

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

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Alma 54–57
Formal Rules of Warfare

What does the word paradox come from? What does it mean? We use the word a lot. It has a double meaning. Para means “by the side, off side, off course, on the side.” It’s like paramilitary or paramedics. They are not all the way—they are para. And *doxa* is a Greek word that means appearance. So a paradox is a thing that is not as it appears. You would expect it to be different. *Doxa* is connected with dogma the same way. *Doxa* is appearance or expectation. So it’s not exactly what you think it would be.

There’s something wrong here. How does the smartest man of all the Nephites write the silliest letter of all the Nephites, an idiotic letter? He is bound to defeat his purpose in writing it. That is a paradox, but it can be explained, namely by the letter that Ammoron writes back to him. He writes back the same sort of thing. They both want to deal. It’s very much in the interest of each one to exchange prisoners. Moroni needs them badly, and Ammoron is tired of feeding a lot of Nephite women and children which they conquered in the cities. That’s not getting them anywhere, so they both want to exchange. But the deal falls through completely when Ammoron replies in the same terms. When he saw the epistle he was angry too. Remember, Moroni said, “I am in my anger.” So they engage in this *stichomythia*. We were talking about that last time.

This gives the case of the Lamanites. They have a case too supposedly. Alma 54:16: “. . . I am the brother of Amalickiah whom ye have murdered. Behold, I will avenge his blood upon you, yea, and I will come upon you with my armies for I fear not your threatenings.” Well, that’s exactly what Moroni had said to him—we’re not afraid of your threatenings. I’ll come upon you with my armies, and you will become extinct. “For behold, your fathers did wrong their brethren, insomuch that they did rob them of their right to the government when it rightly belonged unto them.” Laman and Lemuel were robbed [according to Ammoron] because they were the older brothers. Then he makes a reasonable suggestion, just exactly as Moroni does. If you’ll do what I want you to, then we can settle this very nicely. “. . . if ye will lay down your arms, and subject yourselves to be governed by those to whom the government doth rightly belong, then will I cause that my people shall lay down their weapons and shall be at war no more.” That’s a nice way to end the war—just give us that. Well, that’s exactly the proposition that Moroni put forth. “Behold, ye have breathed out many threatenings against me [and he did] and my people; but behold we fear not your threatenings.”

This is just routine; this is the sort of thing you would expect. I will grant the exchange of prisoners gladly, but if you won’t agree to our terms “we will wage a war which shall be eternal . . .” That’s the policy of the Moslems, to wage an eternal war until all the world has submitted. Islam means submission. Then it’s *Dār al-Ḥarb*. They are in a state of rebellion and must be subdued, so the war never stops. That’s the Roman doctrine of *ager hosticus* and *ager pacatus*. The empire of peace is the *Pax Romana*. Everybody [must]

settle down; the world has to be that way. They can't trust anybody else. It's dangerous to have people out there who are not taking orders from you. That's what imperialism is. *Impar* is the unequal one, the one who dominates the whole thing. When people are *par*, they are divided into equal sides, but the emperor is the one who is *impar*. That's Max Radin's theory, at any rate.

Verse 21: "And . . . God whom ye say we have rejected, behold, we know not such a being . . . And if it so be that there is a devil and a hell, behold will he not send you there to dwell with my brother whom ye have murdered, whom ye have hinted that he hath gone to such a place? But behold these things matter not. I am Ammoron, and a descendant of Zoram, whom your fathers pressed and brought out of Jerusalem." Now he gets heated up. Remember, toward the end of his letter Moroni said, "I am in my anger." He says here, "And behold now, I am a bold Lamanite; behold, this war hath been waged to avenge their wrongs, and to maintain and to obtain their rights to the government." So the Lamanites really thought they had a case. You always do in a war. He presents his case here and ends up saying they're angry. We say it's a paradox that they should write such stuff, but this is really a formality.

We haven't talked about the language of the Book of Mormon, but it is formulaic. You notice it follows in formula. We used to make fun of the many times "it came to pass" is repeated. Well, in Egyptian you have to begin a sentence like that. There are some writings, like the story of the two brothers or the story of the foredoomed prince, in which every sentence begins with the formula "it came to pass" or "it came to pass after many days." Every sentence begins that way, and it was required. In classical Arabic you can't begin a sentence cold and just say, "He went to town." You have to say, "Behold, he went to town," or "verily, he went to town," or begin with *and*. You have to begin with something to soften people up. In Arabic, *inna*, behold is the most common word. In Hebrew it is *hinneh*, "it came to pass." You must put it in at the beginning of a sentence if you are going to begin with a noun. You can't say, "The man was rich." You have to say, "Behold, the man was rich," or "the man, he was the one who was rich." They have these formalities which you must follow. The whole ancient world, medieval world, and modern world are bound up in these, not just customs, but strict rules—rigid forms and formalities.

We thought we had broken away from that, didn't we? With the Industrial Revolution, Darwin, and modern science we weren't bound by old forms, strict rules, strange dress, and customs that required us to do things in certain stiff and predictable ways which bound ancient society. This was John Dewey's doctrine, that we had broken away from all of that. We were free from all that—the superstitions, the prejudices, and the narrow prescriptions of past societies. Of course, he couldn't have been more wrong, because we have adopted even more of them now. Remember White's book on *The Organization Man*, the successful man in business? You have to dress for success, wear the right tie, belong to the right family, go to the right church. In many corporations you have to marry the right people. They won't let you [succeed] unless you do that. You follow a formula. You are in a uniform all the time, and you have to think the same way. You have to use the same jargon that's used by the others, the same slang that is current at the time. It's very rigid and very demanding. We thought we had escaped from that, but we've become more formalistic than ever. The most formal of all has to be the military. We see why that's so.

Incidentally, this is Moroni writing to Ammoron. Why are there so many words in the

Book of Mormon with *mor* in them? Well, that's a favorite Egyptian word, *mor*, [along with] *Amon*. The most recently found really valuable papyrus is the story of an Egyptian general by the name of Morira, and he did some wonderful things. And it has some supernatural elements in it too. This [the use of *mor*] is very common. The Egyptians used it a lot because it means beloved, good, everything nice and desirable. *Moriamon* means "beloved of Amon." That's the Vandier Papyrus, published in 1985. It's a very interesting story about this general who lived back in very early times. So this military behavior is the most rigidly formalized of all. In the Book of Mormon everything is so formal, but we are just as formal. For one thing it's a great saving of effort, isn't it? It's a great advantage to have the grooves already marked and stay in the grooves. But there is a danger to that. The military is a good example there again. We have it here, especially in the case of the two thousand young men. Military behavior is the most rigid, the most formalized, and the most traditional. It must be, and it is here. Remember, we have had this in the Book of Mormon before. When Moroni is besieging a city, he invites the people to come out. They are comfortably ensconced inside the fortified city. He invites them to come out and fight in the open field. Well, they would be idiots to do so. But by the rules of war he is required to do that, so he does it. Sometimes they do.

Then again, they would make their agreements on the field. They would agree, as in the battle of Cumorah, for example. The chiefs of the other side agree on the time and the place of the battle. Well, why aren't you a smart general and catch the other fellow off guard when he is not expecting you? That's the best thing to do, a surprise. But that's playing naughty—you don't do that. [During World War II] the prisoners objected very, very strenuously because we were the first people to wear these camouflage suits. We scattered out all over the place. There's no unity when you scatter all over the place in landing. Shooting from behind trees and things like that, we didn't have formal trenches and weren't formally organized. They said, "That isn't fair; you can't do that." They called us devils and said, "This is wicked and immoral. You are not bound by the Geneva Convention." It was very dangerous to get picked up, because they didn't like that. They said, "You are breaking the rules." As we said before, if you are going to start fighting forget about rules. The only thing to do is to win in that case.

But these unbreakable rules, traditions, and iron discipline have to be, because nothing is more dangerous and unpredictable than an armed band. You give them a lot of weapons and everyone has the curse of Nimrod on him. It's up to him to decide who shall live and who shall die. Only God can decide that. But if you give me a gun, I can decide who will live and who will die. What power that gives me! Nimrod had that power, but God gives it to no man. We've seen that before. It's forbidden to shed blood. So this iron discipline is necessary. Soldiers are necessarily hot headed; that's what they get paid for. Remember Shakespeare's soldier? He's a mercenary. In Shakespeare's day everybody was a mercenary.

Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth.

As You Like It, Act II, Scene 7

[They're] impetuous and fierce. Of course, there's a lot written about the swaggering, braggadocio soldier. The earliest Roman comedy we have is *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus. He's a Roman soldier, but he swaggers around. He's a dangerous person because he has to show off all the time. Really he's quite a coward, just like Falstaff. Falstaff is the immortal

soldier of fortune who goes around on either side. Prince Eugene, the greatest general of the eighteenth century, fought on either side. It made no difference to him. In this case you have to have this absolutely iron, rigid discipline. You didn't need it with the two thousand sons. That's an interesting thing, these agreements on the field and this formality.

Not only are armies unpredictable, but remember what Clausewitz said. "Of all human activities, none is so completely under the control of pure chance as war." Nobody can decide in the end. That being the case, what are we to do about this uncertainty? One rule is: Whoever goes to war doesn't know what he is doing." That's literally true. If you go to war you don't know what you are doing, because war more than anything else is under the domain of chance. You never can tell how it is going to turn out. Who ever figured out right how it was going to turn out? They thought the Civil War would end at Bull Run. They thought it would end at Charleston, etc. It went on for nearly five years. There were terrible things in the Civil War, and they were always predicting when it would end. So it is here. Most armies are very hard to regulate, so they break down. As soon as looting begins, no army has any control at all. Pilet Ville in Paris is a good example; we won't go into that. But you can't keep soldiers from looting, and they don't pretend to. They will always pick up something. In the British army it's a scream; they have no discipline. In the field you can wear anything you want and do anything you want. After all, a soldier is free. He's as much armed as the general is. He can do his own damage. Not only the barbarian hordes.

When the Roman Empire broke up, all of Gaul suddenly was taken over by the Gaudi. These were free raiding bands that would go around picking things up. Later on in the terrible fourteenth century, which Froissart tells us all about, [there were] the free companies. Everywhere free companies were organizing themselves about some leader. Then they would go through the country looting, pillaging, and taking what they wanted. Sometimes he [the leader] would settle down, take a castle, and set himself up as the lord there. Many a great house was started that way, just by freebooters. It was the *condottieri* in Italy. It was the same thing all through the Renaissance and Shakespeare's time. They are traditions that go back to the old barbarian tribal raids, raiding each other. But it is all very unpredictable, so you have to have this iron discipline.

The worst of all was the Roman army. To get the great Roman Empire you had to have a real iron discipline, and they did. It was their great army that did everything. But more than half the emperors were deposed by the soldiers and put in by the soldiers. The man who promised them the most pay got elected emperor, and they proceeded to wipe out his predecessor. This happened not once, but more than thirty times. It began right at the beginning [of the empire]. The Praetorian guard was the most trained of all and the emperor's personal guard. After murdering [Caligula—Elagabalus was murdered later], they rampaged through the palace, found Claudius hiding in a closet, and made him emperor. He didn't want to be emperor. Then you go down the line. In an intrigue with Livia, they got Nero out of the way. He wasn't doing them any good. Then came three men in a row: Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Each one was richer than the other, and each one promised the army higher pay than the other. Galba was rich and promised them high pay, so they put him in. But when Otho promised them more, they put him in. Vitellius was extremely fat and extremely rich and he promised them a lot. They murdered his predecessor and put him in. Then this [happened again] when Decius got rid of Philip the Arab and when Philip himself got rid of Gordian III. The army got rid of Elagabalus, and [earlier] they got rid of Antoninus Pius who was a very good emperor. [It was] always for

this same reason. There's a long list of them. They got rid of some obnoxious ones too, such as Commodus and Caracalla. It's a dangerous thing.

Incidentally, I just remembered something I wrote down this morning. The typical exchange of insults before the battle is a common literary device that is required in epic literature. But it was really done. In the Zend Avesta it's this case. In the Aban Yasht, Aht the sorcerer comes with a huge army. He's going to besiege the city of the wise men. He says, "I'll lay it flat unless you can answer thirty-three riddles." So he puts the riddles to them. The wise men answer the thirty-three riddles, and then they give him three riddles to answer. He can't answer them, so he is flattened by a situation that is too much to handle. So he loses out. This is the common thing, and the classic case of this is Queen Bilqis, the queen of Sheba, and King Solomon. There's a vast corpus of legends on this, and the best source of this is our good old pal Tha'labi whom we quoted before. He tells how when the queen of Sheba, the queen of the South, marched against Solomon with her huge army, Solomon said, "Well here, we are going to make a settlement." So they exchanged riddles. First of all he sent his jinns. He said, "Here comes the queen of Sheba. I'm going to convert her to Islam. So you'd better go under the ground to her palace and steal her throne [she was on the march in her camp] and bring it here. Steal all the things you can. Rob her blind before she becomes a Moslem, because after she becomes a Moslem she will be sacred and I can't touch her stuff."

We have the same thing. We believe the Ten Commandments apply only to the good guys, the people we like. They don't apply to the people we don't like. Thou shalt not murder and thou shalt not lie. Well, if you don't like the person that's different [laughter]. That's what King Solomon did; he wanted to plunder Sheba. When she came up she had some riddles for him, and he had some riddles for her. They exchanged riddles and she won. She made a monkey of him. That's the Shulamite in the Old Testament. This is the tradition. We have the story of [Cyrus] and Tomyris. Cyrus was the great king, the conqueror of the world. There was one nation he hadn't conquered; that was the Masageti far in the north under Queen Tomyris. So he went up there. She asked him not to do it. She said, "It will be foolish; you'll destroy yourself if you do this. God doesn't mean that one man shall rule all the earth." She invited him to a banquet. He had tricked and killed her son in battle. At the banquet they exchanged riddles. She won and cut off his head. She put his head in a bag full of blood, shook it around, and said, "You wanted to drink blood; now have all the blood you want." That's the story of Queen Tomyris. But the idea is that she was the riddling queen. I have a long article on this with at least a dozen queens by the name of Tomyris that do the very same thing. So this is a formal sort of thing—the exchange of riddles before a battle.

Then there's the story of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. You go to the underworld and have to answer certain riddles. In other words they put the riddle in the place of the battle. The basic idea of this *stichomythia* is to absolve the ones for the crime and plunder they are about to commit. With this deadly rivalry, you work yourself up into a lather. You justify what you are about to do. You exaggerate the evil intent of your enemy and the necessity of your destroying him. "Oh, destroy them or they will destroy you." This is what Ammon talked about when he went out to preach to the Lamanites. [Some of the Nephites] said, well, you're crazy—the only way to deal with those people is to destroy them or they will destroy you. But Ammon wouldn't have any of that. This is the idea. You have to do this to work yourself up.

On the other hand, maybe you can avoid it. You have your misgivings. It's a very expensive thing. Since war is all chance you may lose. So why not settle it a different way? It's all a war of wits anyway. The smartest chieftain usually wins the battle, so why not play the game of chess. That's why chess was invented on the steppes of Asia by the constantly raiding tribes. Central Asia is a land that has no natural boundaries, so everybody is always raiding everybody else and trying to determine who is infringing on who else's tribal boundaries. This is especially so in Arabia, as we see in that great work, the epic of the Banī Hilāl. It's very much like the Book of Mormon in these war scenes. There were no boundaries, so they were always raiding each other. Well, that's very expensive, because when you win you're supposed to exterminate the other side. They did that. Genghis Khan started out doing that, but he found that was very wasteful. Why not have the other side just submit to him and add to his army? That's what happened. So he rolled up a tremendous force and was able to conquer everything. He was the greatest conqueror of them all because of that. So these people said, "Well, let's play a game of chess instead, and the winner take all." The winner does. The king is checkmate. *Shah māt* means he is dead. *Māt* in all Semitic languages means dead. The *Shah māt* means the chief is dead, so you take the army. You pick up everything. You pick up the pieces; you don't wipe them off the board. You want to keep as many on the board as you can. You want to spare as much as you can because, as the Book of Mormon shows us and as Liddell Hart tells us, wars in the end go back to personal conflicts. Remember when Amalickiah was dead in his tent, the people woke up New Year's Day, and the war was over as far as they were concerned. Moroni let them go home. He doesn't bind people down or exploit them because it's a purely defensive war he is fighting. There is such a thing.

Every soldier is bound to ask questions, and this is another thing. The main thing is that they should not ask questions. You know the story of the [six] hundred in the Crimean War, "Theirs not to reason why. Theirs but to do and die." But there comes a point when you have to reason and ask yourself the question, "Is defending his property worth my life?" [As one hired soldier said], "I'll accept the fourteen pennies, but I'm not going to risk my life anymore today." That is Moroni's challenge to Pahoran. After all, he says to them, is this going to go on? Can you sit on your thrones in thoughtless stupor surrounded by thousands who are not doing anything at all but living it up? [paraphrased]. This was the picture at Zarahemla. While we out here are suffering you are not even supplying us with food. You are not giving us anything [in this letter we are soon to read here]. Well, that's the idea. The soldier in the end kicks over the traces. He has no right to write this sort of thing to the heads of government. Moroni had been given great powers, but he challenges Pahoran on this very idea. As Clausewitz said, a common soldier is expected to make the self-sacrifice. He doesn't expect any promotion or anything like that. In the British army a common soldier can never be mentioned in dispatches. You have to be an officer to be mentioned. You might save the day or win the war, but you'll never be mentioned in the newspapers or dispatches unless you are a member of the right family. It's all families. I remember Sir Miles Dempsey coming out and giving us a lecture on that.

A good example of that was at Eindhoven. Phillips Radio used to be the biggest radio [company] in the world. It began at Eindhoven in Holland. Well, that's where we landed from the air. Near Eindhoven was this big house, an estate with a long brick wall around it. It was a huge estate that belonged to Phillips. Also, Kipnis, who was head of our three-man team, was related to the great [operatic] bass, Alexander Kipnis. He could get anything. Boy, what a wheeler dealer from Chicago. Right away quick we got Phillips'

own private car. It was the “Red Devil.” The Dutch underground had hidden it in a haystack. So we got it out. It was brilliant red and had real onyx trimmings and a front-wheel drive, which was fabulous in those days. Everything was custom made on it. It was the fastest thing in Europe. We dashed all over the country in it. It would have made a marvelous target. They had painted a huge white star on the hood so we wouldn’t be bombarded from the air. Then we went at it, and some amazing things happened. Well, the general got jealous of it, and he took it over. That thing could outrun anything. As I said, it would have made a marvelous target. I was very glad to get rid of it.

Anyway there was this house. The first thing you would see when you came up to the gates of the estate was a big sign saying, “Off limits to all German military personnel.” Of course, it was in German. The Germans occupied there. So nobody touched it. The fighting went all around it, but nobody went inside there. When we and the British Second Army came in, they put a big sign up, “Off limits to all British military personnel.” We couldn’t go in either. So this man lived it up inside while the war went on around him. And he got rich selling to both sides. It made no difference. The English were as good a market as the Germans to him during the war. So he sat in the middle getting rich on both sides while these kids slaughtered each other. I say “kids,” because many we came against were fifteen and sixteen years old. For this particular area the Germans had scraped the bottom of the barrel. They were just little kids; it was shocking. The average age in the paratroops was eighteen at that time. Twenty was the limit. You couldn’t be more than 5’ 8” either because they said tall people broke their bones easier. In those days they had different rules. But there we were slaughtering each other. There was some terrible fighting all around there, and the guy could sit home having tea with either an American general or a German general. It made no difference. This is the way it is, so the common soldier begins to ask, “Now, wait a minute. What am I doing this for?” That’s dangerous. You mustn’t ask that, of course. But we have this situation in the Book of Mormon right now.

In Alma 55:1: “. . . when Moroni had received this epistle he was more angry, because he knew that Ammoron had a perfect knowledge of his fraud.” After all, what would you expect? Notice, it was a personal thing. He was mad at Ammoron; he wasn’t mad at anybody else. He knew that Ammoron knew this was just P.R. as far as he was concerned. He said, “I will not exchange prisoners . . .” The deal falls through, of course. This is the point. It would have been to the advantage of both of them, but it was a personal huff on both sides. This happens quite often. “I will seek death among them until they shall sue for peace.” That’s the way he is feeling. Ammoron wouldn’t sue for peace either. Each one was trying to be more stubborn than the other. “We’ll show him.” So everything fails when you lose your temper. But, as I said, this was required by custom to go through this idiotic routine. But our routines are just as idiotic. We do the same sort of thing. [They were looking for a descendant of Laman and found] “one of the servants of the king who was murdered by Amalickiah.” Remember when Amalickiah wanted to marry the queen in the manner of Richard III? One of those servants was in [Moroni’s] employ. He knew what was going on, and he came over and told the Nephites. The Nephites were guarded in the city of Gid. That’s where they were kept prisoner. [Moroni] wanted these prisoners back. How are they going to get them back? Well, use the old wine trick. [The descendant of Laman and his men] said, we have escaped from the Nephites, and we have taken their wine. Don’t worry, they are not going to refuse that wine. Guard service is the most boring thing in the world. Nothing must happen if you do your duty. They can’t escape, and everything is quiet. So you are just bored, and it goes on day after day after day. The chance for a little party is not to be turned down. “They received him with joy,” because

he had wine.

He does a little psychology on them in verse 10. “But Laman said unto them: Let us keep of our wine till we go against the Nephites to battle.” Here they were just drooling for this wine. They were going to get it now no matter what. “For, said they: We are weary, therefore let us take of the wine, and by and by we shall receive wine for our rations, which will strengthen us to go against the Nephites.” We’ll get plenty for [fighting] the Nephites. In the British army for every action they always passed around rum. You always had an opportunity to drink rum. It tastes terrible; I don’t like it at all. This was to fortify you, I suppose. You were supposed to drink rum before every operation. Verse 13: “And it came to pass that they did take of the wine freely.” Soldiers on duty do get drunk. I could tell some lurid cases of that. People at headquarters were drunk. Remember, Colonel Cole was as drunk as a lord when he went out to take S’Hertogenbus.

When they were all drunken, he sent to the city of Gid and cast in weapons of war. They were in a sleeping drunk. “When in drowsy sleep their drunken natures lie, what cannot you and I perform on the unguarded Duncan?” said Lady Macbeth. This is what happened [in Alma]. They drugged the guards. They said it was especially potent wine. While they were asleep they cast the weapons over to the people inside so they could fight their way out. It was all done in a profound silence. I’m sure it was not a Laurel and Hardy silence, but sometimes you can’t keep the silence too profound. But this is another thing—how easy it is to spring surprises, as I mentioned before about the Battle of the Bulge. For weeks and weeks the Germans built up two huge armies within five miles of our front lines. We didn’t want to believe it; that was all.

Now here you have good old Moroni, the sport. He plays by the rules all the way through, so we can be sure that these insulting letters were by the rules too. Verse 18: “But had they awakened the Lamanites, behold they were drunken and the Nephites could have slain them. But behold, this was not the desire of Moroni; he did not delight in murder or bloodshed . . . and for this cause he might not bring upon him injustice, he would not fall upon the Lamanites and destroy them in their drunkenness.” He does not want to be guilty of injustice. Like Clerk Saunders, “Tis shame to slay a drunken man.” It was a perfect time to wipe them out. This would solve our problem right here. He wouldn’t do it because it wasn’t a decent thing to do. They were drunk and asleep. You can’t kill people like that; it isn’t right. That’s Moroni—he always wants to do the right thing.

Verse 22: “Now behold this was done in the night-time [wouldn’t you know], so that when the Lamanites awoke in the morning they beheld that they were surrounded by the Nephites without, and that their prisoners were armed within.” Thus they saw that they were overpowered when they came to. “. . .their chief captains demanded their weapons of war, and they brought them forth and cast them at the feet of the Nephites, pleading for mercy.” This is what Moroni desired; he wanted to take more prisoners for exchange. Verse 24: “Now behold, this was the desire of Moroni. He took them prisoners of war . . .” The Nephites joined the army of Moroni, and this was a great strength to his army. There were a lot of prisoners there, and he also got more prisoners for exchange.

He set the Lamanites whom he had taken prisoner to labor in strengthening the fortifications of the camp. He had to excuse himself for that; it was justified because of the pressures of time. Notice verse 27: “And it came to pass that they did, notwithstanding all the intrigues of the Lamanites, keep and protect all the prisoners whom they had taken.” They protected them as well as keeping them. The Nephites began to be victorious. Many

times the Lamanites attempted their tricks. They tried the wine trick, but the Nephites were onto that. You adapt very quickly when they try to pull it a second time. Remember the well-known maxim: “If he fools you the first time, he’s a rascal. If he fools you the second time, you’re the rascal.” They could not be taken with snares anymore, and no poison. The Lamanites had fortified the city of Morianton and made it exceedingly strong. This is a stalemate, and you can’t allow a stalemate.

The first rule for German officers is, “It’s better to do the worst thing possible than to do nothing.” That’s a surprising thing to say, but that’s because it’s so paralyzing. I mentioned these rules before. They have to be so rigid in the military to keep armed men from going off in all directions, doing their own will, breaking up into bands, etc. We’ve said repeatedly that it has to be so rigid. What do you do? In this case it paralyzes initiative in the German army. As you get to be an officer, you get higher and higher not for saying no, but for saying yes. You become less daring, less original, more conforming, more willing to say, “Yes, Sir,” lick the boots, and all this sort of thing. That gets you to the top. In the officer class people wouldn’t act unless they had the approval of somebody else. They didn’t want to offend anybody. They didn’t want to do anything that wasn’t just according to the book. This lack of initiative among the officers paralyzed the German army. This was a thing they were always trying to beat. They were doctrinaire and preaching, “It’s better to do the worst thing than to do nothing. Do something.” Time and again they wouldn’t do it. They hadn’t received orders. Nobody told them what to do. Then, on the other hand, if a soldier becomes too independent and acts on his own orders [he could be shot]. The solution to that was the Maria Theresian. Let him act on his own, but shoot him if he didn’t keep the orders.

So they couldn’t have this dangerous stalemate here. Alma 56:1: “And now it came to pass in the commencement of the thirtieth year . . . Moroni received an epistle from Helaman, stating the affairs of the people in that quarter of the land.” He tells the story of his two thousand sons here now. They have another kind of discipline. Verse 3: “. . . the sons of those men whom Ammon brought down out of the land of Nephi—now ye have known that these were descendants of Laman.” These two thousand sons were good Lamanite boys. They kept their genealogies, as the ancients did, and they were descendants of Laman among the Lamanites. We read of descendants of Zoram and descendants of Ishmael, etc. They saw that their parents were about to break the covenant and go to war to help the Nephites because they needed their help so badly. Notice in verse 8 Helaman said, “But I would not suffer them that they should break this covenant which they had made . . .” He established integrity. He wouldn’t let their parents break their oaths, and [the sons] are not going to break any oaths of theirs. They weren’t required to take an oath, but they took one spontaneously. They kept it because they knew Helaman was one they could trust.

The Japanese colonel at Port Arthur had a company commanded by his son. The company was in danger of being destroyed unless they could pass through a particular civilian area, which would be brought under artillery fire. This was in 1904. According to the rules of war, civilians were sacrosanct; they couldn’t be slaughtered. So he knowingly allowed his own son to be killed and his company to be wiped out rather than kill any civilians. That’s inconceivable now when we zero in on civilians. They’re first. We send the Air Force over the city and wipe it out—let them have the firebombs first of all. What a world we are living in now. We’ve come a long way since 1904. Moroni’s integrity was perfect and Helaman’s was. He had shown it in this case. He wanted their help very badly, but he said, do not break your oath. I forbid you. You must not break that oath you have

taken. When these young men saw that, they said, there's a man who does what he says. We'll follow him. And they do.

They went to the city of Judea to assist Antipus. Notice the Old World names in the New World here. (Half the names in upstate New York are classical names, aren't they? [The cities] were settled by a lot of classically trained Dutch people.) Verse 10: "And I did join my two thousand sons . . . to the army of Antipus," so he could strengthen it. His army had been greatly reduced by the Lamanites. "And the Lamanites had also retained many prisoners, all of whom are chief captains, for none other have they spared alive." Notice, he says the Lamanites didn't take prisoners of war. They just spared the captains for exchange. That's very different from Moroni's practice. Notice he sends a map with the letter. "And now these are the cities of which the Lamanites have obtained possession . . ." Of course, with anything like that he'd have to send a situation map. He lists the cities: Manti, Zeezrom, Cumeni, Antiparah, Judea. It's quite a list. ". . . and I found Antipus and his men toiling with their might to fortify the city."

Verse 16 illustrates another point of Clausewitz. "Yea, and they were depressed in body as well as in spirit, for they had fought valiantly by day and toiled by night to maintain their cities [they had to work by night to make up the fortifications that had been cut down, and they had to fight all day]; and thus they had suffered great afflictions of every kind." Notice that Clausewitz says spirit is not the same as morale. Their [spirits were] low, but they were determined to go on fighting. This little force gave them great hopes. Their morale was high. Their spirits were low. They were exhausted, but they weren't going to give up. That's the difference between morale and spirit here. Spirit is first in a long battle. The Lamanites were compelled by the orders of Ammoron not to come out against Judea. He told them to lie low and not do anything against Judea. [The Nephites] were favored of the Lord. Here again is a case of chance. Ammoron was foolish not to have commanded them to attack then, but he didn't. Chance plays a great part. This saved our necks. They might have destroyed our little army if they had attacked then. Then was the right time for him to do it, but he didn't do it. Hurray for us! As Clausewitz says, war is a game of chance.

Verse 21: "Now we were desirous that the Lamanites should come upon us; for we were not desirous to make an attack upon them in their strongholds." Well, Clausewitz again. The defense position is always the strongest. We wanted them to attack us; we didn't want to attack them. Though you would think that war until Clausewitz' time was always attack. Then they did reconnaissance to find out what the situation was. ". . . therefore we were desirous, if they should pass by us, to fall upon them in their rear, and thus bring them up in the rear at the same time they were met in the front [they were in a quandary]. They durst not pass by us with their whole army . . ." Good old Ammoron is boxed in now. He has the strongest army, but there are minor forces on every side he could move in. You can analyze it here.

Verse 27: ". . . there was brought unto us many provisions from the fathers of those my two thousand sons." He didn't know what to do, so they were waiting. In the meantime they were receiving reinforcements and provisions. They wanted that more than anything else. Then two thousand more men were sent from Zarahemla to join them. When the Lamanites saw their forces increasing, they began to get very nervous. They began to be fearful and said, we've got to put a stop to this. This gave Helaman an idea how they were going to break the deadlock. Verse 29: ". . . they began to be fearful, and began to sally forth [trying to stop these supplies from coming in] . . . to put an end to our receiving

provisions and strength. . . . Antipus ordered that I should march forth with my little sons . . .” Calling them little sons is interesting, isn’t it? I know some of you have taken Russian here. Not only in the novels but in the army today, the colonel always calls the men *ditya*, little children. We call them boys and things like that. But that has been traditional for hundreds of years, and it’s the same thing here. He calls them his little sons. He uses the caritative. In English we have to use the word little with everything, but other languages have these caritatives, these diminutive forms they use. Other languages are rich in these. That’s one of the things in which English is impoverished. We always have to use little this and little that, but they have a special word for the little one.

They are going to act as if they were carrying provisions, that this is just a provisional force, not military or anything like that. They start marching along the coast like that, so he knows they will come out and try to stop them. That’s what they are going to do. Then he can try that old trick and have somebody follow them. Verse 34: “And now, in the city Antiparah were stationed the strongest army of the Lamanites.” It was too strong to be taken, like the city of Mulek here. So they saw this band going along the coast with provisions in verse 36. They were too good to lose; they couldn’t let them get away. So they chased us [Helaman’s group], and we ran away in front of them, always northward. “And thus we did lead away the most powerful army of the Lamanites.” They thought it was really a pushover, an easy thing to get this out of the way. They saw the army of Antipus pursuing them, but they kept right on after us [Helaman’s group]. That would be the best thing to do. Then it was night, and they didn’t overtake us. Before dawn the Lamanites were pursuing them again. They were not strong enough to contend with them. “I would not suffer that my little sons should fall into their hands; therefore we did continue our march, and we took our march into the wilderness.” It’s a running away. Nobody dared turn either direction. The two thousand, the big Lamanite army, and Antipus’ littler army that was chasing them were all going in a beeline up the coast. Nobody dared turn to the right or the left—they just kept going.

Verse 40: “. . . thus we did flee all that day into the wilderness, even until it was dark.” That kept on the third day of the seventh month. Then he said, how about it, kids, have you had enough running away? They would do anything rather than run away anymore, because they hadn’t come out for that. They’d had enough of that. “Therefore what say ye, my sons, will ye go against them to battle?” He really unleashed them. In verse 56 it says they fought with such miraculous strength they did frighten the enemies. The seasoned Lamanite soldiers had never seen anything like this. This is what happened in 1948 in Israel. Those Jewish kids could never fight because they were always the underdogs wherever they were. They had been underdogs so long. They were completely surrounded by a huge Egyptian force and a huge Syrian force coming in from all directions. They just wiped them out and terrified them. These soldiers had never seen anything like that. They were absolutely dedicated, and that’s what you have here. They fought with such miraculous strength that they frightened the Lamanite soldiers. So they delivered themselves up and said, we give up; we can’t fight this. Helaman tells why they didn’t [fall]. He talks about them. Verse 45: “. . . never had I seen so great courage . . . Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall . . . we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone.” There’s no rancor here. Good old sporting Helaman is even more strict on this than Moroni is. They had never fought before. “And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers . . .” They told me what their situation was.

A terrible battle had commenced. When they came up behind, the battle between Antipus

and the Lamanites had already begun. The enemy was already engaged, so they're attacked from the rear now. The army of Antipus was exhausted and just about to give in, and Antipus had already fallen. They began to fall and give way, and the Lamanites were pursuing with great vigor. That was just the time for Helaman's force to strike from the side. That's exactly what you do. You hold your cavalry away on the side. This was Alexander's and Caesar's pet way. You have a block of elite troops on one side. The *hypaspes* of Alexander the Great and the Golden Shields would come in when the battle was going this way or that way. Then was the time to hit with that. It hit with a thunderbolt, and that made all the difference. It's the timing. You always have to hold something in reserve. At the Battle of the Bulge we didn't have anything in reserve. We didn't even have a filing clerk in reserve; we had nothing being surprised like that. At the same time the Russians had eighty-five divisions in reserve. They saved our necks time and again.

So they delivered them up as prisoners of war. This was Moroni's policy. He surrounded them "insomuch that they were compelled to deliver up their weapons of war and also themselves as prisoners of war." Not one of the two thousand had fallen. They fought with such miraculous strength it frightened the enemy. There was no place for the prisoners. What could they do? So they sent them to the land of Zarahemla.

Alma 57:1: "And now it came to pass that I received an epistle from Ammoron [he wanted to make another prisoner exchange here; they were not getting anywhere with prisoner exchanges], the king, stating that if I would deliver up those prisoners," which they had lost in that battle . . . They would only deliver them up on exchange of a Nephite family. Ammoron refused. "But the people of Antiparah did leave the city, and fled to their other cities . . ." Verse 4 is the turning point of the war. From now on everything starts to slow down and go downward. There's a psychological point when you can tell which way it is going to go. That will sometimes come quite early and sometimes quite late. The war can drag on for years, and yet you know how it is going to turn out. It's an interesting thing. The German officers—those that we got and those we tuned in on with the radio—knew when the turning point of the war had come. Already just after the invasion of Normandy, they knew it was over. Yet the war went on. That was 1944; it went on until May 1945. It didn't need to, but that's the way things go.

Verse 4: ". . . and thus the city of Antiparah fell into our hands." In the twenty and ninth year, they received a supply of provisions and then six thousand men, "besides sixty of the sons of the Ammonites who had come to join their brethren, my little band of two thousand." They wanted to get the city of Cumeni, so they surrounded Cumeni by night, a little before [the Lamanites] were to receive a supply of provisions. They camped around the city and slept upon their swords. What kind of a trick would they pull on them now? How could you bring them out? He couldn't conquer this very strong, independent city, so he used another very good trick. [The Nephites] camped so close to them, right under their noses. They couldn't let that go on. In the first place, it would cut off their supplies. In the second place, they could be easily handled. We can't let them camp right in front of the gates here [the Lamanites said], so they had to come out. That's all they wanted, and they dragged them into the usual traps.

We can't go on with warfare forever. We come to other grim matters presently.