

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 4, Lecture 112  
Moroni 1–10  
Formula of Faith, Hope, and Charity  
Gifts

In Moroni 1:1, Moroni tells us that he's writing an appendix to the Book of Mormon. He hadn't intended to write any more, but he had some time on his hands. He ended it with the Jaredites. That's where it should end, back there, showing that they suffered the same things. Well, I'm going to skip to just the high points here, and then I may go back to some others. He tells us in the fourth verse anything he writes now is for the Lamanites. Of course, his people are finished. Moroni 2:2 is a note from the forty-day mission of Christ, and it's how we can enlist the power of the Holy Ghost, which is absolutely indispensable. A very elusive thing is the Holy Ghost, but that verse will tell you some very important things about the Holy Ghost.

You'll notice the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, which we're not going into now, are ordinances that you are familiar with. We have actually taken them from here. We've taken them from the Book of Mormon—the sacrament prayer, baptism, etc. Moroni, with a little time on his hands, searched for the most important, the most vital items, and that's what we have here.

St. Basil, writing in the fourth century, said, we know they baptized, but we don't have any formula. We don't have any ordinance for baptism given. The church didn't have one. They had to invent them. And he said, we know they got married, but we don't know what kind of marriage rites were celebrated in the early Christian church. Now if you want the best thumbnail sketch that could possibly be given of primitive Christianity, called the primitive Christian church, we look to Moroni 6. In the sixth chapter we have a thumbnail sketch of it. It's just like Qumran revisited, a little Dead Sea Scrolls here, the way it describes it. That is a short chapter that's taken up with a description of the working of the church in the early days, and it's a very interesting thing. This is exactly the picture of the primitive church that has emerged from the recent studies of it on the basis of newly found documents, begun in the latter part of the nineteenth century by von Harnack, Albert Schweitzer, Bultmann, and people like that. But read the sixth chapter if you want your primitive church. Yes?

"I'm sorry, you started telling us about the test before you stepped in front of the microphone, so I didn't hear it all."

Oh yes, the essay may be typewritten or handwritten, if it's clearly handwritten. The length is what it would take to unload your thoughts in three hours, and think about it. It's going to be judged purely as an essay. It's a very broad subject, as you know, and yet it's coming down to a fine point today. I'm really getting serious about the Book of Mormon now. It's just been an intellectual exercise heretofore. Not any more, kiddo—it's the real thing. And you might bring that home in [your essay] with what we have here.

Well, let's consider these chapters in Moroni. This will give you some ideas right here, you see. Chapters 7 to 9 are important chapters. What chapter 7 all boils down to, as it tells us in verse 1, is the ancient formula of faith, hope, and charity. I'll refer to that later. In chapter 7 you notice that Mormon is sick to death of violence. He wants rest and peace. He's just obsessed with it now. He said right at the beginning that since he was old enough to observe the ways of men, he had seen nothing but this restless violence. Note verses 3 and 4 in the seventh chapter: "Wherefore I would

speak unto you that are of the church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until ye shall rest with him in heaven [notice his emphasis on peace and rest]. And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable walk with the children of men.” I want to talk of peace for a change with some peaceable people. He wants a peaceable world and he wants a rest. He’s sick and tired. Remember, he’s led the whole thing here, and he has this obsession. Peace and rest are foremost in his mind here, and it comes out throughout this chapter.

He goes on with what he’s been through. Is this cynical when he says in the sixth verse: “For behold, God hath said a man being evil cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing. For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness.” See, he’s in a fake and a phony world, and he [refers] here to our reluctant gifts, our formal prayers, etc. “Man being evil” is a present participle, active, you see. As long as he is evil, being evil, he can’t do that which is good. Everything we do is wrong here. This is a significant thing. Men are not capable of saving themselves, and it’s the inevitable question. He has no peace or rest. What’s the use? Men are just naturally evil. This is not cynical; it’s just a statement of fact. Mormon sees no point in criticizing here. He takes a wholly positive stand here. He’s not disillusioned at all because he never had any illusions. When he was fifteen years old he was preaching to the people [and it was like preaching] to a stone wall, so he has no illusions at all. He says that’s just the way people are (Mormon 1:15–16; 2:18). We’re flawed from the beginning because of the Fall. We’re naturally selfish; that colors everything we do. We’re not in a position to give a good gift he says in verses 6–10 here. Are we really servants of the devil?

Then he explains what’s going on in verses 12–13. Notice the balance here. They’re perfectly balanced against each other here, using the same expressions exactly. You’re thinking of a person suspended in space, and two planets are trying to pull him in opposite directions to opposite orbits. “For the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually.” There is no mention anywhere of God fighting against the devil. He doesn’t have to. He could dismiss him like that. There’s no issue there because the devil is phony. He can only react, but he’s always fighting against God. You’re not called upon to fight God’s battles for him, as Mormon tells us here. He has not asked you to do that at all. He has asked you to do what’s good. If you do righteously, that’s the deadly weapon—not going out and attacking him [Satan] because he’s evil. Remember, he’s going to have to live with us forever, too, in eternity. We’ve got to get on with each other eventually. He’s going to be forgiven, so there’s nothing you can do by going out and trying to eliminate him. He says here, “The devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin [that’s his method], and to do that which is evil continually.”

So it’s like a gravitational force, a continual force exerting steady pressure or attraction to pull you over into an orbit where you’ll be invited to sin and do evil continually. And with God the same thing: “That which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually.” On the other hand, you’re continually being pulled in the opposite direction. But the same way, inviting and enticing—the same test. “Wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.”

Between the two it’s up to you, and the pull is equal. It has to be. Neither one is overwhelmingly powerful—not in this world. If God exerted irresistible force—which Joseph Smith says he will not do—then you would have no choice. I mean it wouldn’t be a test at all. As Peter says in the famous *Clementine Recognitions*, if God forced us to be good, there’d be no merit in that at all. On the other hand, if the devil was absolutely overpowering and you couldn’t resist him, we wouldn’t be responsible for yielding to him. He’d be much too strong for us. So each of them has a mighty pull. The one is this direction, and the other is phony, but it’s a mirror image of the

other. There's a great early Christian literature in which the devil is an exact counterpart. He waits for God to act, and then he acts. He makes the same claims to dominion. He is the fisherman of men, too. He does all these other things. He sends out his missionaries. He has the same influence, and so it's up to you to make the choice. You're suspended in space between the two [and you decide] which direction you're going to move in here.

Remember in Ether 3:2, when he's asking the Lord [for help], he says "because of the fall our natures have become evil continually." Because of the fall we can't do any good of ourselves. But the way is free for our probation, so it's up to us to make the choice. He tells us in the next verse, in making the choice, don't you start rationalizing. He says in view of this you have your choice to be this way or that way, but "take heed . . . that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil."

Who would do that? Everybody would do that. It's the common temptation to do that thing—to rationalize, making good and bad suit your interests. The typical company spokesman will do that. His answer is never an answer. The position is predictable, the routine flat denial of any wrongdoing. We've heard it a hundred times. All we have to do is listen to all these charges against the savings and loan companies, HUD, or whatever it is. The charges that are made are always categorically denied. What we did was only good. You can very easily argue yourself into saying "what I've been doing is good," because you want to. So don't fool yourself, and don't judge that which is evil to be of God and that which is good to be evil, in making your choice here.

We're under great pressure to support the establishment, but he says in verse 15, you still cannot be fooled unless you want to be. You couldn't get out of it, you say. Oh well, but I was fooled. I didn't know all the facts, etc. Uh uh, he says here. "It is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night." You're not going to have any excuse on those grounds. In the end you know what's right and wrong—no hairsplitting about ethics and conditions.

I noticed an interesting thing here. He says (verse 16), "the spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil." We know with a perfect knowledge. Well, what happens if you reject it? That is an interesting thing. Paul says in Romans 1:28, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Forget God, ignore the light of common day [they say]. Let's be practical and down to earth. We don't worry about those things. If they didn't "like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." The Greek word he uses is *adokimos* which means "sick, wanton, perverse, self-destructive, paranoid." The whole world is a promised land. We have the story of the promised land, but after all, the whole world is a promised land where we come for our tests. It's most glorious and beautiful, as God has made it. There is a land choice above all other lands, but other lands are choice, too. This is just choice above all other lands. So the earth is a promised land, and there are certain obligations [that] come with the territory. We've seen that in the promised land [references] again and again. It goes for the whole earth. You are not free to take it or leave it, is the point. You say, "Well, here's the proposition—take it or leave it."

"No, I won't be interested in that. I won't concern myself with what God wants or anything else. That's a fine-pointed argument, and we can't concern ourselves. We have our daily work to do, and all these things fade into the light of common day when you come down to common sense things." That doesn't go at all. You go crazy if that happens, and you see what's happening in the world today. Everybody seems to have lost their balance. He gave them over to a reprobate mind because they didn't like to go on thinking of God, "retain God in their knowledge." So you can't ignore it. You're not free to take it or leave it.

Notice he develops his argument by perfectly logical conditions here. This is exactly what you'd expect, you see. First the violence he's seen—he wants peace and rest. Well, men aren't capable of saving themselves. What is it then? Well, they are being exposed to equal forces here; they have their choice. Yes, but can't you be overwhelmed? No, you can't be. You're able to judge. Well, in that case, can't we just put it aside and live our lives? No, you can't do that either. We find out that that's so.

Well, then in Moroni 7:20–21 he talks about laying hold of every good thing. Make it yours; live by it. Don't merely seek to know but to lay hold of every good thing. Notice he's arguing in a regular, logical order in verses 20 and 21. How do you “lay hold upon every good thing?” Well, he says it's by faith. Well, what gives you faith? he asks. We're inclined to avoid intense effort, he says. Ether 3:2 “Because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment.” That's why we have to go on. Our natures are evil, but we're not going to get off the hook because the Lord has commanded us “that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires.” When you make your choice between the two planets that are pulling you in opposite directions, who decides? See, every moment of your life you have two ways before you—the early Christian doctrine of the two ways. There's a right way and a wrong way, a right choice and a wrong choice. There are many choices, and you'll never know among those which is the best. But, as he tells you, it's given you to know with a perfect knowledge which is right and which is wrong. You make your choice, and you have to do that all the time. Well, this earth is a place of testing. Our whole life became just a time of probation, Nephi says. We're being proven here, so every minute you have to make a choice of what would be preferable to do. In other words, you're revealing your true nature, your true desire, what Alma calls “the desires of your heart.” That, of course, is what you'll be judged by. Nobody's very smart, nobody's very strong, nobody's very brave, but what you want—what you would really desire—that is what you will be judged by. So he says in this case we must call upon thee that we may receive according to our desires. If you want to go with the other one, you desired it. It's your idea all the way along. You'll never have to be given anything you don't want, that you don't desire.

Here's an interesting thing here. Doesn't this look like a contradiction? Notice he tells us in verse 16: “For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; . . . ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.” But then he tells us in verse 19, “Search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil.” How does that come in here? When do you make your choice? You have to instruct and inform yourself. You have to know what you're talking about. You must search diligently and acquire knowledge so you'll know the choice you're making. You're given the power to judge any proposition, but you have to know the proposition first. You have to know what the situation is. You must search diligently; then you may know good from evil and make your choice. That's up to you then.

We have so much stuff here. It's an interesting thing. In all of Mormon's teaching, there's no mention of repentance. Isn't that odd? The Book of Mormon just bristles with it—500 times the word repentance is repeated? It's because he's not talking about that side of it now. He's just talking about the positive side of it. He knows we're evil; he's said that all along. We have to repent. He wants for the time being to be entirely positive. Granted we do evil in this world, he wants to fix our attention on the other world, on the positive values, and to make that real. People underestimate that, he says. If I make that strong enough to you, you might be more enticed to go in that direction.

Now how does faith bring it about? It has to be by faith. How does faith bring about a meeting of the worlds, joining in the covenant? Notice in verse 30 and 32. Well he goes on right down here (verses 23–24): “And God also declared unto prophets, by his own mouth, that Christ should come. And behold, there were divers ways that he did manifest things unto the children of men [there's lots of evidence], which were good; and all things which are good cometh of Christ;

otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them.” Notice—it’s a choice between all and nothing here.

Verses 25–26: “Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing. . . . And after that he came men also were saved by faith in his name; and by faith, they become the sons of God. . . . Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you.”

But then he raises the question, having said this here. What about faith? How do we get it? Well, he says, it has to be brought from above. It has to be brought by angels. It has to come from outside. You don’t get it of your own accord. Notice he says here, you not only lay hold of it, but in verse 28 he says “they who have faith in him will cleave unto every good thing.” You cling to it once you’ve got it. You grab it and cling to every good thing. “He dwelleth eternally in the heavens.” Well, there must be a celestial connection there. What happens then? Well, this is the situation here. Faith brings about this meeting of the worlds, which he calls here joining in the covenant. Notice (verse 30), “. . . to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith.”

The word *covenant* is from *convenira*, come together. *Venir* is “to come.” Venue, conventical, and convention are related words. It’s a coming together of the two worlds. He has just said that the Lord dwells in heaven. Why should he bring that in? “He dwelleth eternally in the heavens.” He says, well, therefore, we have to have a connection here, and he tells us what the connection is. It’s five steps here. First of all, God commissions his angels, but they’re only to represent him and to say what he wants them to say and nothing else. That’s what Bartholomew told the mob in Rome. I’ve been sent as an emissary and ambassador, and I cannot argue your fine points of the law. I just have to deliver my message as it was given to me. So he [Mormon] says these messengers are angels. So you start out with angels. The restoration of the gospel started out with an angel, the angel Moroni—well, with the first vision. It started out with the angel, and in the New Testament, it’s the angel Gabriel who appears in the temple to Zacharias. That’s the beginning, and then he appears to Mary with the coming of angels. And here he sends angels. Without them, we wouldn’t have that connection. So this takes us outside to real things here.

Verses 29–30: “Neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command.” So they represent God, just as if God himself had come. The angels come, and the next step is they come to deliver his message in person, and they deliver it “unto them [notice it’s common gender] of strong faith and a firm mind.”

If you look at Alma 32:23, he tells us what he means by *them* when he says this: “And now, he imparteth his word by angels unto men, yea, not only men but women also. Now this is not all; little children do have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned.” When he says “given to them,” it means to women as well as men. They’re all subject to receive revelation. There’s no special privilege here. So they deliver it to what kinds of people? “unto them of strong faith and firm mind.” The words are *strong* and *firm*. These are not hysterical types. These are not ambitious types who want to have dreams and visions. They are not self-promoting. They are not empty-headed, unbalanced airheads that get all sorts of ideas and visions of this, that, and the other. That’s very important, that they be of strong faith, but also of firm mind. [They must be] perfectly sane to receive these messages, because, as you know, all sorts of hysterical people [claim] various things. People get hysterical and receive the stigmata. They fall down and froth at the mouth. A great deal of this has gone on in the past and still goes on. So, that’s a very important thing.

That's the second thing. First God sends his angels, but to them "of strong faith and a firm mind." They in turn have a special office. That means their calling, a temporary calling, something that's assigned to them. It's their assignment. They have it as the office of their ministry. They minister, but their office is to declare it (verse 31) "unto the chosen vessels of the Lord." They pass it down another stage. Now it's the chosen vessels of the Lord. They're the leaders of the Church that come down from these others. We have a few great prophets, but they in turn declare it, he says, "to the chosen vessels of the Lord." And what do they do? They bear testimony to prepare for the residue of men to receive it. There's the fifth stage. It comes from God to the angels to a few people who receive revelation, but they have to be of strong faith and a firm mind. They give it to the chosen vessels of the Lord, and they hand it on to the rest of the world, to the residue of men.

Well, is this a case of rank? No, it has nothing to do with it, because verse 32 completely wipes that out. "And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts," It isn't that the Holy Ghost gives the message to one person, and he goes and gives you a message. No, it's the Holy Ghost directly who comes to everyone singly and individually. He has as much a revelation as any of them through this handing down in this way, "that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner [this is the way he does it] bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men." A covenant, as I said, is a coming together, an agreement. This is a covenant where everybody is joined in the same atonement, at-one-ment. They're all joined together, and this is the way it happens. He says he does it in regular order here. But nobody's privileged above another. It's just the office of their ministry. As Brigham Young said, prophecy is not an office at all—it's a gift. It doesn't go with any office. Some women have the gift more often than men, as a matter of fact. One of the greatest prophets we had was Eliza R. Snow. My grandmother told us some marvelous prophecies she gave that have been fulfilled.

So this is the situation here. Well, here's *repent*, though (verse 34): "Repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me." If you have faith in Christ, then "ye shall have power," and in verse 34 we're invited at all times to put it to the test. If you take action (verse 35), God will show you that it's true, but you must take action first. Then (verse 37): Why don't we see the plan working? Well, if we don't have faith, all is vain. Now that's no secret. The Koran says, "All is vain in this world." The Greek chorus is fond of making such remarks as "how absolutely nothing I estimate the world to be." All is vain. Well, that's no secret. Everybody who's ever looked at the earth knows that it's all vain and absurd because you're going to end up with nothing at all. Everybody's admitted it, of course. If these things have ceased, that's all you have. You have nothing else, you see. It's just a void, a vacuum.

He talks now about a great and awful gulf between those who follow the plan of the gospel and the others. You say, well, that's too extreme. You can't damn everybody. Well, we've damned ourselves, and they've damned themselves, too. I mean, we're in a desperate situation. "Men at times are sober. They think by fits and starts. And when they think they fasten their hands upon their hearts." As soon as people are sober, they all realize what a terrible thing we're up against in this life. Who was it? Richard Cory "one fine summer night went home and put a bullet through his head." The most successful and admired man in town; you remember his name from *Spoon River Anthology*. There are all sorts of things like that. It is [vain] when you start thinking about it, the frustration of it. After all, what are the plays that get the Nobel Prize? The plays that end in bleak despair and show the bleakness of our lives. Strong films make us face up to reality which is that there's nothing there. Well, it's that sort of thing.

Well, he says it's true. These things have ceased, and we know why. "Awful is the state of man." We're lost in space, you see. In that case, "awful is the state of man." Well, every unbiased observer has said that. There's a saying you hear all the time among the German peasants, the

German *Bauern*, I should say. Where I spent all my mission was in the country in the Black Forest. They say, “Life is a baby’s bib, short and messy.” That’s all we get out of it.

Well, so Moroni says in verse 39 there must be something better than that. “But behold, my beloved brethren, I judge better things of you, for I judge that ye have faith in Christ,”—you must have some faith, and that fact should give us hope. So we begin with that. In verse 40 he asks, hope for what. For eternal life. Well, can’t we ask for anything less ambitious? No, we can’t stop short of that. Anything else is just a reprieve, isn’t it? Remember what Hamlet says to Claudius when he’s praying, “This physick but prolongs thy sickly days.” We just prolong our sickly days awhile. Anything short of eternal life, just “prolongs thy sickly days,” which is not very satisfactory. But that’s what it is. If you’re granted a few years more, it doesn’t make any difference. At my age, I don’t care. A year or two—that’s a bonus. That’s gravy; that’s great. I have no right to expect it at all. A reprieve is the best thing you can expect. Ah, but eternal life—that’s something else, you see. That’s the only alternative. But you’ve got to have that hope first and must receive faith. Well, what will justify it? Remember, Mormon prayed for his people without hope, and he said he led them without faith. You have to have the two together. They can both be completely out of our sphere, not even wishful thinking. That’s where the world is today.

Well, what is the insuperable obstacle? Why don’t we get these things? Why don’t we have the faith and the revelations that go with it? Verse 44 tells us that—because we’re not honest. We are not meek and lowly. That’s what being honest is, recognizing what you don’t know, not what you do. Forget degrees and everything else. “The glory of God is intelligence.” Intelligence is problem-solving ability. We know that. William James’s definition is problem-solving ability. How do you go about solving a problem? You always, step by step, find out what you don’t know. This is where I’m ignorant. This is what I don’t know, and I have to fill that gap. There are no fields anymore. There are no fields; there are only problems to solve. If you have a particular problem you have to work on and it requires a certain language, you’ve got to get the language. If it requires certain math, you’ve got to get the math. See, it’s not the field you’re in that makes it; it’s the problem you have to solve. You have to get whatever you lack. You can’t fall back on your degrees and your reputation and all this sort of thing and say well he’s an authority on the subject. There are none such. You have to be honest and smart enough to realize where the limitations are and where we’re supposed to go. But only by a systematic and progressive revelation of your own ignorance can you do that. That’s a humiliating process, and very few will face it. They must be meek and lowly.

The greatest classical philologist who ever lived, Joseph Justus Scaliger, lived back in the sixteenth century. He went to Rome and lived in the ghetto to learn Hebrew. They spoke Hebrew in those days. The little children laughed at him when he’d make mistakes, and his fellow colleagues disowned him. He wasn’t scholarly about it at all. You don’t go down and mix with vulgar people. His colleagues wore fur-lined robes and everything else, but their knowledge of Hebrew was less than elementary. That’s the difference, you see. You have to be meek and lowly if you’re going to learn anything or do what the Lord wants you to do. Realize your situation and what you really are. But who wants to be meek and lowly?

Now we come to this insistence on charity. You notice he just has a thing about charity here (verse 44 and following). Why this insistence on charity? Well, charity puts the stamp of authenticity on the whole thing. Without charity there’s always an element of ulterior motives, calculation, self-interest, and manipulation—it’s always there. In the most abstract problems, you’re liable to fool yourself. A lot has been written about that recently—how much cheating has been going on by scientists in high places, faking their data, etc., because just a little fake would do. The historians of science and people like Gregor Mendel have all fudged a little here and there. Well, that’s the way you have to do it. Charity is the love one has for children—he talks a lot about children—and you expect nothing in return. It’s completely spontaneous, and it’s irrepressible. Mormon broke his oath out of charity, you see. He had to. Charity finds the

suffering of others unbearable, you see. Mormon just couldn't leave them alone. They were his people. He knew they were wrong. He knew they were going to be destroyed and everything else, but his charity was too great. He just couldn't do it. He realized that he might alleviate the suffering and give them a bit of cheer for a while, and that's what he did.

In verses 45–47 you notice he goes into a long section from the New Testament. Aha! He's quoting the New Testament in the Book of Mormon. Well, there's an answer to this. We get to it right here, as a matter of fact. Well, Paul labored, as you know, to define [charity]. It's rather laborious. He had to go through all this, for "if ye have not charity, ye are nothing." Verse 45: "And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not." We all know this. Therefore, without charity all things must pay. Verse 47: "But charity is the pure love"—unbiased, without any calculations, just for the love of it. Why would you do science or anything else? The only motive would be pure love, even for that, you see. A true scientist or a true artist does what he does for love. It is just as much love as a sexual attraction, something like that. It's a great attraction. "But charity is the pure love of Christ, . . . and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him." So, this charity is a very important thing.

Paul gives an operational definition here, as you may notice. Charity is an intimate, subjective thing—very hard to define. Unless you have it, you don't know what it is. It's like indigestion or a gift for music or math or something like that. You have to have it. That's what charity is, very hard to define. It's impulsive, and yet it's ongoing. It can't be faked; it can't be artificial. You can't use artifice, and you can't use faking as you do in everything else, in every other act of life. In order to get along, we have to grease the rails or oil the machinery to make things go smooth. See these little lies we give to each other make life much easier. You have to write "Dear Sir" to somebody you hate, etc. We have to act as if we had affection toward others and respect of others that we really don't have. I mean in a debate in the Senate or something like that, you might just despise the person you're talking to, but [you say] the Honorable Learned Senator from so forth and so on. These things are necessary to grease the rails in any society.

A German philosopher, Hans Vaihinger, in the early part of this century wrote a famous work on the subject called *The Philosophy of "As If."* Everything we do has to have a little "as if" in it. We have to act as if we were friends. I have to act as if I were teaching you something here. There's always something fake about it, but that's necessary to make life [bearable]. There's none of that in charity—that's the point. Charity eliminates that entirely. Not even that is necessary because it's pure love, the pure love of Christ. There's no artifice in it at all, as there is in everything else. So that means it's impulsive and ongoing. It belongs to the very nature of your being and comes right out of you yourself. It's part of your character and built into you, whatever charity you have. So this is essential. That means there's going to be no cheating. You're not going to go on cheating for eternity. For a person who spends his life cheating, it gets worse and worse. He says [like Macbeth], "I am in blood stepped in so far, that, should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er." You can cheat up to a point, and then it's suicide or something. This is happening now. We see all these famous stock crashes, these junk bonds and things like that. It's very clever cheating, but it always collapses because it builds up. If we're going in for the long stretch, if we're going in for eternity, the one thing we've got to have is charity, because that means doing away with all the cheating. We won't need it at all. How we deal with each other, how we think of each other must be genuine here.

Incidentally, Paul's definition is quoted in the Book of Mormon. It's a long one. But Paul was quoting another work. He was quoting an old hermetic work on the subject. Richard Reitzenstein and some others showed that some years ago, and it's typical of the hermetic writings. In fact, yesterday I was reading an apocalyptic work I'd never read before, and it gives exactly the same analysis of charity. This was a very common theme, not only with the philosophers. We know, especially from recent research, that Paul quoted all over the place. He quoted about every classical writer you can name. Possibly half the statements in Paul are quotations from the

classics, from the orators, from the plays, etc., Paul quoted all over the place; he was a very learned man. What he's quoting here [in 1 Corinthians 13] is from an ancient writing, and it's quoted here in the Book of Mormon. Where we find it is in the hermetic writings which were taken over from the Jews at a very early time. Remember, [Moroni] was going through the records now and picking out the best things. So he picked Paul's definition. It's the best thing you can find [on charity].

In the normal run of things, all things must fail. But remember, Paul said, "Charity faileth not." Charity is the only thing that doesn't fail, in other words. All the others are contrived, they're contingent, they're contemporary. Everything else is an illusion.

Franz Grillparzer was the first modern German dramatist, and his first drama was *A Dream Is Life*. Of course, Shakespeare wrote his last play on that.

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, act IV, scene 1

Shakespeare's final word was, it's all just a play, it's all just imagination. There's going to be nothing left when it has faded after the storm. This is what we have to offer. It's a sad thing, but all else must fail. They're right about that. Then he tells us—unless there is this (verse 46). This is entropy, you see. This is the second law—all things fail. This is the heat death, the normal course of nature. 2 Nephi 9:7 is one of the most important verses in the Book of Mormon, where he tells us what happens in the normal course of things. We must refer to this, why we need a savior. "Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement." There must be unlimited power at work here in the universe—infinite atonement. He says unless that power is infinite (I'd just love to talk about infinity today) [it would fail]. "Save it should be an infinite atonement, this corruption could not put on incorruption. Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man must needs have remained to an endless duration. And if so, this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more."

That's the normal course of nature. We do die, we do rot, we do crumble to earth, and we do rise no more unless there's a power resisting it, and that must be an infinite power—it's resisting the force of the universe itself, of entropy. And this is what we have. The Russian scientist Kozyrev wrote some very fascinating things on that particular subject. He said you can't deny that things are being put together again. That's what Buckminster Fuller writes, but he calls it "syntropy." If you have *entropy* breaking things down, there's obviously *syntropy*, which is organizing things and putting them together, or we would not have been here ages ago. That process would have been completed billions of years ago, and there wouldn't have been anything left at all. Something must be building up toward something. So remember what he said, the one enticeth and inviteth in this direction; the other enticeth and inviteth in that direction. There must be a counterforce of infinite power that's working on our behalf. There are reasons for believing without faith. You won't believe it, though, but you don't have to.

Notice he [the Savior] has infinite charity. And what does he want? He wants us to become like him. "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life

of man” (Moses 1:39). Infinite charity—that’s it. And so he says here, in verse 48 they “become the sons of God; . . . we shall be like him.” This is the payoff, you see. So Mormon ends on this note of supreme hope, this greatest of promises, the greatest conceivable happiness here. Don’t talk about the Book of Mormon being downbeat. We don’t recognize it. It keeps telling us. If we’d only wake up, it’s there, but we set up the obstacles.

In the eighth chapter we ask, why this overriding concern for little children? Well, there’s more than meets the eye here; I’m sure of that. Adults on earth are responsible for overseeing the passage of over ninety percent of the human family, which has passed through the earth as little children. Ninety percent of the human race has died in childbirth and childhood. They must also be our role model, he says, because it’s pride that’s destroying us. As I said, there’s more there than meets the eye.

In the ninth and tenth chapters Mormon’s own words describe the final debacle which is a state of mind. Notice everything is anger, blood, revenge. Oh, and Moroni 9:6 is very important. The battle is on—don’t get discouraged. If you do get discouraged, there’s no excuse at all. “And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness [we’ve lost the battle, see], let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay [no matter how the battle goes], that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God” by doing righteously. So no matter how discouraged we are, no matter how badly things go, it’s our obligation. We have a work, a labor here to perform, so don’t commit suicide. That’s the wrong thing to do.

Then [we have] this state of arms and what brings it on with the mounting atrocities. The Nephite civilization had ended long before this, as soon as civilized behavior [ceased]. The army had requisitioned everything, and the people were starving. Then he tells us in verses 19–20 there is no order, no feeling, no mercy. Today everything is an all-absorbing partisanship, as it was then. We say “win, succeed, dominate,” etc. whether it’s in sports, business, careers, or family. We’re growing more and more partisan, more and more determined to win. That’s what happens. When you meet defeat, as they do back and forth, then this degenerates into that state of mind in which he says everything is anger and blood and revenge.

Then the tenth chapter. What should we do? All we can do now is help the Lamanites, he says. Remember, the bottom line is God’s loving kindness. You can count on that, he tells us in verses 3–4. So he tells us, deny not the gifts. He [the Lord] gives us these gifts, and we’re to enjoy them. They’ll see you through. He lists nine gifts here. It’s very interesting. Our ancestors in the north had the nine norns, and the Egyptians had the hathors. These were the spirits that would come at a child’s birth, and each would bestow a gift on the child. It’s a very ancient [tradition]. Well, it’s the seven hathors and then the nine. Everyone has a particular gift, but he tells us there’s no reason why one person shouldn’t have more than one gift. You’re not limited. Usually one is all you can handle. But notice what the nine gifts are here. First and most desirable (verses 9–10) are the intellectual gifts—very interesting. See, before anything means anything to you at all, your brain and intellect must be clear and active. Otherwise, you’re not going to take everything in. And this is our fatal weakness today, of course. We’re becoming brain dead. That’s the thing that’s emerging, as you see every day more and more. That’s given as the explanation now—we just don’t have it. We’re just not up with it. That’s what happened in the Roman Empire.

Then there’s the vital gift of healing, of putting things right. Then there is the gift of mighty miracles. This is a useful one. He says the gifts are for our profit. They’re not for display. He tells us in verse 8 that the gifts are for our profit. So these great miracles are for our profit. Then the gift of prophecy—who has it? Since everything is conditioned, the Book of Mormon is all the prophecy we need, actually. Prophecy is not office, as Brigham Young said; it’s one of the gifts. It’s power to see invisible visitors, the visiting of angels. Some people have it. I know some who have seen angels; many have seen them. It’s like these after-death experiences—they hesitate to

report them. When you've seen an angel or someone from another world—it's oftener than you think—but people don't talk about it. It's only a few medical doctors who recently have been putting their heads together [on this subject], beginning with Raymond Moody, who [spoke] here at BYU. He said that these things happen oftener than people realize, but [those who have them] are embarrassed to mention them. If people haven't had them, you're not going to get anywhere with them, so leave that alone.

Then there's the useful gift of speaking in living tongues, as Joseph Smith tells. That's for the spreading of the gospel among various nations, etc. Then last there's the gift of understanding the ancient records, the ancient tongues. Notice it makes a [distinction] between verses 15 and 16. One is tongues and the other is the ancient documents.

So, one person is not necessarily limited to one gift. They usually go together, but all must come from Christ. He's the only intercessor. They're all available, but we ignore them, he tells us in Moroni 9:19. This is the trouble, you see. We just have ourselves to thank for that. These gifts will never be done away with. Then he says don't ignore them. Don't deny them. He keeps imploring us not to do that. This is what he ends on. They're available, and we ignore them. Our guilt, though suppressed, paralyzes us. We're not able to receive them for this reason, you see.

Verse 22: "And if ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity." Good old Freud, you see. If you've been doing the wrong things, you may cover them up and rationalize. That goes into your subconscious, but boy will that cripple you! You'll never be able to accept the gospel or anything else. That guilt will haunt you and paralyze you; it will make you incapable of moving; it will give you ulcers and skin disease and everything else. You must despair without hope, because of iniquity. So if you have iniquity, you won't have hope. You can't entertain hope because you'll ask the mountains and the rocks to cover you. After all, you can't get rid of it, and you'll be aware of it.

So if you do not believe you have it, you won't have it, he says in verse 24. These were the Lord's words to Joseph in the grove, incidentally, here in verse 25. The first words he spoke to the Prophet were, "Behold the world at this time lieth in sin, and there is none that doeth good—no, not one. And mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth, to visit them according to this ungodliness." Notice verse 25: "And wo be unto the children of men if this be the case; for there shall be none that doeth good among you, no not one." That was the condition the earth had reached at the time the Father and the Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph in the grove. So suddenly in verse 25 we find a great yawning gulf—what a terrible thing.

Verses 27, 29: "Did I not declare my words unto you . . . like as one crying from the dead? . . . Lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing. " What is called the "filthy gift." Lucre, money, in the New Testament is the unclean thing.

Verse 32: "Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness [notice, he ends with a desperate plea here, calling out from the other side of the gulf]. . . . If by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God." Then you're sanctified. But notice—it's up to you to deny it. You have it. It's only if you put up a positive resistance to it that you'll be able to evade it. He tells us do not deny the power of Christ. You have to deny it actively if you're going to avoid it. ". . . become holy without spot." And then in the end he says, I'll see you later. We'll talk about these things later.

Go hence to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished:  
For never was a story more of woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, act V, scene 3