sort of thing to do. But then I ask myself, but isn't that part of the experience of life? Why ask me? Ask the one who is paying the bills for us what He intends us to study. He is most generous and explicit in his instructions, which are: The first commandment given to the church in these last days (D&C 6:7):

"Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich."

Ha--make you rich after all? He explains that: He who has eternal life is rich. That is the wealth He wants us to have. What's wrong with having both kinds? Again, don't ask me. The scriptures are full of answers to that one. You cannot lay up treasures both on earth and in heaven, you cannot live the gospel and be concerned with the cares of this world. That's what happened to the sower--he accepted the gospel, but the cares of this world, and so forth. You cannot serve God and Manon, you must hate the one and love the other. The rich man cannot enter heaven except by a very special dispensation. You cannot accept the Lord's invitation to His banquet...this idea of the trivial. Remember the Lord said a man gave a banquet, a feast, everything was all ready, and he wanted his friends to

all come and have fun. Ah! But they had more important things to do. The business of the world is more important. One of them says, "Well, I bought some land and I have to go inspect it," another says, "I'm looking over a few oxen and they are important," and another says, "I have a social obligation with this wedding I have to go to"--and the Lord was angry with it all. "You will never get to my feast then. You must either come to my feast or do your business." If you think, well yes...

So many student have told me (hundreds of times) "I would like to study this, I would like to study that (music, astronomy, things like that). But after all I have to do the important things, the real things of life--I have to go out and make money." The Lord says, if you do that, you will never get to the banquet. We are told this in every Gospel, in the Doctrine and Covenants and in the Book of Mormon and in the Pearl of Great Price.. We are told it again and again. Take no thought for what you should eat, or what you should drink or what you should wear. We are clearly told what we should not be doing. "Well, what should we be doing (for heaven's sake?)" I'm glad I asked that.

The Doctrine and Covenants repeatedly tells the saints how they should spend their time. "How's that?" As Adam did. Yay I remind you that Adam was invited to work even before the Fall. What kind of work? "Go to, dress this garden, take good care of it, have a good time, be happy and have joy--you and all the other creatures (they were created especially to have joy)." "My, my, what a time, the existence (inaudible). Yes, and work was part of the fun, not work to make a living I must repeat. At that

time the earth brought forth spontaneously every kind of delicious food of which Adam was invited to partake freely. He wanted Adam to work and have a good time. But then came the fall, after which Adam was instructed to get back to that paradisiacal existence as soon as possible. Messengers being sent to him with one gift after another--while Satan tried to decoy him into a business deal. "What are we instructed to do in our fallen state?" The shortest and most concise section of the DiC puts that to us. Section 26: "Let your time be devoted to 1) the study of the scriptures, 2) preaching and confirming the church, 3) performing your labors on the land. Farming, church work, and study. Even so, Adam was told to cultivate his garden, to do church work among his children (which was most strenuous--remember he spent many, many years working among them, teaching the gospel to them--sheer despair) and finally, to seek ever greater light and knowledge. Which he does, and which the Lord promises him if he asks for it.

When we have sufficient for our needs, which is very soon, as we learn in 1 Timothy 6:5-11, "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content." But they who would have more, they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts," all sorts of (inaudible), which means desires for things which they shouldn't have. This leads many people astray. You don't need money--"Have you any money?" Sure, sufficient for our needs. "That's all right, but we need more." You don't; you don't need more.

Well, back to this again. Then you are ready for the real work, when we have sufficient for our needs, and that is pretty

soon. If we get side tracked on supplying our needs then we are in real trouble (Timothy tells us). We have been decoyed exactly as Satan planned. But still we have to consider mundane things. I keep coming back to that, whatever you say about it. Of course we do. Consider III Nephi 10 ff. Here the Lord bestows gifts on the people of such a sacred nature it is forbidden to discuss them, but before He bestows those gifts, He takes sure that their temporal condition is taken care of. "Have you any that are sick among you, or lame or blind or halt or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered or that are deaf or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them." Then he commanded his disciples that they should bring forth bread and wine unto Him. And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, then He taught them about the sacrament. Then all people, beginning with Nephi himself, went down into the water and were baptized--cleaned up for a special meeting with the Lord on the next day--when He wanted everybody in a perfect state so He could begin His teaching. But all of their physical needs had to be taken care of first--they were. But that is where the gospel begins--that is where other activities end. Once we have taken care of that part of it, once the people are all fed and clothed and healed of any afflictions and cleaned up--well, it's all done. The work is done. What do we do now, sit around and be bored? No--then the teaching begins. All this in preparation for real teachings and manifestations that follow. The gift of the mysteries far beyond the imagination.

The Lord recognized that taking care of physical wants is the beginning of wisdom. Feeding, healing and cleaning the people up is the first step. That leads up to the threshold of the

gospel, but as I say, with most churches that is the whole story, but with us it is a minimal requirement. Like the Word of Wisdom. They are given to the Nephites (we are told the Word of Wisdom is given to us) as all temporal blessings are--as a free gift. The spiritual feast which is to follow is also a free gift. And these are the gifts that Moroni pleads with us not to reject.

"Still, it makes me uncomfortable that everything should be just given to us." Everything is not given unconditionally, but only some gifts. How is your health, for example? My health is very good--no aches, pains, disabilities, headaches, hangups, blackouts, no chronic ills and all that. (The doctor asks me that every year and is so disappointed when I say no, no, no, no, no. He figures I should have some of those!) No, why do you ask? Well, doesn't that make your life very dull? These things are taken care of without any effort on your part. Does that easy good health make you feel uncomfortable; lazy, guilty--how dull your life must be without aches and pains. The ancients use the same word for work and toil as for pain and suffering. Yet you don't suffer. You find good health boring--no, it is not so. So we have a paradox--the body serves us best when we are least aware of it. And so it is with money. This, of course, is the paradox in the Book of Mormon. The people are righteous, they get a lot of wealth, and the wealth makes them unrighteous. So we go around in circles--is that the key? No, it isn't that. They are concerned with the wrong things.

Well, so we have the paradox: the body serves us best when

we are least aware of it, and so with money. We have some--but to set our hearts on riches--that is what it keeps harping away at. The love of money is the root of all evil. That is a quotation from Enoch which is quoted by Paul and it is also quoted in the Book of Mormon. (I put that in an article in the Enoch series and it was struck out.) To set our hearts on riches, is, in the Book of Mormon, the ultimate disaster.

To return to the wonderful events of III Nephi, the Lord fed the people miraculously, as He did on more than one occasion in the New Testament. They were hungry and He gave them food. III Nephi 20:9:

"Now, when the multitude had all eaten and drunk, behold, they were filled with the Spirit; and they did cry out with one voice, and gave glory to Jesus, whom they both saw and heard."

Why this great outburst of rejoicing? Hadn't they ever eaten bread and wine before? Is eating bread and fish such a novelty to them? No, it wasn't the gift, it was the hand of the giver. They actually saw the hand of the giver. "And they both saw and heard." They knew where this comes from. So one gives glory upon being raised from the sick bed. Eventually, everyone is bound to get well, but the manner of the healing is the joy in it--the hand of the giver. The comfort and joy. The feeling of the power and love that is there. This is behind the whole thing. In most passages of scripture where the gifts are specifically mentioned (I have a list of all mentions of gifts in the scriptures here), almost invariably there is a reference to the power of God and the grace of God. Grace is (), it is charity. These gifts are all free gifts and of course Moroni

ends on the theme of faith, hope and charity. If we don't have them we have nothing, and if we do have them we have nothing to worry about and we will not concern ourselves with these things. What is a (inaudible), or even a few more years of life or a good harvest compared with the awareness of the love and power of the giver.

In return for giving us everything--God asks only two things: 1) to recognize His gifts for what they are and not take credit to ourselves and say, "this is mine," and now I ask can ye say ought of yourselves, for behold are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend on the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have for both food and raiment, and for gold, for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind?" Notice, he is speaking of temporal blessings here, of which we actually earn nothing. None of us has so much as earned our own keep, as he says. "I say, if ye should serve Him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants." That is, consuming more than we produce. Nobody can even pay his own way here. What is the second thing He requires? That we should not withhold His gifts to us from others--as if we had a special right to them. "Behold, all that he requireth of you is to keep His commandments." What are they? We should not have a mind to injure one another but live peacefully. "Ye shall not suffer your children to go hungry or naked, you will succor those that stand in need, ye will administer of your substance, ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, saying perhaps, this man he brought this on himself--for behold, are we not all beggars?" Well, perhaps, in a sense, but some more

than others? No, equally, namely 100%. In the first place, back to Benjamin again, "in the first place He hath created you and granted you your lives, created you and kept and preserved you, and doth preserve you from day to day by lending you breath. Even supporting you from moment to moment, and you are still indebted to Him and will be for ever and ever. Therefore, what have you to boast?" We are all beggars equal--100%, as far as you can go.

And that reminds us of another thing--it is all miraculous, totally beyond our power of comprehension. Before the loaves and fishes there was the manna. Now you remember the manna--a gift from heaven and some shrewd and far-sighted Israelites tried to show their appreciation by going into business. And the manna rotted before the day was over. They were not allowed to hoard it, it was not negotiable, it was a gift of God. The miracle of the loaves and fishes was also the miracle of our daily bread, for which the Lord has told us to pray to Him. Just as miraculous, following King Benjamin, as the loaves and fishes. In it we acknowledge the hand of the giver whenever we give thanks, whenever we give the blessing we acknowledge the hand of the giver. But we still have the attitude of the old Danish man in Sanpete, that Brother Jensen used to tell about. "That's a fine carrot patch you and the Lord have there. Brother Peterson," "Yes, and you should have seen what it looked like when the Lord was doing it alone."

Well, as long as we turn our minds to the things of this world, which means just that, and think that we can manage things pretty well for ourselves, we are doomed--not only to frustration

but destruction. So say the prophets and now every newspaper and magazine tells us that they are right. It's a poor time to dedicate ourselves to that philosophy.

Well, finally, "there is no free lunch," says Korihor. "It is all free lunch," says King Benjamin. I side with Korihor the realist if lunch is the aim and purpose of life, then Korihor is right, as he firmly believed. He said, when a man dies that is the end thereof. A Marriot lunch is the best thing you can hope for in that world and so he's right.

But since I accept the gospel, that's out of the question. Either we believe that the lunch has been taken care of or we are in for a long horrible contest, both internal and external, as to who is going to get the most.

Well, it looks like the time is up, the people are getting more vigorous. Let's call it...should I leave on something as negative as this? You see this is the thing that Moroni is telling us--this may seem extreme--and it is. It is utterly fantastic. But what is the alternative? What is the other? I'm telling you. This is in the Book of Mormon. This is the story, this is what happens. It happened to the Jaredites, it happened to us, and it will happen to any other people on the continent that go the way we do--if they set their hearts on the same things. Here's a statement from the next to last Newsweek. It's a quotation from the governor of the Federal Reserve Board, Henry C. Rodash, some of you may have seen it. He says, "Our economy is a form of fraud perpetrated by everybody on everybody. It is a world in which nobody keeps his word. Even if you could adjust perfectly for it, it would be a very unpleasant world."

That's your maximizing of profits. So we are given that choice. But, I say, "that is so extreme, can't you be realistic." This is being realistic--but you have to give it a try. We are seeking for the wrong things, and we are never going to find them. Would you like some news clippings and things like that? No, not that! So, if there are no questions.

I asked the questions and I answered them--not to my satisfaction--there are more things.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: Alexander Solzhenitsyn gave a talk about a year ago and he (inaudible, something about Americans) because they have become so imperialistic (inaudible). What do you think of (inaudible).

Answer: This is the theme all the way through you see. I left out those papers for fear I would get started on that sort of a theme here. But, this is the whole thing. Our plans will not work. Take no thought what you should wear--that will never work in this world (as it is). If you don't want to get involved in the neighborhood brawl, there's only one thing you can do--move out of the neighborhood. And we refuse to do that. We stay in the neighborhood and we're upset because we choose sides and have to get in these neighborhood brawls, and they're both wrong.

Satan's masterpiece of counterfeiting is the doctrine that there are only two choices and he will show us what they are. It is true that there are only two ways, but by pointing us the way he wants us to take and then showing us a fork in that road, he convinces us that we are making the vital choice, when actually

we are choosing between branches in his road. Which one we take makes little difference to him, for both lead to destruction. This is the polarization we find in our world today. Thus, we have to choose between Shiz and Coriantumr--which all Jaredites were obliged to make. We have the choice between the wicked Lamanites (and they were that) and the equally wicked (Mormon said more wicked) Nephites. Or between the fleshpots of Egypt and the stews of Babylon. Or between the land pirate and the sea pirates of the world war, or between white supremacy and black supremacy, or between Vietnam and Cambodia, or between bushwhackers and jay hawkers, or between China and Russia, or between Catholic and Protestant, or between fundamentalist and atheist, or between right and left--all of which are true rivals, hate each other. A very clever move of Satan. A subtlety that escapes us most of the time. So I ask an LDS, what is your position frankly (I'd like to take a vote here) regarding the merits of cigarettes vs. pipes? Which do you take? Or whiskey vs. bourbon, or wine vs. beer, or heroin vs. LSD. It should be apparent that you take no sides. By its nature it simply does not concern you. It is simply meaningless as far as your life is concerned. "What, are you not willing to stand up and be counted?" No, I am not. The saints took no sides in that most passionately partisan of wars, the Civil War, and they never regretted it.

What then of the choice between entering into divisions, schools, controversies, contentions, vanities, or avoiding them? How can you avoid them? As I say, to avoid these neighborhood fights, you must move out of the neighborhood. We can't do that

without supernatural aid. No, of course not. That's where it comes in. The whole thing is supernatural. That's the part where you won't believe me, where nobody will believe me. But it is on a supernatural plane. That changes everything, of course. The argument then ceases. We are dealing in absolutes there. That's just where the gospel comes in. Consider the stories of all the great patriarchs, Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Noah, Jared, Ether, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Lehi, Alma. All are the stories of individuals faced with a problem contending against the whole world--a world in rapid decline.

Why are these stories told to us in such harrowing detail? You think they don't apply? You see, this is it. Now this cross polarization is a very effective means of destruction--as the Romans knew, divide and conquer. The means of gaining power and leadership. So we have always been told you must join the action to fight against communism, or you must accept the leadership of Moscow to fight fascism, or you must join Persia against Rome (or Rome against Persia). That's the 4th century. Or in World War I, you must join the Allies or the central power. While all the time there is only one real choice--between accepting the gifts of God for what they are on His terms and going directly to Him and asking for whatever you need, or seeking the unclean gift, as it is called, of power and gain. Remember, Moroni ends saying this: "Deny not the gifts of God, lay not your hand upon the unclean gift" (he's talking about the filthy lucre and so forth). So that's the choice I think we

have. Do you think that's a practical solution? Well, many of us have had the door banged in our face for that very reason, because "You people are nuts!" All right, so I'm nuts--there's nothing to argue about in that case, is there? So leave us not argue.

Question: Are we supposed to be seeking truth and light?

Answer: Yes.

Question: But I have to pay tuition to attend your lectures.

Answer: Well, you didn't have to pay tuition to get here-- I know people here that didn't pay tuition (laughter). No, that's so, this is an (inaudible) institution, you touched right on the point there. We shouldn't have to pay. At the ideal university the thing is supposed to be supplied. You're not here... This is supposed to be what they call a liberal education because it is not the work of the world you are dealing with. You are dealing with types and models and concepts and things like that. The other things can be put off for now, but the liberal education is that which is liberalis--it is not a trade school. There are other trade schools, and there are fine ones, but this is not the trade school.

Well, should our whole economy be this other sort of thing? Well the funny thing is that there are people in our society, there are some, I can think of some, that trust the Lord and He never lets them down. There are some, you'd be surprised.

But of course the idea of paying tuition, we're into it up to our necks here. This is strictly a business institution, as you know. But you're in it. "Come out of here, oh, my people." This is Babylon, "Come out of her, oh my people and partake

not of her sins--partake of her plagues if you want to." We're willing to take that chance and we pay a high price for it too. Where are the gifts? "The visions and glories of old are returning and angels are coming to visit the earth," and all that sort of thing. Well, we do have healing, I say, because we pray earnestly for that. Nobody is much interested in other gifts, they don't particularly care about that. What they want, you see...They'd much sooner settle for the cash. "But I'll work hard for it." And all that sort of thing. We think we're so idealistic.

Question: (Something about the neighborhood fights.)

Answer: Yes, I think some of us have done that more than once in our lives.

Question: (inaudible)

Answer: Well, again, you don't have to wait for the prophet to tell you everything to do. Remember, this is another commandment given us, You approach the Lord directly as far as that goes. The Lord says, "Trouble me no more about these matters," to Joseph and Joseph says, "trouble me no more about these matters," to his followers. He says the people are to use their judgment. He says the people are relying too much on the Prophet and therefore they are darkening their minds. This is one of the things the General Authorities are bothered by. They can't have people running with every petty personal problem to them. They hand it down to lower echelon and so forth, even so, some people insist they have to go right to the top of the church, right to the head of the church, as if President Kimball could handle all these things personally, as if he were supposed to handle them

all personally. How do you personally escape this? Notice, the persons we are talking about, the heroes we have mentioned, the patriarchs of old, didn't have any particular authority or any particular office at the time. They were all outcasts, every blessed one of them. It was later--after they had been outcasts, after they had been tested and tried, then the Lord gives to them the power and authority over the followers as leaders of the church, as founders of dispensations and so forth. But everyone of them was plagued for a long time by troubles. "My father Lehi was sorely oppressed and he went forth and as he went forth he prayed to the Lord, he prayed for light." Adam himself prayed and prayed, and after many days he finally got an answer. The same thing with Abraham, he says, "Thy servant has sought thee diligently, now I have found thee." He at last finds the Lord. But you must seek first, you must ask with a sincere heart and with real intent. We don't need to go through any other channels.

NOTES AFTER THE TAPE RAN OUT:

The only gift really in the church today is healing because we don't ask for any of the others.

Satan deceives us by telling us that there are only two choices. His plan is to divide and conquer. There are only two real choices, but the choices Satan presents are just a fork in the wrong road. The truth is a whole different road. Don't take sides, just follow the gospel.

The Lord won't let you starve. Satan puts that fear into us. It is the opposite of faith.

"I can honestly say that everything that I have asked for with an honest heart, I have received."

Hope leads to faith. It doesn't all happen at once.