

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 3, Lecture 57

Alma 45

Periodic Extinctions

[A few minutes at the first were not recorded.] Mrs. Carroll lived across the river from them, on the other side. I would take my little bicycle and go along. I would always stop on the Broadway bridge and look down the river. As far as you could see were the masts of ships—three masters, four masters. The three masters were the common ones. Ships were taking wood, salmon and things like that to the Orient and all around the world. There was a line that had three steamboats. The Alaska, the Beaver, and the Bear all ran up to Alaska. (They all sank later.) The thing is that along the waterfront in Portland, Oregon, as far as you could see were the masts of ships. Then all of a sudden they were gone; there were no more three masters. They just went like that. I used to be very good at making imitations of them. I worked with wood and had some good three masters. Right next to it was the station (it's still there), and there were the steam engines which were so exciting to watch. They have gone too, and they went just in one year. The whole thing just disappeared for an entirely new culture—if we can call it a culture. And at Sausalito later when I was at Berkeley you would see the same masts of ships, but they were the salmon ships that would come down and winter at Sausalito. Students would get jobs on them, and they would go up to Alaska for the summertime. Again, all these masts—and all of a sudden about 1939-40 they disappeared and there were no more of them. Everything has just gone away like that. You might say it's sort of sad.

Speaking of the salmon herring this is typical. For thousands of years the main food of Europe was herring. It was required by the church. Of course, you had to have fish on Friday, so the greatest food market in the world was the herring market. The herring market was the Baltic. That's what made the glory of the Hanse. The Hanse cities were the great merchant cities that still remain. They were the basis of the economy of Europe in the Middle Ages with the so-called Hanse. I should be asking you, what were the main Hanse cities? Bremen, Lübeck, Danzig, etc. We got awfully good in the last few years at fishing for herring, very efficient. They had electronic devices for discovering the vast schools of fish. Then they had nets ten or twenty miles long for scooping them up. Then they had floating factories for processing them while they were still on the water. It was wonderful. They got more and more efficient with the herring. Then suddenly one day about ten years ago there were no more herring, after all those thousands of years, not one herring left. The whole center of the Baltic now, more than a third of the Baltic Sea, is not just without herring. It's without anything. There's no life in it whatever. It's nothing but algae, just blue-green algae, corilla bacteria that eat everything up, including the oxygen. So there's nothing left; it's now a dead sea. It didn't happen over a thousand years. I would recommend to you the June issue of the *National Geographic*. The theme is the march toward extermination. This is one of those great periods of extermination. I mention this because this is the theme of the Book of Mormon in which the words *destroy* or *destruction* appear [354] times. That's a discouraging sort of thing. But the Book of Mormon is as upbeat as it is downbeat. Let me refer you to this. We say this is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These are the latter days. This is the end; this is the

final time. These are the last days of what? Well, the last days of a lot of things on which we are depending. But I think this *National Geographic* will be an interesting thing to refer to.¹

All the years I was teaching ancient history and things like that, there was lots of reference to evolution—an infinitely slow, gradual, relentless, perfectly regular process. That was the old Victorian idea—steady, reliable. That’s all gone now. You don’t talk about evolution that way, as the man says here. This talks about the capture of the last California condor. “During that same time [since the 1930s] as many as a hundred acres a minute of the world’s tropical forests, among the most richly populated habitats on earth, have been destroyed . . . An estimated million species will be lost in the next 25 years—a rate of one every 15 minutes.” Every fifteen minutes a species that has existed for thousands of years will disappear forever. Well, we obviously are living at the end of an age when things are going to change. We have to do something about it. What’s the handbook? What do we do? I panic when I read things like this. One answer comes—the Book of Mormon. You may think that’s a paradox, but it isn’t. We’ll see what the Book of Mormon is going to tell us.

Then it talks about other extinctions that are taking place. The first one was that one discovered by the Alvarez of Berkeley, [it occurred] 66 million years ago. The big question was why the dinosaurs suddenly disappeared. We know now that there were hundreds of varieties of them. They showed great adaptability. They could fit into almost any environment, but all of a sudden they just vanished. That’s because the earth got socked by a giant meteorite or a comet, and there was nothing you could do about it. At one time sixty to eighty percent of animal species disappeared. I think it was 1956 when Schwindewolf introduced his *neocatastrophism*. Everybody took it lightly then, but they don’t anymore. They take it more seriously. Namely, there are periods when you find before a certain time a vast variety of creatures are flourishing, and then they suddenly disappear. You don’t find them anymore in the strata above that, but you find totally different species suddenly appearing. Now what happens there? There are various theories. The earth gets socked by a meteorite. It jars the earth’s magnetic field and breaks the magnetic shield which comes from the North Pole and surrounds the earth, the Van Allen belts, etc., which allows solar radiation to come in from the sun. Cosmic rays reach from one side and solar rays to reach from the other. They both have the effect of breaking down our genes and cells and having us produce all sorts of freaks. There are jokes about this sort of thing because of radiation. Suddenly new types and species develop. Well, this is one of the theories. But the point is that things do get destroyed, and they get destroyed suddenly. When a certain period comes, that’s the end. We have been warned of it here. It says at least twelve mass extinctions have taken place.

I taught during the 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s at Claremont and Berkeley and places like that. We never dreamed of anything like this. It says, “The concept has hit science like a fireball during the 1980s.” They never expected anything like that. “. . . the causes behind those great dyings had remained obscure.” We don’t know why. We used to say the fossil record was too imprecise, but all this is changing now. “. . . the rules of evolution are being rewritten.” This is just the June issue of *National Geographic*, very recent. This is the thing they always used to argue about, go ’round and ’round about, and I thought it was a waste of time. I never engaged in those arguments. Dealing with human history within its time there is no evolution at all. We talk about the K-T boundary. That’s the boundary between the Cretaceous and Tertiary periods. During the K-T boundary the dinosaurs

disappeared. You go out and look in these Morrison deposits, this blue-green stuff you find all over Utah. That's where the dinosaurs are. After that you don't find anything. They were all wiped out. They call that the K-T boundary, when you move from the Cretaceous to all these strange creatures.

This isn't in our creation story. This doesn't belong to our story. Genesis isn't concerned with this. This isn't where Adam comes in. These are other creatures here. Remember, we believe in the gospel and we preach other things. Joseph Smith's teachings are much more explicit on this than we realize because we get into them more today; namely, that the whole universe is multiple use, and so is the earth. Well, there are creatures on the earth that we know nothing about. They don't concern us; they have nothing to do with our affairs. We have our own thing to concern us. Adam had his family. We are his people, and his history is our history. But there are other histories that have nothing to do with him. That shouldn't disturb us at all, the idea that there should be anything else besides us. But it is very clear what is happening here. "Most scientists now concur that at least one great extraterrestrial object struck the planet around the time the dinosaurs died out." There are lots of diagrams and pictures here; it's very nice. Here's the description, and it's a very apocalyptic description. It's what you read in the apocalypses of the scriptures. You will recognize these things—the Book of Mormon here. "In the first days after earth was hit, dust blanketed the entire world. It grew pitch-dark for one to three months." Remember in the Book of Mormon it was a local upheaval, but it was the one that wiped out Nephite civilization. The people could feel the darkness. They couldn't strike a light, it was so heavy. The same sort of thing may have caused it. It could be meteoric or volcanic; the two go together actually. (That's the worst of it. The semesters always begin in the spring and in the autumn when I have my allergies, so we have to put up with that.)

"If the impact was on land, it probably got bitter cold. . . . The entire world caught fire." Of course, this is apocalyptic, the earth going up in flames. This is actually what happened. It talks about Yellowstone and says that was nothing. "Yet this holocaust is insignificant compared with what Wolbach believes happened that day 66 million years ago when earth was hit. The entire world caught fire. . . . To get the amount of soot we find [distributed throughout the world at a certain level between the Cretaceous and the Tertiary] as much as 90 percent of the world's forests must have burned." We are taking care of that now. "The fireball would have had a radius of several thousand kilometers. Winds of hundreds of kilometers an hour would have swept the planet for hours, drying trees like a giant hair dryer. Two-thousand-degree rock vapor would have spread rapidly. . . . In addition, lightning discharges like those in a volcanic eruption could have ignited windswept fires on all landmasses that marched far faster than those at Yellowstone."

It's on a much greater scale than that in the Book of Mormon, of course, but it follows the same pattern. The same sorts of things are happening. It's very depressing and very alarming. It says, "Such doomsday scenarios strain our belief. . . . No matter what causes them, mass extinctions do occur. They force a new perspective on the history of life." They also force a new perspective on history, as I said before. In 1200 B.C. Troy fell, and that should concern us—that great tragedy of which Virgil said, *sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt* ("hereto there are tears for misfortunes, and mortal sorrows touch the heart"). Matthew Arnold said that's the most moving and the most tragic line in history. When we read that we are all in the same boat. You can't help crying when you read that. There are these times when this hits. Then, in Lehi's time the thing hit again. The year 600 B.C. was what Jaspers called the pivotal period. We wrote all about this in that book called *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*. That used to be a priesthood

manual in 1957. It introduces you to a lot of things like that. It's not compulsory; you can be sure of that.

Mass extinctions do occur, and when they strike it is not necessarily the most fit that survive. This is the interesting thing, of course. Who survives? The problem of the Book of Mormon is survival. Remember, you always have the one man against the world—whether it's Alma, or Ammon, or Jared, or Lehi. You always have the one man. Right at the end there you have Mormon and Moroni. Who plans the survival? Survival is a tragic word; we use it too much. *Survival* is a dirty word as far as I'm concerned, because it means "I stay here while everybody else is wiped out."

John Chrysostom is called "golden mouth" because he was the greatest Christian orator of the fourth and fifth centuries. He handed on a lot of very interesting doctrine. He was in Antioch at the time of the great earthquake that destroyed the city completely. It was after the time of Christ that this happened. The same sort of thing happened then. These things come in periods. There will be a long, stable period, just as we have with the weather, when everything seems to be going nicely. We get the idea that this is the normal order of things—the nice, safe, Victorian world in which things gradually by imperceptible degrees work toward betterment. They work toward the better because that's what evolution is. Since the fittest survive, the better people are those that come through. So the world gets better and better, and it's wonderful. But it doesn't work that way.

Whatever I was talking about, I'd better get on here now. What was I going to say? It's not necessarily the most fit that survive. "Mass extinctions thus promote new beginnings . . ." Well, that's the purpose of them. The Lord wipes the old slate clean and then he brings more on. This is a principle stated again and again in the Book of Mormon. When the cup is full it can't be filled any further. It can't be diluted; there's nothing to do about it. When the fruit is ripe there's no point to letting it ripen any more. This is the promise on this land here. Then the Lord will cause extinction. They will be utterly destroyed, he says. After the winning of a great battle, the Nephites were celebrating, and Alma had to tell them, four hundred years from now you will become extinct if you are wicked. That's the word he uses. The Lord takes care of these things in order to supplant them. It says in the Book of Mormon, the Lord leads away the righteous into precious lands, and the wicked he destroys. How do you get out of it? Well, it's the story of Abraham, the story of the children of Israel and Moses. Remember, Moses' migrations took place during great world upheavals of the same kind. That's the 1200s, the same time that Troy was destroyed, that the Israelites went out of Egypt into Palestine.

The best evidence of the greatest extinction of all, the Permian extinction in which 94 percent of all life on earth was extinguished, is in Utah's House Range west of here. This is an ironical thing. It is the best evidence we have for the worst extinction that ever took place in the world, it tells us in this article here. The first mass extinction and the worst; it was a terror. It has been turned over now as a range. There has been much discussion; the ranchers are protesting, etc. It's not doing any good because the Air Force is going to have it. They are going to use it as a range to practice mass extinction, including biological warfare. They are practicing mass extinction out there now. The clock comes full circle here.

Then some other things. Life evolves anew after each of these. Boy, this is very sad. With one of these extinctions, the Frasnian, a thin yellow sulfur mineral testifies of its existence everywhere. It was "precipitated as oxygen suddenly vanished from the upper layers of the

oceans. As that band was deposited, most of the world's fish and 70 percent of its invertebrates perished. "The seas would have looked like the aftermath of a global red tide—dead animals floating everywhere," says Geldsetzer." Oh boy, this is a cheerful beginning for our class, isn't it. But we are starting with the Book of Mormon. "If you have tears prepare to shed them now," should be our opening. You all know that line, don't you? Antony's speech, of course. You all had *Julius Caesar* in high school at least. Well all right, "If you have tears prepare to shed them now." How long did it take? It could have taken 20,000 years, it says here but "maybe just one stormy night." That's how long it took in the Nephite story before the coming of Christ. In just one stormy night to wipe out 70 percent of the life on earth. That must be some show.

I remember going on a field trip with Brother Bissell many years ago when I first came here. We saw these things in Nevada—huge boulders of coastal rock carried right across Utah. Then there are these fracture points up Spanish Fork canyon where they smashed against other rocks. The violence of the thing must have been inconceivable. Oh, I was wrong; it wasn't 94 percent. "The Permian was easily the greatest extinction of all time. Perhaps 96 percent of all species disappeared." That's something. Oh boy, these terrible things that happen. ". . . a profound but mysterious crisis struck at the end of the Jurassic." There you go again. We still don't have the explanation because the flowers, the angiosperms, suddenly took over with explosive rapidity. That's a thing we often talk about in the class; not now though. It was because the dinosaurian overgrazing threatened many growing plants, but the angiosperms were able to escape it. Those are the seedpod plants.

"A plague of little Asian mammals invaded North America and . . . They ate the last of the dinosaurs out of house and home." They didn't have anything to eat; this is another theory. "The cruelest K-T [Cretaceous-Tertiary] extinctions struck the seas. . . . All large marine reptiles also vanished . . . Ammonoids—lovely, coiled survivors of many past extinctions—died out completely." They were once the big thing. This goes with the Doctrine and Covenants class as much as anything because it talks about the showers of stars and meteors. This is a very important thing that goes with them. The earth "was hit not by one great object but rather by a shower of comets that bombarded the planet over several million years." This is how they are trying to explain it now. It's a scary sort of thing too. ". . . when comets struck the seas, generating tsunamis and overturns of deep anoxic or toxic water . . ." The tsunamis are the tidal waves that drowned so many cities on the coast in the Book of Mormon when the great destruction came. Remember, they were caught in tidal waves. "The final terminating impact, says Kauffman, probably occurred on land, where it produced fire storms, soot, and a pall of dust." There shall be a vapor of smoke and it shall cover the earth, says the Book of Mormon.

Every 26 million years we have these things happen. What could that be? Well, there are two theories. There is one of the Oort Cloud between Pluto and all this Neptune stuff. See how it has caught us by surprise overnight? Between them is a mass of stuff circulating on an almost galactic scale. Every 26 million years in the sun's course around the galaxy we pass through that, and then we get showered by this stuff. The other [theory] is that the sun has a companion star, a dark star, that we can't see at a great distance. They go around each other every 26 million years, and they call that Nemesis. Nemesis brings with it a cloud of planets in its own dust. When we pass through all that stuff, we get showered and plastered again. This is the picture, you see. There's a dense cloud of comets that astronomers believe surrounds our solar system. Something could periodically unsettle that cloud and fling battalions of comets. It could be either Nemesis or the Oort Cloud.

They don't mention that here. [It could be] a star orbiting our sun, a tenth planet. Our planet moves periodically through a star-dense spiral. Between 35 and 40 million years ago, a well-documented chilling of the seas did all the killing. It would still be a shower again.

Well, this is coming quite recently now. "Whether or not we fit a cosmic timetable for an extinction, we surely are in one today." We are in a period of extinction today is what it's telling us now. "It began in North America about 11,000 years ago." That early there was a brilliant culture flourishing in the Balkans. We won't go into the chronology of the Bible now, but 3,000 or 4,000 years before the pyramids there was the Varna Culture and the people in the center of the Balkans. They've discovered 36,000 artifacts—temples, marvelous sculpture, and wonderful metal work. They had fabulous deep mines; it was amazing. It was almost the same time as these creatures because this would make it only 9,000 B.C. It was there then. That particular civilization reached its peak between 8,000 and 7,000 B.C. "In North America about 11,000 years ago, most large [mammals] were wiped out. All perished abruptly. What happened?"

By abruptly, you know about the stories of the mammoths found with undigested buttercups in their stomachs, which means they must have been frozen very, very fast. It takes three hours to thaw a turkey. How long would it take to freeze a mammoth so that the digestive processes wouldn't cause decay, gasses, and all that sort of thing? Here we have fresh buttercups in these mammoths. They were so fresh that there was an industry in Siberia, in Czarist Russia in the 80s and 90s, which sold mammoth meat for dog food commercially. There was so much of this stuff. "All perished abruptly. . . . The extinctions, however, were so rapid—within five hundred to a thousand years—that many scientists suspect an alternate—or at least assistant—villain in this extinction: *Homo sapiens*." That man was the one who was responsible. He was the one that was responsible for that one. Now we come to ourselves, you see.

Now he says, "In the plant group I study, 42 percent of the species reported in 1930 have not been collected since." This particular botanist talking is Sohmer, head of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Again, we only have to ask who buys the timber or beef these felled forests produce. Well, McDonalds does. They are the biggest market for the Brazilian jungles. "Though occupying less than 0.2 percent of the nation's landmass, Hawaii contains 27 percent of the endangered birds and plants." So we go to these sad statistics now. "We can see that the health of species is interconnected, that if we let too many disappear, we will go too [we depend on them; this is the picture today]. For the first time a living organism can consciously do something to halt a mass extinction."

This is the theme of the Book of Mormon. Destruction is mentioned 354 times in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is a purely religious document. In fact, it's the greatest religious document there is because it is the only one that answers the terrible question. I was going to bring along Richard Anderson's paperback on the three witnesses and practically require it. It has come out now in paperback. That clinches things very tight now. The question that haunts everybody is, (only the Book of Mormon can answer this), "is this all there is?" Is there anything else? Well, we can talk about morals, beauty, ethics, and all this sort of thing and say that's religion. But that isn't what religion is interested in. We just want the answer to that one question. When we die is that all? Is there anything else? What comes after that? Of course, the answer comes with an angel from on high. Moroni, an angel from other worlds, from the immensity of space, comes and personally delivers the book. On top of that we have Joseph Smith's witness, and you

have the three witnesses and the eight witnesses. All their lives they said they saw it. The three left the church, as you know, because of vanity and injured pride. They came back, except [David Whitmer], and they never denied their testimonies. Of course, as soon as they left the church all the newspaper reporters, ministers, and others swarmed in and descended on them like locusts. "Now you will tell us the truth; now you can tell us what really happened." They did. "We'll tell you what really happened; the angel came and showed us the plates." That's what they told them. They could never shake them [the witnesses] at all, any of them.

Well, how do you explain that? The great Eduard Meyer said, "We can only say that was a hallucination." There's a catch to that. The Book of Mormon is not a hallucination. I have been reading this week about the Rosicrucians in the 1600s. They had their sacred books. There have always been these groups of mystics, sectarians, and others. They have produced a manifesto. There's one book called the *Fama*. They claim these books were delivered by angels, but when you read it, it's nonsense. There's nothing there. It doesn't have anything to say, except the usual commonplaces. We should behave and love each other, etc. We know that.

The Book of Mormon is not that. Nobody has ever been able to get around the witnesses, but it's harder to get around the book. It's a solid, compact mass of statements, a package containing thousands of clues. None of the critics that have torn into it have read it with care really. We haven't either. That's why President Benson said, let's start reading it for a change. When I was a kid we just read it because it was sort of romantic. What did it have to do with things? It has to do with us today. So we have here this dazzling procession of vivid images, these marvelous vignettes and character studies perfectly conceived. The Book of Mormon was dug up, remember, so it's a fossil. We were talking about fossils here, and the Book of Mormon is a fossil. *Fodire* means "to dig up," and a *fossa* is a ditch. A fossil is something that is dug up. The Book of Mormon is literally a fossil because Joseph Smith dug it up. He removed the rock and dug and found the book. It's as a fossil that the written word is the most marvelous invention known to man, because every ancient document is a fossil. This is fossilized thought here. Well, if you find a fossil it can tell you all sorts of things. But what does it depend on? It depends on you. You've got to bring all sorts of experience, knowledge, and acumen to the subject and see what you can do with this thing.

So what do you do when you have a literal fossil? The most marvelous invention of man, as Galileo and Arthur Clarke and others have told us, is the written word because it can do what nothing else can. It defeats time and place. When they dig up one of these fossils they are talking in terms of millions of years. The fossil is there and it is just as fresh as it was when it finally hardened, its last cooking. It comes down to us unchanged, and time won't affect the written record either. Those golden plates could last for millions of years, being gold, etc. They o'erleap time and space too. It makes no difference with space. These things are thousands of years old. It conveys not merely sounds and images. I was talking about the fall of Troy, this great tragedy that electrified the human race. It has come down to us in the two greatest epics of Homer, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. You could include *The Aeneid* and others. It's left its memory and its mark with us, and it's just as vivid now. That's why the actor could shed tears for Hecuba. It was just too sad; it was heartbreaking. He was playing the role. What was Hecuba to him? Very much alive. This is a marvelous thing that the written word can do, that TV or nothing else can do. You have to have all sorts of fancy equipment for that. But what do you need to hand down a record for a million years and convey not only the names, places, dates, and

events, but your most subtle nuances of thought? So much of that is great poetry that can move us now just as in the time it was written. It comes down, and what do you need? A surface to scratch on and something to scratch it with. Take a rock or a stick. If you can scratch enough, it will be as deep as the indentations in a fossil. It will last for a million years. By the written word you o'erleap time and space and all the rest of it, just as when you look at a fossil. The geologists can tell you what kind of a creature it was, what its environment was, what it lived on, its habits, etc., just from that one fossil. It can even be one bone. Of course, they do some very comical things. We know that some of the reconstructions of dinosaurs of 150 years ago look very funny now. That isn't the way they looked at all. They didn't have enough bones, but if you have enough to go on you don't need too much. A skillful geologist or paleontologist can look at a bone and tell you all about the creature.

It's the same thing in reading the Book of Mormon. With a written document you have to go into it. Like the flight of the bee, the act of reading has never been explained. It's a mystery. There's no reason why you should be able to do it. It's a strange thing. The classic example of that would be Arabic and other Semitic languages in which you don't write any vowels. You don't have any punctuation of any kind. You don't have any capital letters to know when it's a personal name. You make no division between the words. You put no vowels. Every word has just three consonants. You just string these consonants along and that's it. Usually it's badly written and covered with fly specks, so how can anyone possibly read it? And yet it can be read. When people start improving on it by putting in the little *shaddas* and *fathas* and putting in the pointings to help us along, it becomes a nuisance. You say, "Take those away; we don't want those. They're a nuisance. We got used to reading this."

But how can it be done? In theory you have to know first what it is talking about. Then it goes. But if you don't you can be in an awful state of things. That's the condition with Egyptian today. We do not know the point of view from which to read it. Most of it still escapes us. Egyptian is a good example of limitations of which men are not aware. We think we have translated the text, and we have been deservedly tricked. There's a very recent study by Westendorf on that very subject, showing that we have missed entirely the point of Egyptian. I think that is so.

When we read the Book of Mormon, we read it as if we were picking our way through a mine field and missing ninety-nine percent of the message. Are we even aware of the main points? We start with Alma 46, which is just like starting in the middle of a sentence. We can't do that. I had to go back over the weekend to review and see the points which it brings out. We see certain points of emphasis; they repeatedly come out. What emerges in the Book of Mormon is this very clear message. Up to Alma 46 I'm going to make a quick review next time and show what they were actually talking about.

I must remind you of this too. When you read the Book of Mormon, or any book, you must do exactly what you do when you see a play. We don't realize how great Shakespeare was. This is a new discovery. The traveling [groups] of English players had a great deal to do with the Reformation on the continent of Europe. They set the pace at courts, at Lüneberg, at Heidelberg, in the Pfalz, in the Palatinate, Oppenheim, at various places. A writer by the name of Francis Yates has been investigating this idea. These wandering players had an enormous influence in all the courts of Europe where they would go. You would not make a sharp distinction between the reality of the court and the reality of the

play. You remember when the players come in *Hamlet*, treat them according to their nobility. Treat every man according to his desert and who will escape whipping [paraphrased]. The court itself was a theater. In fact, the court is a stage in Egypt [and elsewhere]. What was the theatrical part and what was the real part? You notice they overdressed. They dressed themselves in the most fancy way. They used overblown theatrical language. We call it Elizabethan Renaissance. Then in the time of James I it carried on in exactly the same way and produced Milton. There's this mood of the courts and this mood of reality. Shakespeare is constantly reminding us that when we read these things and when we see the plays, this is not the real thing. You have to produce the real thing. After he gives what I consider the most vivid description in words of an event that I can imagine, the description of night in the camp in *Henry V*, he concludes:

Sit and see
Minding true things
By what their mockeries be

He says, this is just a play; we are just putting it on. You mind the true things by what the mockeries be, but you have to apply your mind to it. Throughout *Henry V* the chorus is always interfering and reminding that this isn't the real thing, but you must make the real thing. So we have the famous prologue at the beginning. Should I recite? Yes, I should. This takes you into the mood of the court.

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention,—
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire
Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,

[This is only a play; this is the best we can do.]

The flat unraised spirits that have dared
On this unworthy scaffold [the stage] to bring forth
So great an object: can this cockpit hold

[Can I tell you about Henry and his wars on this wooden stage?]

The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques

[The Globe Theater was a round O.]

That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million;

[By writing one, if you add enough ciphers to it you can get a million; put the one and we will be the ciphers and exaggerate it.]

And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work.
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Whose high-upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;

[You must make this story.]

Into a thousand parts divide one man,
 And make imaginary puissance;
 [One man is going to represent a thousand soldiers, so you make an imaginary army. But
 you have to do it yourself.]
 Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
 Printing their proud hoofs i'th' receiving earth;—
 For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
 [You dress them up and put them in their proper places.]
 Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
 [You jump over time and place, just as you do with the written record here.]
 Turning th' accomplishment of many years
 Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
 [You can take the events of many years and present them in one hour, as you can read it
 in a book the same way.]
 Admit me Chorus to this history. . . .”

Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Prologue

So he says you have to do it all yourself, and when you read the Book of Mormon you [should] do that. We skim through and look for the high parts. We look for the heroic Captain Moroni, and that's about as far as we look in the Book of Mormon. But that book is so full, and it's so exactly, so meticulously veracious. Everything is exactly the way it should be, the way it is presented. And the economy, it's so condensed, all this that gets in here. It's a miraculous work. I see the time is up. Are there any questions? Of course, everybody asks, "What are we going to write for this course?" But I'm not going to tell you.

1. "The March Toward Extinction," *National Geographic* 175/6 (June 1989): 662. (Brother Nibley quotes and paraphrases information from this article.)