

## Educating the Saints— A Brigham Young Mosaic

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*The Brigham Young Paradox*:—A big black leather chair stood in Brigham Young's office by the Lion House; it faced the window on the opposite wall and the President's desk in the middle of the room. First-time visitors to the office were invited to sit on that chair, facing the strong light of day and the calm blue eyes of Brother Brigham, who sat there at his desk, his back to the window, quietly waiting for his guest to say something. After all, the man had come to see him, and it was only right to let him state his business: President Young, according to Grandfather,<sup>1</sup> would never say a word for the first three minutes. And at the end of those first three minutes he always knew exactly the sort of man he was dealing with, and the nature—greedy, benign, or sinister—of his business. "And he *never* (here Grandpa smote the arm of his chair) had to change his mind!"—his psychoanalytical techniques, black leather couch and all, were deadly accurate, and always put him on top of the situation. Brigham Young used to say that no man if allowed to speak could possibly avoid revealing his true character, "For out of the abundance of the heart the tongue speaketh."

It is important to know this if we would understand Brigham Young himself. No man ever spoke his mind more frankly on all subjects; all his days he strove to communicate his inmost feelings, unburdening himself without the aid of notes or

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<sup>1</sup>Charles W. Nibley. During the winter of 1921, when President Nibley was writing his reminiscences at Ocean Park, Calif., he used to read the manuscript to the family of the author in the evenings, telling as he went the much better stories left out of the official biography. This was one of them, and has since then been repeatedly confirmed by Preston Nibley, who had it from the same source.

preparation in a vigorous and forthright prose that was the purest anti-rhetoric. It has been common practice to dismiss any saying of his of which one disapproves (and he makes no effort to please) by observing that he said so much on so many things that he was bound to contradict himself, and therefore need not be taken too seriously all the time. No view could be more ill-advised, for there never was a man more undeviatingly consistent and rational in thought and utterance. But we must let him speak for himself to see that, and that is what his critics stubbornly refuse to do, allowing him only an occasional phrase or two quoted out of context to clinch their case. The few quotations that follow are, it is true, only a tantalizingly small fraction of the Prophet's inspired, and resounding utterances on the subject of education, but at least there will be enough of them to establish a definite thesis. Granted that Brigham would admonish the Saints to wear overcoats one day, so to speak, and the next day turn around and advise shirt-sleeves, the element of scandal and confusion vanishes if we only get the main idea, which is, that it is not the rule-book or the Administration but the weather that prescribes the proper dress for the day. All the other apparent contradictions in Brother Brigham's teachings likewise vanish when we grasp the main idea behind them.

What, for example, could sound more worldly and self-centered than a remark such as, "I labor for my own dear self, I have self continually before me; the object of my pursuit is to benefit my individual person . . ." ? That is, until we read the whole statement, which continues, ". . . Men may think, and some of them do, that we have a right to work for ourselves; but I say we have no time to do that in the narrow, selfish sense generally entertained when speaking about working for self." (14:101:69.)<sup>2</sup> What can he possibly mean? He explains: the only way properly to serve one's self is "to labor in the kingdom of God," any other course "is folly in the extreme." (14:101:69.) "Do you want riches pertaining to this world? Yes, we acknowledge we do!"—that again seems brutally frank until we read on: "I merely use the term 'riches' to lead the mind along, until we obtain eternal riches in the celes-

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<sup>2</sup>The references that follow, unless prefixed by *Millennial Star* or *Brigham Young Hist.*, all refer to the *Journal of Discourses*; the first number in the reference is the volume, the second the page, and the third number indicates the year.

tial kingdom of God," which is a very different thing. (15:37:72.) We seem to hear the credo of the ambitious executive when we read, "We are organized for the express purpose of controlling the elements, of organizing and disorganizing, of ruling over kingdoms, principalities, and powers." But the next sentence completely reverses our verdict: "And yet our affections are often too highly placed upon the paltry, perishable objects. We love houses, gold, silver, and various kinds of property, and all who unduly prize any object there is beneath the celestial world are idolators." (3:357:56.) So it is all along: we may grant that Brigham Young talks like a solid, hard-headed Yankee materialist, but only as long as we understand that the only matter that interests him is the enduring substance of eternity. There is no real paradox when he says: "Then let us seek to extend the present life to the uttermost . . . and thus prepare for a better life." (11:132:65.) He is thinking of this life *only* in terms of the next.

But very few people have been able to see that: "There are those in this congregation who are so short-sighted, and so destitute of eternal wisdom and knowledge, that they believe that brother Brigham is after property—after the things of this world." (8:125:60.) Well, what else *could* they think of any man who rolled over all opposition, amassed substance and power, and commanded the absolute obedience that Brigham Young did? To do that in terms of our world, a man must needs be a combination of Tamerlaine, Caesar Borgia, and Boss Tweed, and as such even the Latter-day Saints have pictured Brigham Young. How can you explain to the average American that there was once a shrewd Yankee farmer and builder with a passion for thrift ("I never suffered a peachpit to be thrown away, nor ate an apple without saving the seeds to plant" ([10:335:64])), who practiced and preached as the watchword of his economy the slogan, "Never count the cost"? How could you make him believe that the same dynamic character, whose astounding accomplishments have made his name a synonym for work, used to admonish his people: "Work less, wear less, eat less, and we shall be a great deal wiser, healthier, and wealthier people"? (12:122:27.) How could you ask him to take seriously the multi-millionaire who declares, "I have never walked across the street to make a trade. I do not care anything much about such things"? (12:218f:

68.) Or the devoted family man who advised missionaries to follow his example and put all thought of family from their minds: "I am not bound to wife or child, to house or farm, or anything else on the face of the earth, but the Gospel of the Son of God"? (14:19:70.) Here is the great leader who is utterly contemptuous of his "image": "I care not one groat whether they believe all that I say or not, or whether they love me or not; I have no concern about that . . ." (10:302:64.) Here is the man who worked himself almost to death to get the Nauvoo Temple built on time, and then rejoiced to see it in flames: "I was thankful to see the Temple in Nauvoo on fire . . . when I saw the flames, I said, 'Good, Father, if you want it to be burned up . . .'" (8:203:60.)

There is no paradox in all this. Brigham Young was able to master the things of the world because he would not let them master him: he took the measure of a world that could never understand him. It is not a case of physical *versus* "spiritual" values, but of eternal things, physical or not, versus things we know to be passing and therefore unworthy of our ultimate dedication. "What is the earth in its present condition? Nothing but a place in which we may learn the first lesson towards exaltation, and that is obedience to the Gospel of the Son of God." (14:232:71). That makes education the purpose of our life—a special kind of education. ". . . the world are seeking after the paltry, perishable things of time and sense . . . they are their glory—their pretended comfort—their God, and their daily study and pursuit." (6:40:57.) But not for us! "Seek *first* the kingdom of God . . . and let the gold and silver, the houses, the lands, the horses, the chariots, the crowns, the thrones, and the dominions of this world be dead to you . . ." (1:266:53.) "The Latter-day Saints have been driven from their homes, and their goods have been spoiled; but they esteem this as nothing. What do we care for houses and lands and possessions? The whole earth is before us and all the fulness thereof." (11:16:64.)

That sounds like another paradox: we do not mind the loss of earthly things as long as we get possession of the whole earth! Yes, but in the proper way: "While the inhabitants of the earth are bestowing all their ability, both mental and physical, upon perishable objects, those who profess to be Latter-day Saints, who have the privilege of receiving and understanding

the principles of the holy Gospel, are in duty bound to study and find out, and put in practice in their lives, those principles that are calculated to endure, and that tend to a continual increase in the world to come." (2:91:53.) "As I said yesterday to a Bishop who was mending a breach in the canal, and expressed a wish to continue his labor on the following Sabbath, as his wheat was burning up, 'Let it burn, when the time comes that is set apart for worship, go up and worship the Lord.'" (3:331:56.) ". . . let the kitchens take care of themselves, and let the barns, the flocks and herds take care of themselves, and if they are destroyed while you are praying, be able freely to say, 'Go, they are the Lord's' . . ." (3:53:55.) The treasures of the earth are merely to provide us with room and board while we are here at school; being "made for the comfort of the creature, not for his adoration. They are made to sustain and preserve the body while procuring the knowledge and wisdom that pertain to God and his kingdom, in order that we may preserve ourselves, and live forever in his presence." (8:134f:60.)

The astonishing thing is that Brigham Young, as his behavior demonstrated on innumerable occasions, really believed what he preached; which goes far to explaining his brilliant success in surmounting the most terrifying obstacles. "The Gospel of life and salvation reveals to each individual who receives it that this world is only a place of temporary duration, existence, trials, etc. Its present fashion and uses are but for a few days, while we were created to exist eternally." (5:53:57.) That is the basic idea which resolves the paradoxes of Brigham Young's philosophy. No one grants more readily than this supremely practical man of affairs that "the things of this world add to our national comfort, and are necessary to sustain mortal life," and that "we need these comforts to sustain our earthly existence"; but none is more emphatic in insisting that "those things have nothing to do with the spirit, feeling, consolation, light, glory, peace, and joy that pertains to heaven and heavenly things, which are the food of the ever-living spirit within us. This I know by experience. I know that the things of this world, from beginning to end, from the possession of mountains of gold down to a crust of johnny-cake, make little or no difference in the happiness of an individual." (7:135:59.) So we live two lives at once, taking care

to keep our values straight: "I have a being and a life here; and this life is very valuable; it is a most excellent life! I have a future! I am living for another existence that is far above this sinful world." (13:220:70.)

*The Expanding Mind*:—Brigham Young was the Prophet Joseph's most faithful disciple; their teachings are one as the minds of the saints and prophets have always been one. Before he met Joseph Smith, Brigham recalls, "the secret feeling of my heart was that I would be willing to crawl around the earth on my hands and knees, to see such a man as Peter, Jeremiah, Moses, or any man that could tell me anything about God and heaven." (8:228:60.) And then "when I saw Joseph Smith, he took heaven figuratively speaking, and brought it down to earth; and he took the earth, brought it up, and opened up, in plainness and simplicity, the things of God; and that is the beauty of his mission." (5:332:57.) It was a mind-stretching religion: "Thy mind, O man!" said the Prophet, "if thou wilt lead a soul to salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity." (*Teachings*, p. 137.)<sup>3</sup> The promise he gave to those who took the Gospel and the cause of Judah to heart was that "your minds will expand wider and wider, until you can circumscribe the earth and the heavens . . . and contemplate the mighty acts of Jehovah in all their variety and glory." (*Teachings*, p. 163.) What attests to him the divinity of the Bible is that it is "so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every man is constrained to exclaim: 'It came from God!'" (*Ibid.*, p. 11.) The Holy Ghost, the ultimate teacher, "has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge . . . it is . . . the pure light of intelligence." (*Ibid.*, p. 39.) Mind and heart must expand together, according to the Prophet: ". . . you must enlarge your souls towards each other . . . let your hearts expand, let them be enlarged towards others." (*Ibid.*, p. 228.) For not only is "the mind or intelligence which man possesses . . . coequal with God himself" in time (*Ibid.*, p. 353), but "all the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement

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<sup>3</sup>*Teachings* hereafter refers to Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1942).

. . . so that they have one glory upon another . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 354.)

This was what Brigham Young learned from his beloved Joseph as he "continued to receive revelation upon revelation, ordinance upon ordinance, truth upon truth . . ." (16:42:43.) It was all good news: "What are we here for? To learn to enjoy more, and to increase in knowledge and experience." (14:228:71.) Learning is our proper calling: "We shall never cease to learn, unless we apostatize. . . . Can you understand that?" (3:203:56.) "God has given us mental and physical powers to be improved . . ." (10:231:63), and along with them "our senses, if properly educated, are channels of endless felicity to us . . ." (9:244:62.) All systems are "go" for the expanding mind: "Let us not narrow ourselves up; for the world, with all its variety of useful information and its rich hoard of hidden treasure, is before us; and eternity, with all its sparkling intelligence, lofty aspirations, and unspeakable glories, is before us." (8:9:10.) The news is all good—forever: "And when we have passed into the sphere where Joseph is, there is still another department, and then another, and another, and so on to an eternal progression in exaltation and eternal lives. This is the exaltation I am looking for." (3:375:56.) ". . . when we have lived millions of years in the presence of God and angels . . . shall we cease learning? No, or eternity ceases." (6:344:59.) First and last, the Gospel is learning unlimited.

*We Try Harder*:—The Mormons were latecomers in the learning game, and it is not hard to see why: "Most of the people called Latter-day Saints have been taken from the rural and manufacturing districts of this and the old countries, and they belonged to the poorest of the poor." (14:103:69.) "We have gathered the poorest class of men to be found on the continent of America, and I was one of them; and we have gathered the same class from Europe . . ." (14:121:71.) "I never went to school but eleven days in my life." (13:149:69); "I am a man of few words and unlearned in the learning of this generation." (9:287:62.) "Brother Heber and I never went to school until we got into 'Mormonism': that was the first of our schooling." (5:97:57.) Such men, coming of age in the Flowering of their native New England, hungered for the things of the mind, the moreso since they had been denied them: ". . . we are all of the laboring and middle class. There

are but few in this Church who are not of the laboring class, and they have not had the opportunity to cultivate their minds . . ." (6:70f:57); yet they felt strongly "the necessity of the mind being kept active and having the opportunity of indulging in every exercise it can enjoy in order to attain to a full development of its powers." (13:61:69.) Mormonism gave them their great chance, as it sought, in the words of Joseph Smith "to inspire every one who is called to be a minister of these glad tidings, to so improve his talent that he may gain other talents." (*Teachings*, p.48.)

If they were late starters, the Gospel gave the Saints certain advantages which might even enable them to overhaul the more privileged. For one thing, they had motivating zeal: "Take those who are in the enjoyment of all the luxuries of this life, and their ears are stopped up; they cannot hear; but go to the poor . . . and they are looking every way for deliverance . . . their ears are opened and their hearts are touched. . . . These are they that we gather." (12:256:68.) True, "very few of the learned or of those who are high and lifted up in the estimation of the people receive the Gospel," (14:75:70); but that is all to the good, since such haughtiness can be paralyzing. God is now working with rough but reliable materials: "The beginning of this dispensation of the fulness of times may well be compared to the commencement of a temple, the material of which it is to be built being still scattered, unshaped and unpolished, in a state of nature." (12:161:68.) "A spirit and power of research is planted within, yet they remain undeveloped." (7:1:59.) "When we look at the Latter-day Saints and remember that they have been taken from the coal pits, from the ironworks, from the streets, from the kitchens and from the barns and factories and from hard service in the countries where they formerly lived, we cannot wonder at their ignorance." (14:38:70.)

But if their ignorance is not to be wondered at, neither is it to be condoned. Without a moment's delay the newly-converted Saints were put to work on a grandiose intellectual project, which was nothing less than the salvaging of world civilization! As Brigham puts it, "the business of the Elders of this Church (Jesus, their elder brother, being at their head), is to gather up all the truths in the world pertaining to life and salvation, to the Gospel we preach, to mechanisms of every



kind, to the sciences, and to philosophy, wherever they may be found in every nation, kindred, tongue and people, and bring it to Zion." (7:283f:59.) The "Gathering" was to be not only a bringing together of people, but of all the treasures surviving in the earth from every age and culture; "Every accomplishment, every polished grace, every useful attainment in mathematics, music, in all science and art belong to the Saints, and they rapidly collect the intelligence that is bestowed upon the nations, for all this intelligence belongs to Zion. All the knowledge, wisdom, power, and glory that have been bestowed upon the nations of the earth, from the days of Adam till now, must be gathered home to Zion." (8:279:60.) "What is this work? The improvement of the condition of the human family." (19:46:77.) But why do the poor struggling Saints have to do it? Because "the Lord has taken the weak things of the world to confound the wise" (14:38:70), and especially because the rest of the world is no longer up to it.

It was a daring concept, but one fully justified by history, that once "the Lord has bestowed great knowledge and wisdom upon the inhabitants of the earth—much truth in the arts and sciences," it is quite possible for such treasures to be lost: "This wisdom will be taken away from the wicked"—and once it is gone, "I question," says the far-seeing Brigham Young, "whether it would return again." To this impressive bit of historical insight he adds an exciting suggestion: "My faith and my desire are that there should be a people upon the earth prepared to receive this wisdom. It should not be forfeited as to be taken from the earth." (8:319:61.) The concept (recalling James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*) is an ancient one, being the idea, for example, behind the Cabbala. Repeatedly Brother Brigham admonishes the Saints that if they are to carry out such a task they must in time come to equal and even excel the learning of the world. They can do it if they work like demons: "Put forth your ability to learn as fast as you can, and gather all the strength of mind and principle of faith you possibly can, and then distribute your knowledge to the people." (8:146:60.) If the world seems far ahead of us, remember, "we are not as ignorant as they are" because, like Socrates, we acknowledge our ignorance and know where we stand. (14:38f:70.) If the Saints "have not had an opportunity to cultivate their minds," neither had they "been educated in the devilry and craft of the

learned classes of mankind," to hold them back. (6:70f:57.) Joseph Smith had assured them that "there is a superior intelligence bestowed upon such as obey the Gospel," (*Teachings*, p. 67) and Brigham promised them, "There is nothing the Saints can ask, or pray for, that will aid them in their progress . . . that will not be granted unto them, if they will only patiently struggle on." (11:14:65.)

That last point, the patient struggling, was the rub. President Young kept after his people all the time: "After suitable rest and relaxation there is not a day, hour or minute that we should spend in idleness, but every minute of every day of our lives should strive to improve our minds and to increase our faith in the holy gospel." (13:310:70.) A year after the arrival in the Valley, Brigham Young copied down in his Journal a letter which Parley P. Pratt had written to his brother back east describing the new society: "All is quiet—stillness. No elections, no police reports, no murders, no war nor little war. . . . No policeman has been on duty to guard us from external or internal dangers. . . . Here we can cultivate the mind, renew the spirit, invigorate the body, cheer the heart and ennoble the soul of man. Here we can cultivate every science and art calculated to enlarge the mind, accomodate the body, or polish and adorn our race; and here we can receive and extend that pure intelligence which is unmingled with the jargon of mystic Babylon." (*Brigham Young Hist.*, Aug. 23, 1848, p. 57.)<sup>4</sup> Wonderful to relate, for the ever practical Brigham and the struggling pioneers the improvement of the *mind* always came first. Brigham laid it on the line: "All who do not want to sustain co-operation and fall into the ranks of improvement, and endeavor to improve themselves by every good book" were invited to leave the community. (13:4:69.) The challenge of nature was not the real issue—"the greatest and most important labour we have to perform is to cultivate ourselves." (10:359:64.)

*The Universal Curriculum*:—What the Church most urgently needed at the start was what might be called "missionary learning." It makes perfectly good sense to insist that "We should be familiar with the various languages, if we wish to send to the different nations and to the islands of the sea" (8:40:60), or that all spend "a certain portion of the time . . . in

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<sup>4</sup>The so-called *Brigham Young History* is still in manuscript form in the Church Historian's Office. Passages are quoted by permission.

storing their minds with useful knowledge," by "reading the Bible, Book of Mormon, and other church works, and histories, scientific works and other useful books." (18:75:75.) At an early time Brigham Young suggested the formation of independent study groups among the people: ". . . call in your brethren, and read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Book of Covenants, and the other revelations of God in them; and talk over the things contained in those books, and deal them out to your brethren and neighbors." (1:47:52.) More formal schooling had ever an eye to the mission field: ". . . in our schools, all our educational pursuits are in the service of God, for all these labors are to establish truth on the earth . . ." (13:260:70), specifically, "that our young men when they go out to preach, may not be so ignorant as they have hitherto." (12:31 or 406:67.) Good missionaries should know things: "I do not wish to be understood as throwing a straw in the way of the Elders' storing their minds with all the arguments they can gather . . . (or) learning all they can with regard to religions and governments. The more knowledge the Elders have the better." (8:53:54.) After all, Joseph Smith had said that the mind of one who "would lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens . . ." (*Teachings*, p.137.)

But articulate and informed missionaries do not issue forth from a community of ignoramuses—Zion itself must be the central hearth and home of a broad and flourishing culture: "There is a great work for the Saints to do. Progress, and improve upon, and make beautiful everything around you. Cultivate the earth and cultivate your minds." (8:83:60.) "Now if we can take the low and degraded and elevate them in their feelings, language and manners; if we can impart to them the sciences that are in the world, teach them all that books contain, and in addition to all this, teach them the principles that are eternal, and calculated to make them a beautiful community, lovely in their appearance, intelligent in every sense of the word, would you not say that our system is praiseworthy and possesses great merit?" (13:176:70.)

For Brigham, the proper study of mankind is everything: "This is the belief and doctrine of the Latter-day Saints: Learn everything that the children of men know . . ." (16:77:73.) It all comes under the heading of our religion, which "circumscribes all art, science, and literature pertaining to heaven,

earth, and hell. Is there any good? It belongs to you and me. Is there virtue? It is ours. Is there truth? It is ours. Is there knowledge? It is for us." (12:257:68.) "Every accomplishment, every grace, every useful attainment in mathematics, in all science and art belong to the Saints and they should avail themselves as expeditiously as possible of the wealth of knowledge the sciences offer to the diligent and persevering scholar." (10:224:63.)

A favorite with LDS schoolmen has been Brigham Young's declaration that "Every art and science known and studied by the children of men is comprised within the Gospel." 12:257:68.) But this does not mean, as is commonly assumed, that anything one chooses to teach is the Gospel—that would be as silly as arguing that since all things are made of electrons, protons, neutrons, etc., whenever anyone opens his mouth to speak he gives a lecture on physics. It means rather that all things may be studied and taught in the light of the Gospel: "... if an Elder shall give us a lecture upon astronomy, chemistry, or geology, our religion embraces it all. It matters not what the subject be, if it tends to improve the mind, exalt the feelings, and enlarge the capacity." (1:335:53.) It would be quite impossible to improve the mind, exalt the feelings and enlarge the capacity of any man without making him a better candidate for heaven—"it matters not what the subject be." By the same token, the reading of the scriptures if not undertaken in that spirit does *not* belong to our religion: "'Shall I sit down and read the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Covenants all the time?' says one. Yes, if you please, and when you have done you may be nothing but a sectarian after all. It is your duty to study everything upon the face of the earth, in addition to reading those books." (2:93f:53.)

"Everything on the face of the earth" is a large order, and Brigham was no fool; he knew perfectly well that "the most learned men that ever lived on the earth have only been able to obtain a small amount of knowledge," (3:354:56), and that time, patience and method are necessary to bring the Saints around: "As Saints in the last days we have much to learn; there is an eternity of knowledge before us; at most we receive but very little in this stage of our progression." (3:354:56.) There must be a priority of things to be learned, which is what curriculum is all about: "We wish to have our young boys and

girls taught in the different branches of an English education, and in other languages, and in the various sciences, all of which will eventually be taught in this school." (12:116:67.) "We also wish them to understand the geography, habits, customs, and laws of nations and kingdoms, whether they be barbarian or civilized. This is recommended in the revelations. . . . let them be more informed in every department of true and useful learning than their fathers are . . ." (8:9:60.)

Immediately after arriving in the valley President Young recommended "securing at least a copy of every valuable treatise on education—every book, map, chart, or diagram that may contain interesting, useful, and attractive matter, to gain the attention of children, and cause them to love to learn to read"; this includes "every historical, mathematical, philosophical, geographical, geological, astronomical, scientific, practical, and all other variety of useful and interesting writings." (*Millennial Star* 10:85:48.) To train "the whole man" was his object from the first: "Let us make mechanics of our boys and educate them in every useful branch of science and in history and laws of kingdoms and nations . . ." (10:270:63.) He was always fascinated with problems of communication, on which he had some interesting theories, including the improvement of English phonology: "I would also like our school teachers to introduce phonography into every school. . . . This is a delightful study! In these and all other branches of science and education we should know as much as any people in the world." (1232 or 407:67.)

But curriculum is a game for little minds; the important thing for Brigham is that the Saints use their new-found liberty and revel as he did in the things of the mind. The starving man eats thankfully what he can get and does not quibble for hours over the menu and etiquette. The decisive factor is a passion for the things of the *mind*: "We believe . . . that every man and woman should have the opportunity of developing themselves mentally as well as physically. In the present condition of the world this privilege is only accorded to a few." (*Deseret News*, May 23, 1877.) Learning is a privilege to be eagerly exploited: "If we can have the privilege we will enrich our minds with knowledge, filling these mortal tenements with the rich treasures of heavenly wisdom." (*Millennial Star* 24:630:62.) The proper priority of study is not as important as study itself:

“If it would do any good, I would advise you to read books that are worth reading,” but “I would rather that persons read novels than read nothing” (9:173:63)—reading nothing being the normal outcome of waiting on the Curriculum Committee.

*Use Your Brains!*—As the strong man loveth to run a race, so Brigham loved to exercise his brains, and constantly appealed to the people to do the same: “We are trying to teach this people to use their brains . . .” (11:328:67.) “I pray to the Lord for you; I pray for you to get wisdom—worldly wisdom.” (10:296:64.) Every problem was to be approached as a mental problem, an exciting game of wits: “Whatever duty you are called to perform, take your minds with you, and apply them to what is to be done.” (8:137:60.) Proper pioneering takes as much brain as brawn. Intelligence is not only useful, it is a high moral quality, a holy thing, an attribute to God himself: “If men would be great in goodness” Brigham Young wrote in his “History,” “they must be intelligent . . .”<sup>5</sup> and he records in the same work that Joseph Smith prayed for the leaders of the Church “that God may grant unto them wisdom and intelligence, that his kingdom may roll forth.”<sup>6</sup> And so he appeals to the people: “When you come to meeting, bring your minds with you . . . I want your minds here as well as your bodies.” (8:137:60.)

To use one’s brains is to think for one’s self: “Ladies and gentlemen, I exhort you to think for yourselves, and read your Bibles for yourselves, get the Holy Spirit for yourselves, and pray for yourselves.” (11:127:65.) The appeal has been repeated by every president of the Church. “The catalogue of a man’s discipline,” says Brigham the sound psychologist, “he must compile for himself; he cannot be guided by any rule that others may lay down, but is under the necessity of tracing it himself through every avenue of his life. He is obliged to catechize and train himself.” (6:315:52.) Even virtue is not too high a price to pay for individual responsibility: “Every mortal being must stand up as an intelligent, organized capacity, and choose or refuse the good, and thus act for himself. . . . All must have the opportunity, no matter if all go into the depths of wickedness.” (8:352:61.) We can never grow as long as we are “other-directed”: “Pay no attention to what others do, it is no

<sup>5</sup>*Brigham Young History*, p. 78, Sept. 22, 1851.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 45, June 1839.

matter what they do, or how they dress.” (15:162:72.) A favorite saying of Brigham Young’s was that “Men are organized to be just as independent as any being in eternity . . .” (3:316:56.) No one was a more passionate advocate of temperance than he, but when in his youth he was asked to sign a temperance pledge he absolutely refused: “I said, ‘I do not need to sign the temperance pledge.’ I recollect my father urged me. ‘No sir,’ said I, ‘if I sign the temperance pledge I feel that I am bound, and I wish to do just right, without being bound to it; I want my liberty . . . ! What do you say? Is it correct?’” (14:225:71.) “. . . it would be useless for anybody to undertake to drive me to heaven or hell. My independence is sacred to me—it is a portion of that same Diety that rules in the heavens.” (10:191:63.) Again, it was Joseph Smith who led the way: “. . . all have the privilege of thinking for themselves upon all matters relating to conscience. . . . We are not disposed, had we the power, to deprive anyone of exercising that free independence of mind which heaven has so graciously bestowed upon the human family as one of its choicest gifts.” (*Teachings*, p.49.)

President Young tried to make the meetings of the Saints stimulating and adult affairs instead of humdrum routines. For one thing, “it may sometimes be just as good and profitable to stay at home as to come to meeting. I do not believe that those who stay at home are, in many instances, any worse than those who come to meeting, nor that those who come to meeting are particularly better than those who stay home.” (10:349:64.) “If any of you feel that there is no life in your meetings . . . then it becomes your duty to go and instill life into that meeting, and do your part to produce an increase of the Spirit and the power of God in the meetings in your locality.” (10:309:64.) And even at Conference: “. . . if any of you are not instructed to your satisfaction, be so kind as to send up a card to the stand, intimating your desire to speak, and we will give you an opportunity of doing so, to display your wisdom; for we wish to learn wisdom and get understanding.” (12:124:67.)

On the other hand, he rebukes senseless applause and even dampens the patriotic ardor of a 24th of July gathering: “I have noticed that people there applaud and boys whistle when there was nothing to elicit their approbation; and I would say that it would be very gratifying to my feelings if such useless, noisy,

and uncalled for demonstrations were discontinued.” (*Millennial Star* 31:571:69.) Even high spirits and firecrackers are no excuse for turning off one’s brains: “I ask . . . all the boys under a hundred years of age—never to applaud unless they know what they are applauding. It is confusing, bewildering, and making a noise without understanding.” (*Millennial Star* 30:550:68.) Empty-headed laughter pleases him not: “Never give way to vain laughter . . . I always blush for those who laugh aloud without meaning.” (9:290:62.) Children at meeting, even to attest to the growth of Zion, do not delight him: “I cannot understand the utility of bringing children into such a congregation . . . just for the sake of pleasing the mothers . . .” (13:343:70.) “If you cannot, for the space of two or three hours, forego the pleasure of gazing upon the faces of your little darlings, just stay at home with them.” (13:344:70.)

*Celestial Learning*:—No matter where we begin, if we pursue knowledge diligently and honestly our quest will inevitably lead us from the things of earth to the things of heaven. All science is cosmology, says Karl Popper, and, we add, all cosmology is eschatology. For Brigham Young, since all knowledge can be encompassed in one whole, the spectrum of secular study blends imperceptibly with the knowledge of the eternities: “. . . in our schools all our educational pursuits are in the service of God, for all these labors are: 1) to establish truth on the earth, and 2) that we may increase in knowledge, wisdom, understanding in the power of faith and in the wisdom of God, 3) that we may become fit subjects to dwell in a higher state of existence and intelligence than we now enjoy.” (13:260:70.) Note well that secular learning is sanctified only if it approached in a certain spirit. Only that knowledge belongs to the Gospel which is viewed and taught as such—as *all* knowledge should be. “. . . God has created man with a mind capable of instruction,” according to Joseph Smith, “and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from *heaven* to the *intellect* . . .” (*Teachings*, p.51.)

There are three factors involved, intelligence, revelation, *and* hard work, and if the spirit may help in earthly learning, the mind is required to operate in celestial matters. The learning process begun in this life carries on into the next: “. . . and when we pass through the veil, we expect



still to continue to learn and increase our fund of information.” (6:286:52.) The Saints must first learn “everything that the children of men know,” and then go on and “improve upon this until we are prepared and permitted to enter the society of the blessed—the holy angels.” (16:77:73.) This is done by pursuing a steady course that leads from the earthly to the heavenly without a break: “We should not only learn the principles of education known to mankind, but we should reach out further than this, learning to live so that our minds will gather in information from the heavens and the earth until we can incorporate in our faith and understanding all knowledge.” (12:172:68.) “. . . teach the children; give them the learning of the world *and* the things of God; elevate their minds, that they may not only understand the earth we walk on, but the air we breathe, the water we drink, and all the elements pertaining to the earth; and then search other worlds, and become acquainted with the planetary systems.” Not stopping there, they are to go on to discover “the dwellings of the angels and heavenly beings, that they may ultimately be prepared for a higher state of being, and finally be associated with them.” (14:210:71.) “It is the privilege of man to search out the wisdom of God pertaining to the earth and the heavens.” (9:242:62.) “. . . learn the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God, and put them together and you will be able to benefit yourselves.” (12:313:68.) “We try to so live as to gain more information, more light, more command over ourselves . . . until we can comprehend the great principles of existence and eternal progression.” (9:254:62.)

Such a concept has, of course, no conflict with science. The motto of the Royal Society, *Nullus in verba*—“we take no man’s word for anything”—is even more strongly expressed in the first editorial to appear in the *Times and Seasons*—written by Brigham Young: “Remember, Brethren, that *no man’s opinion is worth a straw*.” Brigham is a man who wants to know: “The object of this existence is to learn. . . . How gladly would we understand every principle pertaining to science and art, and become thoroughly acquainted with every intricate operation of nature, and with all the chemical changes that are constantly going on around us! How delightful it would be, and what a boundless field of truth and power is open for us to explore! We are only just approaching the shores of the vast ocean of

information that pertains to this physical world, to say nothing of that which pertains to the heavens." (9:167:62.) "Send the old children to school and the young ones also; there is nothing I would like better than to learn chemistry, botany, geology, and mineralogy . . ." (16:170:73.) "In these respects we differ from the Christian world, for our religion will not clash with or contradict the facts of science in any particular. You may take geology, for instance, and it is a true science; not that I would say for a moment that all the conclusions and deductions of its professors are true [opinions are not facts!], but its leading principles are . . ." (14:116:71.)

The basic common-sense of science appeals to Brigham Young as being sound and true. He took the shocking position that God works on scientific principles: "If I had the skill . . . to construct a machine" to pass through "the atmosphere as they do now on the *terra firma* on the railway, would there be any harm in acknowledging God in this?" (12:260:68.) When "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the Lord Almighty will send forth his angels, who are well instructed in chemistry, and they will separate the elements and make new combinations thereof." (15:127:72.) That was an outrageous statement both from a religious and a scientific viewpoint a hundred years ago. He also propounded a doctrine which has only recently been brought to the fore by such scientists as Giorgio Santillana: "The people of this day think they know more than all who have preceded them—that this is the wisest generation that ever lived on the earth . . . but there is no question that many things of great worth known anciently have been lost . . ." (13:305f:70.)

*The Facts of Life*:—Brigham Young's sanguine discourses on education were meant to stir his people up and shame them out of their intellectual lethargy. No one knew better than he the weaknesses of human nature ("Mankind are weak and feeble, poor and needy; how destitute they are of true knowledge, how little they have when they have any at all!" [3:343:56]); the hebetude of minds used to having others think for them (" . . . the great masses of the people neither think nor act for themselves . . . I see too much of this gross ignorance among this chosen people of God" [9:295:62]); the hesitancy of the uprooted, tending either "to hide ourselves up from the world" or "to pattern after the people they had left"—both

wrong (*Millennial Star* 29:756f:67); the smugness of the Chosen People, who "imagine that they must begin and unlearn the whole of their former education" (3:204:56), and who expect God to give them everything on a platter: "Have I any good reason to say to my Father in heaven, 'Fight my battles,' when He has given me the sword to wield, the arm and the brain that I can fight for myself?" (12:240f:68.) The Saints were much too easily satisfied with themselves: "How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations," wrote the Prophet Joseph from Liberty Jail, "—too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God."<sup>7</sup> "Condescending" means settling for inferior goods to avoid effort and tension. Brigham hated that: "That diffidence or timidity we must dispense with. When it becomes our duty to talk, we ought to be willing to talk. . . . Interchanging our ideas and exhibiting that which we believe and understand affords an opportunity for detecting and correcting errors"—the expanding mind must be openly and frankly critical, come hell or High Council (6:95:57); without that we get "too much of a sameness in this community" (13:153:69)—"I am not a stereotyped Latter-day Saint, and do not believe in the doctrine. . . . Are we going to stand still? Away with stereotyped 'Mormons' " ! (8:185:60.)

But the foibles of human nature were but some of the timbers and cobblestones of the real barricade which the Adversary has contrived to place in the way of learning. The Saints, gathered "from the poorest of the poor," had good reason to know that the imperious question put to all who presume to set foot on this world where Belial rules is not "Have you any knowledge?" (as in the ancient mysteries), but "Have you any money?" That is Satan's Golden Question. If the answer is "yes," well and good (" . . . for money answereth all things"), but if it is "no" you might as well be dead. That is the way things are set up here upon the earth; " . . . man has become so perverted as to debar his fellows as much as possible from these blessings, and constrain them by physical force or circumstances to contribute the proceeds of their labor to sustain the favored few." (*Millennial Star* 17:673:55.) It is no wonder that the Saints who had momentarily broken free from the sys-

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* . . . , Vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1948), pp. 295-6.

tem were obsessed with an overpowering drive to seek the only security this earth has to offer—wealth. And this passion, as Brigham Young tells them in a mounting crescendo of warning and appeal through the years, is the one absolute obstacle to their ever acquiring the knowledge they must seek.

Brigham discovered the basic conflict at an early age; he tells how at the age of nineteen he “sought for riches, but in vain; there was always something that kept telling me that happiness originated in higher pursuits.” (*Brigham Young Hist.*, p. xiv.) At the very beginning of the Church Joseph Smith noted that “God had often sealed up the heavens because of covetousness in the Church.” (*Teachings*, p. 9.) In 1855 Brigham Young pointed out the way in which love of knowledge and love of wealth, like antipathetical sets of glands, render each other ineffective: “It is possible for a man who loves the world to overcome that love, and get knowledge and understanding until he sees things as they really are, then he will not love the world but will see it as it is . . .” (3:119:55.) In 1859: “I desire to see everybody on the track of improvement. . . . But when you so love your property . . . as though all your affections were placed upon the changing, fading things of earth, it is impossible to increase in knowledge of the truth.” (7:337:59.) In 1860: “There are hundreds in this community who are more eager to become rich in the perishable things of this world than to adorn their minds . . . with a knowledge of things as they were, as they are, and as they are to come.” (8:9:60.) In 1862: “No man who possesses the wealth of wisdom would worship the wealth of mammon.” (10:3:62.) In 1863: If we go on “lusting after the grovelling things of this life which perish with the handling,” we shall surely “remain fixed with a very limited amount of knowledge, and like a door upon its hinges, move to and fro from one year to another without any visible advancement or improvement. . . . Man is made in the image of God, but what do we know of him or of ourselves, when we suffer ourselves to love and worship the god of this world—riches?” (10:266f:63.) In 1866: “When you see the Latter-day Saints greedy, and covetous of the things of this world, do you think their minds are in a fit condition to be written upon by the pen of revelation?” (11:241:66.) In 1870: “We frequently hear our merchants say that they cannot do business and then go into the pulpit to preach.” (13:308:70.)

In 1872: "The man or woman who places the wealth of this world and the things of time in the scale against the things of God and the wisdom of eternity, has no eyes to see, no ears to hear, no heart to understand." (15:18:72.) In 1874: "... the covetous, those who are striving continually to build themselves up in the things of this life, will be poor indeed; they will be poor in spirit and poor in heavenly things." (17:159:74.)

*The Contracted Mind*:—Over against the expanding mind, the Prophets placed the contracted mind: "... you must not be contracted, but you must be liberal in your feelings," Joseph Smith told the people (*Teachings*, p. 228.) "How contracted the mind and short-sighted we must be," Brigham reflects, "to permit the perishable things of this world to swerve us in the least from our fidelity to truth." (11:283:67.) "Let us not narrow ourselves up; for the world, with all its variety of useful information and its rich hoard of hidden treasures, is before us." (8:9:60.) He illustrates this by the practice of constantly quoting a very limited number of scriptures to the exclusion of others equally important, and comments: "This same lack of comprehensiveness of mind is also very noticeable at times with some men who happen to accumulate property, and it leads them to forsake the Spirit of the Gospel. Does it not prove that there is a contractedness of mind in those who do so, which should not be?" (11:283:67.) Business by its very nature is narrowing: "Take, for instance, the financial circles, the commerce of the world, those business men, where they have their opponents they . . . with all the secrecy of the grave, I might say, will seek to carry out their schemes unknown to their opponents, in order that they may win. Like the man at the table with the cards in his hands, unseen by any but himself, he will take advantage as far as he can. So says the politician. So say the world of Christendom, so say the world of the heathens, and it is party upon party, sect after sect, division upon division, and we are all for ourselves." (15:124:72.) "In our trading and trafficking we wish to confine the knowledge of our business in as small a limit as possible, that others may not know what we are doing. . . . We all wish to know something that our neighbors do not know. With scientific men you will often find the same trait of character; I know more than they know; I treasure this up to myself, and I am looked upon as a superior being, and that delights me." (17:52:74.)

Against this, "You see the noble man seeking the benefit of all around him, trying to bring, we will say, his servants, if you please, his tenants, to his knowledge, to like blessings that he enjoys, to dispense his wisdom and talents among them and make them equal to himself." (15:19:72.) "Keep your riches!" cries Brigham to the well-heeled Saints, "and with them I promise you leanness of soul, darkness of mind, narrow and contracted hearts, and the bowels of your compassion will be shut up . . ." (12:127:67.) Even so, Joseph Smith had warned against "those contracted feelings that influence the children of men" who judge each other "according to the narrow, contracted feelings of men" while "the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard." (*Teachings*, p. 218.)

For Brigham Young the contracted mind reached its bathos in the world of fashion: "But to see a people who say, 'We are the teachers of life and salvation,' and yet are anxious to follow the nasty, pernicious fashions of the day, I say it is too insipid to talk or think about. It is beneath the character of the Latter-day Saints that they should have no more independence of mind or feeling than to follow after the grovelling customs and fashions of the poor, miserable, wicked world." (13:4:69.) "To me the desire to follow the ever-varying fashions of the world manifests a great weakness of mind in either gentleman or lady." (14:16:70.) Again, it is the things of the world versus the things of the mind: "Mothers . . . we will appoint you to a mission to teach your children their duty; and instead of ruffles and fine dresses to adorn the body, teach them that which will adorn their minds." (14:220f:71.) So the Prophet Joseph had told the sisters at the founding of the Relief Society, "This Society shall rejoice, and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time forth," but only if they "don't envy the finery and fleeting show of sinners, for they are in a miserable situation." (*Teachings*, p. 229) Status-symbols belong to the same category: "A good name! Bless me! what is a name? It may shine like the noonday sun . . . today, and tomorrow be eclipsed in midnight darkness, to rise no more! The glory of the world passes away, but the glory that the Saints are after is that which is to come in the eternal world." (14:77:70.) "In all nations, or at least in all civilized nations, there are distinctions among the people created by rank, titles, and

property. How does God look upon these distinctions?" (14:83:71.)

*The Impossible Marriage*:—Misreading the case of the ancient Patriarchs, whose wealth came and went and always hung by a thread, many of the Saints dreamed fondly of a happy wedding between the good things of this earth and the blessings of the next, and sought after the death of Brigham Young to bridge the unbridgeable gulf between Babylon and Zion. We cannot go into this here, but it should be clear by now that the search for knowledge, in Brigham's book, by its very nature must be pure and disinterested: "Will education feed and clothe you, keep you warm on a cold day, or enable you to build a house? Not at all. Should we cry down education on this account? No. What is it for? The improvement of the *mind*; to instruct us in all the arts and sciences, in the history of the world, in the laws of how to be useful while we live." (14:83:71.) It is the things of the mind that are really useful. "Truth, wisdom, power, glory, light and intelligence exist upon their own qualities; they do not, neither can they, exist on any other principle. Truth is congenial with itself, and light cleaves unto light. . . . It is the same with knowledge, and virtue, and all eternal attributes; they follow after each other. Truth cleaves unto truth *because* it is truth; and it is to be adored, because it is an attribute of God, for its excellence, for itself." (1:117:53.) There can be no ulterior motive in the study of heavenly things; "Knowledge is Power" is the slogan of a rascally world: ". . . what do you love truth for? Is it because you can discover a beauty in it, because it is congenial to you; or because you think it will make you a ruler, or a Lord? If you think that you will attain to power upon such a motive, you are much mistaken. It is a trick of the unseen power, that is abroad amongst the inhabitants of the earth, that leads them astray, binds their minds, and subverts their understanding." (1:117:53.)

Here Brigham Young goes all the way: "Suppose that our Father in heaven, our elder brother, the risen Redeemer, the Savior of the world, or any of the Gods of eternity should act upon this principle, to love truth, knowledge, and wisdom, because they are all powerful . . . they would cease to be Gods; the extension of their kingdom would cease, and their Godhead come to an end." (1:117:53.) The Saints do what they do purely because the principles which God has revealed . . . are pure,

holy and exalting in their nature.” (16:70:73.) How can there be compromise with the world? “Shame on men and women, professing to be Saints, who worship and love the perishing things of earth.” (7:271:59.) “It is disgusting to me to see a person love this world in its present organization . . .” (*Millennial Star* 12:275:50.) “Go to the child, and what does its joy consist in? Toys . . . and so it is with our youth, our young boys and girls; they are thinking too much of this world; and the middle-aged are striving and struggling to obtain the good things of this life, and their hearts are too much upon them. So it is with the aged. Is not this the condition of the Latter-day Saints? It is.” (18:237:74.)

*Staying After School*:—The Latter-day Saints have always had a way of missing the bus: “Take the history of this Church from the commencement, and we have proven that we cannot receive all the Lord has for us.” (11:103:65.) The trouble is that “these tabernacles are dull, subject to sin and temptation, and to stray from the kingdom of God and the ordinances of his house, to lust after riches, the pride of life, and the vanities of the world.” (18:238:74.) “We may look upon ourselves with shamefacedness because of the smallness of our attainments in the midst of so many great advantages.” (12:192:68.) “. . . in things pertaining to this life, the lack of knowledge manifested by us as a people is disgraceful.” (11:105:65.) “I have seen months and months in this city, when I could have wept like a whipped child to see the awful stupidity of the people . . .” (2:280:55.) “I feel like taking men and women by the hair of their heads, figuratively speaking, and slinging them miles and miles, and like crying, stop, before you ruin yourselves!” (3:225:56.)

In a now-classic study, R. Kaesemann showed that God’s peculiar way of dealing with the Chosen People, ever stiff-necked and slow to learn, was to send them wandering in the wilderness. The Last Dispensation has proven no exception in this regard: “Some may ask why did we not tarry at the centre stake of Zion when the Lord planted our feet there? We had eyes, but we did not see; we had ears, but we did not hear; we had hearts that were devoid of what the Lord required of his people: consequently, we could not abide what the Lord revealed unto us. We had to go from there to gain an experience. Can you understand this?” (11:102:65.) “Could our brethren



stay in Jackson County, Missouri? No, no. Why? They had not learned 'a' concerning Zion; and we have been traveling now forty-two years, and have we learned our a,b,c? . . . I will say, scarcely." (15:4:72.) "I never attributed the driving of the Saints from Jackson County to anything but that it was necessary to chasten them and prepare them to build up Zion." (13:148:69.) "Are we fit for Zion? . . . Could we stay in Independence? No, we could not. . . . What is the matter with all you Latter-day Saints? Can the world see? No. Can the Saints see? No, or few of them can; and we can say that the light of the Spirit upon the hearts and understanding of some Latter-day Saints is like the peeping of the stars through the broken shingles of the roof over our heads." (15:3:72.)

The prophecies have not been revoked, but their fulfillment can be delayed, indefinitely, if need be, until all necessary conditions are fulfilled. The Saints "will take the kingdom, and possess it for ever and ever; but in the capacity they are now, in the condition that they now present themselves before God, before the world and before each other? Never, never!" (15:2:72.) "We are not yet prepared to go and establish the Centre Stake of Zion. The Lord tried this in the first place. . . . He gave revelation after revelation; but the people could not abide them. They do not know what to do with the revelations, commandments and blessings of God." (11:324f:67.) So though "this people will surely go back to Jackson County, they will none the less be *held back* until they are ready—which may be a very long time." (3:279:56.)

"And so we have got to continue to labor, fight, toil, counsel, exercise faith, ask God over and over, and have been praying to the Lord for thirty-odd years for that which we might have received in one year." (11:300:67.) But there was nothing for it but to keep on plugging: "We are so organized that we need preaching to all the time. This is because of our weakness, and we shall have to bear with one another until we become stronger and wiser." (8:181:60.) We may give up and lose the blessings, but the prophecies and promises will all be fulfilled, and "if we do not wake up and cease to long after the things of this earth, we will find that we as individuals will go down to hell, although the Lord will preserve a people unto himself." (18:304:77.) "We may fail, if we are not faithful; but God will not fail in accomplishing his work, whether we abide it

or not.” (8:183:60.) “If we are not faithful, others will take our place; for this is the Church and people that will possess the kingdom for ever and ever. Shall we do this in our present condition as a people? No; for we must be pure and holy.” (8:144:60.) “. . . if my brethren and sisters do not walk up to the principles of the holy Gospel . . . they will be removed out of their places, and others will be called to occupy them.” (16:26:73.) It had already happened many times: “Of the great many who have been baptized into this Church, but few have been able to abide the word of the Lord; they have fallen out on the right and on the left . . . and a few have gathered together.” (11:324:67.) Joseph Smith stated the problem: “I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God,” but they “will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they still cannot stand the fire at all.” (*Teachings*, p. 331.)

*The Moral*:—We have felt no necessity in this brief and sketchy survey for pointing out to the reader how Brigham Young’s educational concepts stand out in brilliant contrast against the background of everything that is practiced and preached in our higher schools today. But the moral of our story must not be overlooked: *Brigham was right after all*. As administrative problems have accumulated in a growing Church, the authorities have tended to delegate the business of learning to others, and those others have been only too glad to settle for the outward show, the easy and flattering forms, trappings and ceremonies of education. Worse still, they have chosen business-oriented, career-minded, degree-seeking programs in preference to the strenuous, critical, liberal, mind-stretching exercises that Brigham Young recommended. We have chosen the services of the hired image-maker in preference to unsparing self-criticism, and the first question the student is taught to ask today is John Dewey’s golden question: “What is there in it for me?”

As a result, whenever we move out of our tiny, busy orbits of administration and display, we find ourselves in a terrifying intellectual vacuum. Terrifying, of course, only because we might be found out. But that is just the trouble: having defaulted drastically in terms of President Young’s instructions, we now stand as a brainless giant, a pushover for any smart

kid or cultist or fadist or crank who even pretends to have read a few books. That puts them beyond our depth and so we (I include myself) stand helplessly and foolishly by dangling our bonnet and plume while hundreds of students and missionaries, of members and enemies of the Church alike, presume to challenge and reject the teachings of Joseph Smith on evidence so flimsy that no half-educated person would give it a second thought. How can you hope to make these people see that the documents and discoveries they hail with such reverence and delight for the most part went out of date in the 1930's; that Huxley, Breasted, Wellhausen, and Frazer do not represent present-day scientific thought; that one book does not settle anything? No one has ever told them of the new discoveries which *every month* call for revision of established scientific and scholarly beliefs. No one has ever told them what it means to lay a proper foundation essential to any serious discussion of the things they treat so glibly and triumphantly. No one has ever told them of the millions of unread documents that already repose in our libraries, holding the answers to countless questions that must be asked before they can justify their instant conclusions. An awesome outpouring of newly-discovered documents of direct bearing on the history and teachings of the Church is even now in full spate, amazing and confounding Jewish and Christian scholars, but bursting with good news for the Latter-day Saints—who ignore them completely.

It is perfectly natural for the young who discover the world of scholarship for the first time to strike in their sophomoric zeal an intellectual pose, rail in high terms against the Church that has kept them in darkness all these years, and catalogue the defects and miscalculations of the Prophets in the light of their own scholarly elevation. That is perfectly natural, and if we had heeded Brigham Young, the urge to study and criticize would be running in fruitful channels. Whether we like it or not, we are going to have to return to Brigham Young's ideals of education; we may fight it all the way, but in the end God will keep us after school until we learn our lesson: "Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your own mind; then you must ask me if it be right . . ." (D.C. 9:7f.)