

formalizing for the first time practices that would characterize the Church for nearly a century.

Brigham was a well-built, stout (in later years, portly) man of five feet, ten inches, somewhat taller than average for his day. His light brown hair, often described as “sandy,” had very little gray. Visitors noticed his penetrating blue-gray eyes lined by thin eyebrows. Though he later wore a full beard, Brigham was clean-shaven until the 1850s, when he first sported chin whiskers. His mouth and chin were firm, bespeaking, visitors thought, his iron will. He was generally composed and quiet in manner, but he could thunder at the pulpit. Sometimes called the “Lion of the Lord,” he could also roar when aroused.

Brigham Young’s manner was pleasant and courteous. His dress, generally neat and plain, was often homespun. He combined vibrant energy and self-certainty with deference to the feelings of others and a complete lack of pretension. By the time of his death, Brigham Young had married twenty women, sixteen of whom bore him fifty-seven children. He died on August 29, 1877, of peritonitis, the result of a ruptured appendix.

Brigham’s most obvious achievements were the product of his lifelong talent for practical decision making. He instituted patterns of Church government that persist to this day. In leading the Saints across Iowa, he issued detailed instructions that were followed by the hundreds of companies that crossed the plains to the Salt Lake Valley in succeeding years. In the Great Basin he directed the organization of several hundred LDS settlements; set up several hundred cooperative retail, wholesale, and manufacturing enterprises; and initiated the construction of meetinghouses, tabernacles, and temples. While doing all this, he carried on a running battle with the United States government to preserve the unique LDS way of life.

But for Brigham Young these were means, not ends. His overriding concern was to build on the foundation begun by Joseph Smith to establish a commonwealth in the desert where his people could live the gospel of Jesus Christ in peace, thereby improving their prospects in this life and in the next. He loved the Great Basin because its harshness and isolation made it an ideal place to “make Saints.”

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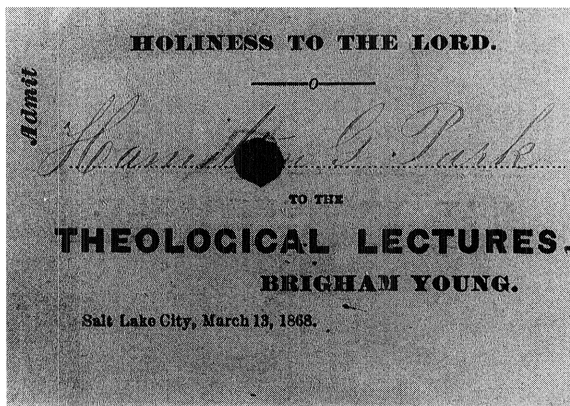
TEACHINGS OF BRIGHAM YOUNG

In leading the Latter-day Saints for over thirty years, Brigham Young wrote comparatively little, except for his letters, but he spoke frequently and on numerous subjects. He was constantly obliged to speak *ex cathedra* on many topics relative to life in this world and the next. His discourses were vigorous and forthright, filled with candid realism and common sense, and many of his speeches were recorded in shorthand by scribes. Along with his practical attainments and mechanical skills, he was one of the most discursive and lucid of men. Here was a man tested by fire (e.g., he was actually driven from his home five times) and who knew all the trials of life, from the corridors of power to the roughest frontiers. He sometimes made statements that surprised or even offended those who tended to accept his every utterance as doctrine, but with a New Englander’s passion for teaching and learning, he plunged ahead.

All the commentators concede that Brigham Young was one of the ablest and most dynamic leaders in American history. He was one of the supremely practical men of his age, a hardheaded, even-keeled, no-nonsense realist who got things done. But, for him, all of that was incidental. The important thing was that the people should know what they were doing and why. His orders and recommendations came with full and persuasive explanations.

His teachings begin with faith in Jesus Christ: “My faith is placed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and my knowledge I have received from him” (*JD* 3:155). “Jesus is our captain and leader; Jesus, the Savior of the world—the Christ we believe in” (*JD* 14:118). “Our faith is placed upon the son of God, and through him in the Father, and the Holy Ghost is their minister to bring truths to our remembrance” (*JD* 6:98).

Brigham Young gained much of his knowledge of Jesus Christ through his constant association with the Prophet Joseph SMITH: “What I have re-



Brigham Young was a popular and forceful speaker on many practical and inspiring subjects. This nontransferable ecclesiastical ticket admitted the holder to one of Brigham Young's lectures in the School of the Prophets, Salt Lake City, 1868. Courtesy Rare Books and Manuscripts, Brigham Young University.

ceived from the Lord, I have received by Joseph Smith" (*JD* 6:279). To the end of his life, Young testified of the mission of Joseph Smith in restoring knowledge of Christ to earth. "I love his doctrine," he said. "I feel like shouting Hallelujah, all the time, when I think that I ever knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet whom the Lord raised up and ordained" (*JD* 13:216; 3:51). His dying words were "Joseph, Joseph, Joseph."

On this foundation, Brigham Young emphatically taught the law of eternal progression. This life is a part of eternity. Eternal knowledge and glory are to be obtained and promoted on this earth. Improvement, learning, training, building, and expanding are the joy of life: "We do not expect to cease learning while we live on earth; and when we pass through the veil, we expect still to continue to learn" (*JD* 6:286). And eternal progression leads to GODHOOD: "The faithful will become gods, even the sons of God" (*JD* 6:275).

Brigham Young recognized that many people were not prepared to understand the mysteries of God and godhood. "I could tell you much more about this," he said, speaking of the role of ADAM, but checked himself, recognizing that the world would probably misinterpret his teaching (*JD* 1:51).

All of the descendants of Adam (men, women, and children) must work. "What is this work?" Brigham asks. "The improvement of the condition of the human family. This work must continue

until the people who live on this earth are prepared to receive our coming Lord" (*JD* 19:46).

For Brigham, improvement meant "to build in strength and stability, to beautify, to adorn, to embellish, to delight, and to cast fragrance over the House of the Lord; with sweet instruments of music and melody" (*MS* 10:86). More specifically, the one way man can leave his mark on the face of nature without damage is to plant. President Young ceaselessly counseled his people to do as Adam was commanded to do in the Garden of Eden when he dressed and tended the garden: Our work is "to beautify the face of the earth, until it shall become like the Garden of Eden" (*JD* 1:345).

In caring for the world, "every accomplishment, every polished grace, every useful attainment in mathematics, music, and in all science and art belongs to the Saints, and they should avail themselves as expeditiously as possible of the wealth of knowledge the sciences offer to every diligent and persevering scholar, and that's our duty. . . . It is the duty of the Latter-day Saints, according to the revelation, to give their children the best education that can be procured, both from the books of the world and the revelations of the Lord" (*JD* 10:224). "If an elder shall give a lecture on 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. The truth that is in all the arts and sciences forms part of our religion" (*JD* 2:93–94).

President Young's fascination with the things of the mind extended to mundane experience. The enjoyment of the senses, he said, is one of our notable privileges upon the earth and a wonderful source of enjoyment.

Although Brigham Young's destiny led him to the desert barrenness of the West, he sensed a spiritual beauty in that land. "You are here commencing anew," he told the people. "The soil, the air, the water are all pure and healthy. Do not suffer them to become polluted with wickedness. Strive to preserve the elements from being contaminated by the filthy wicked conduct of those who pervert the intelligence God has bestowed upon the human family" (*JD* 8:79). For Brigham, moral and physical cleanliness and pollution are no more to be separated than mind and body: "Keep your valley pure, keep our towns as pure as you possibly can, keep your hearts pure, and labor

what you can consistently, but not so as to injure yourselves” (*JD* 8:80).

Brigham Young also had a Yankee passion for thrift, but it rested on a generous respect for the worth of material things, not on a mean desire simply to possess them. When he said, “I do not know that during thirty years past, I have worn a coat, hat, or garment of any kind, or owned a horse, carriage, &c, but what I have asked the Lord whether I deserved it or not—Shall I wear this? Is it mine to use or not?” (*JD* 8:343), he was expressing the highest degree of human concern and responsibility.

Brigham Young often spoke of ZION and of building up the kingdom of God. He used the name Zion to describe the intended state of affairs and constantly had Zion in his view: “There is not one thing wanting in all the works of God’s hands to make a Zion upon the earth when the people conclude to make it” (*JD* 9:283). He recognized that the ideal of Zion stood in the face of contemporary economic values: “It is thought by many that the possession of gold and silver will produce for them happiness; . . . in this they are mistaken” (*JD* 11:15). “If, by industrious habits and honorable dealings, you obtain thousands or millions of dollars, little or much, it is your duty to use all that is put in your possession, as judiciously as you have knowledge, to build up the Kingdom of God on the earth” (*JD* 4:29).

Zion was to be established on the basis of cooperation: “The doctrine of uniting together in our temporal labors, and all working for the good of all is from the beginning, from everlasting, and it will be for ever and ever” (*JD* 17:117). In this there was no room for debate or contention, least of all rancor: “Cast all bitterness out of your own hearts—all anger, wrath, strife, covetousness, and lust, and sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, that you may enjoy the Holy Ghost” (*JD* 8:33).

The contrast between light and darkness was vivid to President Young: “Whence comes evil? It comes when we make an evil of good. Speaking of the elements in the creation of God, their nature is as pure as the heavens, and we destroy it. I wish you to understand that sin is not an attribute in the nature of man, but is an inversion of the attributes God has placed in him” (*JD* 10:251). He recognizes a conscious, active agent in the spreading of evil: “Satan never owned the earth; he never made a particle of it; his labor is not to create, but to destroy” (*JD* 10:320).

The true stature of Brigham Young emerges if one seeks to compose a list of his peers. He led a ragged and impoverished band, stripped of virtually all their earthly goods, into an unknown territory. His critics and biographers note that the man was unique among the leaders of modern history, for he alone, without any political and financial backing, established from scratch in the desert an ordered and industrious society, having no other authority than the priesthood and the spiritual strength with which he delivered his teachings. By constant exhortations and instructions, he drew his people together and inspired them in carrying out the divine mandate to build up the kingdom of God on earth.

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YOUNG, ZINA D. H.

Zina Diantha Huntington Young (1821–1901), third general president of the RELIEF SOCIETY, possessed great faith and compassion. Sometimes called “the heart of the women’s work in Utah” (Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association* [Salt Lake City, 1911], p. 21), “Aunt Zina” led the Relief Society from 1888 to 1901.

Born January 31, 1821, in Watertown, New York, Zina Diantha was the eighth of William and Zina Baker Huntington’s ten children. Her father served in the War of 1812, and his father, William Huntington, Sr., in the Revolutionary War. Zina’s great-great-uncle, Samuel Huntington, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.